



Mt. Marsabit, Kenya: An Assessment of the Governance System

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A Governance Assessment Framework for
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Executive Summary

Mt. Marsabit is an ecosystem of vital importance for tens of thousands of people in Marsabit County in Kenya. It is, among other things, a “water tower”—a source of runoff and groundwater not only on the mountain for more than one hundred kilometres around. This assessment of governance for the Mt. Marsabit ecosystem focused on the system that existed *prior* to the new Kenyan constitution and the devolved County system of government coming into effect. Data gathering included semi-structured interviews with key informants, one focus group with pastoralist elders, and one workshop. Transcriptions of these interviews and group sessions were analysed using the qualitative analysis software NVivo and the governance assessment framework for landscape-level ecosystem-based management developed by this project.

The governance system had at its centre what could be called a “technical approach” to coordination based on District level committees such as the District Steering Group (DSG), the District Environment Committee (DEC) and District Security Committee (DSC). As well as these forums, key actors in the governance system included the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP), National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), the Provincial Administration, including the District Commissioner and Chiefs, traditional institutions including elders and clan councils such as Rendille *Naabo* and Gabra *Yaa*, Environmental Management Committees (EMCs), Ward Councillors, and the Marsabit Environmental Conservation Group. The assessment found that the governance system’s “technical approach” to coordination based on District level committees such as the DEC and DSC has been quite efficient and has been very effective at sharing information and achieving coordination amongst government departments. In addition, the involvement of the Provincial Administration, notably the District Commissioner supported by the District Security Committee, allowed space for political considerations related to the interests and desires of local residents to enter into important decisions. It seems to have also resulted in at least some consideration being given to the array of needs and interests and in relatively a balanced approach to resolving trade-offs such as between livestock owners’ interest in having access to water and forage resources during droughts and the need for protection of the forest ecosystem.

However, the governance system had problems of “fit”, with the overall governance system having little in the way of organizations or institutions whose mandate and focus were explicitly at a level corresponding to Mt. Marsabit. As a result there was somewhat of a governance vacuum at this level. Institutional linkages, while strong amongst government departments through the district-level committees, only very weakly connected other kinds of important actors to key decision-making processes. Those parts of the governance system for which legitimacy and accountability were strongest were only weakly connected to the key coordinating bodies and to the parts of the governance system having the strongest ability to mobilize resources. These factors, together with very prominent place in that system of staff of

government departments—which sometimes resulted in loss of continuity owing to staff turnover—combined to create a situation in which learning, the promotion of local leadership, mobilization of resources, and the direction setting function of governance all suffered. Ultimately, the ability of the governance system to initiate and implement concerted action toward management of the ecosystem was wholly inadequate.

It is recommended:

- That EMCs be strengthened, including perhaps through County legislation officially recognizing them and their mandate;
- That if a Community Forest Association is to be developed it should relate to, but not take over, the role of the EMCs;
- That further effort be directed toward facilitating communities to form Water Resource Users Associations, albeit with careful attention to given to avoid burdening communities with duplication of administrative procedures and to the possible relationship between Water Resource Users Associations and the EMCs;
- That in the creation of forums, committees or other coordination bodies, not to focus all efforts at County level but rather put more effort into coordination at lower levels, such as by forming a Mt. Marsabit Natural Resource Management Forum; and
- To develop, and provide sufficient resources for, a participatory planning process for Mt. Marsabit, integrating forest management planning by KFS, the development of a management plan by the Community Forest Association (CFA), and also planning by county government for community lands.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALRMP	Arid Lands Resource Management Project
CFA	Community forest Association
DEC	District Environment Committee
DSC	District Security Committee
DSG	District Steering Group
EMC	Environmental Management Committee
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
MECOG	Marsabit Environmental Conservation Group
NEMA	National Environmental Management Authority

1 Introduction

Mt. Marsabit is an ecosystem of vital importance for tens of thousands of people in Marsabit County in Kenya. A massive shield volcano covering an area of thousands of square kilometres and reaching to an elevation of 1707 metres, it has a climate very different than the lowlands surrounding it. The mountain receives a mean annual rainfall of approximately 800 mm., as compared to less than 300 mm. in parts of the nearby lowlands, and plays a critical role in hydrology far beyond the mountain itself. Mt. Marsabit, in other words, is a “water tower”—a source of runoff and groundwater as far away as the Chalbi desert. However, Marsabit seems to have been suffering from an unsustainable rate of deforestation and, related to this, progressive degradation of water resources. If the trend of degradation continues, severe impacts for both human beings and wildlife can be expected.

Although there have not been governance mechanisms and procedures consciously designed with the explicit intention to deal with problems and challenges at the level of Mt. Marsabit, the mix of District and national government, traditional, and community governance mechanisms together have constituted what has been, in effect, the *governance system* for Mt. Marsabit. With the devolution entailed in Kenya’s new constitution¹, significant changes in governance can be expected. Aside from the implementation of the new constitution, other developments on the horizon include the creation of conservancies around some lower parts of the mountain and the likelihood that part of the current reserves will be designated as a National Park. National Park status will provide the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) with greater authority to prohibit people from entering the forest and making use of its resources. Access to these resources has been an important component in the livelihoods of some people: livestock owners, for example, often seek access to the water resources in the forest during drought emergencies. Depending on how the National Park is implemented and managed, impacts on livelihoods and especially on the capacity to cope with droughts could be great.

Our assessment of governance for the Mt. Marsabit ecosystem focused on the system that existed *prior* to the new constitution and the devolved County system of government coming into effect. The process of creating and adapting institutional structures to conform to the new Kenyan constitution is still underway, and we hope that this retrospective look at environmental governance as it was under the previous constitution will provide insights that stakeholders find useful as they chart a way forward.

¹ <http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ConstitutionofKenya2010New.doc>

2 Methods

Data collection for this research included eighteen semi-structured interviews with twenty-three key informants (some interviews were conducted with two respondents together), one focus group with pastoralist elders, and one workshop with a mix of stakeholders represented. Participants in the research were selected to represent a diversity of possible viewpoints, in particular taking care to ensure that different stakeholder groups and types of organizations, and both women and men, were represented. As tentative conclusions were formulated, attempts were made through further interactions with participants to find disconfirming opinions and evidence. The interviews and focus group were transcribed, and the workshop summarized, and the transcripts analysed using the qualitative analysis software NVivo. The basis of analysis was the governance assessment framework developed by this project. The framework includes eight descriptive questions and seventeen evaluative indicators, representing various dimensions of governance. The assessment framework document² describes the questions, indicators and scoring criteria in detail.

3 Description of the Social-Ecological System and the Governance System

3.1 *Mt. Marsabit as a Social-Ecological System*

On the mountain, an area of 1,552 km² is gazetted as a National Reserve and within that a smaller area, 157 km², is also designated as a Forest Reserve. Of course, wildlife migrations do not stop at the Reserve boundaries, and the ecosystem extends beyond Reserve boundaries and includes a substantial area of Community Land (formerly “Trust Land”) which falls under the management purview of local authorities. There have been a web of movements and relationships—wildlife migration, livestock movement, hydrological flows, and various types of resource harvesting by human beings—that tie together the Reserves and the Trust Land, and the forested areas and the non-forested areas. Relationships beyond the slopes of the mountain to the lowlands, while relevant, are weaker. Therefore, although “Mt. Marsabit” does not correspond precisely to any particular jurisdiction, treating Mt. Marsabit as a landscape-level social-ecological system for purposes of management, and for purposes of this assessment, is appropriate.

It is important to note that the Marsabit forest is a “mist forest”, receiving a significant portion of its moisture from condensation. The contribution of mist condensation to the water balance on the mountain has not been quantified but is certainly significant, giving the forest characteristics that one might not expect for an area receiving less than 1000 mm. of rainfall per year. Together, the precipitation

² Robinson, Lance W., Philip Dearden, Alejandra Orozco and Carleigh Randall. 2012. Framework for Assessing Governance for Landscape-Level Ecosystem-Based Management – Draft 2.2. [online] URL: <http://www.viu.ca/landscapelevel>.

and condensation received on the mountain provide water resources that are important to people and ecosystems not only on the mountain but also in the lowlands surrounding it. However, the Mt. Marsabit landscape ecosystem, the people who live within and near it, and the organizations and institutions tasked with management, planning and development together face a set of interrelated challenges. From 19,000 ha. in the 1980s, the forested area has declined to about 11,000 ha. currently³. Felling of trees for firewood, charcoal making and construction materials, conversion of forested areas to settlements and farms, and effects from livestock entering the forest have all played some role over recent decades. The resulting loss of forest cover has contributed to degradation of water resources, with some boreholes and springs drying up. This loss of forest is exacerbated by a vicious circle: as trees are removed there is less surface area for condensation from mist, which means less water entering the soil and the forest ecosystem, which in turn stresses the forest and hampers regrowth. Another factor may be the sinking of boreholes on the mountain, which is believed by some to be contributing to the degradation of water resources and ultimately to the gradual drying of the forest. Connected to these challenges are issues related to the growing human population on the mountain, sedentarization of pastoralists, poaching, banditry and inter-communal conflict, and unresolved questions around access to grazing, fuelwood, construction materials, and water resources for humans and for livestock. All of this takes place against a backdrop of poverty and climate change.

There are a number of different social groups, each with differing sets of interests, that could be identified as stakeholders, as well as various state and non-state actors that have some stake in what happens in the Mt. Marsabit ecosystem. Some of the most important ones are described in Table 1.

3.2 The Governance System for Mt. Marsabit

Within the overall governance system there has been little in the way of organizations or institutions whose mandate and focus are explicitly at a level corresponding to Mt. Marsabit. Some of the key actors have had a primary focus at a level smaller than the Mt. Marsabit landscape ecosystem as a whole. Environmental Management Committees (EMCs), for example, are community-based organizations that work at community and Location level. In addition, with the two types of protected area designations—the National Reserve and the Forest Reserve—comes the involvement of two different government agencies: the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Although these two agencies are concerned with forest and wildlife resources generally, they have a primary focus on the gazetted protected areas. Other actors and forums of actors had a focus at a level larger than Mt. Marsabit, specifically at the level of Marsabit *District*: for example, the County Council and forums such as the District Environment Committee.

³ Oroda, A. 2011. The Impact of Increased Population and Sedentarization of the Pastoral Communities on the Land Cover and the Resources of Mount Marsabit Forest and the Surrounding Lands. Unpublished MES dissertation, Kenyatta University, Nairobi

In the pre-devolution governance system, only two entities had a focus specifically at the Mt. Marsabit level. However, one was a Community Forest Association that, at the time of the research, had gone through some of the formal procedures for its formation, but had not yet become active. The other has been the Marsabit Environmental Conservation Group (MECOG), an organization which exists essentially to implement a single project aimed at promoting protection and regeneration of the Marsabit forest, particularly by providing water points for livestock on the lower slopes of the mountain away from the forest. In short, the governance system was made up of a variety of organizations and forums, almost none of which focused explicitly at the level of Mt. Marsabit (see Table 2).

The governance system had at its centre what could be called a “technical approach” to coordination based on District level committees such as the DSG, the DEC and DSC

Table 1: Stakeholders and Their Interests

	Group/Organization	Primary Interest/Mandate
Social Stakeholder Groups	Livestock owners living on the mountain	Access to regular grazing and water
	Pastoralists living in the lowlands	Access to water during droughts. Occasional access to grazing.
	Commercial firewood collectors and charcoal makers (many of whom are poor women with few other livelihood options)	Access to fuelwood
	Agriculturalists and agropastoralists	Access to land for cultivation
	Community members generally	Livelihoods, including natural resource based livelihoods
Government Stakeholders	County Council	Various
	KFS	Forest conservation and production
	KWS	Wildlife and ecosystem conservation
	ALRMP ⁴	Food security and drought preparedness
	NEMA	General environmental protection and management
	Provincial Administration	Many, including security
	Other government departments	Various
Non-State Actors	EMCs	Natural resources management at community level
	MECOG	Forest protection and regeneration, including through development of water resources
	Other NGOs	Various

⁴ The final phase of ALRMP has now been wrapped up, with many of its functions having been taken up by the newly created National Drought Management Authority.

Table 2: Key Actors and the Level at which They Operate

Level	Actor
Marsabit District	ALRMP, NEMA, DSG, DEC, DSC, County Council
Mt. Marsabit	MECOG
Forest Reserve/ National Reserve	KFS, KWS
Location	EMCs
Community	

made up of government officers from various agencies and departments. Depending on the particular committee, community representatives and NGOs might also be included.

Among the most relevant decision-making bodies and other forums and categories of actors in the governance system prior to 2013 were the following⁵.

GOVERNMENT ACTORS

- KFS
- KWS
- ALRMP
- NEMA
- The Provincial Administration, including the District Commissioner and Chiefs

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES AND FORUMS

- The District Steering Group
- The District Environment Committee
- The District Security Committee

TRADITIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTORS

- Traditional institutions (elders, clan councils such as the Rendille *Naabo* and *Gabra Yaa*)
- Environmental Management Committees

⁵ This is not meant to be a comprehensive list of relevant stakeholders. Rather it lists the actors and forums most directly relevant to environmental management and protection at the level of the Mt. Marsabit landscape ecosystem.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

- Ward councillors

CIVIL SOCIETY

- NGOs
- MECOG

Some of the most important collective decisions that are made for the Mt. Marsabit landscape ecosystem relate to emergency access to the forest for livestock, determining funding priorities, land use and allocation, and regulations on resource use (see Table 3).

Table 3: Key Decisions and Decision-Takers

Decision	Main Decision-Takers
Emergency access to the forest for livestock	District Commissioner and District Security Committee
Funding priorities	Various, but with only a limited or indirect role for community actors
Land use/allocation	National government (National Reserve and Forest Reserve), County Council (elsewhere)
Regulations on resource use	KFS and KWS (National Reserve and Forest Reserve), EMCs (Locations)

4 Assessment of the Governance System

4.1 Deliberation

Evaluative Indicator No. I-1, asks to what extent there is deliberation among stakeholders and decision-makers on important issues. Deliberation is a process in which people "confer, ponder, exchange views, consider evidence, reflect on matters of mutual interest, negotiate, and attempt to persuade each other"⁶.

Deliberation took place in various forums, including within the EMCs and within the technical District-level forums such as the District Environment Committee and the District Security Committee. One respondent suggested that the existence of the EMCs has led to more deliberation taking place overall in that agencies such as KFS, if they have some issue, bring it to the EMCs for discussion. As for the District-level technical forums, however, their focus is sometimes quite narrow and their agendas quite full—often they were primarily directed to sharing information, not deliberating on problems and possible solutions. The low frequency of meetings of some of these forums also limited the amount of deliberation that could happen.

⁶ National Research Council. 1996. *Understanding Risk: Informing Decisions in a Democratic Society*. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., p. 73.

One of the main venues where deliberation has taken place relates to when a new project is being planned—the implementing agency will convene workshops or some other kind of forum to bring participants together to discuss and plan for the project. However, that kind of deliberation is not institutionalized into regular decision-making processes. For instance, in a workshop conducted for this assessment, a breakout group of personnel from NGOs and other non-state actors, reported “Deliberation [is] done in cocoons—not regular”.

4.2 Resources

Evaluative Indicator No. I-2 assesses the ability of the system to generate three types of resources: financial resources, human resources and political resources.

Respondents interviewed in this research were nearly unanimous in identifying the lack of political, human and especially financial resources as a problem. Support from political leaders was mixed at best. With human resources, the problem related not so much to insufficient technical capacity as to sheer staff numbers, such as guard staff for the KWS and KFS.

One of the impacts of the shortage of resources was reduced capacity for enforcement. Guard staff for KWS and KFS have been inadequate. This is compensated, although in an incomplete way, by the capacity of the EMCs. As would be expected from a community-based approach, the ways that EMCs engage in enforcement relies on their personal acquaintance with individual resource users, their legitimacy in the eyes of community members, and as much through use of social pressure as through more conventional enforcement approaches. The capacity of the EMCs cannot, however, compensate for resources needed for the heart of the forest. That being said, EMCs are poorly resourced, particularly in terms of financial resources. Some EMC members, moreover, feel that they lack full authority to manage the resource.

Lack of financial resources was also felt in terms of coordination, and this has been one of the reasons for the inability of the Community Forest Association to get on its feet. Overall, the ability of the governance system to generate resources for key governance activities such as coordination and planning has usually been insufficient.

Deliberation

“As much as the DSG and other bodies deal with things, they deal with general things: every issue in the district. NRM is brought up ‘by the way’. The DSG is in place for informing, not discussing: ‘I’m calling you because I have this project’ – they share the information, and it ends there. These forums are there but they are only called when there’s an issue and someone wants to inform others about something, but they don’t meet to discuss issues.”

- An NGO staff

“Before, they [government departments/ officers] never sent their decisions to us for discussion. They never consulted. Now it's a bit better.”

- A community member

Resources

“KFS and KWS are a bit weak. An elephant dies, or someone kills some wildlife, you never hear about them arresting a poacher. The forest was destroyed. KFS has a problem. They have a problem. They just stay in one place and there are no patrols.”

- An EMC member

“No, there are not enough resources. They don’t have. The system has a lot of challenges. The Council itself didn’t have enough resources.... There are two governments now. If they would coordinate, that would be important. And the issue of financing has to be addressed.”

- A former Ward Councillor

Q: Is there political will there and support from political leaders?

A: Not so much. Unless this devolved system comes in. But previously not so much political will. There wasn’t opposition, but there wasn’t political support either. You can hardly see an MP or a councillor saying something about the environment.... It is very difficult to see a politician talking about environmental governance.

- A government officer

4.3 Linkages

Evaluative Indicator No. I-3 assesses whether there are appropriate linkages among organizations and institutions, especially across levels. Interplay and linkages among organizations and institutions, both vertically across levels and horizontally within the same level, are critical factors in resilient social-ecological systems and environmental governance systems.

In the governance system, the technical forums for coordination such as the District Environment Committee and District Steering Group were quite effective at sharing information amongst government stakeholders and with NGOs. The connection of these forums to community actors however was weak,

for instance in the case of the District Environment Committee including a representative of EMCs. Having a single person to represent EMCs on the Committee, to bring information and views from them and take information and decisions back to them, was insufficient. A small handful of *representatives* or often a *single representative*, sitting on these committees, with no resources, cannot be expected to be effective liaisons to the multiplicity of community organizations and stakeholders. Elected representatives (e.g., Ward Councillors) were not well-connected to these technical forums. NGOs provide some connections to community-level actors but this is on an *ad hoc*, project-by-project basis.

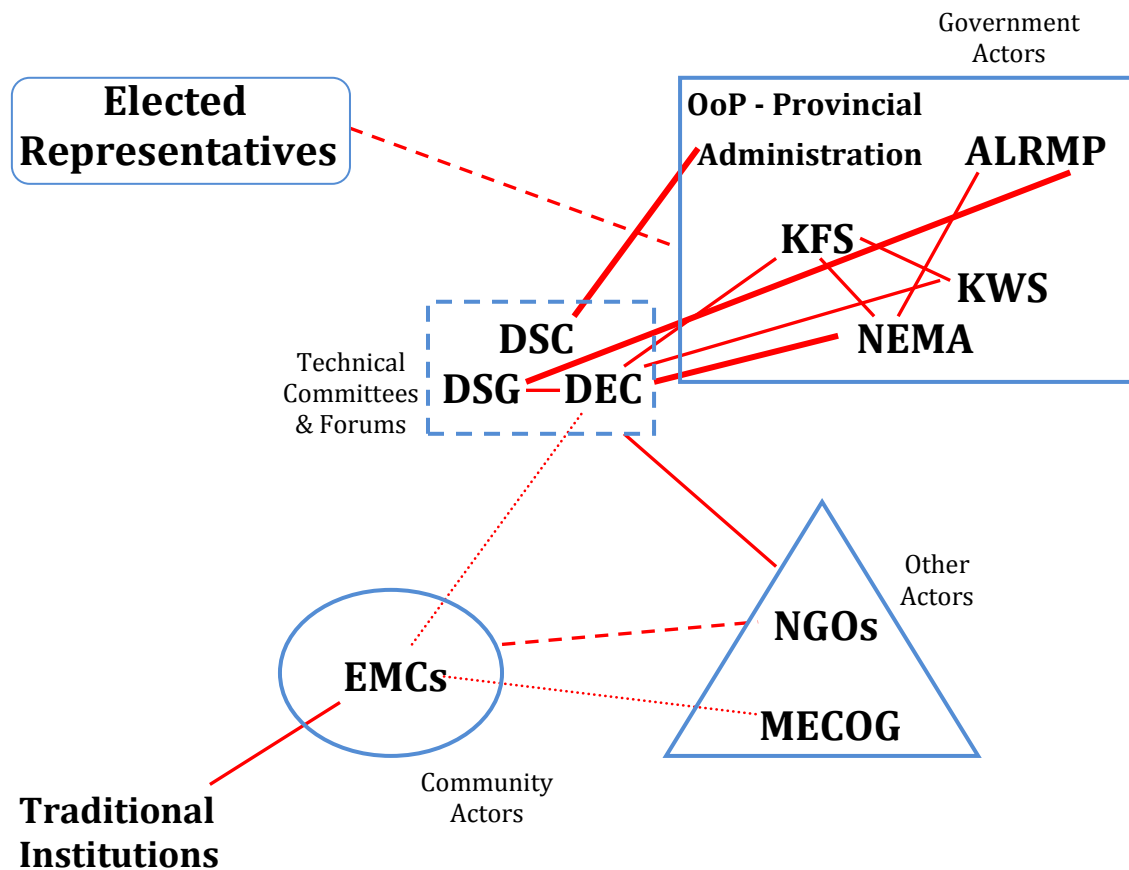
Another set of linkages which was important was between the EMCs and traditional institutions and has been a key aspect of the EMCs’ effectiveness. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the weakness of linkages to key formal sector agencies limits the capacity of the EMCs. Figure 1 depicts institutional and organizational linkages among some of the most important actors and categories of actors in the governance system.

4.4 Use of Knowledge

Evaluative Indicator No. I-4 refers to extent to which the governance system makes use of various sources of knowledge.

Informants interviewed for this assessment indicated that technical capacity is generally quite high. However, the mobilization of other kinds of knowledge for input into decision-making—traditional knowledge and new scientific research, for example—needs to be improved. Clear information on the state of the ecosystem has been lacking. In a workshop conducted for this assessment⁷, a breakout group of personnel from NGOs and other non-state actors, reported “No combinations of

Figure 1: Key Institutional Linkages in the Governance System



Note: The strength of each organizational/institutional linkage is shown by the weight of the red connecting line.

⁷ Held 29 August 2013 in Marsabit town.

different knowledge sources. Emphasis on only one source of knowledge, e.g., technical expertise.”

One positive case is the EMCs, a hybrid form of management linking the traditional and the modern. Insofar as government actors and others consult the EMCs, there is a possibility for traditional knowledge to flow through the EMCs to these other actors and decision-making which they are involved in. However, this use of traditional knowledge in decision-making is essentially passive. That is to say there are no formal or institutionalized mechanisms for traditional knowledge to inform decision-making beyond EMCs.

Use of Knowledge

“As for decision-makers seeking out knowledge, this does not happen. Decisions are made based on assumptions.”

- A workshop participant

4.5 Equity

Evaluative Indicator No. I-5 refers to whether or not the institutional rules embodied in the governance system are fair and take account of unequal circumstances in society, and assesses representation and inclusivity.

The statements of respondents in this research around issues of fairness, equity, inclusivity and public participation in decision-making were very consistent. The overall governance system performed very poorly. This is perhaps not surprising in that key forums at the centre of the governance system and playing an important role in linking different actors and achieving integration across sectors were technical cross-sectoral committees—the DSG, DEC, and District Security Committee—rather than representative forums. Where the equity of the governance system was weakest was in the representation and voice that it provided, or did not provide, for poor and vulnerable groups: women generally, but also particular groups such as firewood collectors and charcoal vendors who have little opportunity or scope to participate in decision-making on a level playing field.

Equity

Q: What was the biggest weakness of the governance system as it was?

A: Poor policy formulation. Public participation. There was lack of public participation.

- A former Ward Councillor

“[The governance system] is not fair for livestock owners. It is also not fair for women. If strengthened, community-based organizations would allow for more fairness and equity.”

- A workshop participant

Traditional institutions play some role in the governance system, and as discussed in Section 5, incorporated them better into the governance system presents an important opportunity. However, traditional governance also has important

weaknesses in terms of equity, by curtailing the role of certain clans and excluding women from collective decision-making.

4.6 Responsiveness

Evaluative Indicator No. I-6 asks whether the governance system shows a response to society and the concerns and issues raised by people and communities.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of EMCs to the responsiveness of the governance system. At a very local level, this responsiveness can be seen in the way in which EMCs are able to consider individual circumstances. One respondent gave the example of people facing some crisis, such as having had their house burn down, coming to the EMC to seek extraordinary permission to collect firewood to sell. As

Responsiveness

“When they [the national government] were serious, it was only on matters of food security. Drought comes and people shout. Relief or other emergency issues. Or conflict. Only then will the national government come in.”

- Former Ward Councillor

Q: Do people feel that there is a place they can go to with their concerns and feel that they are listened to?

A: Now with the EMCs, yes. Before, nothing. If they meet a guard, they just take money. But now with the EMCs, yes.

- A community member

Q: Within this governance system, do you feel there is a place where you can take your concerns and issues to and you will be listened to?

A: The main players are the EMCs, KWS, and KFS. County Council does *nothing*. They just collect fees. If there is a problem, we meet locally, talk and make a decision and say, "Okay, run to the DC and tell him because of the drought we want to bring our livestock into the forest."

- An elder

another respondent explained that with the EMCs there is responsiveness, but “Before the EMCs, nothing.” At a higher level, the responsiveness of the governance system can be seen in the fact that when drought situations have been severe, livestock have been granted access to the forest. However, given that access to the forest is considered primarily as a security decision, the process can be somewhat ad hoc.

The responsiveness of the system to more vulnerable groups, such as firewood collectors, was worse. Responsiveness was also curtailed in that the key elements of coordination, information sharing and collaborative decision-making took place in technical forums such as the DEC and DSG where community actors were not well represented. Having important funds channelled through bodies such as the Community Development Trust Fund and MECOG rather than through *directly* accountable bodies such as the County Council also undermined responsiveness. Some respondents gave the example of the siting of certain water points, which seemed to have been done without

reference to community wishes.

4.7 Legitimacy

Evaluative Indicator No. I-7 refers to the extent to which there is support for the governance system among the various communities and stakeholder groups and the general public.

The level of legitimacy of the overall governance system is quite mixed. There are signs that the authority of mandated bodies such as KFS, KWS and NEMA is accepted, if not approved of, by community members insofar as they will often go through proper channels for access to resources. This kind of respect, however, is a begrudging one: KFS and KWS and the role they play, for the most part, are not looked upon highly by community members.

Traditional institutions, on the other hand, are generally seen as legitimate. The level of respect that EMCs enjoy, in part because of their connections to traditional institutions, is also quite high. For example, one respondent told of an incident that had happened just a few days earlier. A lorry from the County Council had travelled part way down the

mountain from Marsabit town to an area near one of the other settlements to collect firewood. It was stopped by EMC members. "Imagine!" the respondent said. "This is a lorry with a government logo on the side, from a higher level of the government than the EMC. But they stopped it and said, 'You didn't get permission from us to collect this firewood.'"

This is not to say that the EMCs face no challenges in having their plans and rules respected. Livestock owners from other locations, in some cases, will respect EMC management of resources, in other cases not. Another issue is the legal mandate for EMCs, which are not directly recognized in any kind of national legislation or regulations. Instead, EMCs are officially an

Legitimacy

"What we can say is that there was a lot of control in terms of harvesting forest products. Not only inside the Marsabit gazetted forest but even outside, because even today, I see communities of farmers if they want to cut their trees they always come here for authority. Meaning that there was that control before. They always come here to tell me, I have three or four trees I want to cut on my farm, and I have to give authority. Meaning there was that control. And that is very important when the communities realize that they need to seek authority when they are interfering with the environment or forest resources. Both outside and inside."

- The Zonal Manager for KFS

"You know, these communities respect the traditional leadership system. They respect that. Any idea that will be taken through their system, not another system, if the leaders are well-convinced, they are capable of convincing the people. Not the administrative leaders, but... elders. In any village there is an elder that if he says something they will follow. That will work well. But some of these systems are now eroding. If they can be supported it can be enforced. If enforced, it would work."

- An NGO staff member

extension of the District Environment Committee and hence are acting on behalf of NEMA. Some respondents suggested that this limited form of official legitimization of EMCs may also be playing a small role in preventing EMCs from being seen by community members as 100% legitimate.

Legitimacy – EMCs

“The EMCs and even been used in campaigning, politicians saying, if you elect me, this EMC won’t be stopping you anymore.”

- An EMC member

“I was on an EMC. I was alone, and people used to blame me. Now there are more EMCs and the blame is going to them. So they are becoming the enemies of the people.... And through the system, I feel the EMC bylaws should be put in the County Council.... if approved by the Council, people will accept.”

- A former EMC member

Q: So how, would you say, are the relations between the community – the various groups and their members and the community generally – and KWS and KFS?

A: after this idea of the ban of entering the forest, it is like we are wild animals or worse. We have no good relationships.

Q: And what about the Environmental Management Committees?

A: Good.

Q: So, are the Environmental Management Committees and rules they make and enforce, are they very well respected within the community?

A: Yeah, they are so much feared for the work that they do, because they manage the forest at our level. You can’t access the resources without them.

- A member of a fuelwood collectors group

4.8 Accountability

Evaluative Indicator No. I-8 assesses whether institutional patterns provide for accountability procedures.

As the governance system relevant to Mt. Marsabit is made up of various decision-making bodies, the degree of accountability is different in different parts of it. EMCs are structured with regular meetings of their members, and an annual general meeting every two years with election of members. The bylaws used by EMCs were determined through a participatory, public process for each EMC. Generally, community members are welcome to request time in EMC meetings to present issues and ask questions. While different EMCs may vary in regard to how scrupulously they follow these procedures, generally the EMCs have a reasonable level of accountability to the general public.

Ward councillors, in that they must face the electorate every five years, are directly accountable. In addition, a number of respondents complained how councillors and other politicians have been serving short-term interests, for example in allocating, or at least promising to allocate, land. While decision-making that serves short-term interests or ignores the need for environmental protection is not desirable, this can actually be understood as a sign of responsiveness and accountability. Of course, accountability should be more than an event that happens every five years, and the accountability of elected leaders in-between elections was less than ideal.

Elsewhere in the system, accountability seems to be weaker, much more indirect, or both. For example, while it was beyond the scope of this research to identify and assess levels of corruption, perceptions that KWS and KFS enforcement personnel routinely engage in corruption and are not fulfilling their duties are common. Moreover, these agencies are not directly accountable to the local population in the decisions that they make regarding access, management plans and so on.

Accountability

“Back in those days, if KWS saw any livestock they would go arrest the person. Nowadays, they’re not even bothered. It is a big burden on the EMCs who are not paid. No one pays for them. Those who earn their salaries for this are not working. So something should be done.”

- Chairperson of an EMC

“People are concerned with the forest but are not seriously fulfilling their duties. I’m talking about the KFS guys. There is corruption also. People take the forest as the property of the government.”

- A community member

It is also instructive to consider accountability in relation to decision-making and resources in the overall governance system. In that system, many key decisions were beyond the purview of any local actors, being made in Nairobi. In this kind of situation, having direct accountability to local residents is much more difficult. In addition, the parts of the governance system where accountability was highest was the part of the system where resources were lowest, and the parts of the system that had the best access to resources—such as NGOs, stand-alone projects such as the one being implemented by MECOG, and government agencies—was where accountability was weakest or the most indirect. This greatly curtailed the accountability of the overall governance system.

4.9 Clear Scope, Goals and Objectives

Evaluative Indicator No. I-9 assesses the extent to which decision-making bodies have clear goals and objectives.

Coordination bodies such as the DSG and DEC have relatively clear guidance themselves, and they help with information-sharing and guidance to government

Clear Scope, Goals and Objectives

Q: In regards to bodies like the DEC and DSG, have they provided useful guidance in the day-to-day decisions to different stakeholders?

A: Agree.... The link to the grassroots has not been strong but to some extent they have been trying.

- An NGO staff member

departments. However, insufficient work has been done on establishing common ground that extends beyond government actors or an agreed-upon plan that can provide guidance and objectives to other actors within the system. For instance there is no overarching forest management plan. In particular, coordination bodies

have not been able to provide clear guidance to community stakeholders.

4.10 Efficiency

Evaluative Indicator No. I-10 assesses efficiency of decision-making processes.

In response to questions around the time and resources needed for reaching decisions, respondents, including those who participated regularly in coordination forums such as the District Environment Committee, all indicated that decisions tended to be made quickly and efficiently. Urgent decisions such as during drought emergencies were made in a timely way. However, the same participants often mentioned that the problem comes with implementation of decisions and follow-through (see Section 4.2).

4.11 Fit

Evaluative Indicator No. I-11 assesses the extent to which the governance system fits the social-ecological system.

There were a few aspects of the governance system which were adapted reasonably well to the characteristics of the social-ecological system. Decisions about livestock access to the forest, for example, were made at District-level, which would seem appropriate. Having decisions on livestock access to the forest being made through the District Security Committee may have resulted in the decisions being somewhat ad hoc and open to political influences, and for some stakeholders was not an ideal decision-making arrangement; this arrangement was, however, able to allow for aspects of security, livelihoods and basic needs, and environmental protection to all be on the table for consideration. Also, an important aspect of the social environment in Marsabit is the traditional institutions, which enjoy a reasonable degree of legitimacy among the general population. Traditional institutions, while not fully integrated into the overall governance system, were at least connected to it, for example through their linkages to the EMCs, and this (limited) incorporation of traditional institutions is, therefore, a sign of at least some degree of *fit*.

On the whole, however, the governance system was not well adapted to the key social and economic characteristics. The distribution of authority, legitimacy, knowledge,

and resources across the governance system, and the relative weakness of organizational and institutional linkages, were such that coordinated action was sometimes difficult. Many important decisions were made at national level, far removed from local realities. While sharing of information and coordination were not completely lacking, the governance system was not able to bring focused attention and action to the landscape ecosystem level. Analysis and planning at local and ecosystem levels were thus curtailed. Some of the technical coordination committees had sub-committees, for example, at Division level, which in theory could have contributed to decision-making more adapted to local conditions. However, these sub-committees, where they met at all, were even weaker than the District-level committees to which they reported. The fact that EMCs had not been brought together for any kind of joint planning at Mt. Marsabit level or some other higher level was another lost opportunity. A couple of respondents mentioned the Community Forest Association as the organization that could, in theory, be important in bringing attention to decisions at the level of Mt. Marsabit, had it been functioning.

4.12 Learning Capacity

Evaluative Indicator No. I-12 assesses the extent to which the governance system promotes learning.

A key weakness in the learning capacity of the governance system related to the fact that the main functions around coordination and institutional linkages were done by technical committees where government officers played the central role. This left the system vulnerable to loss of knowledge every time a government staff member was transferred. Learning was not institutionalized and distributed through the system but was rather embodied in particular staff members. Continuity was therefore often interrupted.

Another critical factor in social learning is trust. Here was another weakness in the governance system in that trust among the various stakeholders was much less than it could have been, particularly between government departments and agencies on the one hand and community members and community organizations on the other. This hindered collaboration and mutual learning. However, according to many respondents the governance system in recent years was improving in some ways, with increasing trust across ethnic communities, and general improvement in community-level decision-making and environmental management. A few respondents commented on how the EMCs were helping to bring people together and improve things overall. Many complained, however, that coordination at the level of Mt. Marsabit and at District level was not improving but in fact was deteriorating.

And generally, there was a lack of follow up. One respondent described it this way: “Lessons are learned. But as I said, the vision gets lost along the way.”

4.13 Leadership

Evaluative Indicator No. I-13 assesses the extent to which the governance system makes room for the emergence of leadership of various kinds—visionary, entrepreneurial, and collaborative.

One issue here is that the weakness of institutional linkages, the scarcity of resources and the lack of continuity and follow-up combined to create a situation in which there was little support for community initiatives and any emerging leadership and innovation. Community-based organizations, such as EMCs, are created but then receive only minimal support. The central role of government officers in the governance system and the fact of staff transfers and turnover also meant that the positive role that can be played by energetic individuals in government positions is always susceptible to vanishing. For instance, many respondents made reference to a former District Environment Officer whose leadership was critical in getting the EMCs established on a sound footing. When he was transferred away from Marsabit he was not replaced immediately and then when he eventually was replaced the new officer was not able to “fill the shoes” of the previous officer⁸.

4.14 Resolving Tradeoffs

Evaluative Indicator No. I-14 assesses the extent to which the governance system has resolved tradeoffs—including tradeoffs among social, economic and environmental needs, and tradeoffs among different social groups—in a way that is equitable and fair, that is economically rational, and that protects the environment.

There was disagreement among stakeholders as to whether the environment was given *too much* weight or *not enough*. The evidence seems to suggest, however, that in decision-making various types of trade-offs and the need for balance were usually considered. For instance, pastoralists were able to have access to the forest but it was not unfettered access. Decision-making about this access included consideration of the need for environmental protection. However, the resolution of trade-offs seems to have happened on a decision-by-decision and case-by-case basis, rather than being based on a systematic and transparent process such as a transparent planning process for forest resources.

One group whose needs were not adequately addressed in the resolution of trade-offs was the poorest segment of the population with resource-dependent livelihoods: e.g., firewood collectors and charcoal producers.

4.15 Contributing to Just Power Relations

Evaluative Indicator No. I-15 assesses the extent to which the governance system has placed limits on the use of coercive power, and to which it has enhanced power as capacity.

Through its technical approach to coordination, when cross-sectoral coordination and sharing of information happened primarily within technical committees such as the DEC, community members, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, did not have a direct voice. The distribution of authority across a number of actors did help to limit the ability of any one powerful actor to influence decisions, but there was

⁸ This should not be construed as any criticism of new officer who came in—it is just that by all accounts the previous officer was exceptionally dynamic.

little in the governance system that can be said to have been empowering poor and vulnerable segments of the population.

4.16 Setting Direction

Evaluative Indicator No. I-16 assesses the extent to which governance has established a common vision or direction.

Some degree of forward looking planning was happening at Location level through the EMCs. At a landscape ecosystem level, the direction setting function was much weaker. Several respondents commented on the lack of visionary leaders. The loss of continuity that happens when key government officers are transferred has also affected the development and pursuit of any long term vision. However, the technical coordination committees that existed have at least helped to establish some common ground among those who participate, if not detailed visions or strategic plans.

4.17 Building Community

Evaluative Indicator No. I-17 assess the extent to which the governance system is helping stakeholders to identify, or create, shared values and shared identities.

The venues in which people are brought together for dialogue did create some few opportunities for dialogue. However, the extent to which this happened was restricted by limited resources. Perhaps one of the elements of the governance system that helped to bring different groups and communities together has been the EMCs, particularly in Locations that are not made up predominantly of a single ethnic group. Jaldesa EMC, for example, brings together Gabra and Borana communities. On a larger scale, however, an opportunity has been missed in that different EMCs

Building Community

“A woman who depends on firewood for her livelihood will always think what is the best way to use the resource, and a person who wants water and pasture will always think that way and will never compromise on what he or she needs from the forest. KFS thinks it should get the revenue. KWS thinks it should be protected completely. It will take time before they understand each other’s interests.”

- A government officer

“We haven’t been brought together as EMCs from different areas. We were brought on board but we have not been brought together.”

- An EMC chairperson

“... our work brings us together. The environment goes beyond Location boundaries. Forming these groups also has an impact.”

- An EMC chairperson

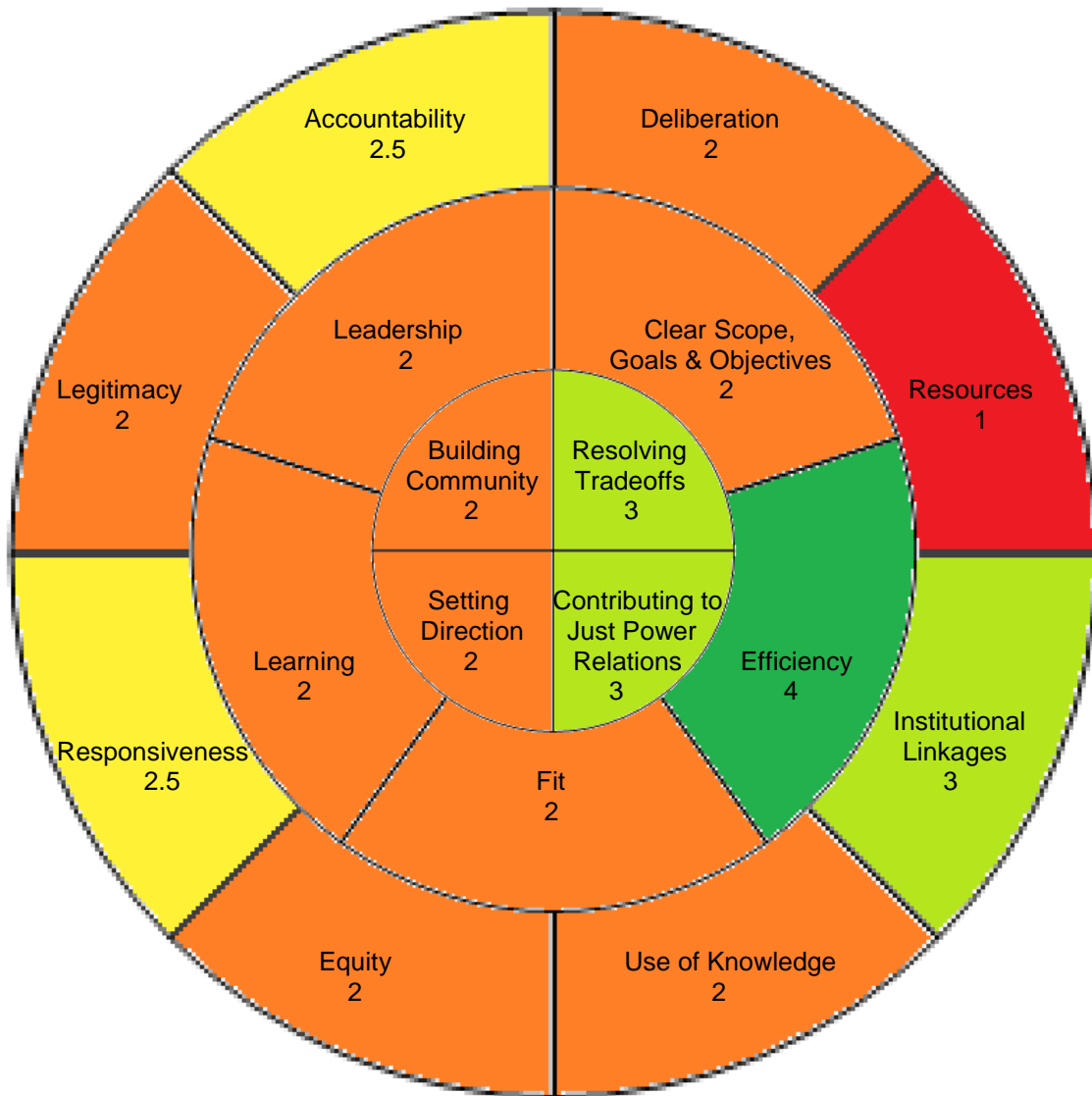
have not been brought together as had been hoped would happen with the creation of the Community Forest Association.

4.18 Overview

Table 4, summarizes the findings for the seventeen evaluative indicators, and gives a score from 1 to 4 for each. The scoring is based on the criteria described in Annex 1 such that each score is based on objectively meeting the particular criteria for that indicator, rather than being based on subjective perceptions such as “weak”, “very weak”, “strong”, etc.⁹ The scores are also summarized visually in Figure 2.

⁹ Nor should a score of 2.5 be assumed to be neutral or to correspond to a minimum acceptable level. See www.viu.ca/landscapelevel for a description of the assessment framework, including the approach used for scoring.

Figure 2: Summary of Indicator Scores



Colour coding for indicator scores

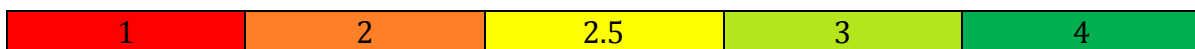


Table 4: Summary of Indicators Scores

Task	Questions/Indicators	Score	Explanation	
Assessment of Governance Processes	I-1. Deliberation	2	Deliberation did happen but was sporadic. Technical coordination forums often focused on sharing of information rather than analysis and dialogue. One of the main venues for deliberation has been workshops and other forums organized for the planning or launching of a new project, but this kind of deliberation is not institutionalized into regular decision-making processes.	
	I-2. Resources	1	Ability to generate financial resources has been poor. Human resources were insufficient, especially for enforcement. The capacity of EMCs has partly compensated for this, but they too have been poorly resourced. Overall the ability of the governance system is to generate resources for key governance activities such as coordination and planning was usually insufficient.	
	I-3. Institutional linkages	3	Strong linkages existed for coordination and sharing of information among government actors and NGOs. There was little in the way of different actors working at cross purposes. However, connections to community actors such as EMCs and to elected representatives, especially Ward Councillors, were weak.	
	I-4. Use of knowledge	2	The governance system made only sporadic use of different sources of knowledge. Some sources of knowledge—e.g., traditional knowledge and scientific research—were often ignored.	
	Fair Governance	I-5. Equity	2	While institutional rules are generally fair, the governance system had little provision to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population had representation and voice in collective decision-making.
		I-6. Responsiveness	2.5	There were several signs of responsiveness to the needs and wishes of various groups in the communities. Responsiveness was weakened by the fact that key elements of coordination, information sharing and collaborative decision-making take place in technical forums where community actors have not been well represented. Also responsiveness to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable groups was weak.
		I-7. Legitimacy	2	The legitimacy of the overall governance system was mixed. The roles KFS and KWS are acknowledged although often in a begrudging way. Legitimacy was strongest for traditional institutions and EMCs. However, these were not the central players in the governance system.
		I-8. Accountability	2.5	In the governance system, accountability was strongest for EMCs and elected representatives (Ward councillors). Elsewhere, it was weaker, more indirect, or both. Across the whole governance system, parts of the system that had the best access to resources had the lowest level of accountability and parts that had the worst access to resources had the strongest level of accountability. While there were channels of mechanisms of accountability, for parts of the governance system these channels and mechanisms could not be easily accessed by community members.

Task	Questions/Indicators	Score	Explanation	
Assessment of Governance Capacities	Effective Decision-Making	I-9. Clear scope, goals and objectives	2	Coordination bodies such as the DSG and DEC had relatively clear guidance themselves, and they helped with information-sharing and guidance to government departments. However, for the governance system as a whole, more work needs to be done. For instance, there is not a forest management plan or other resource management plan guiding all stakeholders around the mountain.
		I-10. Efficiency	4	Decisions in coordination forums such as the DEC were usually made quickly and efficiently. Urgent decisions such as during drought emergencies were timely.
		I-11. Fit	2	Some aspects of decision making were reasonably well adapted to local conditions. Decisions on live-stock access to the forest, for example, were made at a level that seems appropriate. On the whole, however, the governance system was not able to bring focused attention to matters at a Mt. Marsabit level.
	I-12. Learning capacity	2	The learning capacity of the governance system was undermined by loss of knowledge that occurred every time a government staff member was transferred. Trust between community members and key government actors such as KFS and KWS was minimal. In recent years, however, EMCs have been increasing trust at community and inter-community level.	
	I-13. Leadership	2	The governance system did not support the emergence of leadership in the system but neither did it undermine it. The fact that government officers played a central role in the governance system made the system vulnerable staff transfers.	
Assessment of Governance Outcomes	I-14. Resolving Tradeoffs	3	The economic, environmental and social trade-offs that are inherent in the decisions being made were considered. To a certain extent, however, this happened on a decision-by-decision basis rather than being based on a systematic and transparent process. The poorest and most vulnerable did not have their interests adequately represented in the resolution of trade-offs.	
	I-15. Contributing to just power relations	3	The governance system, through its technical approach to coordination and information sharing resulted in community members, especially the poorest, having little voice in decision-making. The distribution of authority across many actors helped to limit the role of coercive power; on the other hand, the governance system did little to empower the poorest and most marginalized people.	
	I-16. Setting Direction	2	The technical committees for coordination (e.g., DEC, DSG, etc.) helped to establish some common ground particularly among government departments, but not detailed shared visions or strategic plans. Collective planning at the landscape ecosystem (Mt. Marsabit) level has been almost completely absent.	
	I-17. Building Community	2	At Location level, EMCs have played some role in bringing communities together. At a landscape ecosystem (Mt. Marsabit) level, however, opportunities have been missed and the governance system has done little to build community and shared identities.	

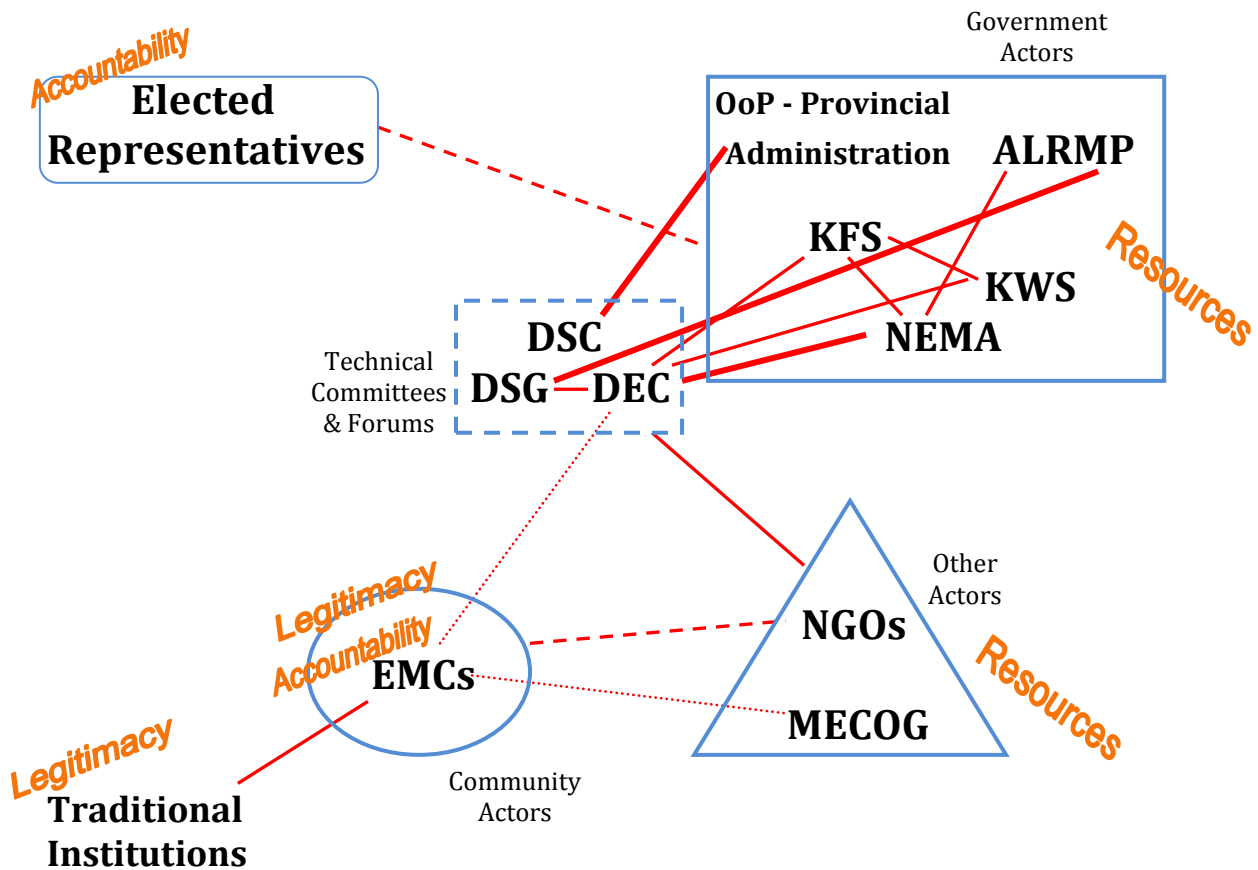
5 Discussion

For the purposes of this assessment it was determined that there are strong reasons for treating Mt. Marsabit as a whole as a landscape-level social-ecological system (see Section 3.1, above). From this it should not necessarily be concluded that there is a need for an overarching jurisdiction that corresponds to all of Mt. Marsabit including the National Reserve, the Forest Reserve, cultivated land, uncultivated community land, and all watersheds on the mountain. Even if only biophysical criteria are used, there are multiple, overlapping ways to identify and delineate ecosystems, and redrafting administrative boundaries and redistributing authority to correspond to every possible ecosystem or social-ecological system is not feasible. However, the wildlife, hydrological, social and economic relationships that make Mt. Marsabit a system are important and point to the need for at least some degree of cross-level and cross-sectoral coordination and planning for Mt. Marsabit. Under the pre-2013 governance system, there was somewhat of a governance vacuum at this level.

The governance system's "technical approach" to coordination based on District level committees such as the DEC and DSC had its strengths. It has been quite efficient and has been very effective at sharing information and achieving coordination amongst government departments. It is also important that in that system, the Provincial Administration, notably the District Commissioner supported by the District Security Committee, played an important role in relation to issues around access to the forest. This allowed space for political considerations related to the interests and desires of local residents to enter into important decisions. It seems also to have resulted in at least some consideration being given to the array of needs and interests and in relatively a balanced approach to resolving trade-offs such as between livestock owners' interest in having access to water and forage resources during droughts and the need for protection of the forest ecosystem. Whether the "right" balance was struck is a different question and is open to debate. What this assessment can conclude about how trade-offs were resolved is that none of the many stakeholders who participated in this research were happy with all of the outcomes of the governance system—given the diversity of stakeholders and of their values and interests, this may actually be a good thing.

However, the governance system did have several critical weaknesses. Staff of government departments have had a very prominent place, which leaves the system vulnerable to staff turnover. Another factor limiting the performance of the overall governance system relates to the weakness of the linkages that might have integrated key actors such as traditional institutions, EMCs and Ward councillors into a cohesive system. Those parts of the governance system for which legitimacy and accountability were strongest were only weakly connected to the key coordinating bodies and to the parts of the governance system having the strongest ability to mobilize resources (see Figure 3). These combined factors created a situation in which learning, the promotion of local leadership, mobilization of resources, and the direction setting function of governance all suffered. Ultimately, the ability of the governance system to initiate and implement concerted action toward management of the ecosystem was wholly inadequate.

Figure 3: Accountability, Legitimacy and Resources—the Disconnect



Note: The parts of the governance system where legitimacy and accountability were strongest—traditional institutions, EMCs, and elected representatives such as Ward Councillors, were not well connected to the parts with the strongest capacity for generating resources, or to the main bodies responsible for coordination, the District-level committees.

The ongoing implementation of the new constitution in Kenya creates a window of opportunity for improving governance in a way that better promotes ecosystem-based management. The structures that existed prior to 2013 should not be unthinkingly carried forward with just a change of name from *District Steering Group*, *District Environment Committee* and so on, to *County Steering Group*, *County Environment Committee*, etc. An assessment of this sort cannot state in any conclusive sense what policymakers and other stakeholders should do; however, if stakeholders are willing to consider making some adjustments, it is hoped that the recommendations offered here may prove useful.

Firstly, the EMCs in Marsabit are a strength that should be built upon. Any new initiatives that relate to environmental management should consider carefully how they relate to EMCs and avoid creating unnecessary duplication. For instance, for the conservancies that are being planned for Marsabit, the relationship to the EMCs needs to be thought through. The legal mandate of the EMCs also needs to be

strengthened. One approach to doing this would be for Marsabit County to pass legislation officially recognizing EMCs and describing their mandate.

One organizational structure that has been suggested for the Community Forest Association is that it either incorporate the EMCs or that the EMCs be transformed into the Community Forest Association. There lies a potential danger here in undoing something that is working quite well. If the Community Forest Association is to have an organizational structure that has EMCs as component parts, this could be extremely effective. But the CFA should not “take over” from the EMCs. In any relationship between the EMCs and the CFA, the EMCs should continue to exist and continue to carry out their current functions.

Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs – a structure for community-based water resources management created by the 2002 Water Act) have not been embraced by communities in Marsabit. If the Water Resources Management Authority could be properly resourced to help facilitate those communities interested in having WRUAs, this too could be an important part of the governance mix. WRUAs have the possibility of accessing funds through the Water Services Trust Fund – an opportunity that is currently being missed in Marsabit. Again, however, care must be taken to avoid duplication and burdening community members with excessive administrative procedures. As with the CFA, careful thought must be given to the relationship with EMCs.

More generally, there is a need to strengthen community level connections to key elements of decision-making and resource allocation. A system in which coordination is driven by government departments makes this very difficult. Therefore, while there may well be a need for some technical coordination committees to continue to exist, for the purposes of landscape-level ecosystem-based management, a different type of structure driven by communities and their elected representatives is needed. Creating an elaborate structure of forums at County level is not likely to be an effective or sustainable way of doing this. An example tried in the past was the Marsabit Natural Resources Forum. This District-level forum brought together stakeholders working on natural resource management issues. However, it lasted only a short time, fizzling once the NGOs that had been supporting it moved on to other initiatives.

Instead, it is recommended that where a need is identified and accepted by local stakeholders, that such forums being created at some kind of smaller scale such as at the level of Mt. Marsabit, as well as for other landscapes in various parts of the County. This kind of forum should be led not by NGOs or by departments or agencies of the national government, although these groups should certainly be involved. Rather it should be led by either County government, or even, if the capacity is sufficient, by the EMCs collectively. In order to avoid unnecessary complexity and duplication, the role of any County level forums or committees should be clear. Some of what District-level forums did, or were meant to do, under the previous governance system, could probably be better performed at a lower level by this kind of landscape ecosystem level forum.

A properly-resourced participatory planning process for Mt. Marsabit may fill many of the governance gaps that have been identified in this assessment. It could improve

the responsiveness of the governance system, help to bring communities together, involve community members better in decision-making and environmental management, and could conceivably mobilize all stakeholders toward much more effective and far-reaching efforts toward environmental management than the previous governance system was able to do. Such a planning process could bring together and integrate forest management planning by KFS, the development of a management plan by the CFA, and planning by county government for community lands. A “Mt. Marsabit Natural Resources Forum” would have a central coordinating role for this kind of planning process.

Annex 1 Governance Indicators—Criteria for Scoring

In the methodology used for this assessment, a governance system is evaluated on seventeen different dimensions of governance. In an attempt to make scoring as transparent and objective as possible, for each indicator a set of criteria describe for that indicator what would constitute a score of "1", "2", "3" or "4". The criteria are described in Table 5

The criteria and the methodology generally are described in greater detail in the assessment framework document available at www.viu.ca/landscapelevel.

Table 5: Scoring Criteria

Indicator	Criteria for a Score Of...			
	1	2	3	4
Assessment of Governance Processes				
I-1. Deliberation (The extent to which stakeholders and decision-makers engage in genuine deliberation on important issues.)	Many important kinds of decisions in the planning/ DM cycle are made without serious deliberation, exploration and dialogue amongst participants/stakeholders	Some deliberation on key decisions in the planning/ DM cycle takes place, but some of that deliberation is disconnected from where decisions are actually taken	Participants in the GS engage in profound deliberation, exploration and dialogue on problem definition, analysis, and alternative/competing perspectives, including at most major stages of the planning/ DM cycle	Participants in the GS engage in profound deliberation, exploration and dialogue on problem definition, analysis, and alternative/competing perspectives, including at all major stages of the planning/DM cycle
I-2. Resources (Ability to generate, and access of the GS to, financial, human and political resources)	The political, human and financial resources available to the GS to change rules or norms, to influence actions, and to solve problems is usually insufficient.	The political, human and financial resources available to the GS to change rules or norms, to influence actions, and to solve problems is sometimes insufficient.	The GS has political, human and financial resources available to it. However, it is limited ability to generate its own resources for changing rules and norms, influencing actions, and solving problems.	The GS has political, human and financial resources available to it. It is able to generate such resources for changing rules and norms, influencing actions, and solving problems.
I-3. Linkages (The presence of appropriate linkages among organizations and institutions, especially across levels.)	The flow of resources and information and the sharing of knowledge with other organizations and institutions is minimal and ad hoc. The GS and <i>other</i> DM bodies often work at cross purposes.	There are linkages within the GS and to organizations and institutions beyond the GS such that the flow of resources and information and the sharing of knowledge are sometimes facilitated. The GS is sometimes able to use its linkages to other DM venues to avoid different DM making bodies working at cross purposes.	There are linkages within the GS and to organizations and institutions beyond the GS such that the flow of resources and information and the sharing of knowledge are sometimes facilitated. The GS is usually able to use its linkages to other DM venues to avoid different DM making bodies working at cross purposes.	There are linkages within the GS and to organizations and institutions beyond the GS such that the flow of resources and information and the sharing of knowledge are all facilitated. Some such linkages are institutionalized. The GS is able to develop new linkages when necessary. Linkages are helping to facilitate coordinated action.
I-4. Use of knowledge (The extent to which the governance system makes use of various sources of knowledge)	The way in which the GS accesses and uses knowledge is minimal and ad hoc. Some sources of knowledge are usually ignored.	The GS makes only sporadic use of different sources of knowledge. Some sources of knowledge are often ignored.	The GS often makes use of various sources of knowledge. However, some sources of knowledge are not accessed or made use of in any systematic way.	The GS regularly and systematically accesses and makes use of diverse sources of knowledge

Fair Governance	I-5. Equity (Whether or not institutional rules are fair and take account of unequal circumstances in society)	Institutional rules favour some stakeholders or communities over others and perpetuate unequal circumstances that already exist in society.	Institutional rules are fair for most stakeholders, communities and sub-groups. However, no explicit allowance has been made or provisions put in place, for the unequal circumstances of some of these groups.	Institutional rules are fair for most stakeholders, communities and sub-groups, and have made allowance in modest ways, for the unequal circumstances of some of these groups.	Institutional rules are fair for all stakeholders, communities and sub-groups, and have provisions that take account of the unequal circumstances of some of these groups.
	I-6. Responsiveness (Whether or not institutional patterns show response to society)	The GS shows no response to the needs of society or wishes of local communities and stakeholder groups. These needs, wishes, objectives and concerns are essentially ignored.	The GS responds to the needs of society and to the wishes of local communities and stakeholder groups some of the time.	The GS responds to the needs of society and to the wishes of local communities and stakeholder groups most of the time.	Procedures and mechanisms are in place and are followed to ensure that the GS consistently responds to the needs, wishes, objectives and concerns of local communities, stakeholder groups and society generally.
	I-7. Legitimacy (Whether there is public support for the institutions of the GS)	There are strong misgivings about the institutions of the GS among more than one of the various communities, stakeholder groups or segments of the general public. The institutions are not seen as legitimate.	One or more of the communities, stakeholder groups or segments of the general public have some misgivings about the institutions of the GS.	There is support for the institutions of the GS among most of the various communities and stakeholder groups, and from general public. Few if any of these groups have more than minor misgivings about the legitimacy of the institutions.	There is general and strong support for the institutions of the GS among all the various communities and stakeholder groups, and from general public. The institutions are seen as legitimate.
	I-8. Accountability (Whether or not institutional patterns provide accountability procedures)	Responsibilities are not clearly assigned. Mechanisms are not in place to hold DM bodies and the persons serving on those bodies accountable.	For the most part, responsibilities are clearly assigned. Mechanisms to hold DM bodies and the persons serving on those bodies accountable are limited and implemented inconsistently.	Responsibilities are clearly assigned. Mechanisms are in place to hold DM bodies and the persons serving on those bodies accountable. Citizens and other organizations to which DM bodies are accountable make use of those mechanisms most of the time.	Responsibilities are clearly assigned. Mechanisms are in place to hold DM bodies and the persons serving on those bodies accountable. Citizens and other organizations to which DM bodies are accountable consistently make use of those mechanisms.

Assessment of Governance Capacities					
Effective Decision-Making	I-9. Clear scope, goals, and objectives	Scope, goals and objectives for DM bodies in the GS are not clearly defined. DM bodies are left without broader principles to guide strategic and day-to-day decisions.	Scope, goals and objectives have been articulated but in a limited way with insufficient detail to guide strategic and day-to-day decisions.	Scope, goals and objectives have been articulated for DM bodies in the GS. There is enough clarity in these to provide some guidance for both strategic and day-to-day decisions.	DM bodies in the GS have clearly articulated goals and objectives which are brought to bear on strategic and day-to-day decisions. The scope is clearly defined, providing guidance as to what issues should be addressed and what issues can be left for others.
	I-10. Efficiency (of DM processes themselves.)	Reaching decisions typically takes a great deal of time and/or resources, even when the issue is urgent.	Reaching decisions sometimes takes a great deal of time and/or resources, even when the issue is urgent. The level of resources spent on reaching decisions can be high even for decisions of lower levels of importance.	The GS is usually able to produce urgent decisions in a timely way when necessary. The level of resources spent on reaching decisions is usually proportionate to the importance of the decision.	The GS is able to produce urgent decisions in a timely way when necessary. The level of resources spent on reaching decisions is proportionate to the importance of the decision.
	I-11. Fit (The extent to which the GS fits the social-ecological system)	Because of inappropriate governance design or distribution of authority there is a mismatch between DM processes and the temporal and/or spatial scale of problems. The GS does not have the scope to make decisions tailored to the unique characteristics of the social-ecological system.	The design of the GS and distribution of authority to and within it are such that it has scope for making only some kinds of decisions tailored to the unique characteristics of the landscape-level social-ecological system. Its DM processes are constrained from addressing some issues at the appropriate time scale or geographic scale.	The design of the GS and distribution of authority to and within it are such that it has scope for making appropriate decisions tailored to most of the unique characteristics of the landscape-level social-ecological system. DM processes are able to address issues at the appropriate time scale and geographic scale most of the time.	The design of the GS and distribution of authority to and within it are such that it has scope for making appropriate decisions tailored to the unique characteristics of the landscape-level social-ecological system. DM processes are able to address issues at the appropriate time scale and geographic scale.

I-12. Learning capacity (The extent to which the GS promotes learning)	The GS has not helped to build trust amongst stakeholders and shows little signs of learning from past experiences. There are defensive routines that inhibit experimentation, consideration of doubt and questioning assumptions. Institutional memory is minimal.	The GS has taken some steps to build trust amongst stakeholders. It shows modest ability to learn from past experiences and improve routines.	The GS has helped to build up trust amongst stakeholders. It shows a strong ability to learn from past experiences and improve routines. However, DM and deliberation processes do not systematically consider doubts and uncertainties, and there is little evidence of changes in the assumptions underlying institutional patterns. Learning is only partially entrenched in institutional memory.	The GS has helped to build trust amongst stakeholders. It shows an openness toward uncertainties, an ability to learn from past experiences and improve routines. There is evidence of changes in the assumptions underlying institutional patterns. Learning is entrenched in institutional memory.
I-13. Leadership (The extent to which the GS makes room for the emergence of leadership of various kinds—visionary, entrepreneurial, and collaborative)	The GS undermines the emergence of any kind of leadership other than coercive leadership.	Neutral. On the whole, the governance system neither undermines nor supports the emergence of leadership.	The GS give modest support to the emergence of leadership.	The GS actively encourages the emergence of leadership (of various kinds) that is responding to long-term challenges and is acting as motivator and a driver for change.
Assessment of Governance Outcomes				
I-14. Resolving Tradeoffs (The extent to which the GS has resolved tradeoffs—including tradeoffs among social, economic and environmental needs, and tradeoffs among different social groups—in a way that is equitable and fair, that is economically rational, and that protects the environment.)	In resolving tradeoffs, the GS has not or is not able to address all three dimensions of sustainability—social, economic and environmental. Tradeoffs that are inherent in the decisions being made are left unresolved, or else proceed with one or more dimensions unacknowledged or not addressed.	The GS deals with social, environmental and economic tradeoffs on a case-by-case, or decision-by-decision basis. Consideration of social, environmental, and economic tradeoffs, as well as equity and sustainability, are sometimes considered but are not always made explicit in the GS.	The GS has mechanisms in place for considering various dimensions of the tradeoffs that are inherent in the decisions being made. Consideration of social, environmental, and economic tradeoffs are usually made explicit in the GS. There is evidence that social, environmental, and economic factors are all sometimes considered, as are equity and sustainability.	The GS has mechanisms in place for considering various dimensions of the tradeoffs that are inherent in the decisions being made. Consideration of social, environmental, and economic tradeoffs are made explicit in the GS. There is evidence that social, environmental, and economic factors are all usually considered, as are equity and sustainability.

I-15. Contributing to just power relations (The extent to which the GS has placed limits on the use of coercive power, and to which it has enhanced power as capacity)	The GS facilitates/entrenches the power of already powerful actors	Neutral. On the whole, the GS has neither entrenched or increased the role of coercive power in decisions nor noticeably reduced it.	The GS limits the role of coercive power in decisions, but is not necessarily facilitating transformative collaboration among people, communities and groups in the region.	The GS limits the role of coercive power in decisions. It is also contributing to the capacity of marginalized or less powerful groups and of people and communities in the region generally to act on matters of individual and collective concern.
I-16. Setting Direction (The extent to which governance has established a common vision or direction.)	No articulated vision or common goals. The GS provides little guidance to help stakeholders prioritize and strategize.	Limited vision articulated. Insufficient detail to guide strategic decisions or day-to-day management.	The GS has articulated a vision and there is some level of detail to guide strategic decisions and day-to-day management by the governance system itself and by stakeholders.	The GS has articulated a vision and there is sufficient detail to guide strategic decisions and day-to-day management by the governance system itself and by stakeholders.
I-17. Building Community (The extent to which the GS is helping stakeholders to identify, or create, shared values and shared identities)	The GS is undermining community among diverse communities and stakeholders.	Neutral. On the whole, the GS is neither building nor undermining community.	The GS is helping diverse communities and stakeholders to find common ground that may already exist, but is not necessarily shaping new shared values or identities.	The GS is helping to create shared values and/or identities and to build community among diverse communities and stakeholders.