



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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COMMITMENT TO TAKE PART IN THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) LOCAL PROGRAM

The above subject refers.

As the Director-General of the Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS), and on behalf of NMS, I would like to express our willingness and commitment to take part in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Local program. NMS was established pursuant to Article 187 of the Constitution of Kenya and the Deed of Transfer of Functions that transferred the following county responsibilities to NMS; health, transport, planning and development, public works, utilities and ancillary services.

According to the 2019 census, Nairobi City County has the highest population of 4,397,093 in Kenya. A bulk of this population dwells in informal settlements and lack infrastructural services such as water, sanitation, solid waste disposal and health services. This was a result of poor local governance that was in place previously. Consequently, NMS was created out of the desire to improve efficiency in provision of services to Nairobi residents and address the previous shortcomings and gaps. As such, since its establishment, MS has been working towards the provision of both short and long-term social-economic benefits to the residents of the Nairobi Metropolitan region by improving key public services. These include: spatial planning and public infrastructure in the areas surrounding railways stations, roads, construction of modern markets, street and security lighting. A lot of effort has also been taken to improve healthcare through rehabilitation of health facilities, expansion of clean water and sanitation coverage through the provision of clean water and sinking of boreholes in informal settlements. Additionally, improvement of transport infrastructure in the city and in informal settlements were made together with a betterment of disaster and emergency preparedness, sanitation services and solid waste management.

Further, as NMS, we have made a deliberate commitment to the citizens of Nairobi City County to reduce urban poverty, increase social inclusion, improve living standards and

provide basic services such as water, infrastructure, health services and integrated solid waste management. So far, NMS has developed an automated one-stop-payment-platform for all service delivery needs ranging from parking fees, land rates, business permits and market fee payment. This system has amplified accountability, transparency and need-based budgeting. This system enables almost real time monitoring and reporting of revenue collection. This has sealed revenue leakages and has made it easy to audit revenue collected. Further, the system is simple and has thus made it easy for residents to pay taxes due to the County. This has enabled increased revenue collection thus guaranteeing funding of development projects in the City.

Despite the results already witnessed under a short period of time, and the efforts conducted by NMS to improve service delivery, there is a lack of proper engagement between the County Government and the residents hence this needs to be addressed. In addition, due to its nascent stages NMS lacks a comprehensive feedback mechanism on service delivery to ensure that there is feedback on the services being delivered. This therefore calls for creation of mechanisms that would see residents participate in the ongoing initiatives by NMS to improve the delivery and address adequately citizen needs. Indeed, transparency and public participation are two fundamental principles of the Kenyan Constitution.

As such, in order to promote open government action, NMS is committing to work with the Nairobi County Assembly which is composed of the representatives of the residents. The County Assembly is the legislative, oversight and budget approval arm of Nairobi City County Government, it also provides a policy framework for NMS. Notably, history shows that the Nairobi City County Budgets have previously been technical, complex and not easily understood by the public. This has resulted in low levels of awareness of the budget content. Furthermore, citizens' preferences on budgetary allocation needs are therefore not reflected in the budget. Budget-making requires a more open process and should be available to the public. The content in the budget should be presented in a simple way and easily understood language for easier comprehension by the public. Besides, the budget should be disseminated to promote transparency, deepen accountability, empower citizens, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

NMS has already taken steps to improve citizen engagement and participation. For instance, NMS has established a Public Relations Department and a Liaison Office to spearhead public engagement initiatives. It is against this backdrop that NMS sees the OGP- Local program as an avenue for increasing public participation in the developmental programs and services being implemented across the City. Working in collaboration with the County Assembly and the Oslo Centre under the program, NMS expects to achieve the following: -

- i) Inclusion of citizens' voice in policy decision making;
- ii) Strengthening open budgets processes;
- iii) Take into account the views of residents in project formulation, implementation and evaluation for improved and effective service delivery;
- iv) Establish a citizen feedback mechanism;

- v) Promote the inclusion of underrepresented groups; and
- vi) Integrate existing IT systems and development of other systems as a mechanism to provide a more transparent and efficient way of delivering services to the public.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, NMS expects to ensure that various Directors mainstream the aforementioned strategies in their programs. NMS will also form a steering Committee composed of representatives of all the Directorates who shall monitor implementation of the said strategies in collaboration with strategic partners which include the County Assembly and the Oslo Centre.

Accordingly, joining OGP Local would increase the role of citizens in local governance and strengthen the provision of local service delivery offered by NMS and the County Assembly. Being the capital, Nairobi City would set a good foundation for engaging other counties in open government through intergovernmental relations mechanics and annual devolution conferences. The collaboration between NMS, the Assembly, the Oslo Center and OGP local would offer a foundation upon which citizens' engagement on local service delivery is laid and principles of openness and transparency can be cultivated. Beyond this collaboration, standards of citizen engagement, openness and transparency would have been set. This would then translate into a sustainable practice that sets democratic standards for other counties and the East African region.

We would like to extend our gratitude in considering us to be part of the Open Government Partnership local program. We look forward for seamless activation of this engagement. Feel free to contact us for any additional information and clarification.



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DIRECTOR GENERAL