

February 26, 2016

The Open Government Steering Committee

RE: ENDORSEMENT FOR ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SUBNATIONAL PILOT

Kerio Center is a registered non-governmental organization that is committed to promoting participatory decision making processes and improving transparency of public finances in the North Rift region (**Elgeyo Marakwet**, Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, and Nandi Counties). The organization pursues research in and analysis of budget and related development documents, advocacy and provides technical assistance to government organs and other stakeholders interested in the budgeting process.

With support of the International Budget Partnership (IBP), we have been working on budget advocacy in the north rift region of Kenya counties with focus on Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu counties. Our analysis has revealed huge gaps in presentation of budget information to stakeholders across counties in Kenya. The budget documents are highly technical and voluminous for non-technical actors to base their informed decisions. This has resulted in misunderstandings between key actors in budgeting over budget choices especially at the budget formulation stage. We have organized meetings, including national and regional forums for technocrats to discuss and share ideas on improving budgeting process; while our partner, the International Budget Partnership organized practitioner seminars for non-state and state actors to foster working relationships in promoting open decision making processes, transparency and accountability in the management of public resources.

The county government of Elgeyo Marakwet has demonstrated a willingness to participate in these fora and to adopt our findings. They have used that as basis to develop and strengthen participatory mechanisms by developing structures for public participation, access to and presentation of budget information to stakeholders including the public and other non-state actors. The leadership of the county government has been open to engagements which aim at promoting open and participatory decision making process. The Deputy Governor in particular endorsed the need for simplifying budget information in order to encourage sustained participation of the public. The county executive committee (CEC) member for finance and economic planning to which served as our entry to the county government dedicated the directorates of budget and economic planning respectively to partner with us in work around improving openness, transparency and accountability and also, allowing the technocrats in these directorates to attend and participate in meetings and seminars organized by us and other partners with view of learning. On the other hand, the county government's legislative arm, the county assembly enacted a law that guides the distribution of resources across the county in an equitable manner. Equity is a major concern that many counties are

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still struggling with. Generally, these put together are good indicators of the county's willingness to promote open government.

In 2015, the county invited our technical support in developing a template for budget presentation which is currently being piloted with the County Budget and Economic Forum using departments' budgets. In addition to active participation; the county government has also accepted to take up a leadership role in organizing the regional meetings which brings together technocrats from the executives and legislatures of Elgeyo Marakwet, West Pokot, Baringo, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and Nandi counties. They have also been a participant in the practitioner seminars organized by our partner IBP which encourage learning and linkage between government and civil society.

Kerio Center would wish to express interest to participate and take an active role in the subnational pilot through continuous learning and provision of technical support and to strengthen partnership with non-state actors to promote collective engagement with the government in promoting open governments. In light of the call for expression of interest for subnational governments to participate in the pilot, we would like to endorse the participation of the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet County in this initiative. We have assessed the county against the criteria and we are convinced that it meets all the requirements as quoted below.

The County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet County

The County of Elgeyo Marakwet is one of the 47 devolved units in Kenya's new system of government. The county has a population of 370,712 people (National Population and Housing Census, 2009). The inter-census population growth rate for the county is 2.7 percent per annum. The county government, like the rest of the devolved units is still learning, exploring and adopting ways of promoting open government. In our assessment as enumerated earlier and against the criteria set in the call, we have established that the county has demonstrated goodwill and commitment to promote the principles of open government.

It is our view that the participation of the County Government is crucial opportunity for learning from others work and experiences to improve its current efforts while participating subnational governments will get the chance to learn and improve on ideas and process being tested and experimented in the county. At end, the major impact of the county's participation is replication of principles and mechanisms adopted by the county as result of its participation in the subnational pilot to many other counties starting with current peers and also influencing the national action plans from bottom-up.

Sincerely,



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Criteria for the call

Eligible subnational governments for both tiers need to have a minimum population of 250,000 people and the national government of the country needs to be a current [OGP participant](#).

Pioneers' tier applicants also need to:

Commit to respect the open government principles articulated in the [Open Government Declaration](#).

Have commitment from the political leader of the subnational government and staff who can dedicate time to developing and implementing commitments in partnership with civil society.

Have a demonstrated track record of, or commitment to, open government, for example through open data, civic engagement, access to information, budget and fiscal transparency, participatory policymaking.

Express interest in receiving direct, institutional support from OGP to co-create commitments and advance their open government reform efforts.

Have experience of working positively with local civil society and a commitment to protecting civic space and engaging constructively with citizens outside government.

Have a willingness to share experience and insights with peers.

Are willing to take on a formal mentorship role with another subnational government after year one of the pilot program is complete.

As well as being assessed against these criteria, participants will be chosen to reflect different forms of subnational government and different stages of economic and social development.