

# NYERI COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE PROFILE

## THE STATE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN NYERI COUNTY



### Profile produced in partnership between

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Onwards to implementation of the project “Increased citizenry participation on Governance and sustainable utilization of Natural resources in Tharaka Nithi, Nyeri and Meru Counties

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## Introduction

Nyeri County is located in Central part of Kenya and it borders the following counties; Laikipia to the North, Meru to the North East, Kirinyaga to the East, Muranga to the South, and Nyandarua to the West. The County covers an area of 3,266 km<sup>2</sup>. The main physical features of the district are **Mount Kenya** (5,199m) to the east and the **Aberdare Range** (3,999m) to the west. The western part of the district is flat, whereas further southwards, the topography is often characterized by steep ridges and valleys occasionally interrupted by hills such as **Karima, Nyeri and Tumutumu**. To some extent these hills affect the pattern of rainfall, thus influencing the mode of agricultural production in some localized areas.

### 1.1 Key Natural Resources in Nyeri County

#### 1.11 Forests and land cover

In Nyeri County is endowed with vast forest resources. During this exercise 10 Forests were mapped which covered a total area of 119.12 km<sup>2</sup>. Mount Kenya forest is the largest forest in the County while the second largest is Aberdares Forest. Other Forests in the county include: South Laikipia, Nyeri Hill, Kiganjo, Karima, Tumutummu, Nyana forest among others. These forests are critical sources of water catchment as well as biodiversity hotspots.

#### 1.12 Water Resources (rivers and streams)

In most areas of Nyeri County there is plenty of surface water. Most of the water comes from the slopes of Mt. Kenya, Aberdares and the surrounding forests, which act as the catchment area. Also, much of the water is retained by the volcanic rocks in the region, so most of the rivers rising from here are permanent and have enough discharge to keep the dry eastern lowlands well watered. With a large number of swift flowing rivers and waterfalls, Nyeri County has high potential for hydro-electric power generation. Surface water in the district is both adequate and suitable for all aspects of farming, and can be economically treated by conventional methods to make the water safe for drinking. During the mapping exercise a total of 3116 rivers were

mapped in Nyeri County. Most rivers in the western parts of the County originate from Aberdares forest while those on the eastern part of the County originate from Mount Kenya.

### Distribution of mapped Rivers per district

#### Kieni West

Rivers in Kieni West district originate from Aberdares forest. Among them include; Mugachi, Kariguini, Karuthingitu, Kamiriki, Kamariki, Karemeno, Karemeno, Ewaso Ng'iro East, Similik, Thuka Thuka, Ewaso Ng'iro South, Kamigogo, Amboni[Honi], Kanyiriri Muiga and Rongai Rivers. (For more details on the Forest in Nyeri, check Nyeri maps No 1&5).

#### Kieni East

Rivers in this district have their catchment area in Mount Kenya. These are: Rongai, Burguret, Naru Moru, Wuguziru, Gathiuru, Northern Ondare, Liki, Nanyuki, Burguret, Wuguziru, Kirugutu, Rongai, Nairobi, Nyangi, Losoi (Kachueri, Kaduni, Mere, Nassia, Warazo, Kituvia, Kamahuri and Sagana rivers.

#### Nyeri South.

Some rivers in this district have their catchment in Aberdares forest while others from Mount Kenya Forest as well as several forested hills in the district. They include: Honi, Kihoni, Honi, Mwathe, Waitimu, Chania, Mwathe Gaturuma, Amboni, Ruhutii, Murin gato, Thaina, Gataraini, Magura, Karimu, Magura, Karuru, Gochiguini, Thuti, Ndurumo, Gikira and Gikururu Rivers.

#### Tetu

The rivers in this district have their catchments in Aberdares forest. Among the mapped rivers include Thaina, haina[Zaina], Chanya, Thiriko, Kaigonde, Kanyore and Gura Rivers.

#### Mukurweini

Some rivers in this district have their catchment in Aberdares forest and others from Mount Kenya Forest. They include Mugono, Ruara, Sagana and Thiha rivers.

#### Mathira

Rivers in this district have their catchment in Aberdares forest and others from Mount

Kenya Forest. They include ; Kamwoya, Hombe, Sagana, Kariumbaini, Kanikwe, Rui-Ruiru, Gathita, Rathithi, Muthira, Kamwoya, Kanja, Gaichamuki, Tegu, Itoga, Kagochi, Karuru, Ragati, Gathangaini, Sagana, Kinyeeru, Kandogo and Ithanji Kirigu Rivers.

### **Othaya**

Rivers in this division Originate from Aberdares forest. Among the mapped include; Githugu, Mumwe, Tunuku, Maragoya, Chinga and Ruarai rivers.

### ***1.13; Landforms in Nyeri County***

Nyeri County has so many hills, mountains and foot ridges. This is evident as one traverses the county and in this case the main mountains, hills and foot ridges that were mapped include: Mount Kenya, Aberdares ranges, Nyeri hill, Tumutumumu hill and Karima hill. Mukurwe-ini valleys also presents some very beautiful scenery with very many bird species inhabiting the area and has hence been declared as Important Bird Area by the National Museums of Kenya. However, it is important to note that there are several other hills that are in the County that were not mapped due to the challenges that are mentioned at the section that describes the challenges experienced during the mapping exercise.

### ***1.14; National parks and game reserves.***

The largely undisturbed ecological system in the County supports a wide variety of animal species. In Nyeri County, the areas inhabited by wildlife and which have potential for tourism are the *National Parks and Game Reserves* (Mount Kenya and aberdares national parks) which are the main parks in the Region. In these parks, the main types of wildlife include; elephants, buffaloes, zebras, water bucks, cheetah, leopards and the primates. In Mukurwe-ini there also exists the Wajee Nature Park that has a bird sanctuary.