CITIZEN REPORT CARD

HOMA BAY COUNTY · 2023

# Citizen Report Card on the Status of Social Accountability Implementation in Homa Bay County

*An evidence base for the County's Governance service charters — assessing access to information, civic education and public participation, devolved units, and complaints handling.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION · CIVIC EDUCATION & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION · DEVOLVED UNITS · COMPLAINTS HANDLING

**Conducted by**
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REFERENCE

# Abbreviations

**ATI**
Access to Information

**BQ**
Bill of Quantities

**CAJ**
Commission on Administrative Justice

**CBTS**
County Budget Transparency Survey

**CGA**
County Government Act

**CSOs**
Civil Society Organizations

**CAT**
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

**CRC**
Convention on the Rights of the Child

**CEDAW**
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

**DANIDA**
Danish International Development Agency

**FBOs**
Faith-Based Organizations

**FGD**
Focus Group Discussion

**GDP**
Gross Domestic Product

**HQ**
Head Quarters

**ICCPR**
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

**ICERD**
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

**ICESCR**
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**ICRPD**
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**IDF**
Integrated Development Facility

**IEBC**
Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

**MCA**
Member of County Assembly

**MDAs**
Ministries, Departments, and Agencies

**M&E**
Monitoring and Evaluation

**NGOs**
Non-Governmental Organizations

**PLHIV**
People Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus

**PMCs**
Project Management Committee

**PWDs**
Persons with Disabilities

**SGBV**
Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

# Introduction

Devolution of power and resources is a pivotal means of promoting and advancing democracy, participation and accountability. Based on the objectives of devolution captured in Article 174 of the Constitution, its promises can be conceptualised as bringing opportunities for equality, participation, accountability and effective service delivery. Devolution also enhances good governance by incorporating vertical separation of powers and increasing the ambit of checks and balances.

In promoting social accountability, Article 174 advocates for active engagement of citizens, communities and other non-state actors in county governance processes. Article 10 further identifies public participation as one of the national values and principles of governance. Various pieces of legislation — the County Government Act 2012, the Public Finance Management Act 2011, and the Access to Information Act 2016, among others — provide principles, structures and mechanisms for citizens to exercise their sovereign power as provided for in the Constitution.

For social accountability to be implemented, county governments need to create an enabling environment. Easy and timely access to verified, authentic information is critical to ensuring stakeholders are adequately informed for productive engagement — alongside well-resourced structures for public participation, including decentralised units, ICT-based platforms, and citizen service centres anticipated by the County Government Act 2012.

The County Government of Homa Bay, Department of Governance, Administration, Communication and Devolution, intends to develop a Departmental Charter in line with Articles 174(a–i) and 232(1) of the Constitution. Service charters define the service experiences that service users can expect — detailing the service offered, the entitlements, and the obligations derived from relevant sector policies, putting service delivery units on an accountability path.

IDF's Citizen Report Card helps identify promising practices and gaps in citizen participation, along with recommendations to strengthen Homa Bay County's governance processes — policy formulation, planning, budgeting, and programme implementation and monitoring. Findings will help determine service standards for the Governance Department's service charters, inform the overall discourse on social accountability implementation, and — through peer learning — contribute to governance reforms in other Kenyan counties.

## Specific Objectives

**1. Identify Best Practices and Gaps**

Identify best practices, gaps, and recommendations for improving citizen participation and social accountability in Homa Bay County.

**2. Determine Service Standards**

Determine service standards to inform the content of service charters for the Governance Department.

# Methodology

The process of developing Homa Bay County's Social Accountability Citizen Report Card involved four key steps:

**1. Entry Meetings with Stakeholders**

Entry meetings with officials from the County Government of Homa Bay (Department of Governance, Communication, Administration and Devolution) and civil society organisations built consensus on the need for the Citizen Report Card and its methodology; key themes and parameters were agreed upon.

**2. Analysis of Social Accountability Legal Frameworks**

A review of laws supporting social accountability — the Constitution of Kenya, the County Government Act 2012, the Public Finance Management Act 2012, and the Access to Information Act 2016 — informed the identification of four thematic areas and the development of a primary data collection tool.

**3. Data Collection and Analysis**

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions, borrowing from the community scorecard approach, gathered citizen scores on public participation and social accountability indicators with justifications. County officials were interviewed on facilitation efforts, and sub-county/ward administrators completed a detailed input matrix against legal and policy requirements.

**4. Validation and Finalization**

The draft Citizen Report Card was subjected to validation by key stakeholders — county officials from headquarters and devolved units, CSO representatives, selected respondents, and enumerators — with inputs incorporated into the final report.

## Four Thematic Areas

Access to Information Civic Education & Public Participation Public Administration / Devolved Units Public Compliments & Complaints

# Analysis of the Legal Framework for Social Accountability

Social accountability is an approach for building accountability relationships between citizens and governance institutions, driven by citizen participation and civic engagement (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2004). The World Bank defines it as an approach where ordinary citizens and/or citizen groups participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. ANSA-EAP further describes it as actions and mechanisms initiated by citizen groups to hold public officials, politicians and service providers to account for their conduct and performance in delivering services, improving welfare, and protecting rights.

**Social Accountability Actions**

Promoting access to information; monitoring of public services; engaging governance institutions through interface dialogues and negotiations to improve governance, development, and service delivery.

**Preconditions for Success**

An informed, committed, and organised citizenry; access to and effective use of adequate information; and a responsive government with political goodwill.

## Legal Framework for Social Accountability

Kenya has a solid legal framework for social accountability. The main frameworks are summarised below.

### A. The Constitution of Kenya

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 places sovereign power on the people of Kenya and obligates every citizen to respect, uphold and defend it. Article 35(1) provides that *"every citizen has the right of access to information held by the State, and information held by another person and required for the exercise or protection of any right or fundamental freedom,"* while subsection 3 requires the State to publish and publicise information affecting the nation.

- Devolution (Article 174) facilitates effective development and service delivery by bringing government closer to the people and enhancing accountability through public participation and checks and balances.
- **Article 196** requires County Assemblies to conduct business in an open and public manner and facilitate citizen involvement.
- **Article 260** defines "marginalised group," and **Articles 54–56** require special consideration to ensure such groups participate in governance and development processes.

### B. The County Government Act, 2012

The primary legislation operationalising county government structures, functions and powers — including civic participation, access to information, public communication, and protection of minorities.

- **Section 87** — Principles of public participation: timely access to information, reasonable access to policy-making, protection of minority interests, and recognition of the reciprocal role of non-state actors.

- **Section 91** — Establishes modalities and platforms for citizen participation, including ICT-based platforms, town hall meetings, budget fora, and notice boards.
- **Section 9(1)** — Requires MCAs to maintain close contact with, and consult, their electorates.
- **Sections 30 & 92** — Require Governors to promote citizen participation and report annually to the County Assembly.
- **Sections 94 & 95** — Require mechanisms for public communication and access to information with the widest outreach.
- **Section 96** — Requires a designated access-to-information office/officer.
- **Section 115** — Requires laws and regulations for effective citizen participation in development planning.
- **Sections 15 & 88** — Give citizens the right to petition the County Assembly and county government.
- **Sections 50–52** — Establish sub-county, ward, and village administrator offices responsible for coordinating citizen participation and service delivery.

### C. Access to Information Act, 2016

Formulated under Article 35, the Act sets out principles of access to public information, regulates request procedures, and confers oversight and enforcement powers on the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ).

- **Section 5** — Requires proactive disclosure, accounting for cost, local language, and accessibility for PWDs.
- **Section 9** — Requires a decision within 21 days of a request (48 hours where life or liberty is affected; up to 15 working days for complex/large requests); non-response within the timeline is deemed a rejection.
- **Section 16** — Protects persons who make disclosures in the course of their duties.
- **Section 28** — An officer who fails to respond in time is liable to a fine of Kshs. 50,000, imprisonment of 3 months, or both.

### D. Public Finance Management Act, 2012

Provides an elaborate framework for management of public finance and entrenches public participation into financial management processes.

- **Sections 35 & 125** — Mandate public participation in the budget-making process at national and county level.
- **Section 135** — Establishes the County Budget and Economic Forum (CBEF) to facilitate citizen participation throughout the budget cycle.
- **Section 129(6)** — Requires publication and publicising of budget documents as soon as practicable after submission to the County Assembly.
- **PFM Regulations 2015, Section 7(3)** — Requires documents to be published and publicised within 7 days of presentation.

## Global Instruments Supporting Social Accountability

Kenya has ratified several international treaties and conventions that inform national and county legal and policy formulation around citizen participation, with particular emphasis on inclusivity for women, children, young people, and persons with disability:

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD), 2008
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1972
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1972
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1997
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 2001
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1984
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1990

## County Context — Homa Bay County by the Numbers

According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Homa Bay County has a population of 1,131,950, including 539,560 male, 592,367 female, and 23 intersex persons. The 2023 Gross County Product Report estimates Homa Bay's GDP at Ksh. 162 billion, with the county's economy growing by an average of 4.9% between 2018 and 2022 — slightly higher than the national GDP growth average of 4.6%. The top three contributors to the county's wealth in 2023 were Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (Ksh. 69 billion), Transport and Storage (Ksh. 22 billion), and Education (Ksh. 13 billion).

1.13M
Population — 539,560 male, 592,367 female, 23 intersex (2019 Census)
Ksh 162bn
Gross County Product, growing at 4.9% (2018–2022), above the 4.6% national average
26.6%
Of residents are poor — lower than the 38.6% national headcount, though 5,000 are in extreme (hardcore) poverty
According to a Commission on Revenue Allocation report on counties' revenue mobilisation efforts, between FY 2013/14 and FY 2018/19 Homa Bay collected an average of Ksh. 136.81 million from own-source revenue out of a potential Ksh. 1.02 billion — translating to just 13%. Homa Bay was flagged among five counties for stagnating revenue performance.

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022 shows Homa Bay performing relatively better than the national average on some health indicators — such as skilled birth deliveries and antenatal care uptake — while nutrition and child immunisation indicators, along with water and sanitation access, fall below the national average.

**Table 1 — Summary of Homa Bay County Indicators (KDHS 2022)**

| Sector | Key Indicator | Homa Bay | National Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| Water | Household population with access to at least basic drinking water service | 57% | 68% |
| Sanitation | Household population with at least basic sanitation service | 21% | 41% |
| Education | Women age 15–49 with no formal education | 1% | 6% |
| | Men age 15–49 with no formal education | 1% | 3% |
| Energy | Household population relying on clean fuels/technologies | 5% | 21% |
| Health | Births delivered by a skilled provider | 91% | 89% |
| | Women 15–49 with a live birth and 4+ antenatal visits | 69% | 66% |
| | Women 15–49 with a postnatal check within 2 days of birth | 77% | 78% |
| | Children age 12–23 months fully vaccinated (basic antigens) | 76% | 80% |
| | Neonatal / infant / under-5 mortality (per 1,000 live births) | 32 / 42 / 61 | 21 / 32 / 41 |
| | Children under 5 stunted / wasted / underweight | 13% / 2% / 6% | 18% / 5% / 10% |

## Governance

Article 229 mandates the Auditor-General to audit county government accounts and report whether public money has been applied effectively and lawfully. The County Budget Transparency Survey

(CBTS) by the International Budget Partnership complements this by assessing the availability, comprehensiveness, and timeliness of budget information — together, the Auditor-General's reports and the CBTS are a critical barometer for transparency and accountability in public finance management.

**Table 2 — Homa Bay County's Audit Opinions and CBTS Index, FY 2017/18–2021/22**

| Financial Year | Audit Opinion — County Executive | Audit Opinion — County Assembly | CBTS Index |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2017/18 | Disclaimer | Disclaimer | — |
| 2018/19 | Adverse | Adverse | — |
| 2019/20 | Qualified | Qualified | 19/100 |
| 2020/21 | Qualified | Qualified | 28/100 |
| 2021/22 | Adverse | Qualified | 18/100 |

# Key Findings and Recommendations

This section presents key findings on the implementation of social accountability in Homa Bay County, organised around the four thematic areas that formed the focus of this Citizen Report Card.

## A. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

### 1. Homa Bay Lacks a County-Level Access to Information Framework

Homa Bay's public communication is largely guided by national laws — the Constitution (Articles 35, 36), the County Government Act 2012 (Sections 87, 93, 96), and the Public Finance Management Act 2012. The county has not yet developed a county-level public communication policy or domesticated the Access to Information Act, 2016. Domesticating the Act is critical to creating customised ATI structures, platforms, human resources, and standardised processes such as access-to-information request templates.

### 2. Public Forums and Digital Platforms are the Main Access to Information Avenues

Decentralised units report that public forums, digital platforms, and notice boards are the main avenues for disseminating information; 57% of administrators consider these effective because they are convenient and targeted. The county leverages a multi-pronged public participation model — from village to county level — and constitutes Project Management Committees to monitor implementation. The Department of Communication uses an Integrated Marketing Communication Model across WhatsApp and Facebook, though the county lacks designated access-to-information officers. Current ATI structures include the Office of the Government Spokesperson, Sub-County and Ward Administrators' offices, and (not yet formalised) village clusters.

### 3. Citizens Feel Homa Bay's Access to Information Avenues are Ineffective

While 71.5% of officials in devolved units say they use digital platforms like WhatsApp to disseminate information, most citizens don't see these as ATI avenues — 60% of citizens scored the effectiveness of access-to-information avenues at just 2 (of 5). Reasons cited include:

- **Absence of physical offices for Ward Administrators** — *"The devolved units offices are not in place, especially ward admins have no office space and operate in the field only, so there is no specific place for citizens to access information."* — FGD Respondent
- **Lack of feedback to communities after public participation** — *"Communities are only involved in key priorities identification during public participation, but they are not involved in implementation and monitoring of the projects, hence can't access the projects' progress."* — FGD Respondent
- **Lack of printed versions of public information** — *"Public information in its nature is voluminous and hard copies are not available. A sizable number of people don't have smartphones, and are therefore not able to access such information."* — FGD Respondent

### 4. There are Notable Efforts to Facilitate Access to Information for PWDs

These include sign-language interpreters at public meetings, intentional mobilisation of PWD representatives to public forums, and identification of PWD clusters for dedicated information sessions.

*"There's an existing cluster group within the ward for PWDs. I occasionally meet these groups in which I relay important County public information."* — County Official, Devolved Unit

### 5. Budget and Project Information are the Most Common ATI Requests

92%
Of requests concern project plans and implementation status
77%
Of requests concern budget allocations
69%
Of requests concern public participation details
Most ATI requests are made verbally or through digital messaging apps — only 14% are made through formal letters, denoting low citizen awareness of the Access to Information Act's provisions. 50% of citizens feel information is inaccessible due to the absence of Ward Administrator offices.

### 6. Inadequate Support and Untimely Dissemination are Key Challenges

- Inadequate logistical support — airtime, physical offices for Ward Administrators, and mobilisation costs.
- Untimely dissemination of information from county headquarters.
- Low public awareness of the request-for-information process.
- Lack of clear communication and coordination structures within the county.
- Lack of dedicated information officers to facilitate access to information.

## B. CIVIC EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### 1. Homa Bay Lacks a Public Participation and Civic Education Policy Framework

The County Public Participation law was passed in 2019 but repealed and redrafted in 2023; at the time of this report, the 2023 law was awaiting cabinet review. The absence of a public participation law has resulted in a weak model for civic education and the integration of civil society in public participation and oversight, contrary to Section 100 of the County Government Act.

### 2. Decentralized Units Disseminate Civic Education, but it's Not Adequate

95% of devolved units provide civic education, with 57% of administrators rating the county's efforts as "fair." Administrators use public fora and collaborate with CSOs, but these efforts rely on opportunistic activities rather than a consistent programme. Enhancing factors include coordination between administrators, weekly community barazas, and the presence of CSOs conducting civic education across wards. Challenges include over-reliance on forums organised by other players, limited resources for movement and meetings, limited training opportunities (some administrators report training only on climate change and SGBV), and political interference — including politicisation of civic messages.

Citizens rate the county's civic education efforts as "fair," informed by officials passing messages during public meetings, through websites and notice boards, and the availability of sign-language interpreters. Even so, many citizens attribute civic education efforts to CSOs and the IEBC rather than the county government — notice-board use in some wards is a promising practice worth amplifying.

### 3. Homa Bay Lacks Standardised Requirements for Citizen Fora

Although devolved units mostly rely on public fora for civic education, 65% don't have known schedules for these. The majority report meeting monthly or "when the county announces public fora," with no standard requirement for frequency.

### 4. The Village-to-County Structure Enhances Participation, but Other Factors Undermine It

Homa Bay's village-to-county public participation structure establishes 16-member teams at every level, comprising professionals, opinion leaders, religious leaders and sector representatives. Citizens rate the effectiveness of these efforts as "fair" — venues are accessible, but participation is undermined by short notices, selective invitation of participants, and late-starting meetings. There are no mechanisms to prepare citizens ahead of fora; they are rushed through voluminous documents, and citizen input is sometimes excluded from final documents without explanation. Citizens are typically involved only in project identification, rarely in progress monitoring — and while Project Management Committees exist for each project, linkage between PMCs and community members is weak. Logistical challenges are acute for administrators covering vast, difficult terrain such as Suba South Sub-County and Gwassi South Ward.

### 5. Inadequate Logistical Support and Untimely Information are Key Challenges

- Inadequate travel logistics, airtime, and meeting resources — particularly for vast, difficult terrain.
- Delays in disseminating information needed to facilitate participation.
- High financial expectations from members of the public.
- Lack of capacity-training opportunities for administrators.

- Negative public perception towards public participation processes.

## C. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION / DEVOLVED UNITS

### 1. Inadequate Capacity of Devolved Units to Perform their Functions

Homa Bay has established Sub-County and Ward Administrator offices and recruited officers per Sections 50 and 51 of the County Government Act, though village administrator offices are yet to be fully established — a scheme of service was in development at the time of validation. 53% of administrators in devolved units feel their offices lack sufficient capacity — citing poorly equipped offices (space, furniture, computers, electricity), particularly for Ward Administrators, and a lack of transport (vehicles or motorbikes). Citizens in wards like Rusinga Island, Homa Bay Central, and Gwassi South report unreliable services due to the absence of a physical office and difficulty finding adequate information.

### 2. Devolved Units Have Budget Information, but Mostly in Soft Copy

66% of administrators rated availability of public information (approved budgets, implementation reports, citizen forum schedules, contractor details) as good or very good — but this information is often only in soft copy. An input matrix administered to sub-county and ward administrators found most lack printed copies of county budgets and policy documents, public forum schedules, individual project details (BQs, design drawings), stakeholder databases, and systems for documenting civic actions.

### 3. Majority of Devolved Units Lack Public Participation Schedules

Despite the village-to-county structure, 66.7% of officials in devolved units report no known public participation schedule — making forums unpredictable for citizens and limiting their ability to plan and prepare for meaningful participation.

### 4. Logistical and Budgetary Support are the Main Forms of HQ Support

81%
Of administrators report receiving logistical support from county HQ
61.9%
Report receiving budgetary support and timely access to information
<50%
Report being consulted in decision-making or receiving capacity building

### 5. Political Interference, Inadequate Resources, and Financial Expectations are Major Challenges

- Inadequate airtime to coordinate public participation activities.
- Inadequate funds for ground movement, venues, and seating.
- Lack of (or delayed) funds to reimburse participant transport for long distances.
- Political interference — including micro-managing tendencies from elected officials sharing office space with administrators.
- High financial expectations from citizens, most of whom want to be paid for attending public forums.
- Delays in disseminating information, capping of participant numbers, public mistrust of the county government, and minimal consultation of devolved units in decision-making.

## D. PUBLIC COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISM

### 1. Homa Bay Lacks Guidelines for Public Compliments and Complaints Handling

In the absence of documented guidelines, public officers lack standardised procedures for processing and responding to public compliments and complaints — including responsibility for receipt, avenues to be used, and timelines to be observed.

### 2. Direct Engagement is the Main Avenue for Handling Complaints

County officials rely on direct engagement — for example, complaints about revenue inspectors are raised directly with the director, and the Governor's office receives complaints directly on service delivery and officer conduct. These occur through direct meetings, public participation meetings, community meetings, digital platforms, and direct phone calls; records are rarely maintained. 38% of officers in devolved units consider their offices effective at receiving, processing, and providing feedback, escalating what they cannot resolve.

From a citizen perspective, the mechanism is not working: **40% rated it as poor and 30% as fair.** Reasons include:

- Lack of open days, complaints desks, and suggestion boxes in devolved units.
- Absence of devolved offices at ward level, making it difficult to lodge complaints.
- Lack of a clear system for reporting, reviewing, and addressing complaints.
- Delays in addressing complaints raised by citizens.
- Limited structures for raising complaints — *"The only place we raise complaints are public participation forums, community dialogues, direct calls to the MCA office, and written petitions which are never replied to."* — Citizens, Arujo

### 3. Citizens are Unaware of Homa Bay's Administrative Structures for Complaint Handling

At headquarters, structures include departmental liaison officers, a Directorate of Service Delivery, complaint books (in some departments), Project Management Committees, digital channels (a website complaint/compliment portal and social media), and a direct governor's phone line. However, these structures are largely unknown to citizens — liaison officers, the service delivery directorate, and complaint books are stationed at county level and unavailable in devolved units. While citizens know of the county website, they see it as an information-access tool rather than a complaints channel.

### 4. Lack of Protocols and Untimely Information Flow are Major Challenges

- Lack of clear structures and protocols for handling complaints.
- Untimely flow of information on issues (e.g. bursary disbursement) requiring consultation.
- Lack of complaint-handling infrastructure — desks, suggestion boxes.
- Delays in getting feedback on escalated complaints.
- Inadequate resources, such as well-equipped Ward Administrator offices to serve as a central point for complaints and prompt feedback.

# Key Recommendations

**1. Homa Bay County Government should formulate at least five service charters** covering the following units of service delivery under the department responsible for governance:

### Public Compliments and Complaints Unit

Establish and maintain a system for public feedback; receive and maintain a complaints/ compliments register; regularly open complaint boxes; provide timely response; continuously analyse complaints to inform policy; support departments and decentralised units to set up complaint mechanisms; investigate abuse-of-power complaints and recommend redress; publicise mechanisms and citizens' entitlements; provide an alternative dispute resolution platform; install complaint boxes at strategic service points; cascade complaint management to decentralised units through sub-county grievance committees/champions; establish a central repository for information access; develop a Project Management and Investment Dashboard for budget transparency; induct officers on good governance principles; and report regularly to relevant authorities.

### Public Participation and Civic Education Unit

Develop, implement and periodically review appropriate civic education and public participation models; facilitate and coordinate participation in governance and development processes; prepare an annual citizen participation report per Section 92(2) of the CGA; maintain a stakeholder/CSO database and foster collaboration; promote participation of marginalised and vulnerable groups; demystify the SDGs and establish monitoring mechanisms across departments; strengthen interdepartmental linkages; promote public involvement in forming Project Management Committees; create space for social inclusion of ethnic minorities, PWDs, youth and women; and harmonise national and county policy frameworks on public participation and civic education.

### Public Communication Unit and Access to Information Unit

Provide guidance to citizens on ATI request procedures and tools; respond promptly to ATI requests; give timely communication (14–21 days' notice, factoring in special interest groups); establish and update public communication mechanisms (website, social media, newsletters); design appropriate communication avenues for women, PWDs, youth and the elderly; work with the civic education unit to publicise ATI mechanisms and entitlements; and secure storage of public information in decentralised units.

### Decentralized Units (Sub-County and Ward Administrators)

Ensure availability of services during set operational hours; receive and channel civic actions to relevant MDAs with feedback to citizens; facilitate access to county policy documents (budgets, BQs, design drawings); conduct and publicise regular citizen forums; document deliberations and decisions; coordinate service delivery across devolved sectors; link communities with technical departments for capacity building; maintain databases of county projects, department contacts, and stakeholder groups (NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, youth, PWD, and PLHIV groups); build the capacity of local development committees; provide accurate information for dispute resolution; and make hard copies of the CIDP, ADPs, and county laws/policies available locally.

While these charters belong to the Department of Governance, developing them should include other county departments (health, water, agriculture, etc.), since the Governance Department will require their support in honouring commitments such as timely access to information and complaint response.

1. **Fast-track the formulation and approval of enabling laws, policies and guidelines** — the Public Participation Act (awaiting cabinet approval, per CGA Section 92(3)); Access to Information policy and procedures (CGA Section 96(3)); a Public Communication Policy (CGA Section 95(1)); Guidelines for Public Complaints and Compliments; and a County Civic Education Framework (CGA Section 101).
2. **Strengthen decentralised units** through costing and financing their operations, establishing and equipping ward offices, and building the capacity of sub-county and ward administrators.
3. **Regularise citizen forums** at sub-county and ward level for deliberation of emerging issues, budget prioritisation, and feedback — reducing the crowding of county budget forums led by the County Treasury and County Assembly Budget Committees.
4. **Use digital platforms** to document and analyse public participation feedback — for example, digital surveys on issues such as where to construct a fishing landing bay.
5. **Publish and publicise budget and project information** — the most sought-after information according to this Citizen Report Card.
6. **Strengthen the linkage between devolved units and county headquarters** for free, adequate, and timely flow of information.
7. **Involve other county departments** (health, water, agriculture, etc.) in developing the Governance Department's service charters, given the cross-cutting support required.
8. **Address weak record-keeping**, a gap that cuts across all four thematic areas — access to information, public participation, devolved units, and complaints handling — in every service charter developed.
9. **Establish dedicated offices** to spearhead public participation and social accountability: an Access to Information Officer (CGA Section 96(2)); a Civic Education and Public Participation Unit (CGA Section 100(1)); village administrators and village councils (CGA Sections 52–53); and a County Ombudsman.
10. **Establish a fully-fledged, adequately resourced Civic Education Department** and strengthen partnership with CSOs, who can complement county efforts as envisaged in Section 100(4) and provide direct community feedback.
11. **Accompany budget documents with public participation reports** detailing where and how consultations took place, who participated, what input was received, what was and wasn't factored in (and why) — improving citizen confidence in the process.
12. **Train and equip Project Management Committees** on their roles, the project cycle, technical aspects, and tools for providing feedback to citizens and government.

# Annex: Data Collection Tool

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire administered by trained enumerators, comprising an introduction and informed consent script, followed by two sections:

**Section A — Sub-County / Ward Administrators**

An input checklist covering availability of budget information, notice boards, project databases, individual project files (BQs, design drawings, work plans, committees), and public participation information (schedules, venues, target groups, agendas) — each rated Yes/No with supporting remarks.

**Section B — Focus Group Discussions**

Structured discussion guides for citizen groups (including women, youth, and persons with disability) covering access to information, civic education and public participation, effectiveness of devolved units, spaces for CSO–county dialogue, and cross-cutting implementation challenges.

Respondents gave informed consent before participating, were free to skip questions or withdraw at any time, and were assured that responses would be treated confidentially and published only in aggregate form.