

TARDA NEWS

TANA AND ATHI RIVERS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINISTRY OF EAC, THE ASALS, AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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HIGHLIGHTS

PS Kello Harsama Visits TARDA's Operational Areas



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Belgium-TARDA Livestock Partnership Talks Signal New Era of Tech-driven Agricultural Transformation



Faith, Stewardship, and Action.

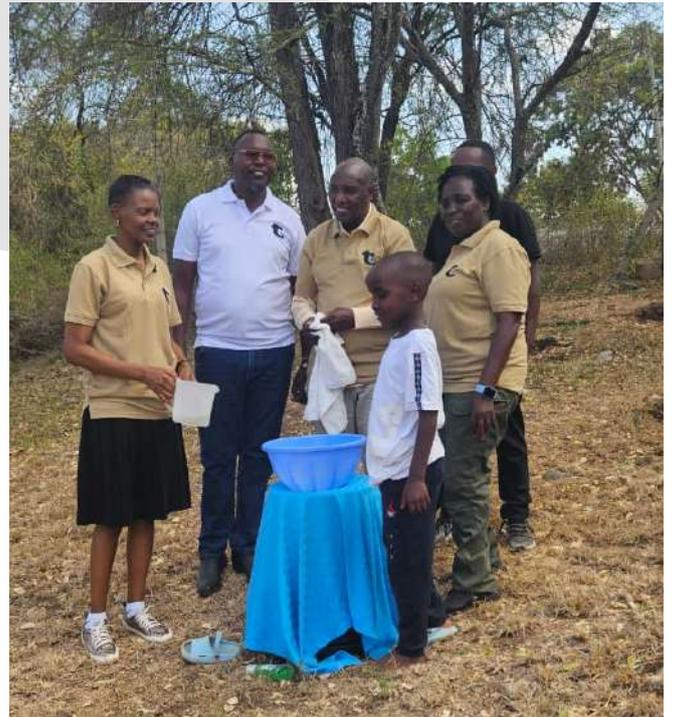
National Development Meets Local Impact As Ps Kello Harsama Visits TARDA's Operational Areas

On February 8th 2026 TARDA had the distinct honour of hosting the Principal Secretary, State Department for ASALs and Regional Development, Mr. PS Kello Harsama , during his visit to various areas within the Tana Basin under the Authority's jurisdiction.

His presence on the ground was more than a courtesy call — it was a powerful demonstration of national leadership engaging directly with the realities, opportunities, and aspirations shaping our regions. From irrigation landscapes to community development initiatives, the visit provided a valuable platform to showcase ongoing interventions advancing food security, sustainable water resource management, climate resilience, and inclusive regional development.

Walking through project sites and interacting with teams and allowed for candid conversations on what is working, where challenges remain, and how strategic alignment between national policy and on-the-ground implementation can accelerate impact. Such engagements reaffirm the importance of responsive governance — leadership that listens, observes, and connects policy direction to lived experiences.

We are deeply honoured that the Principal Secretary chose to spend time within our operational areas, engaging firsthand with the work being undertaken across the Basin. His visit strengthens momentum toward practical, scalable solutions that improve livelihoods and unlock the region's immense potential. As TARDA continues to implement its mandate, we remain committed to translating national development priorities into tangible outcomes — where water, land, infrastructure, and community-driven initiatives converge to create lasting transformation.



Securing Investment For Regional Growth



2026 Budget Policy Statement (BPS).

The meeting, convened pursuant to National Assembly Standing Order 216 and Section 25(2) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012, focused on aligning sector priorities with proposed fiscal ceilings for the 2026 financial year.

Key areas of engagement included:

- Policy priorities and expenditure allocations under the 2026 BPS;
- Performance targets for ongoing and proposed flagship programmes;
- Strategic investments in irrigation, food security, and climate resilience;
- Emerging priorities requiring enhanced fiscal consideration.

Belgium-TARDA Livestock Partnership Talks Signal New Era Of Tech-driven Agricultural Transformation



On 24th January 2026, TARDA was happy to have hosted Mr. Coffi Barboza, Founder & CEO of BeCoffi & Co, and Prof. Pascal Leroy from the University of Liège, as part of a Belgian delegation exploring strategic collaboration in livestock development.

The discussions centered on establishing a pilot livestock excellence centre within the basin — anchored on technology transfer, modern breeding systems, animal health innovation, feed optimization, and capacity building for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. The TARDA Team at the meeting

were led by Director, Corporate Services, Mr. David Kimaiyo and Director, Resource Planning and Development, Ms. Irene Ndavi.

The proposed partnership goes beyond theory. It targets practical demonstration models that can strengthen productivity, improve value chains, enhance climate resilience, and position livestock as a structured economic driver rather than a subsistence activity.

There is strong alignment between Belgium's technical expertise and TARDA's basin-based development mandate — particularly in semi-arid regions where improved genetics, data-driven herd management, and sustainable grazing systems can transform livelihoods.

The conversation marks an important step toward building a knowledge-driven livestock ecosystem in the Tana and Athi River Basins — one that connects research, technology, enterprise, and community impact. Partnerships that combine global expertise with local implementation capacity are how we move from potential to performance.

Shaping Kenya's Climate Future



TARDA, together with other Regional Development Authorities, is actively participating in the Joint Concept Note Development Workshop (8th-14th Feb 2026, Nairobi), convened by the State Department for ASALs and Regional Development—a game-changing platform for designing high-impact, climate-responsive projects that directly align with Kenya's national priorities.

This workshop brings together experts to craft innovative, competitive proposals under the Mitigation Action Facility

framework, ensuring that every idea has the potential to drive sustainable development, boost resilience, and transform communities across the river basins under our purview.

By collaborating and sharing insights, we are aiming to turn climate challenges into actionable solutions—from conserving natural resources to enabling climate-smart investments that secure livelihoods and ecosystems for the future.



Faith. Stewardship. Action.

On February 7th 2026, TARDA partnered with the Anglican Church Of Kenya – Diocese of Machakos in a powerful capacity-building engagement themed “Wholesome Children – Caring for God’s Creation.” Bringing together over 108 Sunday School teachers and Brigade officers from across the Diocese, the training went beyond awareness — it focused on equipping faith leaders as frontline stewards of environmental responsibility and community resilience.

Through interactive sessions and practical demonstrations, participants explored:

- Environmental stewardship and catchment conservation
- Soil and water conservation practices



- Climate change adaptation and its impact on children and communities

The role of churches as local change hubs

Partnership pathways between TARDA and faith institutions

Hands-on agroforestry techniques including grafting and budding technologies

The sessions were facilitated by Mr. Gibson Mwakideu, Regional Coordinator – Athi Basin Region; Ms. Caroline Muendo, Public Service Intern – Natural Resources Conservation; and Mr. Robert Muange, who led practical demonstrations from the Machakos Tree Nursery Project.

We were honoured by the presence and leadership of Rt. Rev.

Patrick Kyalo Munuve, Lord Bishop of Machakos Diocese, alongside Rev. Elena Mwaniki, Provost of All Souls Cathedral.

The engagement culminated in a symbolic tree planting exercise at the Diocesan Headquarters — a reminder that stewardship is not a concept, but a daily commitment.

At TARDA, we recognize that sustainable development is strongest when anchored within communities, and faith institutions remain critical partners in shaping responsible, climate-conscious generations.

When faith meets action, communities transform — and the future grows stronger.

Food Security Takes Center Stage In Machakos County



TARDA's– Athi Basin Region joined County leaders and sector partners at a County Steering Group (CSG) Meeting convened by NDMA Kenya held at the Governor’s Boardroom Machakos County Government, on 6th February 2026 to confront one of the region’s most urgent priorities — food and nutrition security.

The session focused on the presentation of the Rapid Food and Nutrition Assessment Findings, providing critical, real-time evidence to guide targeted interventions, strengthen resilience, and sharpen

coordinated response strategies across the county.

Key discussions also explored micro-project solutions, including goat breed improvement initiatives aimed at boosting household income, nutrition outcomes, and climate-smart livelihoods.

For TARDA, this engagement reinforces a clear agenda — data-driven planning, coordinated action, and practical solutions that deliver impact where it matters most: at community level.

Because when institutions align, decisions become sharper, responses faster, and outcomes stronger for vulnerable communities.

Advancing The Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) In Kitui County



TARDA participated in a sensitization workshop on the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) held in Kitui County on 11th February 2026, bringing together National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs) and representatives from the Office of the President and the Office of the Deputy President. The engagement focused on

aligning county-level implementation with national development priorities, reinforcing the role of NGAOs in driving structured oversight and accelerating delivery of government programmes. The workshop was followed by an inspection tour of key national projects, including Ithookwe Airstrip, Ithookwe Stadium, the ongoing Kwa Ngindu Affordable Housing Project, and the Umma Dam Project — currently at 57% completion. The site visits underscored a clear shift from policy dialogue to measurable execution. For TARDA, participation in this forum is directly aligned with our mandate of integrated basin-based development. Water infrastructure, irrigation expansion, and sustainable resource management remain central to unlocking economic potential in ASAL regions. The Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda provides a coordinated framework through which institutions can synchronize planning, investment, and implementation for greater impact. Effective transformation requires more than plans — it requires disciplined oversight, inter-agency collaboration, and sustained follow-through. Platforms such as this strengthen alignment and ensure development priorities translate into tangible outcomes for communities.



Driving BETA From Policy To Projects – Meru, Embu & Kitui



TARDA's Tana Region Office participated in the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) engagements from 9th-15th February 2026, across Meru, Embu and Kitui counties, working closely with the Office of the President, the Office of the Deputy President, and National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs). Also present during the meetings was TARDA's Alternate Director to the Principal Secretary, State Department for Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mrs. Dionisia M'eruaki.

In Meru, County Commissioner Mr. Jacob Ouma, alongside the BETA Secretariat and NGAO leadership, led an inspection tour of key Government initiatives including completed Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) projects in South Imenti and the County Aggregation and Industrial Park (CAIP) in Buuri near Isiolo International Airport. The CAIP — with fully developed cold storage and supporting infrastructure — is now ready for commissioning and represents a strong anchor for agricultural value addition in the region. During the BETA sensitization forums, the Tana Region Office presented priority projects identified in collaboration with communities and CBOs. *(Continues In the Next Page)*

These include irrigation schemes such as the Iraru–Mweru project, community water initiatives, food security interventions for both human and livestock needs, tree nursery development, agricultural value addition, and apiculture. These initiatives align directly with BETA's core pillars of productivity, aggregation, and grassroots economic empowerment.

The BETA Secretariat confirmed the inclusion of TARDA in ongoing sensitization programmes, following mandatory training undertaken by regional officers alongside Deputy County Commissioners. This creates a structured pathway for coordinated rollout of Government programmes at the grassroots level, including chiefs, assistant chiefs, and local development leaders.

Encouragingly, projects presented during the engagements received positive consideration, with commitments to escalate qualifying proposals for funding and implementation under the BETA framework.

The engagements reinforced one clear message: transformation happens when national policy converges with locally grounded, implementation-ready projects. The Tana Region Office remains focused on aligning basin-based development interventions with national priorities to accelerate food security, water access, and value chain development across the region.



Momentum. Alignment. Delivery.



TARDA was honored to participate in a Corporate Roundtable – Chandaria Tree Nurseries Best Practice Sharing Forum, convened by Global Peace Foundation Kenya in partnership with Chandaria Foundation and Unicaf Kenya on 16th February 2026.

The forum brought together corporate and institutional leaders to align on advancing the 15 Billion Tree Growing National Agenda through structured, scalable nursery models. The emphasis was clear: move beyond tree-planting events and embed sustainability into systems,

partnerships, and youth enterprise.

Opening remarks by Ms. Winnie Rachel (UNICAF Country Director), Mr. Daniel Juma (Africa Regional Representative & Country Director, Global Peace Foundation Kenya), framed the dialogue around ethical leadership, peacebuilding, and environmental stewardship.

Insights from Mr. Vincent Rapando of the Chandaria Foundation, alongside best-practice case studies shared by Mr. William Kimei (Lenana School) and Mr. David Chomba Kamau (Alliance High School), demonstrated how institutional nurseries can serve as scalable climate assets while driving youth engagement.

The President's Fellowship – Million Tree Ventures segment, led by Mr. Japheth Ouda, spotlighted enterprise-driven approaches that connect environmental action with sustainable livelihoods.

Closing reflections by Mr. David Caprara, Vice-President, Strategic Partnerships at Global Peace Foundation, underscored the need for disciplined execution and deeper public–private collaboration.

Also present at the event were KenGen Foundation, KCB Foundation, Family Bank Foundation, Covu, @Akilia kids amongst others.

For TARDA, tree growing is not a peripheral activity. It is central to catchment restoration, river basin sustainability, and climate resilience within our mandate. The conversation now shifts to implementation—aligned partnerships, measurable impact, and delivery at scale.

Protecting Sasumua Riparian Corridor To Safeguard Water Security And Climate Resilience

TARDA's Njabini Team on 17th February 2026 joined the Kenya Defence Forces and the Dedan Kimathi Foundation to commemorate the 69th Anniversary of Dedan Kimathi through action-driven environmental stewardship.

At Mikami Kimathi Grounds and along the Sasumua Dam riparian corridor in Kinangop, 3,000 trees were planted, alongside intensive nursery management at the mega nursery.

The Sasumua riparian corridor is a strategic ecological buffer. Its vegetation stabilizes riverbanks, controls erosion, filters sediment, and reduces runoff before it reaches the dam — directly protecting water quality and storage capacity. In a changing climate marked by extreme rainfall events, restoring riparian ecosystems is not optional; it is infrastructure protection.

Healthy riparian zones strengthen biodiversity, enhance groundwater recharge, and lower long-term maintenance costs by reducing siltation and flood damage. Simply put, protecting the corridor secures the dam — and securing the dam safeguards communities, agriculture, and downstream economic systems.

This was more than a commemoration. It was a deliberate investment in watershed resilience and intergenerational responsibility.



Restoring Catchments. Securing Our Rivers.



On 12th February 2026, the TARDA partnered with the Mumandu-Kalimanzalu Community Forest Association (MUCAFOFA) to strengthen restoration efforts in the Mumandu Catchment Forest — a key feeder of the Athi River.

TARDA supported the initiative with 10,000 tree potting bags (5×8) to boost community-led nursery development. Earlier, the Authority had also provided assorted agroforestry seeds to support ongoing reforestation efforts.

By empowering community forest associations, TARDA continues to advance catchment conservation, river basin sustainability, and climate resilience across the basin.

Building The Next Generation Of Public Service Leaders



TARDA's Athi Basin Region inducted Public Service Commission (PSC) interns under Cohort 8 on 23rd February 2026, following TARDA's broader management induction of 33 interns across the Authority.

On 20th February 2026, six interns deployed to the Athi Basin Region were formally inducted at the Machakos Regional Office, where they were introduced to the Region's 2025/26 Performance Contract aligned to TARDA's Strategic Plan, key projects and ongoing programs.

The session also covered stakeholder engagement, community partnerships, performance expectations, and quarterly evaluation frameworks, equipping the interns with a clear understanding of their role in advancing development within the basin.

Through initiatives like these, TARDA continues to nurture talent, strengthen institutional capacity, and deepen collaboration with communities and partners across the region.

Engaging Stakeholders On Land Valuation In Kitui County

On 3rd February 2026, TARDA participated in a Kitui County Land Value Index (LVI) stakeholder engagement forum convened by the Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development – State Department for Lands and Physical Planning. The forum aimed to sensitize stakeholders and the public on the Land Value Index, a key tool used in determining land values across the country. The engagement brought together the CEC Member for Lands, the County Commissioner, Members of the County Assembly, representatives from the Law Society of Kenya, and National Government officers. Discussions focused on land values across eight sub-counties in Kitui County. Stakeholders raised concerns that the current values reflected in the index do not adequately capture prevailing market realities, calling for a review of the Land Value Index. Issues were also raised regarding value influencers, with participants noting that factors such as minerals and electricity infrastructure should be considered in determining land values. The Department of Valuation indicated that the current index is based on data collected between 2012 and 2025, though leaders and community representatives emphasized the need for an urgent review to align valuations with current conditions.

The forum provided an important platform for constructive dialogue and strengthened awareness on land valuation processes among stakeholders in the county.



Investing In Tomorrow's Public Service: Tarda Welcomes The PSC 8th Cohort Interns



The future of public service is not inherited—it is deliberately built, mentored, and entrusted to the next generation.

On 2nd February 2026 TARDA received 33 interns under the 8th Cohort of the Public Service Commission of Kenya (PSC) Internship Programme (2025/2026), drawn across a range of technical and professional disciplines aligned to the Authority's core mandate. The interns were formally onboarded through a structured induction programme led by the Managing Director Mr. Liban Roba and members of Management, setting clear

expectations on institutional values, service delivery standards, ethics, and performance.

The induction provided interns with a practical understanding of TARDA's mandate, operational environment, and role within national development, while reinforcing accountability, professionalism, and results-based public service. Through this engagement, Management emphasized the importance of innovation, discipline, and citizen-centric service delivery as key pillars of the Authority's work.

Nationally, the PSC Internship Programme continues to reflect the scale of youth unemployment and competitiveness in the labour market. For the 2025/2026 cycle, 35,659 youth applied for only 7,000 available slots, with 13,117 candidates shortlisted and interviews conducted between 1st and 6th December 2025. Deployment of successful candidates commenced in January 2026.

Within this highly competitive national context, TARDA's intake of 33 interns represents a deliberate investment in capacity building, skills transfer, and future public sector leadership, while simultaneously strengthening delivery in key technical areas.

The programme enables the Authority to nurture talent, inject fresh perspectives, and support national efforts toward youth empowerment and public service renewal.



World Wetlands Day 2026: Machakos County

The Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority translated its commitment into action at Kwa-Mutaki Dam, where wetlands, livelihoods, and culture intersect. In line with this year's theme, Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge, TARDA distributed 500 assorted fruit tree seedlings to community members and CBOs and trained over 260 participants on agroforestry value addition, grafting and budding techniques,



tree nursery establishment and management, as well as soil and water conservation practices. The Authority also supported the restoration of riparian zones through targeted tree planting around Kwa-Mutaki Dam. The commemoration was enriched by Kamba traditional dances, highlighting the connection between environmental conservation and cultural heritage. The event was graced by Mr. Kitheka, reflecting strong collaboration with the Machakos County Government in advancing environmental stewardship. At TARDA, wetland conservation goes beyond symbolism—it is practical, skills-based, and community-driven, focused on protecting wetlands, empowering communities, and delivering results where they matter most.

World Wetlands Day 2026: Runyenjes, Embu County



TARDA's Tana Region team was on site at the Runyenjes–Kawanjara Wetland in Embu County, actively participating in the 2026 World Wetlands Day commemoration on 2nd February 2026.

The event brought together a wide cross-section of stakeholders from both county and national government, parastatals, community-based organizations, and local institutions—underscoring the collective responsibility required to safeguard critical wetland ecosystems.

As part of its coordination role, TARDA supported on-the-ground activities including the preparation and

identification of planting sites, coordination of tree planting logistics, and reception of guests. The Authority also received the Guest of Honour, the Embu County Deputy County Commissioner, Embu East (Runyenjes Town, Embu County), during the celebrations.

The Kenya Forest Service led the identification of appropriate indigenous tree species and provided technical guidance on their ecological importance, while Nema Kenya coordinated overall environmental compliance and activity oversight. Indigenous tree seedlings were planted within the wetland as a practical conservation measure aimed at protecting and restoring the ecosystem.

This year's focus on Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge speaks directly to the lived realities of communities that have protected these ecosystems for generations. For TARDA, effective wetland conservation is not abstract—it is local, practical, and partnership-driven.

Through presence, coordination, and purposeful action, TARDA continues to reinforce its role as a responsive public institution committed to sustainable wetland management across the Tana Basin.

Accountability In Action: Tarda Strengthens Public Complaints Management & Access To Information

Service delivery is only as strong as the systems that listen, respond, and act. TARDA convened a high-impact sensitization workshop on Public Complaints Management and Access to Information, facilitated by the Commission on Administrative Justice's Moses Sukali, as part of the FY 2025/2026 Performance Contract commitments. The one-day engagement brought together departmental Complaints Champions — both physically and virtually from regional offices led by our Director, Corporate Services Mr. David Kimaiyo and Director Resource



Planning Development Ms. Irene Ndavi— to sharpen institutional responsiveness, reinforce statutory compliance, and strengthen citizen-centric service delivery across the Authority. Key focus areas included:

1. *Public complaints handling frameworks and reporting standards*
2. *Roles, accountability, and turnaround expectations for Complaints Champions*
3. *Documentation and case management processes*
4. *Coordination mechanisms with CAJ*
5. *Compliance with the Access to Information Act*

Through this capacity-building initiative, TARDA is reinforcing a culture of transparency, timely response, and structured accountability, ensuring that public concerns are not just received — but resolved with professionalism and efficiency. At TARDA, effective governance means building systems that listen, learn, and deliver measurable impact for the citizens we serve.



Due to the ongoing heavy rains and rising water levels in several rivers and drainage systems, TARDA would like to issue an urgent flood safety warning to all employees, staff working in field stations, and communities living within the operational areas of the Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority (TARDA), including those in Nairobi and surrounding regions.

Current Situation

Recent rainfall has significantly increased water levels in rivers raising the risk of flooding in low-lying areas, floodplains, and informal settlements near rivers and drainage channels.

Safety Advisory

All employees and community members are advised to take the following precautions:

- 1. Avoid crossing flooded roads, rivers, or drainage channels.**
- 2. Do not attempt to drive or walk through fast-moving water.**
- 3. Relocate temporarily from flood-prone areas if water levels begin to rise.**
- 4. Keep children away from rivers, dams, and drainage systems.**
- 5. Secure property, equipment, and important documents.**
- 6. Field staff should suspend non-essential field activities in high-risk areas.**
- 7. Follow guidance from local authorities and disaster response teams.**

The Authority will continue to monitor hydrological conditions and provide updates where necessary. Cooperation from staff and communities is critical in ensuring safety and minimizing risks during this period. Let us all remain vigilant, prepared, and supportive of each other as we navigate the current weather situation.

Stay safe. Stay alert!