

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
PRACTICES AT THE KISII COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN
KENYA**

**BY
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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination to any university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

My foremost gratitude goes to our Almighty God for enabling and guiding me through my academic endeavors. I dedicate this research project to my beloved parents Mr. Barnabas Bongoye and Elmelda Osebe for their undying support and love. Their virtue of hard work, resilience, devotion and integrity has continued to drive and guide me through the long journey of my life.

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ABSTRACT

Strategic planning and implementation is an integral component of the strategic management process and is viewed as the process that turns the formulated strategy into a series of actions and then results to ensure that the vision, mission, strategy, and strategic objectives of the organization are successfully achieved as planned. The aim of this study was to ascertain strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii county government in Kenya. The researcher collected qualitative data from the County secretary, Deputy Speaker, County Development Officer (CDO) and county executives. The total number of targeted respondents was 10 and the researcher managed to interview 7 of the respondents. The study was a case study of Kisii County in Kenya. The data was collected through face to face interviews with the respondents. It was revealed that Kisii County has a number of challenges that can be solved through proper strategic planning. The County has a well stated vision and mission that focus on the country's vision 2030. Stakeholders such as the electorate, the county executive, professional and civic leaders are involved in the strategic planning and implementation process. It is also clear that financial and human resources are the main resources that are required in the implementation of the strategic plan. The main challenge in strategic planning and implementation is financial constraints. The study reveals that the county has made significant steps towards the strategic planning process. Among the notable strategic planning activities that the county government has done is to conduct citizen surveys. The essence of the citizen surveys was to collect views and the situation as it were on the ground in order to determine the most immediate needs of the citizens in the county. This was aimed at assisting the county government to be able to come up with long and short term strategic plans for implementation purposes. The findings indicate that policy roundtable discussions were also conducted in order to discuss various issues that needed to be addressed in the strategic plan for the county. The study further reveals that the county strategic plan was also given to civic leaders as well as professionals and academic and community leaders for scrutiny and review. The purpose of this undertaking was to enable the county involve its people in developing its strategic plan. It was clear from the study that the Kisii County strategic plan is based on Kenya's Vision 2030. The strategic plan developed own content based on the vision. The respondents revealed that there are a number of issues that are covered under the Kisii County strategic plan. The plan clearly elaborates the county plans on social and economic transformation within the county; development of infrastructure to facilitate service delivery; provision of reliable energy in order to assist in the development of manufacturing sector in the county; to improve science and technology and innovation; to conduct land reforms in the county; to engage in the development of human resources and provision of efficient and effective public service; promotion of tourism activities in the county and promotion of manufacturing activities in the county in order to provide employment opportunities to many unemployed young people. The County has a well stated vision and mission that focus on the country's vision 2030. Stakeholders such as the electorate, the county executive, professional and civic leaders are involved in the strategic planning and implementation process. It is also clear that financial and human resources are the main resources that are required in the implementation of the strategic plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 Strategic Planning	2
1.1.2 Strategy Implementation.....	4
1.1.3 Strategic Planning and Implementation.....	5
1.1.4 Structure of the Kenyan Government	7
1.1.5 Kisii County.....	8
1.2 Research Problem	10
1.3 Research Objectives.....	12
1.4 Value of the study	12
CHAPTER TWO	14
LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings.....	14

2.3 The Concept of Strategy	16
2.4 The Strategic Planning Process.....	17
2.5 Strategic Planning Models	18
2.6 Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation.....	20
2.7 Importance of Effective Strategy Implementation.....	22
2.8 Challenges facing Strategic Planning and Implementation	23
CHAPTER THREE	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Research Design.....	25
3.3 Data Collection	26
3.4 Data Analysis	26
CHAPTER FOUR.....	28
DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	28
4.1 Introduction.....	28
4.2 County Background	28
4.3 Strategic Planning and Implementation Practices.....	29
4.4 Discussion of Findings.....	34
CHAPTER FIVE	37
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	37
5.1 Introduction.....	37

5.2 Summary of Findings.....	37
5.3 Conclusions.....	39
5.4 Recommendations.....	39
5.5 Limitations of the Study.....	40
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research.....	40
REFERENCES	42
APPENDIX.....	i
Interview Guide	i

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- ANT - Actor Network Theory
- CRA - Commission of Revenue Allocation
- MIS - Management Information System
- TA - Transition Authority.
- SWOT - Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

All organizations lend themselves to external environment. The environment is highly dynamic and continually presents opportunities and challenges. To ensure survival and success, firms have to develop capabilities to manage threats and exploit emerging opportunities promptly. This requires adoption of strategic planning practices that constantly match capabilities and environmental requirements (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). One of the challenges presented by the dynamic environment is increased competition. The dynamics in the environment destabilizes most organizations that do not have formal strategic plans. Strategic planning response is a set of decision and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve firm's objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 2007).

Strategic planning is a forward-looking exercise and all managers should be involved with it. If strategic plan is available and well implemented, an organization will have little or no challenge in managing external changes. For organizations to survive, it should be able to operate successfully with environmental forces that are unstable and uncontrollable and which can greatly affect decision making process. Organizations adapt to these environmental forces as they plan and carry out strategic activities. It is through strategic planning that an organization can predict changes in the environment and act pro-actively. (Adeleke et al, 2008). However, it has been observed that most

organizations are more concerned with the formulation of strategic plan and not how to implement them (Douglas, 2003). He concluded that “plan without effective and measurable implementation is no plan at all.” No matter how super a plan is, it has to be well implemented to achieve the desired result (Lynch, 1997). David (2009) believes that the usage of strategic plan is very important to organization’s ability to achieve and maintain competitive advantage over other organizations.

Spotting problems early as a result of close monitoring of the environment is core to dynamic strategic planning. Effective implementation of strategy is essential to its success (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005; David, 2009). However, there is evidence in the strategy literature about it being neglected and ill-conceived (Kennedy et al., 2003). In particular, Noble and Mokwa, (1999) believe that the nature of implementation and why it succeeds or not have not been well understood. For McGuinness and Morgan (2005), in this timeless framework, strategic planning’s main themes are strategy formulation and implementation, which are treated separately and sequentially. They further state this traditional, linear approach emphasizes the design of organizational structures and systems; that implementation is an administrative issue and follows after formulation as day follows night.

1.1.1 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is defined as the process of diagnosing an organization’s external and internal environments, deciding on a vision and mission, developing overall goals, creating and selecting general strategies to be pursued, and allocating resources to

achieve the organization's goals (Raps, 2005). The objective of strategic planning is to align an organization's activities with its environment, thereby providing for its continuing survival and effectiveness. It requires an organization to monitor its internal and external environments constantly for changes that may require modifying existing strategic and tactical plans or developing different ones altogether.

Central to strategic planning is the determination of long-term goals and objectives of an organization serving as a framework within which choices are made concerning the nature and direction of the organization (David, 2009). This framework helps in the allocation of resources in order to enhance financial and strategic performance (Dincer et al, 2006). By "nature " and "direction" implies that decisions are of fundamental importance to the organization as opposed to less important, operational decisions. Strategic planning also places emphasis on resource allocation and plans throughout the entire organization (Dincer et al, 2006). From this perspective, strategy is considered as a deliberate planning process, initiated by top management, based on an elaborate industry analysis and aimed at designing a cohesive grand strategy for the organization (Dincer, et. al., 2006). Strategic planning further ensures that the organization has appropriate structures, processes and culture or mindset, to carry through a programme of change (Raps, 2005).

Strategic planning has also been described as a formal managerial process. Dincer, et al (2006) indicated that it can be broadly defined as the process of determining the mission, major objectives, strategies, and policies that govern the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve organizational aims. To Johnson and Scholes (1999), strategic

planning is a systematic analysis and evaluation of procedures to formulate strategy as well as the process of implementing that strategy. Also Strategic planning can be considered from a content or process point of view (Hartman, 2004). The content relates to the distinct elements of the strategic plan which differ for every organization and the process relates to the mechanisms for the development of the strategic plan and its subsequent deployment. Effective strategic planning clearly requires defined achievable goals, systematic integration of a number of sequential activities, and above all commitment to implement the plan (David, 2009). There is no doubt that a well-conceived plan can be an effective catalyst for managing change and enhancing decision-making processes in organizations.

1.1.2 Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is defined as a series of interventions concerning organizational structures, key personnel actions and control systems designed to control performance to desired ends (Hrebbinak, 2005). Nobble (1999) views strategy implementation as a process that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the plans stated objectives. Both Douglas (2003) and Lynch (1997) treat strategy implementation as synonymous with execution of the strategic plan .this view of strategy implementation is limited as it falls to acknowledge the emergent nature of the many of the processes involved in the implementation of the strategy.

According to Nobble (1991) and Douglas (2003) accentuate the importance of allocating resources and operational issues that combine several of the perspectives with more of a focus on the process involved. Noble (1999) views strategy implementation as the communication, interpretation, adoption and enactment of strategic plans. David (2009) also stated that strategy implementation is often called the action stage of strategic management process, as it requires mobilizing of managers and employees on all levels of the organization to convert the formulated strategy into action and results.

Otsieka (2009) states that strategies are not valuable if they are developed and not implemented. Crafting and executing strategy is the heart and soul of managing business enterprise (Thompson et al, 2008). Kaplon and Norton (2008) assert that once strategies have been developed, they need to be implemented otherwise excellent strategies would continue to be of no good.

1.1.3 Strategic Planning and Implementation

Spotting problems early as a result of close monitoring of the environment is core to dynamic strategic planning. Effective implementation of strategy is essential to its success (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005; David, 2009). However, there is evidence in the strategy literature about it being neglected and ill-conceived (Kennedy et al., 2003). In particular, Noble and Mokwa, (1999) believe that the nature of implementation and why it succeeds or not have not been well understood. According to for McGuinness and Morgan (2005), in this timeless framework, strategic planning's main themes are strategy formulation and implementation, which are treated separately and sequentially. They

further state this traditional, linear approach emphasizes the design of organizational structures and systems; that implementation is an administrative issue and follows after formulation as day follows night.

Cespedes and Piercy (1996) have referred to the formulation-implementation dichotomy as the heart of the traditional approach stating that the many difficulties that arise in the practice of implementation can be attributed to it. To resolve this problem a different mix of skills and abilities are needed (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005) and to this end they propose three themes. These are a process perspective on implementing strategy, an emergence view and co-aligning the organization with its environment. A process perspective of implementing strategy (Piercy, 1998; Noble, 1999) widens the traditional focus on organizational structure and control systems by also including behavioural and interpersonal process elements (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005). This they said, would introduce psychological issues such as individual motivation and commitment; and issues relating to social and political processes such as organizational culture, leadership, and learning which requires consideration as a result of their complex interrelationships with organizational structure and control systems.

An emergence view of strategy deliberately puts formulation and implementation together (McGuinness and Morgan, 2005). They are viewed from this perspective as interactive and reciprocal processes, intertwined in a higher level process of strategy emergence, adaptation and improvisation (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). The third theme that McGuinness and Morgan (2005) propose towards solving the formulation-

implementation problem is co-alignment of the organization with its environment as a process indicative of strategic intent; noting that it involves the purposeful, adaptive coordination of organizational goals and actions over time. This is an essential part of the dynamic concept of strategy. These themes, they argue, provide a coherent basis for formulating and implementing strategy.

1.1.4 Structure of the Kenyan Government

Kenya's central government is structured through the constitution with administrative and policy making powers being distributed to its three arms namely Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. However, the current structuring is being replaced by a revamped new governance system following the recent adoption of the new constitution. Executive being by far one of the most crucial arms, it consists of the following primary members: President, Deputy President, Cabinet Secretaries, Attorney General and Director of public prosecutions. Headed by the president of the republic, the executive is guided by an underlying framework of laws. The laws require the president to appoint between 14 and 22 cabinet secretaries reflecting ethnic and regional diversity.

According to the new constitution (2010), the Legislature is held responsible for advocating for the people's interest in law making. In addition to that, it is vested in two houses - the national assembly and the senate. The specific roles of the national assembly are: to represent their constituents and all the special interests within their respective constituencies; enactment of legislation for both county and national government; approval or disapproval of revenue allocation presented by the senate; check the conduct

of the executive and other state officers and if necessary initiate the process of removal of president, deputy president and other state officers and lastly exercise oversight over state organs. The roles of the Kenya Senate under the new constitution are: to debate and approve county bills; determine the allocation of national revenue to be distributed to the counties and represent the interests of the counties at the national level.

Judiciary is another important arm of the government. This arm of government mainly centers on the Kenyan Judicial system. The Kenyan Judicial system adheres to a hierarchical system, with The Supreme Court being the highest organ, followed by the Court of Appeal, High Court, Magistrate's Courts and other Subordinate Courts. The chief justice is the president of the judiciary and is appointed by the president subject to the approval of the National Assembly. The Supreme Court, being the highest judicial organ, has the following key functions: It is mandated to hear and determine presidential election disputes, if they occur and to attend to the appeals arising from the Court of Appeal.

1.1.5 Kisii County

After the promulgation of the new constitution in Kenya in 2010, new 47 units of devolution known as counties came into existence as a result of the passage of the new constitution. Kisii County is among the most picturesque and naturally endowed counties in Kenya. Blessed with breath-taking hills and valleys interspersed by all-year-round clear flowing rivers, the county is a beehive of agricultural and commercial activities thanks to the abundant rainfall and the industrious spirit its people. Kisii county is located

Kisii in the western Kenya. It has a population of 1 152 282 as per the 2008 census, 245,029 households and covers an area of 1,317.4 sq. km. The population density stands at 874.7 people per sq. km and 51% of the population lives below the poverty line (Economic Survey, 2012). Kisii County is a major business hub in the Western region. Due to the massive circulation of money in the region, Kisii town has attracted a total of 17 commercial banks.

About 90 percent of the residents rely on agriculture for economic empowerment with the main activities being subsistence farming, soapstone carvings, vegetable, dairy, tea, coffee and small scale farming. Kisii receives frequent convectional rains and enjoys a great highland climate. The county has nine constituencies and 10 sub-counties. It is a vibrant urban and commercial center with the town having about 85,000 residents. According to latest national population and housing census of 2009, it has a large dependent metropolitan population of over 100,000 residents. Kisii is a bustling town and home to several businesses, organizations, educational institutions and government agencies.

The economy of Kisii County today is derived from commerce and agriculture. Kisii town is dotted with tall commercial buildings and is ever bustling with activity. It has several businesses dealing in food processing, health care and education. Although it has are few industrial setups, the county has the potential for the establishment of large agro-based industries. Kisii town also hosts large supermarket chain stores. There are also numerous other businesses such as the hospitality sector with hotels, bars, restaurants,

sports pubs, among other commercial activities. The county has an airstrip located in South West Suneka where chartered planes can land. Due the large population and ever-increasing demand for education, most public universities and colleges have set up campuses in Kisii town.

1.2 Research Problem

The contemporary business environment is characterized by globalization, coupled with rapid and discontinuous change on the political, economic, social, technological and environmental fronts. Strategic management is a management approach that enables organizational leaders to align the internal organizational environment with the changes in the increasingly volatile business environment in which organizations operate (Lynch, 1997). Strategic management is viewed as the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation, implementation and control of plans designed to achieve an organization's vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives within the business environment in which it operates (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). Strategic planning and implementation is an integral component of the strategic management process and is viewed as the process that turns the formulated strategy into a series of actions and then results to ensure that the vision, mission, strategy, and strategic objectives of the organization are successfully achieved as planned (Thompson and Strickland, 2003). In the last few decades, strategy formulation has been widely regarded as the most important component of the strategic management process — more important than strategy implementation or strategic control. However, recent research indicates that strategy implementation and not strategy formulation, is the key to superior business performance

and that strategy implementation is more important than strategy formulation (Hartman, 2004).

In Kenya, devolution is one of the integral components of the new constitution. It is executed or made possible through the units known as counties. The creation of new 47 counties in Kenya as the new centers of devolving resources and subsequent election of the county government means that some of the government functions that were initially centralized will now be executed by the county government and this will spur the economic growth at the county level. As a result, the county governments should incorporate the element of strategic planning and implementation if they are to succeed in their quest to improving their counties. This is because strategic planning is a tool for organizing the present on the basis of the projections of the desired future.

In Kenyan context, various aspects of strategic planning and implementation have been studied. Many of the studies that have been carried out locally have mainly focused on the aspect of strategic planning e.g. (Wangeci, 2005; Abdulaziz, 2006; Kamau, 2008; Gichira, 2009; Kyozo, 2009; Gitau, 2009 and Oketch, 2010). Many studies have been done locally relating to the concept of both strategic planning and implementation e.g. (Otsieka, 2009 and Omondi, 2010). These studies focused on strategic planning and implementation but no study has been carried out locally on the counties linking these two. A gap in literature has motivated this study as the study seeks to answer the research question; what are the strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii County government in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objective of this study was to determine the strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii County government in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the study

The findings of this study will be of significant importance to the top county executives. The study will enable the county executives to appreciate and understand the importance of effective strategic planning and implementation at the county level. A framework for successful strategy planning and implementation by county governments will be proposed. The findings from the study will be shared with other counties and they will be able to use the insights from the research and build these into their future implementation plans. Clear understanding of strategic planning and implementation will enable the counties to overcome any barriers inherent in their strategic undertakings.

Both local and foreign Investors may need to know the strategic plans of various counties. This will enable the investors to make their investment decisions as whether to invest or disinvest in a certain counties depending on the attractiveness of the investment. By looking at the county strategic plans and how the said plans will be achieved is of paramount importance to the investors as this will inform them of any incentives available at a particular county and this will aid their decision making process.

The findings of this study will enable the government to formulate sound policy measures that are geared towards supporting the devolution process at the county level. The

strategic plans of various counties and their abilities to implement them will guide various state organs such as Transition Authority (TA) in making a decision as to whether devolve certain functions to the county or not. CRA will also benefit from the findings of this study as it will guide them in resource allocation.

The findings of this study will contribute towards the current body of knowledge in strategic management discipline especially in the topic of strategic planning and implementation. It will also form the basis upon which other related and replicated studies can be based on and also suggest potential research areas for future researchers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study, the concept of strategy, the strategic planning process, strategic planning models factors affecting strategy implementation, importance of effective strategy implementation and finally, finally challenges facing strategic planning and implementation.

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on several theories. The study adopted the resource-based theory of the firm. This theory combines concepts from organizational economics and strategic management (Barney, 1991). In this theory, the competitive advantage and superior performance of an organization is explained by the distinctiveness of its capabilities (Johnson et al, 2008). Traditional sources of competitive advantage such as financial and natural resources, technology and economies of scale can be used to create value. However, the resource-based argument is that these sources are increasingly accessible and easy to imitate. (Pfeffer, 1994). Critics of this theory are of the opinion that the core position of this theory which sees resources as strategically valuable, rare, inimitable and organizationally embedded as sources of competitive advantage is not scientifically proven (Raps, 2005).

Barney's (1991) resource based view reflects the fact that rival organizations may not perform at a level that could be identified as considerable competition for the

organizations that have been well established in the market because they do not possess the required resources to perform at a level that creates a threat and competition. An organization should exploit existing business opportunities using the present resources while generating and developing a new set of resources to sustain its competitiveness in the future market environments; hence, an organization should be engaged in resource management. There is always high uncertainty in the environment and for organizations to survive and stay ahead of competition, new resources become highly necessary. (Crook et al, 2008). Strategic planning process will give the organization the needed opportunity to analyze the environment effectively and be able to prepare for any eventuality that may affect the plans therefore negatively affecting the performance of the organization.

Actor Network Theory (ANT) is another important theory in strategic planning and implementation. ANT appears far more able to detect effects of strategic planning activities in relation to who and what is involved, how, why, and with what results than the blunt-instrument variance methods noted above. By allowing the actors to act and by focusing on the associations they trace, ANT appears to be particularly able to clarify in practice what it means to call strategic planning a way of knowing defined as “a network of heterogeneous objects” (Douglas 2003) that is “relationally constituted” and “kept together by active processes of ordering and sense making, [where] to know is to keep all these elements in alignment, given that order is not given but is always an emergent process (Hax, 1990). At the same time, by focusing on actors and the associations they

trace (or not) ANT is well-suited to the task of discerning how and to what extent strategic planning in practice is inclusive, participatory, and democratic.

2.3 The Concept of Strategy

Douglas (2003) defined strategy as a match between what a company was capable of doing within the reality of what it could possibly do. This it does by trying to match the company's strengths and weaknesses with the environmental opportunities and threats. Strategy means making clear-cut choices about how to compete and win. Hough et al (2008) support that view; they say that a company's strategy is management's action plan for running the business and conducting its operations. They see strategy as being all about how management intends to grow the business, how it will build a loyal clientele and out-compete its rivals, and how each functional piece of the organization will contribute to the sum total and how performance would be boosted and sustained.

According to Hough et al. (2008), a company's strategy consists of the competitive moves and business approaches that managers are employing to grow the business, attract and please customers, compete successfully, conduct operations and achieve the targeted levels of organizational performance. Hill and Jones (2001) give an all-encompassing definition of strategy: "A strategy is an action that a company takes to attain one or more of its goals, the overriding goal being to achieve superior performance". There seems to be agreement that one cannot be strategic about the past. Strategies tend to be both proactive and reactive, depending on the market conditions and will evolve over time, as companies endeavour to stay ahead of their competitors in terms of market share,

profitability and customer service. Even though the focus of this research is more on strategy implementation than formulation, it is important to review how implementation fits into the broader strategic planning process.

2.4 The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process, which can be formal or informal, entails setting visions and missions, goals and objectives; clarifying policies and principles; and searching for opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses (SWOT). One of the critical aspects of being successful in a modern business context is having a clear vision, a balanced journey for the future based on a market-oriented approach and building core competencies of the organizations concerned. Whether developing a new business or reformulating direction for an ongoing company or institution, the basic goals, characteristics and philosophies which will shape a firm's strategic posture must be determined (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). The mission guides future executive action. Thus a company mission can be defined as the fundamental, unique purpose that sets a business apart from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of its operations in product and market terms (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). The principal value of a mission statement is the specification of the ultimate aims of the firm and which also provides managers with a unity of direction that transcends individual, parochial and temporary needs.

As Lynch (1997) notes, long term objectives are the results a business seeks to achieve over a specified period of time, typically five years. Seven common long-term objectives he describes are; profitability, productivity, competitive position, employee development,

employee relations, technological leadership and public responsibility. These and any other term objectives should be acceptable, flexible, and measurable over time, motivating, suitable, understandable and achievable. Policy and strategy has to be tackled as a whole process which needs to be managed and reviewed on a regular basis. Objectives could be short-term, medium-term or long-term.

Strategic planning involves carefully analyzing the external environment, because the environment keeps changing and calls for new organizational strategies (Beal, 2006). The aim is to produce a documented picture of the most significant environmental developments around which the organization must formulate its future goals, strategies, structures and systems. Second, the internal scan or assessment of the internal environment of the organization involves identification of its strengths and weaknesses, that is, those aspects that help or hinder accomplishment of the organization's mission and fulfillment of its mandate with respect to People (Human Resources), Properties (Buildings, Equipment's and other facilities), Processes (Such as student placement services, M.I.S etc.), Products (graduates, Publications etc.) (Lynch, 1997). A SWOT analysis is conducted with a focuses on the internal and external environments, examining strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment and opportunities and threats in the external environment.

2.5 Strategic Planning Models

According to Mintzberg et al, (1998), the basic strategic planning model originated from Ansoff (1965), the Harvard Group and Steiner (1979) asserting that strategic planning

reached its peak in the 1970s when managers extolled the virtues of formal strategic planning. This basic model involves five stages which are objective setting, external and internal auditing, strategy evaluation and operationalization stages. In this model there is also programming of works where a plan of action regarding how, where and what needs to be done is drawn to ensure that the process is achieved on time. This model has been criticized to be too rational and methodical with a long hierarchy of activities making it bureaucratic and may not succeed in dynamic, changing environments (Chaffee, 1985). However, it remains the basic building blocks upon which strategic planning is developed in almost all situations.

The second strategic planning model known as the HAX model was developed by Hax (1990). It is said to be a rational approach in which activities in developing a strategy flow in a sequential manner. He derived the model from the various hierarchical levels that exist in the organization emphasizing that their different managerial responsibilities contribute to defining the strategy of the organization. In his discourse, he indicated that three levels of strategy exist in an organization – corporate, business and functional levels. He argued that, the general tasks that need to be addressed are the responsibility of corporate level strategists and these primarily include the determination of overall missions, validation of proposals emerging from business and functional levels, identification and exploration of linkages between distinct but related business units, and the allocation of resources with a sense of strategic priorities.

The second level, intrinsic to the business unit, is the place where the activities needed to enhance the competitive position of each business unit is coordinated. The third level, functional level, deals with competency development such as financing, administrative infrastructure, human resources, technology, logistics, etc. Hax (1990) concludes that regardless of the structure adopted by a firm, these three highly differentiated strategic concerns still remain. These two models have been referred to in the literature as the linear approach to strategy because it connotes the methodical, directed, sequential action involved in planning (Chaffee, 1985).

2.6 Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation

Various authors have looked at the dilemma of implementation, specifically as it relates to strategy with (Pfeffer, 1996) commenting that implementation is one of the more difficult business challenges facing today's managers. They say that a strategy is as good as its implementation. Ungerer et al. (2007) suggest a cycle that must be followed to enable the implementation of strategic plans. The stages involved are an evaluation of current position and an understanding of potential futures, the development of various options and choices, formulation of a robust strategy architecture and then implementation.

Mintzberg (1998) had a different view on strategy implementation. He argued that it depended on what one's view was on strategy. He questioned whether strategy formulation came first before implementation or vice versa. In his view, one's perspective on strategy greatly influenced how one viewed implementation. It could be

seen as executing what had been planned already, otherwise the alternate view is that strategies emerge and evolve. Raps (2005) found that strategy implementation requires much more energy and time than the mere formulation of the strategy.

The success of the implementation effort depends on the level of commitment and involvement of middle managers. Often the input of the middle managers' knowledge is underestimated in strategy formulation and it is not surprising that Kaplan and Norton (2008) found that as few as five percent of a typical workforce understand their organization's strategy. Miniace and Falter (1996) stated that communication stands out as the key success factor when it comes to strategy implementation. It is imperative for an organization to develop a comprehensive communication plan in order to improve the success rate of its implementation programme.

Miniace and Falter (1996) assert that companies need to take an integrative view point where not only the organizational structure, but cultural aspects and other human resource issues are taken into account. They see implementation being a boundary less set of activities working together to achieve the change needed. Vagueness of the assignment of duties and responsibilities often results in failure. Miniace and Falter (1996) argue that employees tend to think and see only in their own department structures and companies need to ensure a cross-functional effort in order to improve their implementation plans. A detailed plan detailing activities and who is responsible prevents power struggles between departments and within hierarchies.

2.7 Importance of Effective Strategy Implementation

The effective implementation of strategy can lead to creating and sustaining a competitive advantage in addition to realizing higher returns for shareholders. All other factors being equal, an organization with managers who are competent at implementing strategy will enjoy a competitive advantage over a competing organization with managers who are less competent at implementing strategy (Hrebbinak, 2005).

Effective strategy implementation has a positive impact on strategic and organizational success. A recent comprehensive study of what contributes to organizational success highlights the importance of strategy implementation. In this study of 160 organizations over a five-year period, organizational success (as measured by total return to shareholders) was strongly correlated, amongst other factors, with an ability to “. . . execute flawlessly” (Joyce et al, 2003). Various other publications support the notion that effective strategy implementation is critical to strategic and organizational success. These include Raps (2005); Dincer et al (2006); and Hartman (2004).

The effective implementation of strategy can also contribute to good corporate governance. Dincer et al (2006) states that it is the responsibility of the board of directors of an organization to formulate a strategy based on the expectations of identified stakeholders. In addition, it is the responsibility of the board to ensure that managers not only implement the formulated strategy, but also that the implementation efforts are monitored and controlled. The board of directors must ensure that the implementation of strategy takes into account issues such as social responsibility, environmental

responsibility, and stakeholder engagement and sustainability. The claims of internal as well as external stakeholders should be taken into account during the organization's strategy implementation efforts (Hartman, 2004).

2.8 Challenges facing Strategic Planning and Implementation

Strategic planning in public entities is affected by a number of issues. Public organizations are inclined to approach strategic planning according to traditional planning theory from the private sector. This approach is what Mintzberg (1998) refers to as the synoptic approach, which is based on strategy formation being a controlled and formalized effort, outlining specific steps and procedures that are to be followed. The prescribed top-down strategic planning approach is problematic for entities. According to Mintzberg (1998), this approach is based on three fallacies, viz. the fallacy of predetermination – strategies can be predetermined since the strategy making context is least predictable; the fallacy of detachment – strategy has to be detached from operations, and thinking detached from doing; and the fallacy of formulation – the process of making strategy can be programmed by the use of systems.

Resource constraints are apparent during strategic planning in public entities, in particular, those dependent on the government for funding. This is so partly because such entities are subject to political factors, making funds availability and allocation more difficult when compared to the private sector. In some instances, political support might be lacking to fund strategic projects even though there could be demand from the community. In other instances, political support may be available to fund non-strategic

projects which have no real demand. The legal environment in which public entities operate is another constraining factor to strategic planning. According to Lynch (1997) this environment makes it difficult for entities to be flexible and autonomous.

Ungerer et al (2007) and Johnson (2008) assert that performance indicators and expectations for public organizations are normally unclear and vague as a result of the requirements by numerous and varied stakeholders. Douglas (2003) adds that performance in government is difficult to measure due to the need to report on outcomes as compared to outputs. Outputs, such as the number of houses built, are the direct effects of actions taken, and are easy to measure. However, outputs present a limited picture of a public entity's performance. Unlike the private sector firms, public entities do not have a profit motive, which is a significant performance indicator for the private firms. Legislated provisions and mandated objectives, functions and responsibilities are instead used as performance indicators in the public sector (Douglass, 2003).

According to David (2009) public sector managers tend to perceive their goals as achievable and straightforward, depending on the degree of the entity's publicness. However, entities that have a variety of stakeholders normally experience problems during goal setting processes. Such processes tend to be politicized, resulting in goals that are general ambiguous, not specific, and difficult to implement. Joyce (2004) asserts that to counter the problem of goal conflict, public sector strategic management processes need to accommodate the results of consultations and involvement by the public. It is the coordination of information from various stakeholders that creates a challenge for public entities in their effort to reach consensus in goals that are sometime conflicting.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that the researcher employed in the study. The methodology includes the research design, data collection methods and data analysis techniques that was employed in this study.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design in determining the strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii County government in Kenya. Kothari (1990) describes a case study as a form of qualitative analysis that involves a careful and complete observation of a social unit. He further describes a social unit as a person, family or institution. The researcher adopted a case study because of its contribution to the knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social and political phenomena.

A Case study has been a common research strategy in business (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002) and community planning. The distinct need for case studies arises out of the desire of the researcher to understand the complex social phenomena. Case study method also allowed the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of the real life events such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes (Robert, 2002).

3.3 Data Collection

Interview guide was used in the collection of data. Interviewing is a way to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. Kvale (1996) regarded interviews as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social impact of research data.

The interview guide was considered appropriate for this study since there is need to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii County government and this could only be achieved by conducting interviews. The researcher personally conducted the data collection exercise through face to face interviews with the respondents. The respondents were the governor, deputy governor, secretary, speaker and county executives.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher collected qualitative data. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) define content analysis as any technique used to make inferences through systematic and objective identification of specified characteristics of messages. Kothari (2004) also explain content analysis as the analysis of the contents of documentary and verbal material and describes it as a qualitative analysis concerning the general import of message of the existing documents and measure pervasiveness. Before embarking on content analysis, the researcher assessed the written material's quality to ensure that the available material accurately represented what was written or said. The

researcher then listed and summarized the major issues contained in the interview guide responses. This enabled him to structure the data in a way that made it possible to analyze and interpret it.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to ascertain strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii county government in Kenya. The researcher collected qualitative data from the deputy governor, secretary, speaker and county executives. The total number of targeted respondents was 10 and the researcher managed to interview 7 of the respondents. The other three could not be interviewed because they were out of their offices for official county functions elsewhere in the country. This is an indication that the study managed to achieve a response rate of 70% and this was considered enough for the study.

4.2 County Background

The findings from the study reveal that Kisii County is one of the 47 counties that were created in Kenya after the promulgation of the new constitutional dispensation in the year 2010. The constitution required that Kenya adopts a devolved government system that would allow the formation of County governments that are headed by a governor. The gubernatorial position is an elective position with tenure of five years. The respondents confirmed that Kisii County has a population of more than 1.5 million people and a total of 7 national assembly constituencies. The county is located to the south east of Lake Victoria and is bordered by six counties with Narok to the south, Migori to the west, Homa Bay to the north west, Kisumu to the north, Bomet to the south east and Nyamira to the east. It was further revealed that the county has a number of economic activities such as subsistence agriculture, vegetable farming, small-scale trade, dairy farming, tea

and coffee growing, commercial businesses and soapstone carvings. The main agricultural products available in the county include Tea, coffee, bananas, tomatoes, vegetables, dairy products, maize and sugarcane.

The findings from the study indicate that the County has a number of challenges that need to be addressed through proper strategic planning and implementation. The respondents confirmed that some of the challenges that are prevalent in the county include poor transportation network that hinders the transportation of produce to the market and this denies the farmers an opportunity to get competitive prices for their produce. It was also revealed that the county has health challenges since the infant and below five year mortality rates are very high translating to about 10% on average in both cases. It was also established that 51% of the population of the county lives below the poverty line. The respondents indicated that the strategic plans for the county need to focus more on poverty reduction strategies that will improve the incomes of the majority of the poor populations in the county.

4.3 Strategic Planning and Implementation Practices

The study reveals that the county has made significant steps towards the strategic planning process. Among the notable strategic planning activities that the county government has done is to conduct citizen surveys. The essence of the citizen surveys was to collect views and the situation as it were on the ground in order to determine the most immediate needs of the citizens in the county. This was aimed at assisting the county government to be able to come up with long and short term strategic plans for implementation purposes. The findings indicate that policy roundtable discussions were

also conducted in order to discuss various issues that needed to be addressed in the strategic plan for the county. The study further reveals that the county strategic plan was also given to civic leaders as well as professionals and academic and community leaders for scrutiny and review. The purpose of this undertaking was to enable the county involve its people in developing its strategic plan.

It was clear from the study that the Kisii County strategic plan is based on Kenya's Vision 2030. The strategic plan developed own content based on the vision. The respondents revealed that there are a number of issues that are covered under the Kisii County strategic plan. The plan clearly elaborates the county plans on social and economic transformation within the county; development of infrastructure to facilitate service delivery; provision of reliable energy in order to assist in the development of manufacturing sector in the county; to improve science and technology and innovation; to conduct land reforms in the county; to engage in the development of human resources and provision of efficient and effective public service; promotion of tourism activities in the county and promotion of manufacturing activities in the county in order to provide employment opportunities to many unemployed young people.

The researcher sought to find out from the respondents the role that is played by various stakeholders in the strategic planning and implementation process. It was clear from the findings that the County executive committee has the responsibility of implementing the County's strategic plan. The reason provided for this is because these people are the ones who coordinate the functions of the county government. The county assembly executive

committee is also charged with the responsibility of drafting various pieces of legislation in order to support the various activities. It was further confirmed that the electorate are the primary reason for the county strategic plan. The strategic plan should address the needs and concerns of the electorate. The respondents indicated that the content of various activities of the strategic plan is a clear reflection of the priorities of the electorate of Kisii County. The central government was also found to play a central role since it has to provide part of the resources for implementation of the county strategic plan.

The study confirms that the Kisii County strategic plan had to consider a number of environmental factors both in the external and the internal environment in coming up with its strategic plan. The county had to initially examine the internal environment in order to establish the strengths and weaknesses that are prevalent in the internal environment. The county strategic plan also took into account the political environment both within the county and at national level. Internally the County strategic plan established that generally the county is very stable politically and there are minimal political wrangles. This provides a conducive environment for implementation of the county strategic plan. However the respondents indicated that the stability of the political environment at the county is largely dependent on the national political environment.

The economic environment was also reviewed during the strategic planning process as can be established from the study findings. The county reviewed the various economic activities that are prevalent in the county and the level of poverty that currently stands at 51% of the total population of the county. The social and technological environments were also considered in the development of the county strategic plan. The respondents

indicated that some of the electorate is still rooted in the Kisii culture and traditions that are likely to hinder the achievement of some strategic objectives. It was also clear from the study that the technological environment was very important in developing the county.

The study findings established that there has not been any significant resistance to the strategic implementation process. However a few issues are common such as the debates by the county assembly to decide and approve the county budget that also includes funds for the implementation of the strategic plan. The only perceived resistance currently is likely to emanate from the county assembly since all the issues regarding the county must be deliberated at the county assembly. The respondents also revealed that the other possible resistance on the implementation of the strategic plan may arise from the electorate since most of the electorate believes so much in clanism. This has however been addressed since the strategic plan has addressed the concerns of all the people in the county without any biasness.

The study has revealed that top on the list of the resources that are required for the implementation of the strategic plan is the financial resources. The respondents confirmed that the county has two sources of financial resources. The first source is from the allocations of the central government while the second source is from the revenue generated locally within the counties from various levies. The study revealed that the county is also at liberty to seek for donations or loans from other development partners in order to finance the activities that are in its strategic plan. The respondents also indicated that human resources are also very important in the implementation of the strategic plan. The county endeavors to recruit competent and qualified personnel in all sectors so as to

enhance proper implementation of the strategic plan. The study further reveals that some natural resources such as land are very critical in the implementation of some sections of the strategic plan. The respondents confirmed that Kisii County currently suffers from land severe land fragmentation that makes it difficult to acquire land for development projects.

It was evident from the study that the county has an elaborate plan on how the strategic planning and implementation process will be carried out. At the strategic planning level, the county ensures that the strategic plan is in tandem with its vision and mission. The county all ensure that the strategic plan is integrated in such a way that the elements of the plan support each other. The respondents also confirmed that the county ensures that its strategic plan is balance in a way that it financial, customer, internal business process and learning goals are all balanced. At the implementation level, the study revealed that the county has quarterly reviews to establish the actual performance and compare the same with desired level of performance. It was also clear from the study that the county has clear performance indicators that have been developed to guide the implementation process.

The study also confirmed that at the strategic planning level, the county can brag of a very high degree of success since there is a strategic plan in place barely a year into the county system of governance. However the respondents indicated that it will be very soon to start evaluating the success or failure in the implementation of the strategic plan. Some of the reasons given by the respondents for this is that the county governments are yet to agree with the central government on allocation of funds. There are still concerns that the

current allocations cannot sustain the development projects that counties intend to initiate. It is also clear that some of the barriers to implementation of the strategic plan is the financial resources. The counties have limited revenue sources and yet the needs of the people are very many. The other challenge is the huge debt burden that counties inherited from the local authorities and this is a daunting task to most of them. The study also revealed that there are challenges in revenue collection due to the use of manual means of collecting revenue. There is need to use information technology in revenue collection in order to enable the county to raise enough money for implementation of its strategic plan.

Although there are financial challenges that hinder the effective implementation of the county strategic plan, the county administration has in place a plan of ensuring that revenue collection is enhanced in order to raise enough funds to assist in alleviating the financial crisis. It was also evident from the findings that the county is also focusing on ways through which it can partner with some development partners in order to finance part of the activities in the strategic plan.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that Kisii County has a strategic plan that is based on the Vision 2030 strategic plan of the country. The strategic plan draws much of its content from the Vision 2030 that aims at developing Kenya into a middle income economy by the year 2030. This is in line with Hough et al (2008) who assert that that a company's strategy is management's action plan for running the business and conducting its operations. They

see strategy as being all about how management intends to grow the business, how it will build a loyal clientele. Hence the Kisii County Strategic plan is the County's plan on how they are going to run the various activities in the County.

It was also evident from the findings of the study that the County involves all stakeholders in the development of the strategic plan. Among the Key stakeholders that are involved in the development of the strategic plan are the electorate. The County government ensured that the views of the electorate were factored into the development of the County strategic plan. The main purpose of involving the stakeholders is to establish the current state of affairs in the County. This is in line with the findings of Ungerer et al. (2007) who suggest that the stages involved in strategy formulation are an evaluation of current position and an understanding of potential futures, the development of various options and choices, formulation of a robust strategy architecture and then implementation.

The study confirmed that the perceived source of challenges in implementing the County strategic plan is the availability of resources and wrangles in the County assembly if there will be any. The implementation of the County strategic plan depends largely on the revenue allocated by the central government and the revenue that will be collected locally at the County. This same view is held by Lynch (1997) who argues that this same view is also held by Lynch (1997) who argues that Resource constraints are apparent during strategic planning in public entities, in particular, those dependent on the government for funding. This is so partly because such entities are subject to political factors, making funds availability and allocation more difficult when compared to the private sector. In

some instances, political support might be lacking to fund strategic projects even though there could be demand from the community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of findings on the strategic planning and implementation practices in Kisii County, Kenya. The chapter also presents the conclusions that were made from the findings; the recommendations of the study based on the study findings and the suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study reveals that Kisii County is among the devolved government administrative units that were brought into existence due to the promulgation of the new constitution of the Republic of Kenya in the year 2010. The county has an approximate population of 1.5 million people of whom 51% live below the poverty line. The county has other challenges such as high infant and below five years mortality rate which stands at approximately 10%. The study revealed that these and other challenges facing the county can only be addressed using proper strategic planning in the county. It was evident that through proper strategic planning, the county can be able to get solutions to most of these challenges.

It was established that the county has made great strides in the strategic planning and implementation process. Citizen surveys have been conducted in order to assist the county to understand the immediate needs of the citizens. The county also involved experts and academicians in the strategic planning process where they were required to give their views and ideas. It is also evident that the county draws its content from the

Kenya Vision 2030 objectives that are meant to transform the country into a middle level economy by the year 2030. The study confirmed that the county strategic plan highlights issues such as social and economic transformation within the county; development of infrastructure to facilitate service delivery; provision of reliable energy in order to assist in the development of manufacturing sector in the county; to improve science and technology and innovation; to conduct land reforms in the county; to engage in the development of human resources and provision of efficient and effective public service; promotion of tourism activities in the county and promotion of manufacturing activities in the county in order to provide employment opportunities to many unemployed young people.

It was also clear from the findings that the various stakeholders in the county play a significant role in the strategic planning and implementation process. The electorate for instance is the source of the information and activities in the strategic plan; the central government provides much of the funds that will be used to implement the strategic plan; the county executive committee is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the strategic plan is efficiently and effectively implemented. It was also established that the county assessed the internal and external environment before embarking on the strategic planning processes. This process as revealed by the study assisted the county to establish the weaknesses and opportunities as well as threats that are facing it.

It was clear from the study that the main resources that are required in the strategic planning and implementation process are the financial and human resources. The

financial resources are provided partly by the central government and partly by the county government through the revenue collected from within the county. The study also revealed that there are a number of challenges that affect the strategic planning and implementation process. The first among these challenges is lack of finances to implement the strategic plan. The study revealed that the county is constrained financially and it is a big challenge to implement some of the activities outlined in their strategic plan. On evaluation of the success of strategic planning and implementation, the study revealed that it may be too earlier to start talking of success or failure since the county government is hardly a year old.

5.3 Conclusions

Kisii County has a number of challenges that can be solved through proper strategic planning. The County has a well stated vision and mission that focus on the country's vision 2030. Stakeholders such as the electorate, the county executive, professional and civic leaders are involved in the strategic planning and implementation process. It is also clear that financial and human resources are the main resources that are required in the implementation of the strategic plan. The main challenge in strategic planning and implementation financial constraints.

5.4 Recommendations

The study has established that financial constraint is the main challenge that faces the strategic planning and implementation process at Kisii County. It will be important for the county government to look for ways of strengthening its financial base in order to avoid challenges of this nature.

The study has revealed that the county is barely a year old hence the difficult in ascertaining whether there is success in strategy implementation. It will be important from the county to closely monitor its implementation process so as to get things right from the beginning.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Time was a major limitation in this study. The researcher did not have a lot of time to conduct a survey of all the 47 Counties in the country and this is the reason why he considered conducting a case study of Kisii County alone in order to beat the time constraint.

If the researcher sought to conduct a census of the 47 counties in the country, the resources required could be enormous. The researcher did not have access to such enormous financial resources thus the reason why singling out Kisii County was necessary.

These findings are relevant to strategic planning and implementation practices in Kisii County only. The other Counties have their own different strategic planning and implementation practices.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This study should be carried out in form of a countrywide survey that involves other counties. This will assist in establishing the strategic planning and implementation practices among the County governments in Kenya.

The County government concept is relatively new in Kenya. There is need for a comparative study to be carried out with a country that has a devolved government that has been successful over a long duration in order to establish best practices in strategic planning and implementation.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

Instructions

This interview guide is designed to collect data that will help in better understanding the strategic planning and implementation practices at Kisii county government in Kenya. The data provided by this interview guide will be treated in strict confidence.

1. Kindly give a brief outline of the Kisii County Strategic plan including the period it covers.
2. Who are the main stakeholders in the strategic planning and implementation process?
3. What role does each of the stakeholders play in the strategic planning and implementation in Kisii County?
4. How does the environment affect the strategic planning and implementation at the County?
5. What is the role of the electorate in strategic planning and implementation?
6. How receptive are the stakeholders on the County strategic plans and implementation process?
7. What are the roles of the central and county governments in the strategic planning and implementation process?
8. What form of resistance is experienced in the strategic planning and implementation?
9. What resources are critical in the strategic planning and implementation process?
10. How does the county evaluate the strategic planning and implementation process?
11. In your opinion how successful is the county in strategic planning and implementation?
12. What are the main barriers to effective strategic planning and implementation in the County?
13. How does the County government address the existing challenges?