

Urban THE NEW

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MERU COUNTY

Planning Headache at Border Town

An informal settlement that sits at the border of Laikipia and Meru Counties may continue to grow if the governments of the two counties fail to adopt cross-boundary planning. Likii Slum is right next to Likii River, which is the physical boundary between Meru and Laikipia

Counties. Whereas the slum is in Nanyuki Town, in Laikipia County, its social ills spread across the two counties.

The growing border town, which is yet to receive an acceptable name, is the centre of booming inter-county trade. The increasing number of upcoming apartment blocks in the town insinuates the

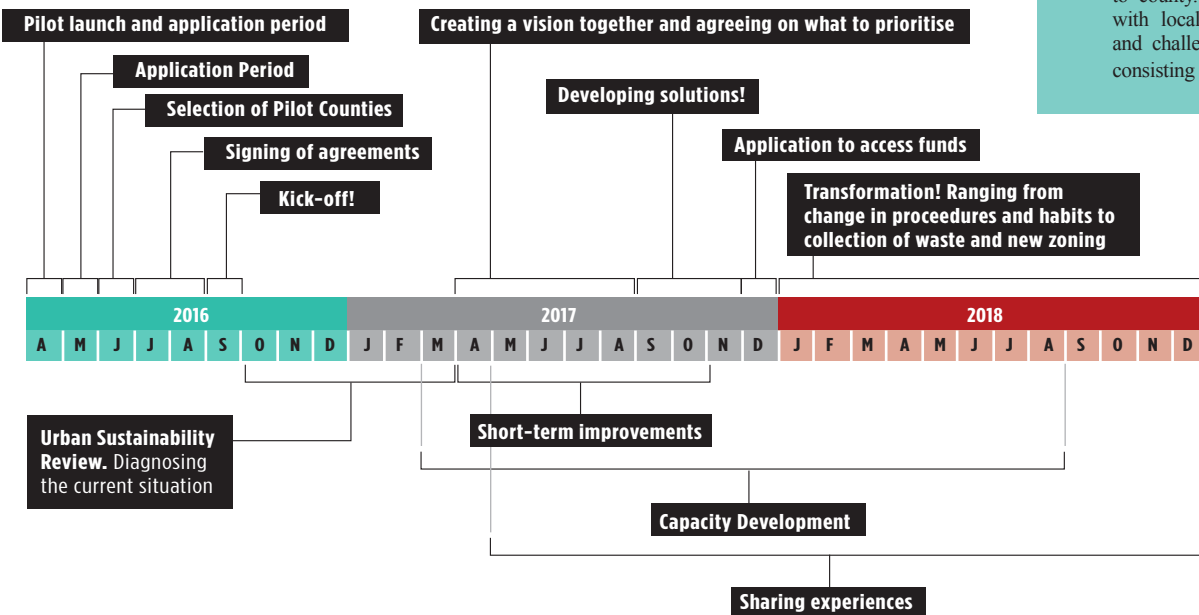
expanding residential need in Nanyuki Town. Mary, a resident of the growing town, and a teacher in Ontulili Location in Meru County, says residents of the town receive most of their services, such as healthcare, from Nanyuki Town. They also sell their farm produce

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Gateway to Meru

Timeline for SymbioCity Kenya Programme in Meru County



THE SYMBIOCITY KENYA PROGRAMME

What?

SymbioCity is an approach to sustainable development with emphasis on improving living conditions for the people living in urban areas. It doesn't provide ready-made solutions to all urban challenges. Instead it offers committed local elected representatives, officials and activists a chance to develop properly planned and managed cities where people work, access services and thrive! Urban areas with health, safety, comfort and quality of life for the people who live there. With efficiently managed urban services like waste management, mobility and water. And where the economic potential that urbanization brings is captured, while protecting the urban environment.

Who?

SymbioCity Kenya is a cooperation between Council of Governors and its sister organization, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Seven counties have been selected, after a competitive application process, to become so called SymbioCity Pilots. Each county has selected a secondary town to be in focus for the piloting activities.

How?

Project activities are delivered by the Council of Governors, Urban Support Team, under the Land, Planning and Urban Development Committee. We are a team of mixed backgrounds and nationalities, with emphasis on Kenyan and Swedish urban specialists. In the respective pilot counties, a Working Group has been established, to guide the work in the county. The composition of the Working Group varies from county to county. The Working Group in its turn engages with local stakeholders when consulting on needs and challenges and report to a Steering Committee consisting mainly of County Government officials.

THE SYMBIOCITY PILOTS!

Pilot	County
Mbita	Homabay
Butere	Kakamega
Ahero	Kisumu
Kwa Vonza	Kitui
Makutano	Meru
Njoro	Nakuru
Kiminini	Trans Nzoia



Some of the operational kiosks in Makutano Market



Uncontrolled development



Likii - Makutano Market



Likii Slum



River Likii

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in Nanyuki.

Jefferson Musyoka, a Planner in the Department of Lands, ICT and Planning, Meru County, says that the boundary between Meru and Laikipia Counties remains Likii River. The county's survey office supports the planner's assertion with a registry index map. The SymbioCity Kenya Programme team will meet the Nanyuki Town Physical Planner in the course of this month. Section 106 (1) of the County Governments Act of 2012, says that cooperation in planning shall be undertaken in the context of the law governing inter-governmental relations. This is on integrating national and county planning. Planner Sammy Kathike, the Deputy Town Administrator in Kitui County, asserts that there is a gap in cross-boundary planning. "Whereas the County Government Act highlights trans-boundary sharing of resources, inter-county planning should be about collaboration, since challenges always arise during implementation, with disagreements on contribution and allocation of resources."

Planner Nicodemus Mbwika, Project Manager for SymbioCity Kenya at Council of Governors also identifies the challenge in cross-boundary planning. He attributes this to a mix of pre-devolution laws that are still in force and in conflict with the new order. He acknowledges that there are several laws on planning in Kenya but none specifically addresses the contentious reality.

Nicodemus singles out Section 23 (1) of the Physical Planning Act of 1996 (undergoing review in the Senate), which says, "The Director may..." giving the director of physical planning power to declare by notice in a gazette, an area with unique development potential or problems, a special planning area for the purpose of preparation of a physical development plan.

This is irrespective of whether such an area lies within or outside the area of a local authority. This is in conflict with the County Government Act and the Intergovernmental Relations Act of 2012.

In 2012, Lamu and Tana River Counties faced a related challenge. The Tana River Delta integrated land-use plan needed a coordinated approach to resource planning and management. The Delta covers 130,000 ha, and is rich

in biodiversity - several species of flora and fauna. Immediate action was taken, as continued delay would have worsened the bad situation that was leading to human encroachment on the Delta.

If cross-boundary planning is adopted in the Meru /Laikipia boundary town, it may just turn out to be a vibrant economic and socio-cultural urban centre.

"Inter-county planning should be about collaboration"

What's Next ?

Meru's Nameless Town

What's in a name? A name is identity; but a town in Meru County remains "nameless". Residents call it by different names, which include Makutano, Katheri and Likii, but desire one name, which should be unique, catchy, memorable, all-inclusive and easy to visualise. Additionally, the name should capture the people's diverse interests, including their agrarian lifestyle, and the emerging scattered urban settlements.

The residents have widely discussed names for the town, but can't settle



Katheri entrance from Likii-Makutano

on one. For instance, Likii won't pass

because of Likii Slum that has recently sprung up on the Nanyuki side of the boundary. Makutano on the other hand is unacceptable because it is too common a name in Kenya. Katheri, according to the residents, is the name of the sub-location where the less developed part of the town falls, so it is not adequate. The better-developed part of the town is in Kangaita Sub-location.

As the stalemate continues, proposed combinations such as Likii-Makutano, Katheri-Ontulili, Ontulili-Makutano, will be explored in future meetings.

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This newsletter has been put together by the SymbioCity Kenya team. The purpose is to share information with stakeholders on the process and progress of SymbioCity in Meru County.