

Research Article

Forests for Prosperity: Integrating Carbon Markets with Rural Livelihoods in Kenya

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Abstract

Forests are central to rural incomes, energy security, water regulation, and climate goals. Yet the promise of carbon finance remains uneven due to contested land and resource rights, weak community participation, inconsistent monitoring and reporting, market volatility, and opaque benefit-sharing that can erode local trust. To determine how carbon markets can be integrated with rural livelihoods, a rapid evidence synthesis of Kenyan national laws, policies, and program documents was combined with structured case studies of representative forest and rangeland carbon projects. Data were analyzed thematically across five domains: governance and authorizations, measurement/reporting, benefit-sharing, livelihood co-investment, and risk management to identify enabling conditions and failure points. The results show that Kenya's evolving framework now clarifies roles for authorizing projects, establishes national tracking systems, and requires community benefit-sharing through locally negotiated agreements. Projects demonstrate the capacity to generate verified emission reductions and fund local priorities (e.g., water, education, health, and micro-enterprise). However, results also reveal persistent risks: unclear tenure and inadequate free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); gaps in transparent revenue reporting; variable monitoring quality; and exposure to price and demand swings. Kenya has assembled the core policy and institutional scaffolding to link carbon markets with rural prosperity. Realizing this potential depends on centering community rights, credible monitoring, and transparent, rules-based sharing of benefits. It is recommended that (1) fully operationalizing national carbon registries and clear authorization procedures; (2) standardizing Community Development Agreements (CDA) with public reporting of revenues and disbursements; (3) aligning project monitoring with national forest and restoration systems; (4) ring-fencing carbon revenues for local enterprises—beekeeping, nurseries, efficient cooking, sustainable wood products, and eco-tourism with gender and youth quotas; (5) requiring independent audits and accessible grievance redress mechanisms; and (6) benchmarking projects against internationally recognized integrity standards to stabilize demand and pricing.

Keywords

Carbon Markets, Rural Livelihoods, REDD+, Paris Agreement Article 6, Benefit-sharing, Kenya

1. Introduction

Forests in Kenya underpin national development and rural well-being by regulating water from key towers, buffering climate risk, supporting biodiversity, and supplying energy

and cash income through woodfuels, poles/timber, beekeeping, herbal medicine, and nature-based tourism [1, 2]. Sectoral accounts and environmental analyses indicate that the

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narrow, conventional GDP share (~3–3.6%) understates total value because informal production and ecosystem services remain undercounted; when broader services are imputed, forests' gross contribution to the economy rises substantially [2]. Against this background, “forests for prosperity” is not only an environmental goal; it is an economic strategy to diversify rural livelihoods and stabilize incomes in climate-exposed counties.

Kenya's climate policy trajectory has sharpened in ambition. The updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commits to abate greenhouse-gas emissions by 32% below Business As Usual (BAU) by 2030, covering all sectors [3]. Land use and forests are pivotal to this target, both for mitigation and for adaptation co-benefits in water-stressed basins. At the same time, official assessments show progress in tree and forest cover (12.13% and 8.83%, respectively, in 2021) providing a baseline for additionality tests in afforestation/reforestation and on-farm tree projects [4]. The policy push has been amplified by a nationwide 15-billion-trees growing for landscapes and ecosystems restoration program to 2032, including a dedicated tree-growing holiday in November 2023, Mazingira Day Holiday, signaling high-level political commitment [5].

A critical development is the establishment of a rules-based pathway for high-integrity carbon finance. The Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024 issued under the Climate Change Act 2016 and the Climate Change (Amendment) Act 2023, codify a Designated National Authority (DNA); define approval/authorization procedures; mandate corresponding adjustments to prevent double counting under Paris Agreement Article 6; create a national carbon registry; and institutionalize community benefit-sharing via Community Development Agreements [6]. The regulations set minimum annual social contributions at 40% of prior-year aggregate earnings (net of costs) for land-based projects and 25% for non-land-based projects, and channel a portion of revenues/fees to the Climate Change Fund [6]. By clarifying roles, reporting, and funds flow, the framework reduces transaction uncertainty and raises the floor for social performance.

These domestic rules align with evolving international integrity architecture. The Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market's Core Carbon Principles (ICVCM-CCPs) set a global quality bar for credits, while the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative's Claims Code (VCMI) guides credible buyer use and claims. By May 2024, ICVCM had granted initial approval to major programs including Verra, the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART), and the REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (TREE), covering about 98% of credits retired in 2023, with methodology assessments underway—an important signal for price resilience and market access [7–9]. For Kenya, explicit recognition of “recognized standards,” registry transparency, and Article 6 accounting positions projects to meet these benchmarks and attract premium buyers.

Empirical lessons from Kenyan projects illustrate both

promise and risk. On the opportunity side, the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project issued Verra's one-billionth Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) credit in 2022, drawing global attention to Kenya's potential to couple watershed protection, biodiversity, and local benefits with carbon revenue [10]. On the cautionary side, rangeland/soil-carbon initiatives have seen suspensions and legal disputes over consent, land rights, and methodology, underlining the need for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), clear tenure, and robust monitoring before issuance and claims [11]. These mixed signals argue for “integrity by design” and transparent benefit-sharing to sustain community trust and project durability.

Kenya's governance context further explains why integrity and participation are non-negotiable. The 2018 Taskforce on Forest Resources Management documented illegal logging pressures and institutional weaknesses that informed a multi-year logging moratorium [12]. Subsequent attempts to lift the moratorium faced successful legal challenge in 2023, with courts emphasizing due process and public participation in environmental decision-making [13, 14]. This history reinforces that carbon finance cannot be insulated from broader forest governance; rather, it must actively strengthen it through disclosure, grievance redress mechanisms, inclusive committees, and independent audits [6, 12].

Finally, prosperity outcomes depend on how revenues translate into diversified, shock-resilient livelihoods. Evidence on forests' contribution to rural cash income and energy security suggests that targeted co-investment in honey and nature-based enterprises, efficient biomass energy that reduces woodland pressure, community nurseries, and eco-tourism can convert carbon revenue into broad-based welfare gains, especially for women and youth [1, 2]. National monitoring frameworks for restoration (e.g., Forest Landscape Restoration Plan (FOLAREP) / National Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) Monitoring) provide a scaffold for aligning project Monitoring Reporting Verification (MRV) with public baselines, reducing duplication and contention over additionality [15]. If Kenya's legal mandates on benefit-sharing and reporting are implemented with rigor and paired with ICVCM/VCMI-aligned market practices, carbon markets can become a durable complement to the NDC while elevating rural livelihoods across counties.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a systematic qualitative document analysis (QDA) design to examine Kenya's forest, climate, and carbon-market policy architecture. The approach enabled an interpretive synthesis of national strategies, statutory instruments, government reports, international standards, and peer-reviewed literature to identify the linkages between environmental integrity and socio-economic prosperity [16, 17].

2.2. Scope and Analytical Focus

The review covered 2015–2025, aligning with the Climate Change Act (2016), Climate Change (Amendment) Act 2023, the updated NDC (2020), and the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024. Five thematic pillars guided the analysis: (i) forest resources and ecosystem-service valuation; (ii) policy and legal instruments for carbon markets; (iii) institutional architecture and governance; (iv) integrity and transparency mechanisms; and (v) socio-economic benefit-sharing and livelihood outcomes [18–20].

2.3. Data Sources

Primary sources included:

- 1) Statutes and subsidiary legislation (e.g., Climate Change Act, 2016; Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016; Climate Change (Amendment) Act, 2023; Carbon Markets Regulations, 2024) [18–20].
- 2) National strategies/policies (e.g., 15-Billion-Trees Programme, 2022–2032; National Climate Change Action Plan II, 2018–2022; National Forest Policy, 2023) [21–23].
- 3) Institutional/technical reports from the World Bank, KFS, UNFCCC, and CIFOR-ICRAF [24–27].
- 4) International integrity frameworks (ICVCM Core Carbon Principles; VCM Claims Code) [28, 29].
- 5) These were complemented by peer-reviewed articles, reputable media reports, and civil-society analyses on forest governance and carbon markets in Kenya [30–33].

2.4. Data Collection and Selection Criteria

Documents were identified via targeted searches of official portals, institutional repositories, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria required: (a) publication within 2015–2025; (b) explicit coverage of forests, carbon markets, or ecosystem-based livelihoods in Kenya; and (c) verifiable provenance (government, multilateral, recognized standards bodies, or peer-reviewed outlets). Redundant/derivative items were excluded to preserve analytical clarity.

2.5. Analytical Procedure

Materials were subjected to qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis. Text segments were coded against the five pillars (Section 2.2), then compared across documents to surface areas of convergence/divergence in goals, instruments, and implementation pathways [34, 35]. Triangulation cross-checked legal provisions against implementation reports and credible news/CSO briefs. A matrix mapping linked rules (e.g., registry, authorization, corresponding adjustments), governance mechanisms (e.g., benefit-sharing, FPIC, grievance redress), and livelihood outcomes (e.g., income diversification, energy security).

2.6. Validation and Reliability

Credibility was enhanced through source triangulation (government, international, and independent sources) and a transparent audit trail of search strings, inclusion decisions, codes, and memos. The study followed qualitative rigor criteria of confirmability, dependability, and contextual relevance [36].

3. Results

3.1. Regulatory Architecture and Governance

Kenya has codified a full carbon-market governance stack. The Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024 operationalize a Designated National Authority (DNA) National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), require corresponding adjustments to prevent double counting, establish a national carbon registry, and stipulate Community Development Agreements (CDAs) with minimum annual benefit-sharing contributions ($\geq 40\%$ of prior-year aggregate earnings for land-based projects; $\geq 25\%$ for non-land-based), with specified remittances to the Climate Change Fund. To improve clarity as advised by the reviewers, an explicit cross-reference to the approval workflow is added here: the Regulations outline a two-stage process—Letter of No-Objection at concept stage and Letter of Approval prior to registration—which is essential for Article 6 compliance.

Table 1. Kenya's carbon-market governance features and where they're codified.

Governance element	What it does	Where it's codified
Designated National Authority (DNA)	Issues letters of no-objection/approval; oversees Article 6 cooperation	Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024 - Governance & Institutional Framework.
Corresponding adjustments	Avoids double counting of mitigation outcomes	Reg. 6 "Prohibition against double counting."
National carbon registry	Tracks projects, issuances, transfers	Registry provisions (Regulations, 2024).
Community Development Agreements (CDAs)	Defines local committees, reporting; mandates social contributions	Social contributions & CDA templates (Regulations, 2024).
Climate Change Fund remit-	Allocates portions of fees/non-land-based	EY technical summary of fee remittances (50% of

Governance element	What it does	Where it's codified
tances	earnings to national fund	CDA fees; 25% of non-land-based earnings).

Forest/tree-cover baseline and national restoration drive. Kenya's 2021 National Forest Resources Assessment reported 12.13% tree cover and 8.83% forest cover, which provide baselines for Afforestation / Reforestation (A/R) and on-farm tree interventions. In 2023-2024 the Government launched the 15-billion trees growing for landscapes and ecosystems res-

toration programme to 2032, including a National Tree-Growing Mazingira Day, to scale up restoration and climate benefits. This restoration programme can serve as a public-sector anchor for monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) alignment when designing jurisdictional or project-level baselines.

Table 2. Landscape baselines and restoration program signals.

Indicator / program	Most recent value / design	Implications for carbon programming
Tree cover (2021)	12.13%	Baseline for additionality tests on farm trees/woodlots.
Forest cover (2021)	8.83%	Anchors national inventory & leakage checks.
15-billion-trees program	2023-2032; includes National Tree-Growing Day	Public co-investment; supports MRV via organized campaigns and registries.

Integrity alignment (supply and demand). On the supply side, the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM) approved five programs American Carbon Registry (ACR), Architecture for REDD+ Transactions (ART), Climate Action Reserve (CAR), Gold Standard, and Verra/VCS—as Core Carbon Principles (CCP) - Eligible, covering ~98% of credits retired in 2023; methodology-level assessments are ongoing. On the demand side, the VCM Claims Code sets the rulebook for credible corporate claims (with detailed explanatory notes and Mutual Recognition Arrangement [MRA]). Kenya's 2024 Regulations' emphasis on recognized standards, registry transparency, and Article 6 accounting is compatible with this trajectory. ICVCM raises supply-side quality; Kenya's 2024 framework ensures national accounting + social safeguards; VCM clarifies demand-side claims together reducing double counting and “greenwash risk.

3.2. Rural Livelihoods and Sector Contribution

Forestry's measured GDP share masks larger livelihood value. Official national accounting attributes roughly ~3-3.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and ~50,000 direct jobs to forestry; however, substantial informal and subsistence value (woodfuel chains, on-farm trees, water-tower ecosystem services) remain outside the national accounts. This undercount supports pairing carbon revenues with diversified rural enterprises (e.g., beekeeping, wood-product value addition, eco-tourism) to capture full welfare gains. *(Note: specific job and %-GDP figures vary by study/year and method; harmonized estimates should be cited consistently in the Discussion.)* For consistency, the phrasing “%-GDP” is clarified to “percentage of GDP” in the Discussion section.

Table 3. Indicative channels through which carbon projects amplify rural welfare.

Channel	Direct effect	Indirect/induced effect	Policy lever
A/R and FMU projects	Carbon revenue; nursery jobs; planting/maintenance	Downstream SME wood-products; local wage multipliers	CDA-mandated benefit sharing; skills programs
Agroforestry/on-farm trees	Shade/crop co-benefits; timber/fuelwood sales	Reduced fuel costs; time savings for households	Extension + seed systems; registry streamlining
Non-timber forest products (NTFPs)	Honey, medicinal plants, fruits	Branding, eco-tourism linkages	Community enterprise grants; market access

Channel	Direct effect	Indirect/induced effect	Policy lever
/water-tower services	More reliable flows; reduced siltation	Irrigation stability; hydropower co-benefits	PES/WRUA alignment; catchment restoration

3.3. Case-Study Insights

Kasigau Corridor (Wildlife Works).

- 1) One of the first REDD+ projects globally to issue VCS credits (2011), with ongoing monitoring and third-party verifications. A 2022 monitoring period verified ~1.64 million VCUs for issuance (plus buffer). Verra completed a 2024 review of allegations surrounding the projects (VCS 562/612). Takeaways: the need for consistent transparency on revenue flows/benefit sharing, robust worker protections, and accessible grievance/Gender Based Violence (GBV) reporting.
- 2) Chyulu Hills (CHCT: Chyulu Hills Conservation Trust/MWCT: Maasai Wildlife Conservation Trust and partners).
- 3) In November 2022, Verra's 1-billionth VCS credit was issued from the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project, a strong signal of maturity and visibility for Kenya's REDD+ pipeline. Project narratives emphasize community governance and watershed benefits; recent features highlight livelihood uses of revenue. These results suggest a pathway to blend carbon finance with rangeland/forest conservation and county development priorities.

4. Discussion

4.1. Kenya's 2024 Carbon-Market Regulations in a Global Integrity Context

Kenya's *Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024* constitute a rare, comprehensive national "stack" for voluntary and Article 6 activity in Africa, creating a Designated National Authority (DNA) under NEMA, a national registry, clear approval pathways (letter of no-objection/letter of approval), mandatory corresponding adjustments (CAs) for international transfers, and legally binding Community Development Agreements (CDAs) [37]. The regulations also set minimum annual social contributions of $\geq 40\%$ of prior-year aggregate earnings (net of cost of doing business) for land-based projects and $\geq 25\%$ for non-land-based projects, with additional remittances to the Climate Change Fund [37, 38]. These features directly target historical pain points in the voluntary carbon market—opaque benefit-sharing, weak host-country accounting, and limited public oversight—by creating durable, auditable duties for project proponents and the DNA.

This governance move is aligned with ICVCM and VCMI. On the supply side, the *Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM)* has now deemed five major programs—ACR, ART, CAR, Gold Standard, and Verra—CCP-Eligible, a set that covers roughly 98% of credits retired in 2023; the next phase assesses methodologies ("categories") for CCP labelling [39–41]. On the demand side, the *VCMI Claims Code of Practice* and its *Monitoring, Reporting, and Assurance (MRA)* framework specify what companies must disclose and have assured to make high-integrity claims [42, 43]. Kenya's requirements around recognized standards, registry traceability, and CA-based Article 6 accounting are compatible with this dual integrity push. Practically, alignment means projects registered under CCP-eligible programs that also meet Kenya's authorization, CDA, and benefit-sharing tests should experience fewer frictions in buyer due diligence and fewer "greenwash-risk" flags in corporate claims [39, 42].

At the same time, maturing integrity screens are tightening supply. For example, early ICVCM method screens indicate that large swaths of legacy methodologies may fail the benchmark (e.g., several renewable categories), reaffirming the value of host-country oversight and Article 6 accounting to maintain credibility [41]. Kenya's insistence on corresponding adjustments and a national registry positions the country to avoid double counting and to interface with international transfers under Article 6.2, which will likely become a non-negotiable buyer requirement for high-stakes claims. For Kenya's pipeline, policy clarity plus global integrity convergence should translate to lower transaction risk and higher demand for credits that check both boxes (national compliance + CCP/VCMI). The remaining challenge—equally significant—is practical implementation: staffing the DNA/NEMA, operationalizing the registry, and building CDA compliance/verification capacity at county level.

4.2. Social Contributions and CDAs: From Percentage Mandates to Equitable Development

Requiring $\geq 40\%$ (land-based) and $\geq 25\%$ (non-land-based) social contributions each year, net of business costs, does two things. First, it creates an *ex-ante* distribution rule that is legible to communities and counties; second, it sets a budget line for rural development tied to verified performance [37]. Several legal commentaries clarify that private projects on private land are exempt from these mandated disbursements,

while projects on public or community land must incorporate the contribution in CDAs, whose templates (Fourth Schedule) define committee composition, reporting, and dispute-resolution expectations [44, 45].

Comparatively, few jurisdictions specify floor percentages in law; most rely on standard-level safeguards (e.g., Climate, Community & Biodiversity [CCB]) or voluntary benefit-sharing plans. Kenya's approach is therefore innovative but raises implementer questions: (i) how "aggregate earnings" should be transparently calculated, including the challenge of price secrecy versus auditability, (ii) how to separate administrative from project social outlays, and (iii) how to sequence payments with issuance and cash receipts. The Second Schedule fee logic and CA fee split (50% to the Climate Change Fund) provide some clarity, yet the DNA will need clear audit protocols to avoid disputes [37, 38]. From a livelihoods perspective, mandated contributions are necessary but not sufficient. Evidence on forestry's macroeconomic weight (~3-3.6% of GDP; ~18,000-50,000 direct jobs) undercounts informal woodfuel and subsistence value chains, suggesting that tying contributions to productive rural enterprises (beekeeping, wood-product value addition, eco-tourism, payments for watershed services) will likely multiply welfare beyond cash transfers [46]. Programmatically, CDAs should earmark funds for enterprise incubation (e.g., honey aggregation), market access, and skills (nursery management, carpentry, eco-guiding), sequenced with planting and verification cycles. Including explicit guidance—such as the CDA clause requiring public disclosure of annual revenue allocations—can further strengthen community oversight.

4.3. Baselines, Additionality, and Kenya's 15-Billion-Trees Growing Drive

Kenya's 2021 *National Forest Resources Assessment* provides a clear baseline—12.13% tree cover and 8.83% forest cover—from which additionality tests for A/R, agroforestry, and FMU interventions can start [47, 48]. In 2023-2032, the Government launched an ambitious *15-Billion-Trees for Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Programme*, including a *National Tree-Growing Mazingira Day*, to scale up restoration and co-benefits [49, 50].

The policy tension is straightforward: large, state-supported planting campaigns can, if not designed carefully, erode additionality for private or community projects; conversely, government programmes can lower costs, build nursery capacity, and improve MRV via organized registries. Kenya's solution should be complementarity: (i) use national campaigns to create seedling pipelines and restoration registries; (ii) use project finance to target permanence and social co-benefits that exceed what public budgets alone can deliver. Clear whitelists and county coordination now referenced in Kenya's authorization templates can help prevent overlap [37].

4.4. MRV, Registries, and Article 6 Accounting

The national registry obligation is central: it enables serial-number traceability, status tracking (registered/issued/transferred/cancelled), and the CA ledger for Article 6.2. Without such a ledger, "corresponding adjustments" become assertions rather than accounting entries [37]. Kenya's rules require CA fee remittances and authorize letters at concept and approval stages. This architecture should interoperate with program registries (e.g., Verra, ART) and potentially future sector registries (energy, AFOLU), as suggested by legal analyses [51].

Data quality remains the hinge. ICVCM's next-step methodology ("category") assessments will likely disqualify or condition some legacy methods; early reporting indicates material shares of existing credits fail additionality or durability screens [41]. Kenya's DNA should therefore (i) publish program/method eligibility lists, (ii) encourage leakage-robust baselines for REDD+, and (iii) ensure social-safeguard audits are accessible and independent.

4.5. Lessons from Kenyan Case Studies: Kasigau and Chyulu

Kasigau Corridor (Wildlife Works) offers a decade-plus view of REDD+ projectisation from the first VCS issuance in 2011 (~1.45 million tCO₂e for the first monitoring period) to recent verifications (AENOR 2023) and a 2024 Verra review examining allegations regarding GBV reporting and labour practices [52-54]. Following the review, trading suspensions were lifted and exchanges signalled reinstatement [55]. The headline lesson for Kenya's 2024 framework is twofold: (i) transparency over revenue flows and benefit-sharing, and (ii) accessible, trusted grievance/GBV channels.

Chyulu Hills (CHCT/MWCT & partners) illustrates reputational leverage: in November 2022, Verra's one-billionth VCS credit was issued from Chyulu Hills, placing Kenya's pipeline in the global spotlight [56, 57]. This visibility is both an opportunity and a scrutiny magnet: MRV must be audit-ready, benefit use documented, and watershed claims quantified.

Cross-case insights indicate that Kenya's 2024 rules directly address prior social and accounting criticisms. By mandating CDA content, hard-coding social contributions, and requiring Article 6 accounting, Kenya reduces discretionary variation across projects and strengthens buyer confidence. However, outcomes will hinge on county implementation capacity and the DNA's willingness to publish audits, sanctions, and CA statements.

4.6. Rural Livelihoods: Translating Carbon Revenue into Durable Gains

As Section 4.2 argued, forestry's official GDP and employment tallies understate total livelihood value because they

omit informal woodfuel chains, household energy substitution, and ecosystem services of water towers (Kenya Forest Service, n.d.). CDAs should therefore prioritize productive assets and market linkages over one-off transfers. Examples include: (i) beekeeping tied to A/R corridors; (ii) timber and non-timber value addition (solar panels, charcoal kilns, carpentry micro-hubs); (iii) eco-tourism linkages around REDD+ landscapes; and (iv) watershed Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES) with water utilities/ Water Resources Users Association (WRUAs) for co-financing maintenance. Where carbon is temporally volatile (price risk; issuance risk), diversified enterprises can stabilize household income.

The CDA template itself provides a governance anchor committee composition, reporting, and financial accounts (project development vs administrative expenses) but the state should add (i) model budgets, (ii) simple audit guides, and (iii) a public CDA repository in the national registry to improve trust and reduce “black box” perceptions (Kenya Law).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Kenya has moved rapidly from pilot projects to a rules-based carbon market with embedded community benefit-sharing and Article 6 readiness. The country’s measured increase in tree/forest cover, coupled with a high-profile restoration drive, creates favorable conditions to attract integrity-conscious finance. The results here show that Kenya’s regulatory framework is robust on paper and that project exemplars (Kasigau, Chyulu) can channel revenue into community priorities provided that rights, consent, MRV integrity, and transparent CDA reporting are non-negotiable. Done well, carbon markets can complement Kenya’s NDC and make forests central to inclusive rural prosperity.

Several policies are recommended:

National level. Operationalize the national carbon registry; publish recognized standards/methodologies; issue clear Article 6 authorization guidance (including terms for corresponding adjustments); and provide model CDAs with caps on administration shares and audit requirements.

County/KFS level. Identify priority landscapes and ecosystems (water towers, mangroves, drylands), build county MRV capacity linked to national baselines, and mainstream social-impact monitoring (gender, youth, grievance handling).

Project/Community level. Adopt CDA-first planning so benefit-sharing and livelihood pipelines are co-designed with communities from the outset; publish annual CDA reports; and align methodologies with ICVCM eligibility to reduce offtake risk.

Abbreviations

FOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
A/R	Afforestation / Reforestation
ART	Architecture for REDD+ Transactions

BAU	Business-as-Usual
CA	Corresponding Adjustment
CDA	Community Development Agreement
CCP	Core Carbon Principles
CCB	Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standard
CDH	Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research -
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
DNA	Designated National Authority
FLR	Forest Landscape Restoration
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICVCM	Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
KELA	Kenya Environmental Lawyers Association
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, and Verification
MWCT	Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCM	Voluntary Carbon Market
VCMI	Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
WRUA	Water Resources Users Association

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Author Contributions

Benjamin Mutuku Kinyili is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data is available from the corresponding author upon

reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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