



# TARDA NEWS

TANA AND ATHI RIVERS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

ISSUE NO. 19 | FEBRUARY 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

MINISTRY OF EAC, THE ASALS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT ON KENYA'S 2025 BUDGET POLICY STATEMENT



The **Kenya National Assembly** Departmental Committee on Regional Development led by MP Sigor Hon. Peter Lochakapong on 24<sup>th</sup> February convened a pivotal meeting with the Ministry of EAC, The ASALS and Regional Development's State Department for ASALs and Regional Development under the leadership of Principal Secretary **PS Kello Harsama** to deliberate on the 2025 Budget Policy Statement (BPS).

Also present at the meeting were Managing Directors and representatives of the 6 Regional Development Authorities **Coast Development Authority** **Page Ewaso Ng'iro South River Basin Development Authority** **Ewaso Ng'iro North Dev. Authority** **Kerio Valley Development Authority** **Lake Basin Development Authority** as well as the **National Drought Management Authority**. The **TARDA** Team was led by Managing Director Mr. Liban Roba.

This engagement was more than just a review of numbers—it was about shaping the future of our regions and ensuring that development plans translate into real impact for communities.

- ✓ Are we making progress? The discussion evaluated the implementation status of the 2024/25 budget, tracking financial performance and project milestones.
- ✓ Where are we headed? The session explored expenditure ceilings and key policy priorities to ensure budget allocations address pressing challenges.
- ✓ How will this impact communities? From infrastructure projects to climate resilience initiatives, the focus was on delivering meaningful and measurable outcomes.
- ✓ What's next? The Principal Secretary outlined performance targets and strategies to accelerate regional growth and ensure every investment drives sustainable development.
  - ❖ Why does this matter? These discussions determine the future of water access, food security, flood control, environmental conservation, and economic empowerment—issues that affect us all.

As we work towards a more resilient and prosperous Kenya, RDAs remain committed to driving impactful development that transforms lives and secures our shared future.

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE AFFORESTATION



TARDA Managing Director, Liban Roba, welcomed a courtesy visit from Better Globe Forestry (BGF) **Better Globe As**, led by Chief Executive Officer Jean-Paul Deprins. BGF is a key partner in advancing afforestation and community development initiatives near the Authority's Kiambere Dam. As part of the Norwegian Better Globe Group, BGF focuses on poverty reduction through large-scale tree planting, sustainable agriculture, microfinance, education, and rural water supply. Through this partnership which commenced in the year 2008, BetterGlobe have planted over 140,000 trees and engaged over 2,500 farmers. The specific tree planted is the mukau tree (*Melia volkensii* tree), known for thriving in drylands.

Our collaboration has led to impactful initiatives, including:

- ✓ Greening the 7-Forks Area through contract farmers, a TARDA-driven initiative
- ✓ Establishing Eco-villages for sustainable community development
- ✓ Knowledge-sharing and capacity-building for long-term environmental and economic resilience.

This collaboration underscores the importance of strategic partnerships in driving sustainable development and restoring Kenya's landscapes.

## CELEBRATING WORLD WETLANDS DAY!



TARDA's Athi-Basin Region team joined key stakeholders at Matetani Wetlands in Mbitini Village, Kangundo Sub-County, Machakos County on February 3rd to mark World Wetlands Day. As crucial ecosystems, wetlands play a vital role in supporting biodiversity, regulating water flow, and sustaining livelihoods.

In line with our commitment to conservation and community empowerment, TARDA conducted capacity-building training for over 600 community members on agroforestry practices, including grafting, budding, and tree nursery establishment. Additionally, we donated more than 1,000 assorted agroforestry and fruit trees to promote reforestation and sustainable land use.

Elsewhere, the Tana Basin Region team also joined stakeholders in Embu County to commemorate World Wetlands Day with a tree-planting exercise at Gakungu Springs and Ikungu Wetlands. Wetlands are vital for water conservation, biodiversity, and climate resilience, and protecting them is key to ensuring sustainable ecosystems and livelihoods.

By equipping communities with the knowledge and resources needed for sustainable land management, we are fostering long-term environmental stewardship and ensuring that wetland ecosystems continue to thrive. Healthy wetlands mean resilient communities, enhanced biodiversity, and a sustainable future. As we celebratd this day, we reaffirm our dedication to protecting and restoring wetlands for generations to come.



## TARDA PARTICIPATES IN WORKSHOP ON POPULATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT (PHE) FOR CLIMATE ACTION IN MACHAKOS COUNTY



On February 6<sup>th</sup> TARDA's Athi Basin Region participated in a key workshop organized by the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) in Machakos County. The workshop brought together various government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners to discuss the role of Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Discussions centered on the interlinkages between population dynamics, food security, and climate change, highlighting the need for integrated approaches to environmental conservation and sustainable development. The workshop also focused on strengthening climate adaptation strategies and fostering sustainable environmental management practices.

By addressing the connections between population growth, environmental sustainability, and public health, TARDA remains committed to championing regional development initiatives that contribute to long-term climate resilience and food security. Through partnerships and coordinated efforts, stakeholders can drive impactful solutions that safeguard both people and the environment.

## SECURING THE FUTURE OF IRRIGATION AT TANA DELTA



At **TARDA**, we are taking bold steps to protect and enhance the Tana Delta Irrigation Project (TDIP). The ongoing Gabion Protection Works at Kelona Brook are a game-changer—fortifying riverbanks, preventing soil erosion, and ensuring stable water flow for irrigation.

### Why this matters:

- ✓ Protects irrigation infrastructure from flood damage
- ✓ Improves water retention for sustainable farming
- ✓ Enhances food security for communities in Tana Delta
- ✓ Strengthens climate resilience in this vital agricultural zone

By securing Kelona Brook, we are safeguarding the lifeline of thousands of farmers, ensuring consistent, climate-smart irrigation that drives economic growth and food production.

## ADVANCING GARISSA'S AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL THROUGH SOLAR IRRIGATION



Garissa County, with its vast landscapes and proximity to the Tana River, holds immense potential for agricultural transformation. The Badhia Smallholder Irrigation Project in Bouralgi, Iftin Ward, is a testament to how sustainable technology can unlock prosperity in arid and semi-arid regions.

Spanning 500 acres, the project is empowering 140 farmers by providing affordable, reliable, and environmentally friendly irrigation. At the core of this initiative is a solar-powered intake system, replacing costly diesel pumps with solar panels that guarantee a continuous water supply from the Tana River. Complemented by unlined canals, a masonry distribution tank, and a pump house, this infrastructure is a game-changer for agriculture in the region.

Farmers are now looking at cultivating a variety of fruit trees (mangoes, bananas), horticultural crops (tomatoes, onions), and livestock fodder, maximizing their land's productivity. As a result, Garissa is emerging as a model for climate-smart agriculture, proving that with the right investments, even traditionally dry regions can become thriving food baskets.

With substantial completion of infrastructure and security fencing, the next steps include farmer training and officially handing over the project to the community. **TARDA** remains committed to delivering impactful, long-term solutions that strengthen food security, economic empowerment, and climate resilience in Kenya's drylands. The future of Garissa is bright—powered by the sun and sustained by the Tana River.

## CHAMPIONING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN MACHAKOS



On February 21st, **TARDA's** Athi Basin Region proudly joined forces with **Nema Kenya, Machakos County Government**, NGOs, public institutions, and community-based organizations for an impactful Environmental Clean-Up Day at **Machakos University**

This initiative goes beyond just waste collection—it's about fostering a culture of environmental stewardship, raising awareness on sustainable practices, and strengthening partnerships that drive long-term impact. A clean and healthy environment is not just a necessity; it is our shared responsibility.

By working together, we are not only restoring our surroundings but also building resilience against climate challenges, promoting eco-friendly practices, and ensuring a greener future for generations to come.

Small actions, collective impact. Let's continue to protect, restore, and sustain our environment—because every effort counts!



## BUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS THROUGH AGROFORESTRY & BEEKEEPING IN MACHAKOS



At TARDA, we recognize that sustainable development begins with empowering communities—equipping farmers with the right skills to enhance productivity, restore ecosystems, and build resilience to climate change. During a high-impact training session held on 26<sup>th</sup> February in Mwala Subcounty, Masii Sub-location, TARDA, in partnership with the **Kenya Forest Service** Machakos Branch and key stakeholders, engaged 229 farmers in agroforestry, grafting/budding techniques, and modern beekeeping practices.

### Why this matters:

- ✓ **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Farmers learned innovative techniques for sustainable land use, including tree integration in farming systems to enhance soil fertility, water retention, and carbon sequestration.
- ✓ **Pollinators for Productivity:** Beekeeping is not just about honey—it plays a crucial role in crop pollination, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation. By maintaining strong bee colonies, farmers contribute to food security and ecosystem restoration.
- ✓ **Alternative Livelihoods:** Sustainable beekeeping offers a viable economic alternative, reducing dependence on unsustainable land practices like deforestation while providing an additional income stream.
- ✓ **Restoring Degraded Ecosystems:** Through TARDA's donation of 300 assorted fruit trees, we are reinforcing reforestation efforts and promoting climate resilience in arid and semi-arid lands.

Other partners also present in today's event included the **Kenya Forestry Research Institute**), **Nema Kenya**, **NGAOs**, **Ministry of Agriculture**, **Bayer LTD**, **Machakos County Government**, **CBOs**, **Masii Horticulture Farmers Cooperative Society**, and the **African Development Bank Group** Green Belt Development Support Programme 2. The training session culminated in a tree-planting exercise, symbolizing our collective commitment to restoring degraded landscapes and enhancing Kenya's green cover.

TARDA remains committed to fostering climate-smart solutions that not only protect the environment but also enhance rural livelihoods. By strengthening the link between agroforestry, beekeeping, and sustainable food systems, we are ensuring long-term economic and environmental benefits for communities in the Tana and Athi River basins.