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**KENYAN LEADERS' DEVELOPMENT RECORD**

**ISSUE NO. 003**

## **Jobs, agricultural growth and the Creative Economy: What Ruto has delivered**



*This is the first report documenting William Ruto's achievements in job creation, agricultural growth, and the Creative Economy. Future volumes will provide updated records as new projects and programmes are rolled out and their impact realized.*

# Inside the agricultural reforms fuelling food security and rising incomes



By 2025, the number of farmers registered on KIAMIS had risen to **7.1 million**, up from approximately 300,000 in August 2022

Coffee acreage expanded from **109,385 acres** to 115,500 acres in 2025, signalling renewed confidence among growers

Irrigation at the Galana Kulalu farm on October 12, 2025. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

BY OBED SIMIYU |

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Kenya's agricultural sector has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past three years, with reforms introduced by the Kenya Kwanza administration beginning to yield measurable results across crop production, livestock development and food security.

In 2022, the country was grappling with one of its most severe food crises in recent history occasioned by prolonged drought, soaring input costs and supply shortages which pushed the price of a 50kg bag of fertiliser above Ksh7,000, while a 2kg packet of maize flour retailed at about Ksh250.

The country relied heavily on imports to bridge deficits in key food commodities, including maize and wheat, placing additional pressure on households already struggling with the high cost of living.

Against this backdrop, the government embarked on a series

of structural reforms aimed at reviving agricultural production, lowering the cost of farming and improving food availability.

Central to these reforms was the digitisation of farmer registration through the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information System (KIAMIS), which has become a key tool in the administration of agricultural support programmes.

By 2025, the number of farmers registered on KIAMIS had risen to 7.1 million, up from approximately 300,000 in August 2022. The digital platform has enabled the government to identify genuine farmers, minimise subsidy leakages and ensure support reaches intended beneficiaries more efficiently.

The impact of these interventions is increasingly evident across the agricultural value chain.

## Bumper maize harvest

One of the clearest indicators of the sector's recovery is maize production, which surpassed 75 million bags in 2025 according to the ministry of Agriculture.

The increase has largely been attributed to the widespread distribution of subsidised fertiliser and certified seeds, which helped farmers reduce production costs while improving productivity.

The bumper harvest marks a significant turnaround from the food shortages experienced just a few years ago. Increased domestic production has also reduced dependence on imports, strengthening national food security and cushioning consumers from global supply shocks.

As production increased, the cost of maize flour eased considerably. A commodity that had become increasingly unaffordable for many families is now retailing at around Ksh165 for a 2kg packet, offering relief to consumers and improving household access to a staple food.

The rise in domestic output

The acreage under edible oil crops nearly doubled from

**60,000** hectares to 114,350 hectares

has also contributed to a sharp decline in food imports. Imports, which stood at nearly 10 million metric tonnes in 2022, fell to approximately 3.3 million metric tonnes by 2025, reflecting improved local production and reduced reliance on external markets.

## Coffee recovery

The coffee industry has also shown signs of renewed growth, supported by reforms aimed at increasing farmer earnings and expanding production.

Coffee acreage expanded from 109,385 acres to 115,500 acres in 2025, signalling renewed confidence among growers. At the same time, coffee farmers benefited from improved prices, with cherry prices rising from between Ksh70 and Ksh80 per kilogramme to Ksh120 per kilogramme.

The increase in acreage and farm-gate prices has enhanced farmer incomes and encouraged greater investment in coffee production. For many producers, improved returns have made coffee farming more attractive and economically viable.

The gains in the coffee sector are particularly significant given the challenges that had previously affected production, including fluctuating prices, ageing bushes and declining farmer interest. The upward trend suggests that ongoing reforms are beginning to restore confidence in one of Kenya's traditional cash crops.

## Expanding production

Another notable achievement has been the expansion of edible oil crop production.

The acreage under edible oil crops nearly doubled from 60,000 hectares to 114,350 hectares, reflecting increased efforts to promote domestic production and reduce dependence on imports.

The expansion has already generated economic benefits. Kenya's palm oil import bill fell from Ksh114 billion to Ksh96.8

Continued from Page 2 →

billion, easing pressure on foreign exchange reserves while strengthening local agricultural value chains.

Reducing the country's edible oil import burden has long been a policy objective, given the substantial resources spent annually on imports.

The increase in local production represents a significant step towards improving self-sufficiency and supporting industrial growth linked to agricultural processing.

**Livestock Resilience**

The livestock sector has also benefited from targeted interventions designed to improve resilience, protect livelihoods and enhance productivity.

A major component of these efforts has been the implementation of the De-Risking, Inclusion and Value Enhancement of Pastoral Economies (DRIVE) project, which has expanded insurance coverage for pastoralist communities and livestock keepers.

By 2025, the programme had insured 238,000 households and protected approximately 2.7 million animals valued at around Ksh29.3 billion.

The initiative has provided a critical safety net for vulnerable communities, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions where livestock losses due to drought and disease can have devastating economic consequences.

In addition, 51,660 animals were distributed across 16 Arid and



The expansion has already generated economic benefits. Kenya's palm oil import bill fell from Ksh114 billion to

**Ksh 96.8 b**

Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) counties, helping households rebuild herds, strengthen livelihoods and improve food security.

The programme reflects a growing emphasis on climate resilience and risk management within the livestock sector, particularly as changing weather patterns continue to affect pastoral communities.

**National vaccination drive**

Disease control has remained a key priority in safeguarding livestock production and expanding market opportunities.

In January 2025, the government carried out a nationwide livestock vaccination campaign that reached more than 7.9 million animals against Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR).

The exercise spearheaded by President William Ruto despite resistance, was aimed at reducing disease outbreaks, improving

A farmer looks after his goats. The De-Risking, Inclusion and Value Enhancement of Pastoral Economies (DRIVE) project has expanded insurance coverage for pastoralist communities and livestock keepers. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

National Mass livestock vaccination was officially launched by Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture Mutahi Kagwe in Segera Ward, Laikipia County on Jan 30, 2025. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

animal health and protecting Kenya's access to export markets, where stringent sanitary standards are increasingly important.

By controlling transboundary animal diseases, the vaccination programme is expected to enhance the competitiveness of Kenya's livestock products and support long-term sector growth.

**Dairy and livestock exports**

The positive momentum within the livestock sector has extended to exports. Expanded cooperative structures, feedlot programmes and market interventions have helped increase the value of dairy and livestock exports from Ksh4.9 billion in 2022 to Ksh9.4 billion in 2025.

Livestock export volumes also grew substantially, rising from 14,985 metric tonnes to 19,328 metric tonnes over the same period.

The increase translated into an additional Ksh4 billion in export earnings, strengthening the sector's contribution to the national economy while creating new opportunities for producers and traders. The growth underscores the importance of coordinated investments in animal health, market access and value-chain development.



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# How subsidised fertiliser programme offers lifeline to farmers amid rising production costs

Bags of subsidised fertiliser delivered at an NCPB depot in Uasin Gishu County. PHOTO | UGC.



President William Ruto, after assessing the situation, announced the reduction of the subsidised fertiliser price from

## Ksh3,500 to Ksh2,500

per 50-kilogramme (kg) bag on August 2, 2022.

is intended to minimise abuse of the subsidy and ensure that the intended beneficiaries receive direct support.

The government also established a registration framework to capture eligible beneficiaries. Farmers who were not already registered were directed to visit county, sub-county or ward agricultural offices for registration, a process provided free of charge.

This registration requirement reflects a broader effort to create an organised agricultural database that can support future planning, resource allocation and policy implementation. By knowing who the farmers are, where they are located and the acreage under cultivation, the government is better positioned to design targeted interventions.

Farmers can access the fertiliser from NCPB depots located within the counties where they are registered. This decentralised distribution model seeks to bring the product closer to the farmers and reduce logistical challenges that often increase farming costs.

### Major relief

The programme provides fertiliser according to a farmer's registered acreage. Each farmer is entitled to a combined maximum of 100 bags of planting and top-dressing fertiliser per season, with the allocation determined by the size of land prepared for cultivation.

Farmers are allowed two bags each of planting and top-dressing fertiliser per acre. For instance, a farmer with three acres can

## BY OBED SIMIYU |

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The Government of Kenya's subsidised fertiliser programme emerged as a critical intervention aimed at supporting farmers and enhancing food production during the 2022 short rains season that affected the country.

President William Ruto, after assessing the situation, announced the reduction of the subsidised fertiliser price from Ksh3,500 to Ksh2,500 per 50-kilogramme (kg) bag on August 2, 2022.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives, the programme was implemented following a presidential directive intended to make fertiliser more affordable and accessible to farmers across all counties, thereby increasing agricultural productivity and strengthening national food security.

Agriculture remains the main backbone of Kenya's economy, employing millions of people directly and indirectly. However,

farmers have for years grappled with rising production costs, particularly the high prices of fertiliser.

The subsidy programme was therefore introduced as a strategic response to these challenges, targeting both small-scale and large-scale farmers who rely heavily on fertiliser to improve crop yields across the country.

Under the programme, only duly registered farmers whose details appear in the official farmers' register maintained by the National

Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) qualify to purchase the subsidised fertiliser.

Farmers are required to present themselves in person at designated NCPB depots with their original national identity cards before accessing the product.

### Accountability

One of the notable features of the programme is the emphasis on accountability and traceability. Farmers are not permitted to purchase fertiliser on behalf of another individual. The restriction



Bags of subsidised fertiliser being offloaded at a National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) Nakuru depot on January 3, 2026. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

Continued from Page 4 →

purchase up to 12 bags, while one with 15 acres can access up to 60 bags. Farmers cultivating more than 25 acres can receive up to 100 bags.

The acreage-based allocation system seeks to balance equity and efficiency. Smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of agricultural producers in Kenya, are therefore guaranteed access to fertiliser, while larger commercial farmers are accommodated according to their production needs.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the programme is the reduced cost of fertiliser. The government approved subsidised prices for various fertiliser types, including DAP at Ksh3,500 per 50-kilogramme bag, NPK fertilisers at Ksh3,275, Urea at Ksh3,500, CAN at Ksh2,875, and Sulphate of Ammonia at Ksh2,220.

Local planting and top-dressing blends are also priced at Ksh3,275.

Type	Quantity (kg)	Price (Ksh)
DAP	50	3,500
NPK	50	3,275
UREA	50	3,500
CAN	50	2,875
Sulphate Ammonia	50	2,220
Others (Local)	50	3,275

Source: NCPB

For many farmers, these prices represent substantial savings compared to prevailing market rates. The reduction in input costs has enabled farmers to allocate resources to other essential farming activities such as land preparation, seed acquisition, irrigation and labour.

Agricultural experts have long maintained that fertiliser is among the most critical inputs in crop production.

When farmers are unable to apply adequate fertiliser due to high prices, yields decline significantly. The subsidy programme therefore sought not only to lower production costs but also to improve productivity and overall food output.

The Ministry of Agriculture has reported sustained progress in the



Bags of subsidised fertiliser at a NCPB depot. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

implementation of the subsidised fertiliser programme, which has significantly supported farmers across the country since its rollout.

According to the ministry, during the 2023/2024 Financial Year (FY), a total of 8,315,555 bags were distributed, benefiting approximately 1,238,851 farmers nationwide.

Already, the government has received at least 1 million fertiliser bags, which are sufficient to support farmers across the country up to July 2026, according to Agriculture Principal Secretary Dr Paul Kiprono Rono.

Additionally, 5 million bags are expected to arrive thereafter as Dr Rono emphasises that the fertiliser subsidy programme continues to reduce production costs, increase agricultural productivity, and strengthen national food security.

### Transparency

To improve transparency and reduce loopholes for misuse, the programme adopted cashless payment mechanisms.

Farmers are required to make payments through mobile wallet, M-Pesa, transactions using designated NCPB till numbers or through bank deposits approved by depot managers.

Farmer cooperatives and organisations were similarly required to make payments directly from their bank accounts to NCPB accounts. Cash transactions at depots are prohibited.

The move towards digital transactions reflects the government's broader efforts to enhance accountability in public programmes. By creating verifiable

credit.

While this requirement may help maintain operational efficiency, it also presents challenges for farmers who struggle with cash flow, particularly during planting seasons when financial demands are highest but the President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration has assured farmers that this would be addressed.

### Diversion and abuse

To protect the integrity of the subsidy programme, the government has outlawed the resale of subsidised fertiliser. Any individual found purchasing the fertiliser for resale would be engaging in an illegal activity.

This provision addresses concerns that subsidised agricultural inputs can sometimes find their way into commercial markets where they are sold at higher prices. Such practices have over the years deprived genuine farmers of support and undermine the objectives of government intervention.

payment records, authorities can now easily track transactions and minimise leakages that have historically affected agricultural subsidy initiatives disadvantaging the less monied farmers.

The programme also stipulates that all farmers must pay before collecting fertiliser and are not allowed to purchase the product on



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# Ewaso Ng'iro tannery: Narok's leather project unlocking Kenya's untapped industrial potential



Hides at the Ewaso Ng'iro Tannery. The facility is capable of processing between 2,400 and 4,000 metric tonnes. PHOTO | PCS.

**BY OBED SIMIYU |**  
Milestone Badge

For decades, Narok County has been known primarily for its vast livestock wealth, with thousands of pastoralist families depending on cattle, sheep and goats as their main source of livelihood.

Yet despite the abundance of livestock, much of the economic value embedded in hides and skins has traditionally been lost through poor handling, limited processing capacity and the export of raw materials instead of finished products.

However, that narrative is gradually changing through the transformation of the Ewaso Ng'iro Tannery and Leather Factory, a state-owned facility established by the Ewaso Ng'iro South Development Authority (ENSDA) and increasingly being viewed as a cornerstone of Kenya's broader industrialisation agenda.

The factory represents one of the Kenya Kwanza administration's most ambitious efforts to add value to livestock products while

creating jobs, stimulating local manufacturing and strengthening the leather value chain.

Following a major infrastructure expansion and modernisation programme worth approximately Ksh1.4 billion, the facility is positioning itself to become a key player in the regional leather industry.

The project is not only expected to transform the economic fortunes of livestock farmers across Narok and neighbouring counties but also help Kenya reduce its dependence on imported leather products by promoting local production.

## Industrial expansion

Before the ongoing transformation, the tannery operated with a processing capacity of about 1,200 metric tonnes of hides and skins annually. However, actual production remained significantly lower, averaging about 850 metric tonnes per year.

This meant that nearly a third of the facility's installed capacity remained unused, creating an operational gap of approximately 350 metric tonnes annually.

Previously, the factory largely

operated on an order-based production model, processing hides and skins only when customers placed orders. While this approach helped manage operational costs, it also limited growth, constrained revenue generation and prevented the facility from taking full advantage of available market opportunities.

Recognising the untapped potential, the government embarked on a comprehensive expansion programme that has dramatically upgraded the factory's physical infrastructure and production capabilities.

Today, the facility boasts expanded infrastructure and modern machinery capable of processing between 2,400 and 4,000 metric tonnes of hides annually, more than tripling its original output potential.

The expansion marks a significant milestone in Kenya's efforts to move from exporting raw materials to producing finished products that command higher market value both locally and internationally.

## Modern Infrastructure

The upgraded tannery is designed to meet modern industrial

Before the ongoing transformation, the tannery operated with a processing capacity of about

**1,200**  
metric tonnes of hides and skins annually

At the centre of the facility is a

**3,200**  
-square-metre integrated tannery and leather goods manufacturing complex equipped with specialised machinery for processing hides and skins into high-quality leather.

standards and support large-scale leather processing.

At the centre of the facility is a 3,200-square-metre integrated tannery and leather goods manufacturing complex equipped with specialised machinery for processing hides and skins into high-quality leather.

The factory houses automated tanning drums, leather splitting machines, drying tunnels and other specialised equipment required for industrial-scale production.

Unlike traditional tanneries that focus primarily on semi-processed leather, the Ewaso Ng'iro facility has incorporated value-addition sections dedicated to manufacturing finished products.

These include military and security boots, school shoes, belts, bags, jackets and other leather goods that are in high demand across the country.

A key feature of the project is its environmental compliance infrastructure.

Leather processing is often associated with chemical waste and environmental concerns. To address this challenge, the factory includes a Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) designed to treat industrial waste before discharge, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations while minimising ecological impact.

This investment reflects a growing emphasis on sustainable industrialisation and responsible manufacturing practices.

## Production capacity

Despite its strategic importance, the factory has historically struggled to utilise its full production capacity.

A detailed operational assessment points to several challenges that have constrained output and limited growth.

One of the most significant obstacles was due to livestock management practices among pastoralist communities.

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Leather shoes on display at the Ewaso Ng'iro Tannery on May 6, 2025. A steady supply of leather products to security agencies, the military, schools and other public institutions could guarantee year-round factory production. PHOTO | PCS.

Traditional hot-iron branding remains common in many livestock-keeping areas for ease of identifying animals. While branding serves as a method of animal identification, it causes permanent scars on hides, reducing their quality and rendering many unsuitable for premium leather production.

As a result, large quantities of otherwise valuable hides are either downgraded or rejected altogether.

The second challenge lies within the livestock supply chain.

Most hides reaching the tannery originate from small-scale slaughterhouses where standardised skinning techniques are often lacking. Poor flaying methods frequently result in cuts, punctures and tears that diminish the commercial value of the hides.

The cumulative effect of these defects significantly reduces the quantity of high-quality raw materials available for processing.

Nonetheless, the President William Ruto-led administration has put in place public awareness plans to enlighten the pastoralists and all livestock farmers about modern animal-identification methods that do not devalue the hides.

The factory has also faced market-related constraints.

Operating strictly on an order-based production model creates uncertainty in cash flow and limits the ability to maintain adequate stocks of chemicals and production inputs. This often results in intermittent production cycles that leave machinery idle for extended periods.

Collectively, these factors have prevented the facility from achieving its full economic potential despite having sufficient infrastructure.

### Full production

To bridge the production gap and maximise capacity utilisation, a structured operational strategy has been proposed.

The first priority is securing a reliable supply of quality raw materials.

This involves working closely with livestock farmers, cooperatives and respective county governments to promote modern animal identification methods such as hydrogen branding and electronic tagging. These alternatives preserve hide quality while still allowing effective livestock tracking.

The factory also plans to strengthen partnerships with livestock cooperatives and

emerging regional abattoirs across Narok, Kajiado, Nakuru and Samburu counties.

Long-term supply agreements could help guarantee a steady flow of quality hides and skins while reducing dependence on fragmented supply channels.

The second strategy focuses on changing the production model.

Instead of waiting for customer orders before commencing processing, the factory aims to adopt a continuous manufacturing approach.

This transition would involve processing available hides into “wet blue” leather, a semi-finished product that can be safely stored for extended periods before final finishing.

Such an approach would allow the factory to operate consistently during periods of high livestock slaughter while maintaining inventory that can be converted into finished products whenever demand arises.

The strategy would significantly improve production efficiency and stabilise cash flow.

Another important pillar involves securing long-term institutional markets.

Government procurement programmes present a substantial opportunity.

By supplying leather footwear and related products to security agencies, the military, schools and other public institutions, the factory could establish a predictable demand base capable of sustaining year-round production.

The government’s ‘Buy Kenya, Build Kenya’ initiative offers a potentially powerful framework for supporting locally manufactured leather products.

### Lifeline for pastoralists

Beyond industrial development, the tannery has the potential to transform livelihoods across pastoralist communities across the country.

“*This transition would involve processing available hides into “wet blue” leather, a semi-finished product that can be safely stored for extended periods before final finishing.*”

Livestock remains one of the most important economic assets in the arid and semi-arid regions. However, during drought periods, farmers often suffer heavy losses as weakened animals fetch lower prices or die before reaching markets.

A fully operational tannery could provide an additional income stream by creating a reliable market for hides and skins that might otherwise go to waste.

Instead of viewing hides as by-products, farmers would be able to derive direct economic value from them.

This additional revenue could help cushion households against climate-related shocks and strengthen resilience in livestock-dependent communities.

### Jobs and local industry

The factory’s economic impact extends far beyond its immediate operations.

At full capacity, the facility is projected to increase direct employment from about 90 workers to approximately 300.

# KIAMIS: The Digital backbone transforming Kenya's Agriculture

BY OBED SIMIYU |  
Milestone Badge

For decades, agriculture has remained the backbone of Kenya's economy, supporting millions of livelihoods, contributing significantly to national income and serving as a critical pillar of food security.

Yet despite the sector's importance, policymakers and agricultural stakeholders have long grappled with a persistent challenge: the absence of reliable, comprehensive and up-to-date data on the country's farmers.

The lack of accurate farmer information often resulted in fragmented planning, inefficient allocation of resources and difficulties in targeting government support programmes. Subsidies intended for farmers frequently faced logistical challenges, while policymakers struggled to obtain the real-time information needed to make informed decisions.

That challenge, at the moment, is steadily being addressed through the Kenya Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (KIAMIS), a transformative digital platform that is reshaping how agricultural services are delivered across the country.

The system has emerged as one of Kenya's most ambitious digital agriculture initiatives, providing government agencies, counties and development partners with a centralised source of agricultural data while enabling farmers to access services more efficiently, just as promised by the Kenya Kwanza government to digitise services.

Its impact is already being felt across the country, particularly

through the government's subsidised farm input programme, where data from more than 6.4 million registered farmers is being used to deliver targeted support through digital platforms.

## Major milestone

A major milestone in the evolution of KIAMIS was achieved on November 27, 2025, when the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) officially handed over the platform to the Government of Kenya.

The handover marked more than a transfer of technology as it represented the culmination of years of collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, FAO and the Government of Sweden, which provided financial support for the initiative.

President William Ruto has been vocal in building a digital



The Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mutahi Kagwe during the official handover of Kenya Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (KIAMIS) on November 27, 2025 from the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to the Government of Kenya. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

superhighway for the country. This is one of the delivered promises.

By assuming full responsibility for the farmer registration module, the Government of Kenya demonstrated confidence in the system's maturity and its ability to serve as a long-term foundation for data-driven agricultural development.

By mid-2025, KIAMIS had registered at least

## 6.5 M

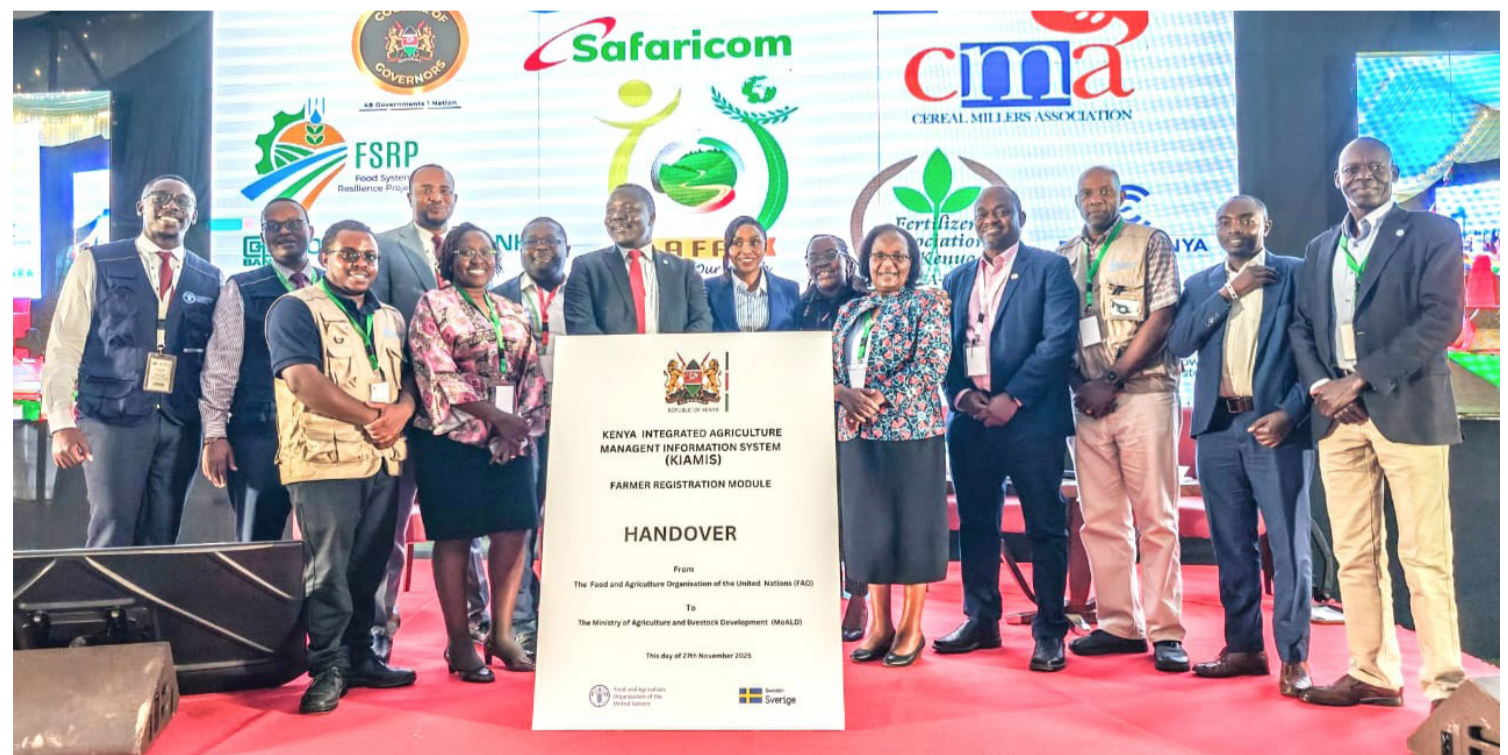
farmers, with thousands more continuing to join the platform.

The transition also reflected the success of a partnership model built on local ownership, technical expertise and institutional collaboration.

## How it started

The story of KIAMIS began in 2019, when stakeholders in the agricultural sector recognised a fundamental weakness in Kenya's agricultural information systems.

Although agriculture supports millions of Kenyans directly and indirectly, information about farmers remained scattered across different institutions, counties and programmes that are crucial.



The system has emerged as one of Kenya's most ambitious digital agriculture initiatives. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

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This fragmentation made it difficult to identify beneficiaries accurately, monitor interventions and evaluate outcomes.

As a result, policymakers often lacked the comprehensive information required to design effective support programmes and measures.

To address this challenge, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development partnered with FAO to establish a modern, integrated digital platform capable of capturing farmer data nationwide. The initiative received financial support from the Embassy of Sweden, enabling the development of a system that would eventually become one of Africa's most notable digital agriculture platforms.

The vision was straightforward yet ambitious: create a single, reliable source of agricultural information that would improve planning, strengthen accountability and ensure that government

support reached the right farmers at the right time.

#### Testing the concept

Rather than immediately rolling out the system nationwide, developers adopted a phased approach.

The initial implementation was conducted in two pilot counties – Uasin-Gishu and Nyandarau, where the platform was tested under real-world conditions.

In Uasin-Gishu, the piloting was done on farmer registration and e-voucher system while in Nyandarua, the piloting was done on farmer registration, according to FAO.

County governments, agricultural extension officers and farmers actively participated in the process, providing feedback that informed improvements to the system.

The pilot phase allowed developers to identify operational challenges, refine user experiences

and strengthen data collection procedures before it was eventually rolled out.

The lessons learned during these early stages proved critical in ensuring that the system could function effectively at a national scale.

As confidence in the platform grew, registration efforts expanded across the country.

#### National database

By mid-2025, KIAMIS had registered at least 6.5 million farmers, with thousands more continuing to join the platform.

The growing database represents one of the most comprehensive collections of agricultural information ever assembled in Kenya.

The information captured includes details about farmers, farm locations, production activities and other critical data needed to support agricultural interventions.

This growing repository of information has become a valuable national asset.

For government agencies, it provides unprecedented visibility into agricultural trends and production systems.

For farmers, it serves as a gateway to support programmes and services.

For policymakers, it enables evidence-based decision-making that was previously difficult to achieve.

Most importantly, the availability of reliable data will significantly improve transparency and accountability in the distribution of agricultural resources.

#### Supporting farmers

One of the most visible applications of KIAMIS is in the government's subsidised farm input programme.

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The Ministry of Agriculture is currently using data from approximately 6.4 million farmers registered within the system to provide targeted input subsidies.

Rather than relying on broad and often inefficient and long-relied on distribution methods, the government can now identify eligible beneficiaries with greater precision.

Inputs are distributed through an electronic voucher system that allows farmers to redeem approved products from designated suppliers.

It is fashioned in that County governments have to play a crucial role by identifying local agro-dealers and distribution outlets that farmers can easily access.

The e-voucher model represents a significant departure from traditional subsidy mechanisms.

By digitising the process,

the government has improved traceability, reduced opportunities for fraud and enhanced efficiency in programme implementation.

The system also gives policymakers valuable insights into uptake patterns and programme performance, enabling continuous improvement.

For farmers, the approach reduces bureaucratic barriers and makes it easier to access essential inputs such as fertiliser and certified seeds.

The result is lower production costs, improved productivity and enhanced food security.

#### More than a database

According to FAO officials involved in the project, KIAMIS was never intended to function simply as a digital registry.

Instead, it was designed as an integrated platform capable of supporting multiple agricultural services over time.

The Ministry of Agriculture is currently using data from approximately

## 6.4 million

farmers registered within the system to provide targeted input subsidies.

FAO's Lead Technical Officer Stuart Tippins noted during the handover that the system was built using lessons from global agro-informatics initiatives and digital public goods programmes.

"Drawing on its global experience in agro-informatics and digital public goods, FAO worked with national counterparts to ensure that KIAMIS would be scalable, interoperable and form the bedrock of Kenya's Digital Agriculture ecosystems," Stuart revealed.

He added: "The platform was designed not merely as a database, but as an integrated system capable of supporting multiple services over time, including farmer registration,

Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mutahi Kagwe at a model farm. KIAMIS has helped in registering farmers and collecting real-time data for better planning. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

input management, advisory services and links to markets and finance."

The objective was to create a scalable and interoperable platform that could serve as the foundation of Kenya's broader digital agriculture ecosystem.

Today, KIAMIS supports farmer registration, input management and agricultural planning.

In the future, its capabilities could extend further into advisory services, financial inclusion, market access and value-chain development.

This flexibility is one of the system's greatest strengths.

Rather than requiring multiple disconnected digital platforms, KIAMIS provides a unified framework through which different services can be delivered.

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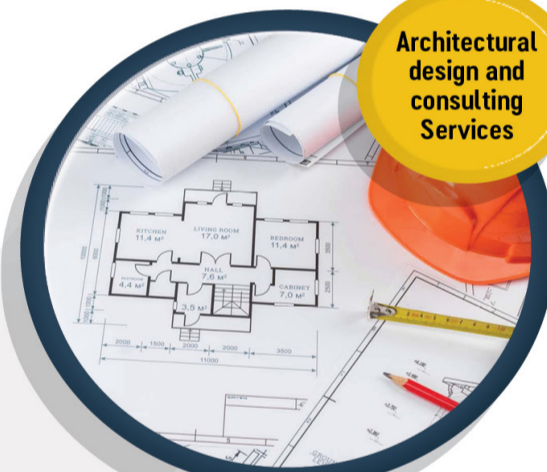
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# Kenya's tea sector defies global headwinds, earns Ksh218.8 billion

BY PHILLIP MOMANYI |  
Milestone Badge

Kenya's tea industry delivered a remarkable performance in 2025, demonstrating resilience in the face of global economic uncertainty, geopolitical disruptions, adverse weather conditions and persistent oversupply in the international tea market.

According to the Kenya Tea Industry Performance Report 2025 released by the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK), the sector recorded total earnings of Ksh218.79 billion, the highest in recent years, reaffirming tea's position as one of Kenya's leading foreign exchange earners and a critical pillar of the national economy.

The sector's growth was driven primarily by a significant increase in export volumes, aggressive market diversification efforts

and sustained demand in key international markets.

Kenya exported 652.8 million kilogrammes of tea in 2025, representing a 9.81 per cent increase from the 594.5 million kilogrammes exported in 2024. Export earnings rose to Ksh186.91 billion, up from Ksh181.69 billion the previous year.

Yet beneath these impressive figures lies a more complex story. While export volumes expanded considerably, international tea prices remained subdued due to global oversupply and market disruptions.

Production also declined significantly owing to unfavourable weather conditions, highlighting the growing vulnerability of agriculture to climate variability. The sector's performance in 2025 therefore represents not merely growth, but resilience under immense pressure.

President William Ruto's

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*The Government is in the process of implementing a raft of measures in the tea industry in a bid to double smallholder farmers' earnings to Sh. 100 per kilo of Greenleaf by the year 2027.*

administration has rolled out a raft of measures that are being implemented to ensure smallholder farmers earn at least Ksh100 per kilogramme of Greenleaf by 2027, according to information from the ministry of Agriculture.

The Government is in the process of implementing a raft of measures in the tea industry in a bid to double smallholder farmers' earnings to Sh. 100 per kilo of Greenleaf by the year 2027.

These reform measures are referred to as 10-point plan which aims at “improving tea quality, stabilising prices and ensuring fair

returns to farmers” the ministry states. The TBK has already started implementing the Strategic Tea Quality Improvement Programme (STQIP) to upgrade factories that have consistently been producing lower-quality tea.

## Industry performance

The TBK notes that the industry operated in a difficult global environment characterised by economic shocks, sluggish global growth, conflicts in key export destinations and a stronger Kenya shilling against the US dollar. Under normal circumstances, these factors would have significantly depressed export earnings.

However, the industry managed to post a two per cent increase in total marketed value from Ksh215.21 billion in 2024 to Ksh218.79 billion in 2025. Compared to 2023, total earnings increased by 11 per cent from Ksh196.97 billion.

Of the total marketed value, exports accounted for Ksh186.91 billion, local sales contributed Ksh19.13 billion, while committed stocks generated Ksh12.75 billion. Export growth remained

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A man picking tea at a farm. Green Leaf are the tea leaves plucked at a farm and later delivered to a tea buying centre ahead of processing at a factory. PHOTO | KNA.



India and Poland. Together, the top ten markets accounted for 81.5 per cent of Kenya's total tea exports.

Among the standout performers were Kazakhstan and Oman.

Exports to Kazakhstan surged by an extraordinary 186.9 per cent, while shipments to Oman grew by over 320 per cent. The Tea Board attributes Kazakhstan's growth to a shift in consumer preference towards Kenyan tea, while Oman's rapid rise reflects its emergence as a regional logistics and re-export hub serving Gulf markets including Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Other emerging growth markets included Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Switzerland and Malaysia, all of which posted substantial increases in imports of Kenyan tea.

### Market diversification

One of the most encouraging developments in the tea sector is the success of Kenya's market diversification strategy.

Historically, Kenya has relied heavily on a limited number of export destinations, exposing producers to geopolitical and economic risks in those markets. The expansion to 100 export destinations in 2025 signals meaningful progress in reducing this vulnerability.

the primary engine of industry expansion.

The performance is particularly noteworthy because it was achieved despite declining international prices and a less favourable exchange rate. The average export price dropped from USD2.27 per kilogramme in 2024 to USD2.21 per kilogramme in 2025. Similarly, the average exchange rate weakened earnings conversion, with the Kenya shilling averaging 129.50 against the US dollar compared to 134.82 the previous year.

In practical terms, Kenya earned more largely because it sold significantly higher volumes of tea rather than because prices improved.

### Historic levels

Perhaps the most significant achievement of 2025 was the dramatic increase in tea exports.

Kenya shipped 652.8 million kilogrammes of tea to international markets, an increase of 58.3 million kilogrammes compared to 2024. The Tea Board attributes the increase partly to the clearance of unsold tea stocks carried forward from both 2023 and 2024.

The increase demonstrates the industry's ability to maintain international demand even during

periods of economic uncertainty.

Tea remains Kenya's largest agricultural export and one of the country's most important sources of foreign exchange. The growth in exports helped offset declining production and lower prices, preserving overall sector earnings.

The report further indicates that Kenya expanded its export footprint from 96 countries in 2024 to 100 destinations in 2025, underlining successful efforts to diversify markets and reduce overreliance on a handful of traditional buyers.

Notably, Pakistan retained its position as Kenya's single largest tea export destination, importing 235.14 million kilogrammes of tea during 2025. This represented 36 per cent of Kenya's total export volume and generated Ksh73.4 billion in export earnings. Imports by Pakistan increased by nearly 14 per cent compared to 2024.

According to the Tea Board, Pakistan's continued strong performance was supported by government policies that prioritised foreign exchange allocation for tea imports due to tea's importance as a staple consumer product.

Other major export destinations included Egypt, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Oman,

**Women picking tea. The Tea Levy through the Tea (Levy) Regulations 2026 has been reintroduced and gazetted by the Tea Board of Kenya (TBK). PHOTO | TBK.**

Continued from Page 12 & Continued on Page 14 →

Kenya shipped **652.8** million kilogrammes of tea to international markets, an increase of 58.3 million kilogrammes compared to 2024.

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The Tea Board of Kenya, working alongside industry stakeholders, organised trade missions, exhibitions and business-to-business engagements in the United Arab Emirates, Iran, China, Germany, the United States, Algeria and Hong Kong. These initiatives have contributed significantly to opening new markets and strengthening existing relationships.

The emergence of Chad and South Sudan as growing markets further demonstrates the industry's ability to adapt to shifting regional trade dynamics. Chad, for instance, has increasingly imported tea directly following disruptions in traditional supply routes through Sudan caused by conflict.

#### Strategic priority

The report identifies value addition as one of the most promising avenues for enhancing earnings.

In 2025, Kenya exported 25.36 million kilogrammes of value-added tea, representing approximately four per cent of total exports. These products included tea bags, packaged retail tea, tea extracts and instant teas.

The United Kingdom remained the leading market for value-added Kenyan tea, followed by Sudan, Oman and Somalia.

Government policy is increasingly geared towards supporting value addition through tax incentives, establishment of common user facilities and development of overseas warehousing infrastructure.

Industry experts argue that value addition offers Kenya the best opportunity to capture a larger share of the global tea value chain. Currently, much of the value generated from tea branding, packaging and retailing accrues outside producing countries.

#### Orthodox tea

Another notable development in 2025 was the launch of Kenya's Orthodox and Specialty Tea Auction.

Orthodox teas achieved prices ranging between USD 3.20 and USD 3.41 per kilogramme, significantly higher than conventional CTC teas.

The specialised auction provides



producers with a transparent price discovery mechanism and creates incentives for increased production of specialty teas.

Currently, specialty teas account for only about three per cent of Kenya's total production, suggesting significant room for future growth.

The 2025 tea sector performance demonstrates both the strengths and vulnerabilities of Kenya's tea industry.

The Tea Board of Kenya's report ultimately paints a picture of an industry in transition, one that is successfully adapting to changing global realities while seeking new pathways for growth.

The achievement of KSh218.8 billion in earnings, exports to 100 countries and record export volumes demonstrates that Kenya's tea sector remains one of the country's most dynamic agricultural sectors.

Yet sustaining this momentum will require strategic investments, innovation and continued efforts to move beyond the traditional model of exporting bulk black tea.

If 2025 proved anything, it is that Kenya's tea industry possesses the resilience and adaptability necessary to remain globally competitive even in an increasingly challenging marketplace.

#### What has been done

Since taking office, the Kenya

Kwanza administration has rolled out a series of reforms aimed at strengthening the tea industry, lowering production costs and improving returns for smallholder farmers.

Among the key interventions is the subsidised fertiliser programme, under which farmers access a 50kg bag at KSh2,500, down from as much as KSh6,000 previously. The initiative is intended to reduce production costs and boost green leaf output.

The government has also reintroduced the Tea Levy through the Tea (Levy) Regulations, 2026, gazetted by the Tea Board of Kenya. The levy is expected to provide sustainable funding for market development, research and farmer

price stabilisation initiatives.

To support value addition and improve competitiveness, the government has facilitated a KSh3.7 billion concessional loan facility through the Kenya Development Corporation at an interest rate of five per cent. The fund is helping smallholder tea factories modernise their operations and expand the production of orthodox teas, which attract premium prices in international markets.

Further measures include the removal of VAT on tea purchased locally for processing and the zero-rating of packaging materials to encourage domestic consumption and lower operational costs.

The administration has also introduced governance and payment reforms within the sector, including changes in KTDA Holdings leadership, tighter controls on directors' expenditure and a direct payment framework designed to ensure farmers receive timely remittances from tea sales at the Mombasa Tea Auction.

Efforts to expand market access have seen Kenyan tea reach 100 export destinations, helping push the sector's earnings to KSh218.79 billion. At the same time, the establishment of a Tea Quality Analysis Laboratory in Mombasa is expected to strengthen quality assurance, support pricing decisions and enhance the global competitiveness of Kenyan tea.

## Ksh218.8b

**Achievement in earnings, exports to 100 countries and record export volumes demonstrates that Kenya's tea sector remains one of the country's most dynamic agricultural sectors.**

**Efforts to expand market access have seen Kenyan tea reach 100 export destinations, helping push the sector's earnings to**

## KSh218.79 billion.



The Ewaso Ng'iro Tannery and Leather Factory is strengthening partnerships with farmers, livestock cooperatives and emerging regional abattoirs across Narok, Kajiado, Nakuru and Samburu counties. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.



The government has initiated awareness sessions to enlighten farmers about modern animal-identification methods that do not devalue the hides. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.



Inside the Ewaso Ng'iro Tannery and Leather Factory in this May 6, 2025 photo. The facility is projected to increase direct employment from about 90 workers to approximately 300. PHOTO | PCS.



Harvesting of maize on the Galana Kulalu farm supervised by Agriculture Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe on December 19, 2025. PHOTO | Agriculture Ministry.

The Council of Governors (CoG) Agriculture chairperson Ken Lusaka (in green) joins his Uasin Gishu counterpart Jonathan Bii to receive bags of subsidised fertiliser in the county's NCPB depot in 2024. PHOTO | UGC.



# Water and irrigation projects transform lives across the North Rift

Continued on Page 29 →

BY JALANG'O ODIDI |  
Milestone Badge

As part of the National Government's broader agenda to invest in sustainable water infrastructure, boost agriculture and empower local communities, it has invested in water, sanitation and irrigation projects in North Rift counties.

The region has often faced perennial water shortage and drought.

Already, Four out of nine water, sanitation and irrigation projects have been completed in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

In Keiyo South, the Ksh26 million Cheminya Water Project located in Kaptarakwa Ward has been designed to combat water scarcity and boost agriculture. According to

the National Irrigation Authority, (NIA) the project features both domestic water access and irrigation schemes.

Also completed is Etio Dam in Kapteren, Keiyo North. The completion of Phase 1 of the dam at Ksh80,000, comes as a major boost for over 8,000 households in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

The dam, which was commissioned by President William Ruto on July 26, 2025, has a storage capacity of 160 million litres of water and is set to irrigate over 2,500 acres of land.

The dam is expected to facilitate large-scale cultivation of high value crops like passion fruits, avocados, cabbages, kales and potatoes.

In Kamariny Ward, Keiyo North Constituency, the rehabilitation of Yokot Dam has been completed at a cost of Ksh73 million.

The dam, with a capacity of

170,000 cubic metres, will address water shortages, boost irrigation and spur economic development. The dam is expected to irrigate over 200 acres of land and also provide water for domestic use and livestock.

It will produce over 1,050 tons of horticultural crops which will translate to Ksh80 million annually. It is also expected to enhance fish farming.

The rehabilitation of Kimanich-Chesoi-Kapsowar Water Supply Project has also been completed at a cost of Ksh27.3 million.

The project involved the construction and rehabilitation of water treatment plants, upgrading of water tanks, and the replacement of water distribution pipelines. The completion of the water treatment plant will significantly reduce water rationing and eliminate water distribution challenges across

Elgeyo Marakwet County.

Of the five water, sanitation and irrigation projects in Nandi County, only one is complete.

The drilling of Kapsumbeiyo borehole is complete. The water infrastructure project is designed to supply clean water to local residents and improve public health.

Uasin Gishu County has four water, sanitation and irrigation projects under the National Government. Of the four projects, two are complete. These include the drilling of Chepsaita community borehole and the Lower Sabor irrigation project in Tembelio Ward, Eldoret East Sub County.

The irrigation project covers 1,200 acres of land. According to the National Irrigation Authority, the project provides water to over 2,000 small scale horticultural farmers.



Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation Eric Mugaa during inspection of Lesepe Small Dam in Baragoi, Samburu North Constituency on December 20, 2024. PHOTO | MoWSI.

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President William Ruto's administration is opening doors that lead directly to wealth creation, business growth, and stronger local industries. PHOTO | PCS.



# Youth, women and PWDs empowerment achieved through AGPO programme

BY PHILIP MOMANYI | Milestone Badge

The government has managed to meet its pledge of growing businesses owned by youth, women and persons with disabilities through Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO).

Over the years, the government has been aggressive and intentional in ensuring public institutions meet the spirit of AGPO, thereby improving access to financial opportunities for the

disenfranchised group.

In the Economic Survey 2026, the number and value of tenders awarded by public procuring entities to Youth, Women and PWDs under AGPO is on an upward trajectory.

The report documents that the number of the tenders awarded is projected to rise by 1,257 by 2025/26, with the value of tenders awarded expected to rise to Ksh28.3 billion in 2025/26 Financial Year from Ksh25.5 billion in 2024/25. The number of tenders awarded to Youth, Women and PWDs is expected to increase

“  
The number of reporting procuring entities is expected to grow by 19.0 per cent to 401 in 2025/26. The amount reserved under AGPO for procurement of goods and services is expected to increase by 11.0 per cent to Ksh128.6 billion in 2025/26. Consequently, the value of tenders awarded under AGPO is expected to increase from Ksh50.7 billion

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during the review period.

“The number of reporting procuring entities is expected to grow by 19.0 per cent to 401 in 2025/26. The amount reserved under AGPO for procurement of goods and services is expected to increase by 11.0 per cent to Ksh128.6 billion in 2025/26. Consequently, the value of tenders awarded under AGPO is expected to increase from Ksh50.7 billion,” the report stated.

AGPO is a procurement intervention established to facilitate enterprises owned by youth, women and persons with disability to be able to participate in government procurement. The programme ensures that at least 30% of government procurement opportunities be reserved for these enterprises.

#### Financial independence

It is affirmative action is intended at empowering youth, women and PWDs of ages 18-35, providing them with an opportunity to earn financial independence. The programme has helped to tackle systemic economic exclusion, catalyse growth of MSMEs, and increase access to capital and capacity building opportunities for these groups.

From 2021/22 - 2025/26, the report indicates that there has been a significant rise in the number of registered and reporting procuring entities, amount reserved and awarded under the programme.

For instance, in the 2021/22 financial year, the amount awarded under AGPO stood at Ksh41 billion; it reduced to Ksh21.8 billion in 2022/23 before increasing to Ksh51.1 billion in 2023/24 period. The number dipped to Ksh50.6 in 2024/25 before shooting up to Ksh 54 billion in the 2025/26 financial year.

#### YED fund

The AGPO programme merely complements other robust interventions the government is strengthening to cushion members of the vulnerable groups and at the same time promote people-centred growth as prescribed by the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

Of note is the work the done by the Youth Enterprise Development Fund in providing access to affordable

capital through a myriad of financial products. The YEDF, implemented under Vision 2030, catalyses the creation of youth employment by promoting enterprise development that expand economic opportunities for the youth. It does this through provision of the following, loans to youth-owned businesses, market support, business development services, trading premises and worksites, and linkages and networks with large enterprises.

Specifically, the amount of money disbursed in loans to the youth, both male and female, over the last five financial years has been rising.

Data from the Economic Survey 2026 show that the amount of money disbursed as loans to youth has been increasing from Ksh403.6 million in 2021/22, Ksh143.8 million in 2022/23, Ksh324.4 million in 2023/24, Ksh410.4 million in 2024/25, and Ksh591 million in the 2025/26 period.

“The number of YEDF beneficiaries increased by a 44.0 per cent to 24,363. This was reflected in higher loan uptake, with the amount disbursed increasing from Ksh410.4 million in 2024/25 to Ksh591.0 million in 2025/26. Loan repayments also increased slightly

“

**The number of YEDF beneficiaries increased by a 44.0 per cent to 24,363. This was reflected in higher loan uptake, with the amount disbursed increasing from Ksh410.4 million in 2024/25 to Ksh591.0 million in 2025/26**

from Ksh289.7 million in 2024 to Ksh300 million 2025/26,” the report highlighted. According to the Fourth Medium Term Plan 2023-2027, the YEDF involves disbursement of Ksh1.78 billion to enable “economic empowerment of youths through credit, mentorship and business incubation services.” In addition, the Fund focuses on supporting projects in the agricultural value chain. Other funds meeting a similar purpose include Women Enterprise Fund, Uwezo Fund, and National Government Affirmative Action Fund.

#### Youth unemployment

Job creation has been deemed as a fundamental component in enhancing national socioeconomic transformation. This is met by prioritising the following areas: labour and employment;

information and communication technology (ICT); infrastructure; science, technology, and innovation; and land reforms. Others are public sector reforms; national values and ethics; ending drought emergencies; and security, peace building and conflict resolution.

The Fourth Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2023-2027 mentions that between 2018 to 2022, which covers the MTP III implementation period, the government was pursued the lofty ambition of creating 1.3 million new jobs annually to bridge the youth unemployment crisis.

The government planned to increase the ratio of white-collar sector employment from 13 per cent in 2017 to 40 per cent by end of the plan period. On average, 835,500 new jobs were created yearly against a target of 1,154,500 jobs in 2018 and 2019.

“In 2020, 736,000 jobs were lost because of COVID-19 containment measures, before rebounding to 926,000 and 816,600 new jobs in 2021 and 2022, respectively. The share of formal sector employment remained below the target during the plan period,” the document states.

President William Ruto has over the years reasserted the government’s determination to address the youth unemployment crisis through the Affordable Housing Programme, digital jobs, and labour mobility, National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) Project, among others.

Additionally, President Ruto said that over 300,000 young people are fully engaged in the Affordable Housing Programme, while another 180,000 are earning a livelihood through digital jobs in Jitume Labs.

Speaking during a past event in January this year, President Ruto said that 400,000 young Kenyans had secured foreign jobs through the government labour mobility programme.

“For the first time in the history of Kenya we have a plan on how to create jobs for the young people of our nation,” he said.

The sentiments echoed similar remarks he made in June 2025 when he said that “Beginning next week, the ‘Kazi Mtaani’ programme will be rolled out across the country.



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**President William Ruto has over the years reasserted the government’s determination to address the youth unemployment crisis through the Affordable Housing Programme, digital jobs, and labour mobility, National Youth Opportunities Towards Advancement (NYOTA) Project, among others.**



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# ‘Studio Mashinani’ programme crucial to enhancing creative economy

BY PHILLIP MOMANYI |  
Milestone Badge

The ‘Studio Mashinani’ project has helped more youths to develop mass media and communication skills, which has been instrumental in driving youth entrepreneurship and job creation.

The government set up the audio-visual recording studios for youths to record quality audio music, commercials and jingles. Since, the project has propelled more youths to explore and tap into their creativity to alleviate their social and economic wellbeing.

The beneficiaries are able to record music and spoken word creations at either free or subsidised rates, enabling them to earn a living from their talents.

Since 2021, six fully equipped studios have been set up in Nairobi (Lang’ata), Mombasa (Sauti House), Kisumu (KBC Nyalenda), Murang’a (Kirwara Youth Empowerment Gatanga), Machakos (Komarock studio), and Kitui (Manyonyeni Chief, “Chairman” Camp). Cumulatively,

**SINCE 2021, SIX FULLY EQUIPPED STUDIOS HAVE BEEN SET UP IN NAIROBI (Lang’ata), Mombasa (Sauti House), Kisumu (KBC Nyalenda), Murang’a (Kirwara Youth Empowerment Gatanga), Machakos (Komarock studio), and Kitui (Manyonyeni Chief, “Chairman” Camp). Cumulatively, about over 100 productions have been done under Studio Mashinani.**

**Kenya Film Commission Board Chairperson Sudi Wandabusi. He has revealed that fully equipped Film Hubs are being incorporated in the Affordable Housing Programme. PHOTO | Courtesy.**

about over 100 productions have been done under Studio Mashinani.

Studio Mashinani is being implemented in partnership with Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and Y254, an online platform that presents entertainment content that has a particular focus on Kenya’s youth, thereby providing them with immense opportunities to earn a living from their talents.

During President William Ruto’s tour of the Kisumu (KBC Nyalenda) studio mashinani in March 2026, one of the staff said artistes are not charged any fee; that they are only required to book studio sessions online through the Ministry of ICT.

He mentioned that they have been providing technical support to both established and up-and-coming musicians in writing lyrics, programming instruments and beats, among others, since 2017.

In 2017, President Ruto was the then deputy president.

Additionally, he stated that the project has enabled youths interested in venturing in the music space to breathe a sigh of relief with regards to financial

implications. For instance, he said at other commercially-purposed studios recording an audio can cost one up to Ksh20,000 and Ksh50,000 for video, which is an exorbitant fee for the millions of cash-strapped youths. The facility also serves Siaya, Homa Bay, Busia and Kakamega counties.

According to data from the Government Delivery Unit (GDU), there was a 94% increase of youth recordings made via Studio Mashinani, an increase from 398 in 2022 to 774.

Also, 962 students trained in Mass Media skills, which represents a 101% increase from the 478 recorded in 2022.

According to the GDU, the intervention has led to “improved digital literacy and employability in media and creative sectors, increased income generation opportunities for youth in the creative economy, and strengthened Kenya’s position as a hub for creative content production.”

The project operates under the

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BETA pillar of Digital Superhighway and Creative Economy that seeks to empower the country’s creative economy and build a skilled digital workforce through technology expansion.

According to the Fourth Medium Term Plan 2023-2027, the government is boosting the youth’s economic empowerment by setting up 18 additional studios across the 47 regional governments and training 5,000 mass media practitioners in information communication, performing and creative arts, and construction and equipping of Kenya Institute of Mass Communication.

The government set up the Talanta Hela Programme to encourage talents among the youths and invigorate the creative space through identifying, nurturing and monetisation of youth talents in sports and creative and digital space.

“In cognizance of the diverse talent and creative work of the country in music, theatre, graphic design and craft, among others, the Government will expand and mainstream culture and the arts infrastructure, build capacities and other supports required to scale up the cultural production and creative economy,” the document reads.

In further reference to MTP

IV 2023-2027, the government’s overall plan for the Digital Access and Creative Economy is to leverage ICT to increase employment opportunities for youths by establishing 25,000 free public Wi-Fi across the country (JiKonnnect Hotspots), establishing 1,450 training/innovation hubs (digital hubs), and training 100,000 youths annually through Ajira Youth Empowerment Centres.

The government also intends to equip 400 TVETs with creative economy facilities (23,000 virtual desktop infrastructure) and capacity build 400 ICT graduates on high end skills annually through the Presidential Digital Talent Training Programme (PDTP).

“This programme complements what Kenya Film is doing. We gave established modern Film Hubs in Bomet, Uriri and Dedan Kimathi in Nyeri.

“Following the President’s directive, now fully equipped Film Hubs are being incorporated in the Affordable Housing Program. An architectural model of the studio, that will include a recording studio, a cinema hall and film editing suites, was presented to the President at the Kalasha Awards Night,” Kenya Film Commission Board Chairman Sudi Wandabusi told this publication.

An artiste records during a studio session at the Mombasa Studio Mashinani in this updated photo. PHOTO | KNA.

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# Jitume labs transforming digital literacy, youth self-reliance

BY PHILLIP MOMANYI |  
Milestone Badge

Following the nationwide rollout of the Jitume Digital Laboratory programme in 2022, hundreds of thousands of young people have acquired requisite digital skills that have enabled them to earn a living and compete in the global market.

The programme was launched by President William Ruto in 2022 to provide the youth with access to digital services through virtual desktops, digital skills, on-the-job training, online courses to boost their credentials, and expanded job opportunities.

The project was established on the backdrop on growing concerns and frustration among the young people owing to minimal employment opportunities and lack of adequate skills to transition to the labour market.

In July 2025, President William Ruto said that technology is the emerging gateway to solving the unemployment crisis among the youth in the country.

He confirmed that over 180,000 young people were making a living

through online jobs through the Jitume programme. The programme was launched at various colleges in the country.

The programme is being implemented by the Ministry of ICT and the Digital Economy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, and Ministry of Labour led by Konza Technopolis, ICT Authority, and TVET Authority.

The Kenya National Digital Master Plan 2022-2032, has outlined the establishment of 25,000 internet-hotspots across the country to provide internet services to innovators, youth and entrepreneurs, establishment of 1,450 village digital hubs for citizen digital literacy training, film production and public access to government services, and Digital Literacy Programme to accelerate integration of technology in teaching and learning in all learning institutions as key enablers of the Vision 2030.

The masterplan highlights that enhancing the digital skills of the citizens is a gateway to improved and vibrant quality of life.

It equally shows that some of the indicators demonstrating the realisation of the country's digital

economy needs include the number of youths transitioning to business and employment as a result of digital skills empowerment and number of digital innovations that provide work for the students and youths in the community.

“The Government has built a capacity of 92,000 youths under the Ajira initiative and currently over 1.2 million working on digital and digitally-enabled jobs, 2,100 Presidential Digital talent graduate trainees, over 15,000 civil servants trained,” the masterplan states.

**The Jeremiah Nyaga Technical Institute is one of the country's top institutes offering training through Jitume labs.** PHOTO | ICT Ministry.



While on a tour at the Jitume ICT Hub in Lari Technical and Vocational College on April 5, 2025, the President heard that 203 labs will be set up across various colleges. At Lari college, the administration said 693,000 young people were trained, of which 195,000 were linked to job opportunities.

During a similar occasion at another Jitume Lab in Kaiboi Polytechnic in January 2024, several beneficiaries revealed that they draw an income by working virtually for foreign corporations while still in school. The job opportunities are AI-related and transcriptions.

The Economic Survey 2026 underscores that heavy investment in internet infrastructure countrywide has prompted the exponential growth of the Jitume Digital Programme powered by Konza Technopolis, a leading technology hub venture.

The survey underlined that the number of digital hubs equipped with Virtual Digital Infrastructure increased by 35.2 per cent to 261 in 2025. The figure rose from three in 2022, which was when the programme was kickstarted, to 109 in 2023, 193 in 2024 and 261 in 2025.

In the same breath, the number of youths trained on online jobs rose from 8,527 in 2023 but varied in 2024 (13,166) and 12,585 in 2025. On the number of youths linked to online jobs, the figure stood at 5,684 in 2023, 8,062 in 2024 and 6,200 a year later.

The government has been keen on improving digital literacy among Kenyans, with the efforts bearing fruits following the sector's performance.

The Fourth Medium Term Plan 2023-2027 shows that between 2018 to 2022, the number of incubation centres set up and operational was 525, a deficit of 200 from the cumulative target of 725 centres. This was, according to the document, occasioned by “insufficient space for the establishment of the new centres.”



Former ICT Cabinet Secretary Eliud Owalo interacting with students at Jeremiah Nyaga Technical Institute on May 31, 2023 after launching a Jitume lab at the institution. PHOTO | ICT Ministry.

“  
The Government has built a capacity of 92,000 youths under the Ajira initiative and currently over 1.2 million working on digital and digitally-enabled jobs, 2,100 Presidential Digital talent graduate trainees, over 15,000 civil servants trained

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The Plan added that the total number of youths who underwent capacity building and were later linked to remote jobs was 2.56 million against a target of three million for the period 2018/2019 to 2020/2021.

“This was made possible through the implementation of the Digital Literacy Programme, Ajira, and National ICT Human Capital and Workforce Development programmes. These initiatives have not only improved the efficiency and accessibility of public services but also created numerous employment opportunities within the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector,” it said.

Under the Digital Access and Creative Economy project, the government plans to leverage ICT to increase employment opportunities for youths through establishment of 25,000 free public Wi-Fi across the country (JiKonnnect Hotspots), creation of 1,450 training/innovation hubs (digital hubs), capacity building of 100,000 youths annually

through Ajira Youth Empowerment Centres and 400 ICT graduates on high end skills annually through the Presidential Digital Talent Training Programme (PDTP), and equipping of 400 TVETs with creative economy facilities (23,000 virtual desktop infrastructure).

“It also involves coding in primary schools, digital skills learning and software development in primary schools and connecting one (1) million youths to online jobs,” the document adds.

Under President Ruto’s Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, Digital superhighway and creative economy is a major pillar in the realisation of socioeconomic growth of the country and young people, particularly.

The pillar is focused on growing and fast-tracking broadband connectivity across the country through construction of 100,000km of national fibre optic connectivity network, improving government service delivery through digitisation and automation of all government critical processes and make available 80 per cent of government services online.





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Sedimentation Chamber at the Kiserian dam which is located along the Kiserian River about 2kms from Kiserian Township and supplies water to Kiserian, Ongata Rongai and parts of Ngong' townships. PHOTO | NWH&SA.

# Rift Valley rejoices as clean water and irrigation reach forgotten regions

BY JALANG'O ODIDI |  
Milestone Badge

**K**ajiado County boasts of five completed irrigation, water and sanitation projects undertaken and completed by the President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration.

The Ksh231 million Mt. Kilimanjaro-Amboseli-Namanga Water Supply Project in Kajiado South is complete and operational.

The project, which targets a population of 25, 000 people, involved the construction of an intake weir, a water treatment facility and extensive transmission and distribution pipelines to deliver clean water.

According to the State Department for Irrigation, the project seeks to supply water for domestic use, livestock and agricultural use within Kajiado South. The project

also provides water to support the local population and reduce livestock deaths during droughts.

Also completed in Kajiado County is Kiserian Ongata Rongai Water Supply project constructed at a cost of Ksh1.1 billion with the aim to improve water supply in the Nairobi satellite towns.

The project seeks to serve over 150,000 residents in Kiserian, Ongata Rongai and surrounding areas by injecting up to 18 million litres of water daily into the local system to support the growing population and the rising livestock numbers.

The construction of the Ksh1.2 billion Loitokitok Agro Processing (Tomato) Factory is also complete. The factory in Kajiado South is designed to absorb massive regional yields to eliminate post-harvest losses.

The plant is also expected to create at least 400 direct jobs.



“  
**The Ksh231 million Mt. Kilimanjaro-Amboseli-Namanga Water Supply Project in Kajiado South is complete and operational.**

Also, the Ksh221.6 million Rombo Clusters Irrigation Project Scheme rehabilitation and expansion has been completed.

According to the National Irrigation Authority, the project seeks to increase irrigation coverage from 2,983 to 5,259 acres. The project in Rombo, Kajiado South, aims to boost food security besides enabling a year-round cultivation of crops like watermelons, tomatoes and beans.

Also completed is the construction of a canal, intake and spring protection in Loitokitok at a cost of Ksh221.2 million.

## Water scarcity

In Nakuru County, the construction of Kiambiriria Water Project has been completed. The project was completed at a cost of Ksh19.7 million.

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Designed to end water scarcity, the project aims to provide clean, safe drinking water to over 1,200 local residents. Also completed is the drilling of a borehole at Arimi Primary School in Molo.

The project whose cost is Ksh3.7 million will provide clean water to the institution and the local community living around the institution.

Also completed is the Sundu River Borehole in Kuresoi North Sub County. The project, whose cost is Ksh6.4 million, aims to improve access to clean water, alleviating the local community's dependence on seasonal streams.

In Kericho County, two of the four water and sanitation projects by the National Government have been completed.

These include the Kabianga Health Centre and Blue Hills boreholes. The Kabianga Health Centre borehole provides clean water to the facility and the surrounding communities in Kericho County.

The Blue Hills borehole in Kipkelion West has been connected to the distribution network to serve local residents.

In Bomet County, the drilling of boreholes in three schools has been completed. These are boreholes at Kimawit School, Koiyet/Cheboyo of Primary School and Chebwastuiyet Secondary School.

In Narok County, the rehabilitation and augmentation of Suswa (DCK) water supply in Narok East Constituency is complete. The project, which cost Ksh24.9 million, involved the installation of a new water pump and the rehabilitation of water distribution channels.

It is expected to supply up to 5 million litres of water daily,



Members of the public at the site of Suswa (DCK) water supply in Narok East Constituency on October 9, 2024. PHOTO | Courtesy.

“*These markets have provided the link between consumers and sellers in a formal and regulated conducive environment. The county has constructed 14 markets spread across the county*

serving at least 15, 000 to 40,000 households.

During the launch of the project, President William Ruto said that the project successfully eliminates the need for locals to trek up to 50km in search of water, lowering costs and securing a reliable clean water supply for both domestic use and livestock.



An overview of the Suswa (DCK) water supply in Narok East Constituency. PHOTO | Courtesy.

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The Principal Secretary, State Department for Irrigation Ephantus Kimani during a visit of the Lower Nzoia Irrigation Project Phase 1 on March 12, 2024. It will redefine the agricultural landscape of Siaya and Busia Counties. PHOTO | Ephantus Kimani.

# The projects bringing water to homes and prosperity to siaya, Busia, Homa Bay farms

BY JALANG'O ODIDI |  
Milestone Badge

In Siaya County, the Ksh3.9 billion construction works of the Lower Nzoia Irrigation Project Phase 1 -Lot 1 is complete.

The project spanning Siaya and Busia counties is expected to generate Ksh4.8 billion annually.

According to the National Irrigation Authority (NIA), the project is designed to boost food security, mitigate perennial flooding and plug the country's rice deficit.

In the project, 5,000 acres have been dedicated to high-value crops

like fruits and vegetables, while another 5,000 acres are used for rice.

The project helps fulfil the Bottom-up economic Transformation Agenda for regional food security.

Phase 1 Lot involved the construction of diversion weir/intake, water conveyance infrastructure and infield irrigation and drainage system.

The project covers 10,000 acres with Siaya 2,535 having 6,270 acres and Busia 3,730 acres.

Launched on January 22, 2025 by President William Ruto, the project's components include construction of the main canal,

secondary and tertiary canals, drains, farm development works and scheme management facilities.

The other completed project is construction of an additional water supply distribution pipelines Lot III in Siaya and Bondo towns.

The Ksh265.3 million project involved the laying of 184km of pipes to supply treated water. The project also includes construction of 11km of sewer line.

In Homa Bay County, Oyugis Water Supply and Sanitation project is complete and running.

The Ksh706.2 million project in Kasipul constituency, which was commissioned on August 29,

2024 by President William Ruto, is designed to provide clean water and improved sanitation to residents in the town.

The project, which produces 12,300 cubic metres per day, has a 4,500 cubic metres concrete tank at Got Wire Hill. It benefits over a population of 119,000 of 11,000 households and 6,000 direct connections in regions including Kasipul, Kasipul Kojwach, Ringa, Kosele and Kakelo.

Its completion puts an end to a decade-long wait for Rachuonyo South and Rachuonyo East sub counties residents to have access to clean and safe water in their homes.



# Join Milestone Badge as a Columnist

Milestone Badge is a next-gen platform dedicated to documenting completed development projects, reforms, and public welfare programmes delivered by Kenyan leaders since 2013.

We are now seeking a highly respected and intellectually grounded Columnist to help shape the national conversation around development, accountability, and measurable leadership outcomes.

## THE ROLE

This is not a conventional opinion-writing position.

We are looking for a contributor capable of interpreting verified development outcomes within broader local, regional, and global economic realities.

The ideal columnist will help readers understand:  
 What completed projects actually mean for economic growth.  
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 Why development documentation matters.  
 How governance translates into measurable public outcomes.  
 Where Kenya stands within global development trends.

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We are seeking an individual with:  
 Deep understanding of economic development and public policy.  
 Strong analytical and editorial writing skills.

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Ability to translate complex development issues into accessible public language.

Strong credibility and intellectual independence.

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At Milestone Badge:

We do not publish political promises.

We do not amplify projections.

We do not promote campaign rhetoric.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Qualified candidates should submit:

A detailed CV.

Links or samples of previously published work.

A brief statement outlining their perspective on development accountability in Kenya.

Send applications to: [milestonebadge@grayiq.net](mailto:milestonebadge@grayiq.net)

# Milestone Badge: A new dawn in documenting what Kenyan leaders have delivered

In every election cycle, Kenyans are flooded with promises. Manifestos are launched, pledges are repeated, and ambitious development plans dominate political communication. Yet years later, citizens are often left asking a simple but powerful question: What was actually done?



Milestone Badge platform logo. PHOTO | Milestone Badge

That question sits at the heart of Milestone Badge - a groundbreaking Kenyan platform designed to systematically capture, verify, document, and communicate completed development achievements by leaders across the country.

Instead of amplifying political rhetoric, the platform focuses strictly on outcomes that citizens can see, verify, and measure.

Its philosophy is direct and uncompromising: If it is not completed and verifiable, it does not appear on Milestone Badge.

That principle alone distinguishes the platform in an era where political communication is increasingly shaped by projections, announcements, and promises rather than completed delivery.

Milestone Badge is not built around speculation. It does not publish campaign pledges, planned projects, or proposed reforms. Instead, it serves as a digital archive of completed roads, hospitals, schools, electricity projects, housing programmes, business infrastructure, technological advancements, employment initiatives, and public welfare reforms delivered across Kenya since 2013.

At its core, the platform is designed to help citizens clearly connect leadership with measurable impact on the ground.

Using advanced artificial intelligence systems, Milestone

Badge captures, analyses, verifies, and documents development achievements across sectors and regions. The information is then transformed into structured, standardized reports published every two weeks. These reports are distributed directly to citizens through downloadable digital formats and WhatsApp, ensuring accessibility beyond traditional media channels.

This direct-to-citizen approach is one of the platform's most disruptive features. By delivering reports straight to mobile devices, Milestone Badge minimizes distortion, eliminates gatekeeping, and places verified information directly in the hands of the public.

Equally significant is the platform's audience segmentation capability.

Reports can be distributed according to specific regions such as Rift Valley, Western, Coast, or Nairobi, as well as county-level or even constituency-level and custom audience targeting. This ensures citizens receive information that is directly relevant to their local realities and development context.

The platform's reporting structure revolves around key development pillars that shape everyday life in Kenya. These include physical infrastructure such as roads, stadiums, schools, hospitals, boreholes, and housing projects; electricity and renewable energy; digital and

technological infrastructure; jobs and employment; business and trade infrastructure; human development programmes; and broader development impact indicators.

In many ways, Milestone Badge represents an evolution in public accountability. It shifts political evaluation away from speeches and narratives toward documented evidence and completed outcomes. For citizens, researchers, institutions, and voters, it creates a centralized and searchable repository of development records that can be referenced long after political campaigns end.

The platform also introduces continuity into development communication. With bi-weekly publication cycles and organized digital archiving, Milestone Badge gradually builds a long-term chronological record of national progress and leadership performance.

Importantly, this initiative arrives at a time when trust in information ecosystems is increasingly under pressure. The rise of misinformation, polarized political discourse,

and fragmented digital narratives has made verification more critical than ever. By combining AI-powered analysis with structured verification systems, Milestone Badge positions itself as a credibility-first platform in Kenya's development reporting.

Its model reflects a broader global shift toward data-driven transparency and evidence-based public engagement. Citizens no longer want to hear only what leaders intend to do; they want to understand what has already been accomplished, where it was done, who benefited, and whether the results are tangible.

Milestone Badge responds to that demand with clarity and structure.

By focusing on verified outcomes rather than political noise, the platform is not merely publishing reports - it is helping redefine the relationship between leadership, accountability, and public information.

In a country where development stories are often debated, Milestone Badge seeks to ensure they are also documented, verified, and accessible to every citizen.

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PS Julius Korir engaging the public at Cheminya Water Project located in Kaptarakwa Ward on February 4, 2026. PHOTO | Ministry of Water.

**BY JALANG’O ODIDI |**  
Milestone Badge

**W**ith the completion of the irrigation project, crop yields are expected to improve due to reliable water supply. Crops grown here include cabbages, tomatoes, onions, kales, coffee, avocado and indigenous vegetables.

In West Pokot County, the National Government has spent Ksh50 million to rehabilitate

Wei Wei Irrigation Scheme’s Phase I and II and operationalise phase III.

This also includes the purchase of three farm tractors. With its completion, agricultural output from the project is expected to increase from the current 8,00,000 tonnes to a target of 2 million tonnes.

Established in the 1980s under a bilateral partnership between Kenya and Italy, the Wei Wei

Irrigation Scheme has grown into a flagship project under Kenya’s Vision 2030.

Initially covering just 70 hectares, the scheme has since expanded to over 600 hectares, with the latest Phase III contributing to an additional 325 hectares under irrigation and supporting more than 600 farmers.

Through President William Ruto’s Bottom-Up Transformation Agenda, Wei Wei Irrigation Scheme stands out as a model of what targeted investment, strategic planning and strong government commitment can achieve in advancing food security.

The National Government initiated five water, sanitation and irrigation projects in Turkana County. Out of the five, four have been completed.

Lotikipi (Nanam) Phase 1: The National Government has drilled boreholes and installed a water conveyance pipeline at a cost of

**The National Government has drilled boreholes and installed a water conveyance pipeline at a cost of**

**Ksh64.3m**

**With its completion, agricultural output from the project is expected to increase from the current**

**8,00,000 tonnes to a target of 2 million tonnes.**

Ksh64.3 million. The boreholes in Turkana West Sub County will mitigate the devastating effects of frequent droughts and water scarcity in the county.

Also complete is the Naipa Lot 2, a 910-acre agricultural zone in Turkana Central.

The government spent Ksh70 million to construct the main irrigation canals, hydraulic

structures and furrows.

Also completed was the construction of a septic tank at Lodwar Prison in Turkana Central at a cost of Ksh6.9 million.

The National Government has also completed the rehabilitation of Napuu Irrigation and Food Security Project Phase II.

The 150-acre food security and drought mitigation project in Turkana County transforms the arid region by producing crops like sorghum, maize and watermelons to combat perennial hunger.

This project, which relies on water from boreholes, supports nearly 800 to 1,000 households.

In Samburu County, the Lesepe Dam Project in Baragoi, has been completed at a cost of Ksh94 million.

The dam is designed to hold 550 million litres of water. During the renovation, a 560,000m<sup>3</sup> reservoir was built. The money was also spent on the building of cattle drinking troughs, purchase of tanks and pipeline laying.



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