Localizing the SDGs to Accelerate Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Lessons on SDG Integration and Multilevel Governance from Kenya

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The success of multilevel governance and coherent SDG implementation can be fostered by effectively integrating the SDGs into the mandates of institutions and promoting cross-sector collaboration at all levels
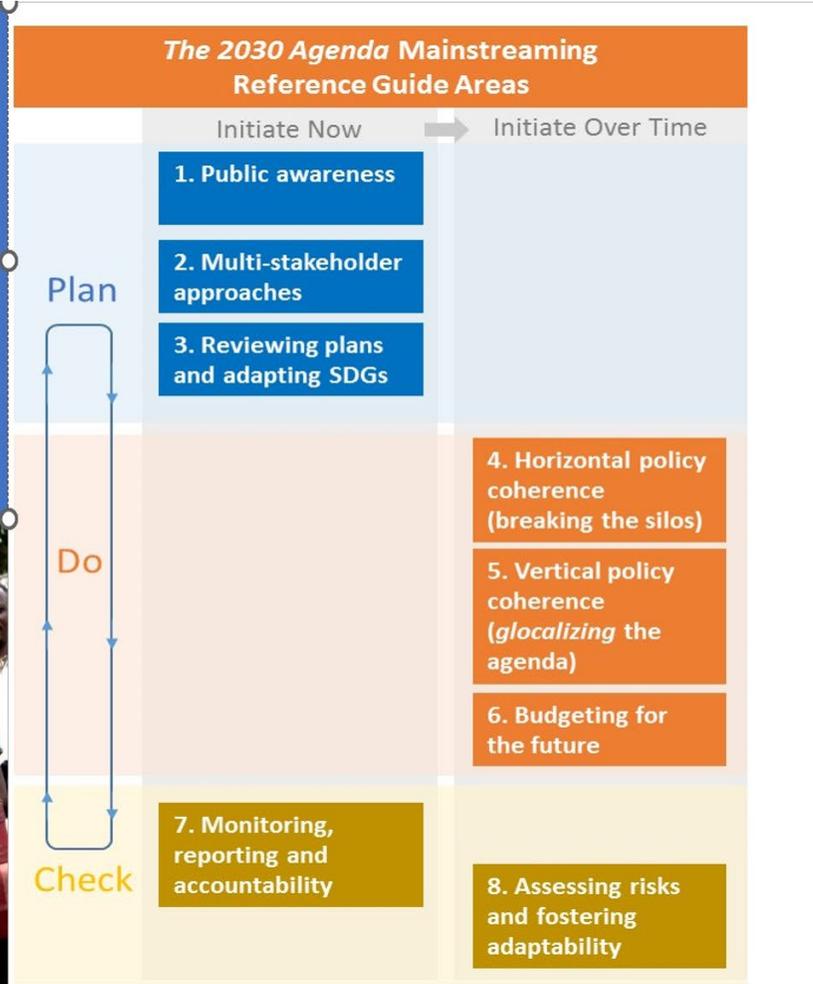
- Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" states, "Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others." (UN General Assembly. 2015. UN Resolution 70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York (para. 45).

- This global partnership is, among others, embodied in SDG 17 ("Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development"), target 17.14, which calls on countries to "enhance policy coherence for sustainable development" as a means of implementation.

- Target 17.14 speaks to the interconnectedness between the 17 SDGs and the benefits of synergetic actions among stakeholders and levels of government. The need for integrated, inclusive, and coherent approaches— that enhance horizontal coordination between sectors, and vertical integration between levels of government—also addresses one of the underlying principles of the 2030 Agenda of "leaving no one behind."

- The reality of SDG achievement will to a great extent rely on the actual inclusion, contributions, and collaboration of all partners and levels of government – multilevel governance [which is described as as the decision-making system to define and implement public policies produced by a collaborative relationship either vertical (between different levels of government, including national, federal, regional or local) or horizontal (within the same level, e.g., between ministries or between local governments) or both.

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- The success of multilevel governance and coherent SDG implementation can be fostered, for instance, by effectively integrating the SDGs into the mandates of institutions and promoting cross-sector collaboration at all levels. This requires adjusting institutional structures, aligning decision-making procedures, and installing mechanisms that support the cross-cutting and integrative nature of the SDGs.

- The imperative of that adequate multilevel governance is a prerequisite for successful sustainable development implementation can be traced back to the lessons learned from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which showed that ack of skills and resources at the local and regional levels was a hindrance in reaching targeted populations in implementing the MDGs.

- These and other shortcomings suggest the increasing the role of LGAs, communities, and local stakeholders is essential for accelerating progress on the SDGs, in particular to meet the principle of "leaving no one behind."

Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals

MAINSTREAMING the SDGs at COUNTRY-LEVEL

The 2030 Agenda Mainstreaming Reference Guide Areas

Initiate Now → Initiate Over Time

Plan
1. Public awareness
2. Multi-stakeholder approaches
3. Reviewing plans and adapting SDGs

Do
4. Horizontal policy coherence (breaking the silos)
5. Vertical policy coherence (*glocalizing* the agenda)
6. Budgeting for the future

Check
7. Monitoring, reporting and accountability
8. Assessing risks and fostering adaptability

- SDG localization is described as "the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development goals."

- It includes "the process of taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators that measure and monitor progress.

Why SDGs Localization is Key to Achieve the 2030 Agenda?

- The 2030 Agenda aims to address global challenges such as eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and achieving environmental sustainability. These challenges directly concern and impact local communities and LGAs, and their efforts can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

- LGAs are often in a strong position to identify and respond to the gaps and needs of successful SDG implementation. LGAs are often in charge of key policy areas such as education, health, transportation, waste management, urban and territorial planning, local economic development, social inclusion, and basic services. Because LGAs are in close proximity citizens, they play an important role in understanding citizens' needs, identifying gaps and minority and vulnerable groups, and facilitating awareness around the SDGs.

- Furthermore, LGAs can play a key role in data collection and monitoring related to the 2030 Agenda. Hence, the process of bringing the SDGs to the local level and vice versa is ideally considered to be a top-down and bottom-up process that enhances vertical and horizontal policy coherence and thereby contributes to the transformative change that is embedded in the 2030 Agenda.

- The 2030 Agenda directly and indirectly refers to subnational efforts and LGAs. All the SDGs have targets that relate to the role of LGAs in terms of their responsibilities in basic service delivery as well as their ability to promote and integrate inclusive and sustainable territorial development. Two SDGs explicitly relate to SDG: SDG 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels") and SDG 11 ("Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable").

- The implementation of these goals requires effective, accountable, and participatory institutions, and places particular responsibility on LGAs. This is especially the case for SDG 11, which, as a stand-alone goal for sustainable cities and communities recognizes sustainable urban and local development as a fundamental precondition of sustainable development. The implementation, monitoring, and reporting of SDG 11 therefore requires mechanisms at the national and local levels that ensure effective alignment of efforts.

- The discourse on "localizing SDGs" recognizes that many of the national SDG targets will not be achievable without the full commitment and involvement of sub-national levels of government.

- There is some SDG goals and targets that are a responsibility of sub-national governments

Using the SDGs to Recover from Shocks and Build Resilience

- The SDGs offer a far-sighted framework for shaping recovery beyond the impacts of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia- Ukraine war and other external shocks.

- In particular, they can accelerate the shift towards building inclusive, green, smart and resilient economies and cities.

- At the forefront of responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries, cities and regions used the SDGs as a framework to shape stimulus measures, investing in infrastructure and financial assistance for green and inclusive long-term strategies, while others scaled up sectoral efforts underlying specific SDGs.

- Three aspects make the SDGs a guide to recovering from shocks and strengthening resilience:
  - ✓ Localization: they help identify place-based priorities for sustainable development;
  - ✓ Alignment: they help match priorities, incentives and resources across levels of government; and
  - ✓ Engagement: they compel governments to work with the whole of society, including the private sector and citizens.

- The appreciation of sub-national governments (SNGs) as implementers of public policies, as facilitators of networks and partnerships between different stakeholders, and as interlocutors between communities and the state, has seen a tremendous increase in using the SDGs as a framework

- This trend has been reinforced by decentralisation in some countries e.g.; Kenya with the promulgation of a new Constitution in 2010 with Article 174 of the Constitution outlining the objectives of devolution that included giving powers of self-governance to the people, enhancing their participation in decision making, promoting economic development and ensuring equitable sharing of resources.
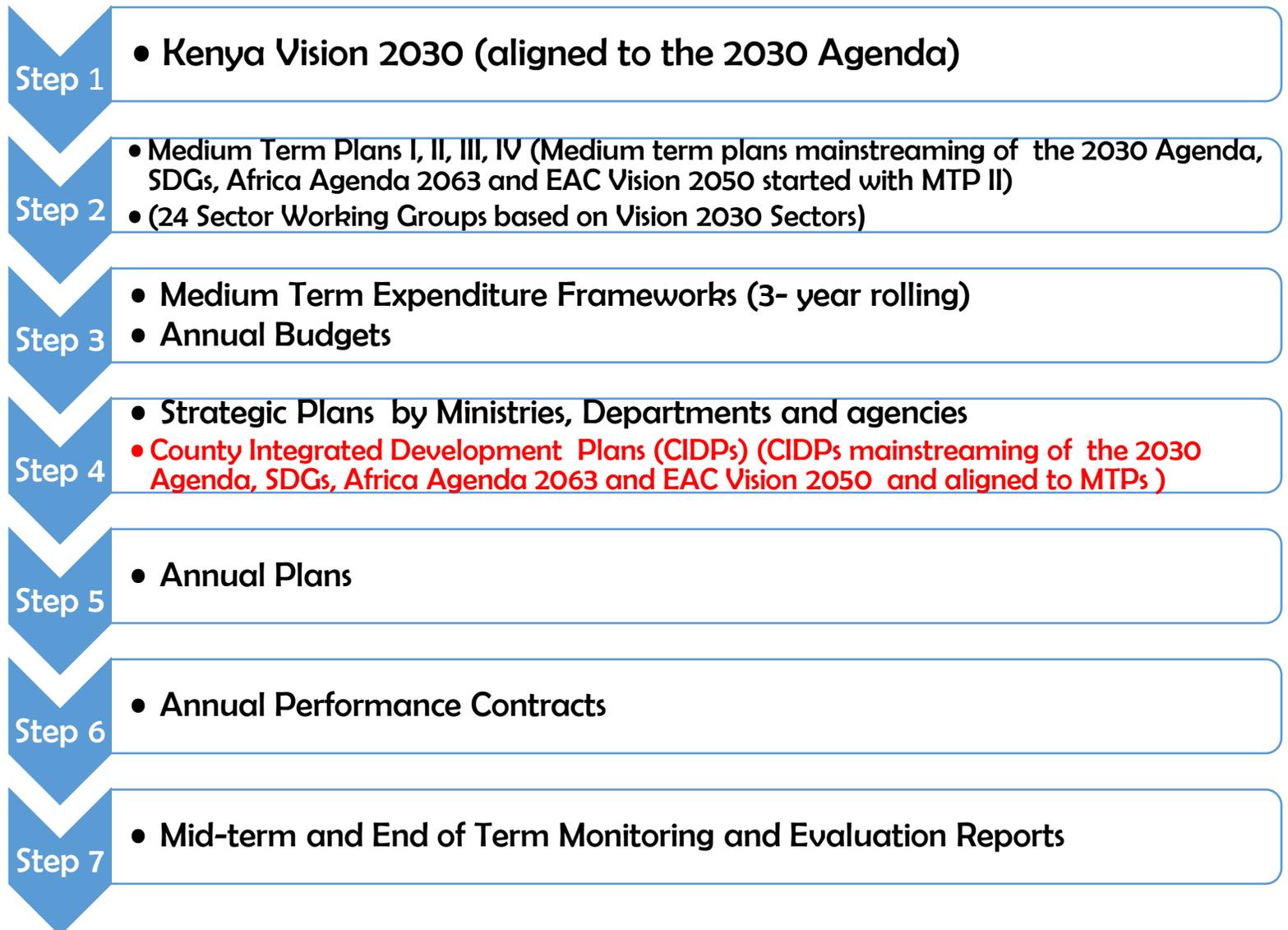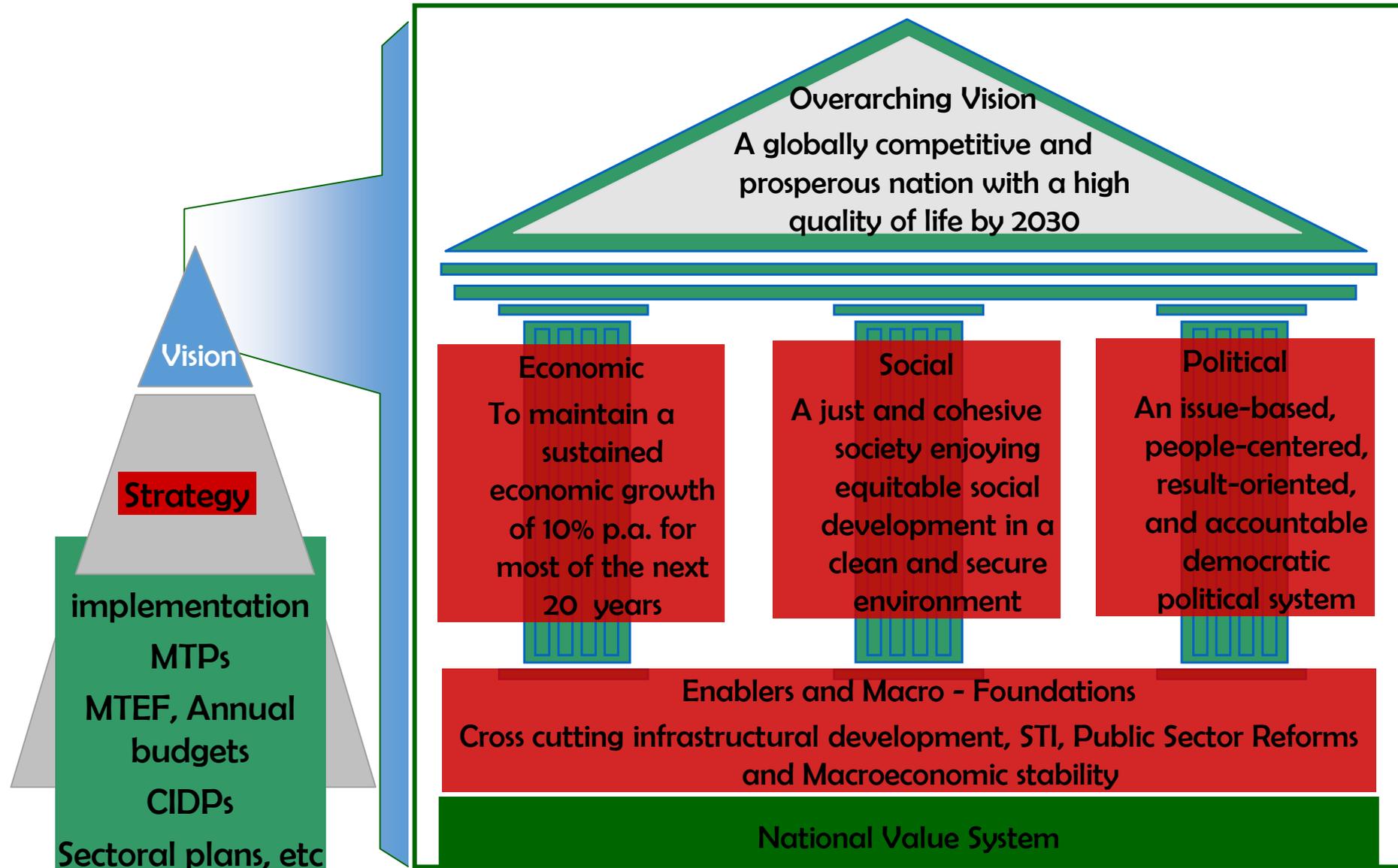
Kenya's Multilevel Governance System

o Kenya offers an interesting case study in multilevel governance system since 2010. The 2010 constitution put in place a two-tier system of governance – a national government and 47 county governments – giving new decision-making powers to the county level.

o The National Government is constitutionally mandated to provide guidance on policies, norms and standards for developing various plans as well as capacity building and technical assistance to national government and counties.

o The guidelines outline the processes and procedures for the preparation and development of the various plans to ensure harmony and standardization in development planning.

o Integrated planning in Kenya is a process through which efforts at national and devolved levels of government and other relevant public institutions are coordinated. The economic, social, environmental, legal and spatial aspects of development are brought together to produce a plan that meets the need and targets set for the benefit of communities. Integrated development involves participation by stakeholders who play key role in the planning process.

o The county planning framework highlights the aspect of integrated planning. The framework demonstrates the linkages of a county plan to other plans at county and national levels as well as international commitments and obligations.

o The framework also considers important factors such as the spatial planning for the projects identified. The framework links the projects planning and implementation with the budget allocation and no funds can be utilized outside of the planning framework. In project identification and implementation, the various stakeholders are considered.

o The planning process at the county level considers integration of the various plans such as the five-year County Integrated Development Plans, ten-year County Sectoral Plans, County, Urban Areas and Cities plan, Spatial Plans, strategic plans etc.

o The County Integrated Development Plan guidelines are prepared and issued to counties by the State Department of Planning, National Treasury and Planning. They highlight the processes and procedures a county undertakes in planning.

Institutionalizing Kenya Vision 2030 in Planning, Budgeting, Implementation , Monitoring and Evaluation

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- Since its launch in June 2008, Kenya Vision 2030 has provided the blueprint for government development planning

- Modular structure ensures ease of extracting Medium Term Plans

- Comprehensive and inclusive nature ensures universal acceptance

Step 1
- Kenya Vision 2030 (aligned to the 2030 Agenda)

Step 2
- Medium Term Plans I, II, III, IV (Medium term plans mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda, SDGs, Africa Agenda 2063 and EAC Vision 2050 started with MTP II)
- (24 Sector Working Groups based on Vision 2030 Sectors)

Step 3
- Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (3- year rolling)
- Annual Budgets

Step 4
- Strategic Plans by Ministries, Departments and agencies
- County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) (CIDPs mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda, SDGs, Africa Agenda 2063 and EAC Vision 2050 and aligned to MTPs)

Step 5
- Annual Plans

Step 6
- Annual Performance Contracts

Step 7
- Mid-term and End of Term Monitoring and Evaluation Reports

Kenya Vision 2030

Vision

Strategy

implementation
MTPs
MTEF, Annual budgets
CIDPs
Sectoral plans, etc

Overarching Vision

A globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030

Economic

To maintain a sustained economic growth of 10% p.a. for most of the next 20 years

Social

A just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development in a clean and secure environment

Political

An issue-based, people-centered, result-oriented, and accountable democratic political system

Enablers and Macro - Foundations

Cross cutting infrastructural development, STI, Public Sector Reforms and Macroeconomic stability

National Value System
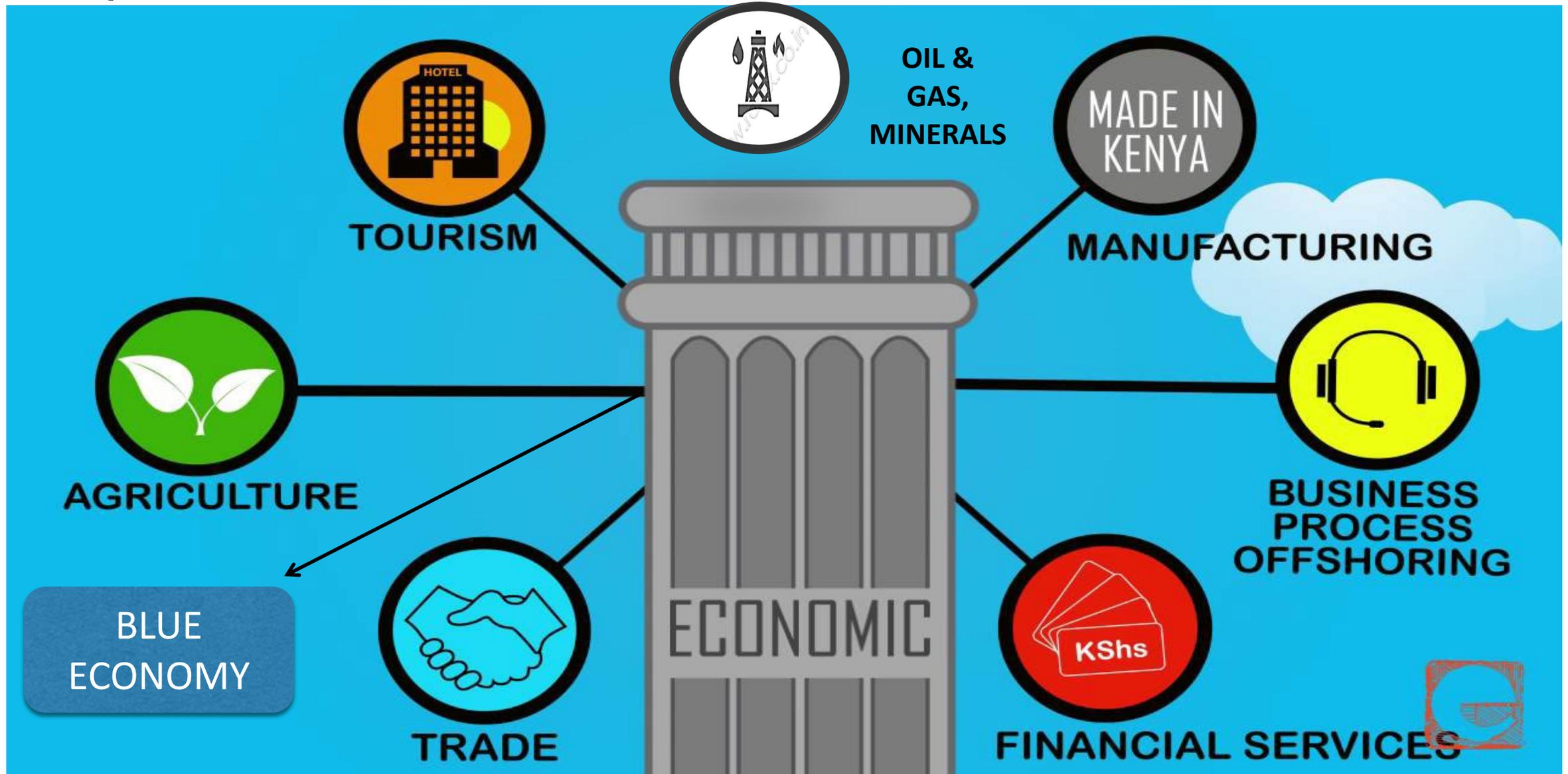
Overview of Kenya Vision 2030

o Kenya Vision 2030 is anchored on three pillars: economic, social and political governance:
   - ✓ The economic pillar aims to achieve an average economic growth rate of 10 percent per annum.
   - ✓ The social pillar seeks to create just cohesive and equitable development in a clean environment.
   - ✓ The political pillar aims to realize an issue-based, people-centred, results-oriented and accountable democratic system.

o The Constitution of Kenya 2010 recognizes a healthy environment as a right and calls for 'sustainable exploitation, utilization, management and conservation of the environment and natural resources.' Vision 2030 also seeks to provide a clean and secure environment.

o The three pillars of Vision 2030 are anchored on foundations of society that undertake reforms in 11 key sectors for socio-political and economic growth, viz:
   - ✓ Macroeconomic stability for long term development
   - ✓ Continuity in Governance Reforms
   - ✓ Enhanced Equity and wealth creation opportunities for the poor
   - ✓ Infrastructure (Transport, Ports, Telecom, etc)
   - ✓ Energy (Electricity etc)
   - ✓ Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)
   - ✓ Land Reforms
   - ✓ Human Resource Development
   - ✓ Security
   - ✓ Public Service
   - ✓ National Values and Ethics

Kenya Vision 2030 has identified 8 priority sectors to drive economic growth by specifying sectors and flagship projects to anchor major investment opportunities for the private sector

Implementation of Kenya Vision 2030

o Vision 2030 is implemented through 5- year Medium Term Plans (MTPs)

- MTP I   2008 -2012
- MTP II   2013 –2017
- MTP III   2018-2022
- MTP IV   2023 –2028 (still in process and to launched)

o Counties are expected to align their Strategic Plans and County Integrated Plans (CIDPs) to the Kenya Vision 2030 national development blueprint and the MTPs, regional and global development agendas (Africa Agenda 2063, EAC Vision 2050 and Agenda 2030) through a consultative process.

Localization of the SDGs by National and County Governments in Kenya

- In 2016 the country with support from the UN developed a roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda based on the UNSDG Mainstreaming Reference Guide.

- The multi-stakeholder Inter-Agency Technical Committee (IATC) was set up in 2016 by the government to coordinate SDGs. It is co-chaired by the government, private sector the CSO and a SDGs Directorate in the State Department of Planning plays is its secretariat.

- The ATC spearheads the implementation of the SDGs, to ensure that the SDGs are mainstreamed in the development planning documents, and track and report on implementation progress. The IATC is very critical in supporting the 47 County Governments in Kenya in the localization of the implementation of SDGs and reporting.

- County Governments have appointed and trained SDGs Champions to steer the SDG implementation, monitoring and evaluation process.

- Kenya presented its first VNR in 2017 (baseline report) and second VNR in 2020 which also drew from 4 VLRs of 4 pilot counties.

- A policy gaps analysis in 2018 assessed Kenya's preparedness to implement the 2030 Agenda by elaborating how SDGs targets align with the national planning frameworks. It recommended the enhancement of the national policy framework, which informed the need to review the existing and development of new policies.

- Mainstreaming of SDGs in performance contracting, action plans and County Governments through County Integrated Development Plans, position Kenya to better implement the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

- The Council of Governors established the SDGs unit to support County Governments in mainstreaming SDGs in their strategies, plans, projects and programmes.
    - ✓ The Unit supports County Governments to develop an institutional framework for the implementation of SDGs.
    - ✓ The Unit is working with County Governments to develop SDG indicator handbook on tracking and reporting on the progress and process of SDGs implementation.
    - ✓ The Unit facilitates the coordination of SDGs between the National Government and the 47 County Governments.

What is Needed to Further Localize the SDGs in Kenya?

Further efforts to localize the SDGs to help accelerate the SDGs in Kenya are:

- ✓ Full alignment of the SDGs at all levels of government to strengthen the commitment to mainstream localization into SDG implementation, coordination, and legal frameworks.
- ✓ A proper functional assignment in sectors affected by collaborative government that delineates the division of responsibilities and facilitates service delivery, good governance and SDGs implementation.
- ✓ Revamped fiscal transfers and revenue arrangements that ensure counties have sufficient funding to fulfil their mandates and meet local priorities.
- ✓ Empowered counties, rearranged local governance systems, and interactions between local actors and stakeholders to ensure a whole of government and society approach to SDGs implementation and monitoring.
- ✓ Reshaped civil service arrangements that enable the required personnel to be deployed to counties.
- ✓ Restructured and enhanced accountability relationships, both vertical and horizontal.
- ✓ Targeted interventions to ensure that SDG localization helps combat gender inequality and violence.
- ✓ Effective monitoring and performance measurement so that results can be used to fine-tune the reform in line with the intended impacts.
- ✓ Building local statistical capacities to collect data, monitor, evaluate, and engage in SDG-related data

Thank You