



Influence of Stakeholder Engagement on Performance of Climate Adaptability Projects by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Kenya

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Abstract: Climate change poses a major threat to agriculture, livelihoods, and socio-economic development in East Africa, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions. To address this, IGAD has implemented climate adaptability projects in Kenya; however, challenges such as weak political support, limited institutional capacity, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and poor resource mobilization have constrained performance. This study examined the influence of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) drivers—political support, institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization—on the performance of IGAD's climate adaptability projects in Kenya, grounded in Stakeholder and Institutional Theories. A convergent parallel mixed-method design was employed, targeting 757 respondents across nine projects. The sample comprised 263 staff and 12 key informants from partner organizations, with data collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. Analysis was conducted through SPSS v30.0 for quantitative data and thematic methods for qualitative data. Results revealed that the four M&E drivers collectively explained 78.3% of the variance in project performance ($R^2 = 0.783$), with institutional capacity as the strongest predictor. Introducing organizational coordination improved the model to $R^2 = 0.796$. The study concludes that all four drivers significantly influence performance and recommends strengthening political support, institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource allocation to enhance climate adaptability project outcomes.

Keywords: Stakeholder Engagement, Performance, Climate Adaptability, Projects, Intergovernmental Authority, Development, and Kenya

How to cite this work (APA):

Oloo, C. K., Lango, B. & Onsarigo, T. G. (2025). Influence of Stakeholder Engagement on Performance of Climate Adaptability Projects by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Kenya. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 9(3), 996 – 1008. <https://doi.org/10.59765/pw7z4>.

1. Introduction

Climate adaptability projects are increasingly recognized as critical interventions for addressing the escalating impacts of climate change on ecosystems, economies, and societies worldwide. The projects are intended to improve resilience in reducing the vulnerability and enhance sustainable development (Scott & Moloney, 2022). Globally, in many countries the effectiveness of

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks is always a key determinant to the success of such initiatives by not only assisting with measuring, advising, and enhancing the performance of the projects. Among others have been identified to include political support, institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization as paramount contributors to sound climate adaptability projects (Leiter, 2021).

These drivers form facilitators as well as a measurable

independent variable that has direct impact on the performance of climate adaptability projects which is the dependent variable in this study. The elements of ensuring political support, institutional capacity, stakeholders and ownership, national and international policies, the issue of technical and financial viability and sources of resources all contribute to the achievement of climate goals (World Bank, 2020). Appreciating the factors affecting the performance of projects would be helpful in terms of how climate shocks can be facilitated. IGAD continues to play a significant role in harmonization of climate resilience interventions of the Horn of Africa. The Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) of IGAD provides such important early warnings and policy advice, thanks to political agreement between the nations in the region (Bahaga et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the IGAD states vary in institutional capacity and political stability, a factor that highly contributes to the success of climate activities. Ogah (2021) elaborates that M&E systems are becoming progressively perceived as a key factor of project success; they have been unevenly applied in the region.

Ethiopia has shown a clear political commitment to climate in relation to implementing its Climate-Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) plan (Naud, 2022). This plan involves the incorporation of climate action in development plans of the countries and the use of the existing institutional frameworks like the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission (EFCCC). Nonetheless, even with such frameworks, there is a shortage of technical and sectorial capabilities regarding coordination (Rawat & Tekleyohannes, 2021; Yigezu Wendimu, 2021). An example would be the experience of Ethiopia whose Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) successfully incorporated the local knowledge where the usefulness of stakeholder engagement has shown (Addis Birhanu & Italemahu, 2022). In contrast, South Sudan fails to overcome political instability and weak institutions, which still do not allow it to achieve its projects and prevent failures due to climate risks awareness (Aboul, 2024; Raoux, 2024).

In Kenya, adaptive climatic projects are combined with well-developed policy support and institutional infrastructure. Strength of political commitment can be expressed in terms of the development of the Climate Change Act and creation of the National Climate Change Council (Nyika, 2022). Adaptation to Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) is organized to include agencies like the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), who use early warning systems and cross-sectoral coordination (Mwangi et al., 2022). Such stakeholder involvement is specifically keyed up by such projects as Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project (KCSAP) that encourages the community to participate in the sustainable procedures (Ngigi & Muange, 2022). In ASAL areas, the

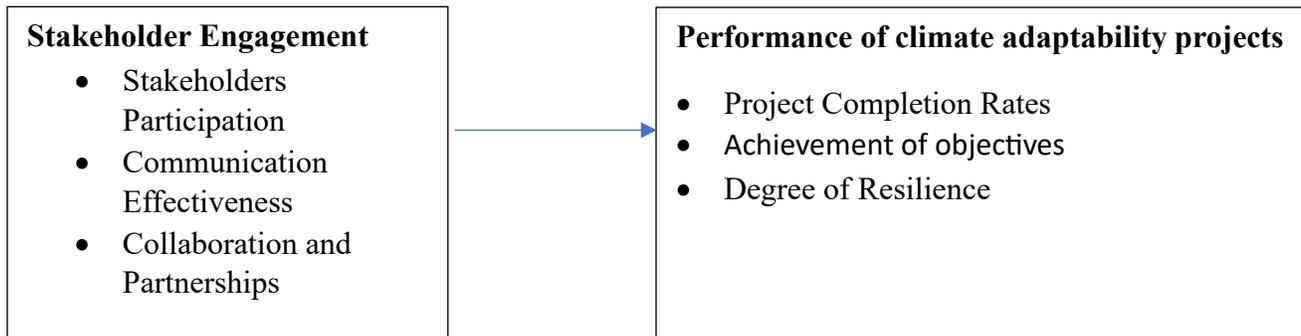
implementation of community-based adaptation programs is also indicative of the fact that local ownership increases project sustainability (Ndiritu, 2021). However, Kenya is also struggling with financial crisis as it is the case with other IGAD states despite other bodies such as the African Development Bank Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods program (Kithikii, 2023). The dynamics emphasize the necessity to explore the particular impact that political, institutional, stakeholder, and resources factors have on climate adaptability project success specifically in the context of the operations of the IGAD-Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Stakeholder engagement has emerged as a cornerstone of successful climate adaptability projects, enabling inclusivity, ownership, and contextual relevance in addressing climate-related vulnerabilities. Globally, evidence shows that projects with strong stakeholder participation are more likely to achieve sustainable outcomes, as communities and institutions actively shape solutions that reflect their priorities (Leiter, 2021; Scott & Moloney, 2022). In Africa, regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) play a pivotal role in coordinating climate resilience interventions. Through initiatives like the IGAD Climate Adaptation Strategy (2023–2030) and the Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), emphasis has been placed on participatory approaches that strengthen collaboration and enhance adaptation outcomes.

In Kenya, and particularly within Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), IGAD has invested heavily in climate adaptability projects to address recurring droughts, food insecurity, and livelihood fragility. Yet despite these efforts, project performance remains uneven, with limited evidence on how stakeholder engagement specifically shapes effectiveness and sustainability. Most existing studies highlight policy frameworks, institutional capacity, or financing mechanisms, leaving a **methodological gap** in empirically measuring the impact of stakeholder participation. This study addresses this gap by examining the influence of stakeholder engagement on the performance of IGAD-implemented climate adaptability projects in Kenya, providing insights to strengthen inclusivity and long-term resilience.

1.2 Conceptual Framework



2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The influence of stakeholder engagement on the performance of climate adaptability projects by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) can be effectively understood through the lenses of Stakeholder Theory and Institutional Theory. These theoretical perspectives provide complementary insights into how collaboration, inclusivity, and institutional pressures shape project design, implementation, and sustainability.

Stakeholder Theory, pioneered by Freeman (1984), emphasizes that organizations must address the needs and interests of all actors who influence or are influenced by their decisions. This extends beyond shareholders to include local communities, governments, non-governmental organizations, and development partners (Freeman & Phillips, 2002). In the context of IGAD's climate adaptability projects, stakeholder engagement enhances inclusiveness, transparency, and integration of local and expert knowledge. When communities are consulted during planning and decision-making stages, they show stronger commitment to implementation, thereby improving both project success and sustainability (Barney & Harrison, 2019).

The theory underscores the importance of communication and trust-building as central to effective collaboration (Barney & Harrison, 2020). Early and consistent stakeholder involvement in IGAD projects not only facilitates conflict reduction but also improves access to resources and alignment between local needs and regional priorities (Freeman, Dmytriv & Phillips, 2021). Mechanisms such as regular feedback sessions and collaborative planning ensure legitimacy and inclusivity, both of which are crucial for climate resilience initiatives (McGahan, 2021). From this perspective, stakeholder theory provides a robust framework for evaluating and

enhancing IGAD's climate adaptability interventions, particularly by ensuring that diverse stakeholder interests are represented equitably in decision-making processes.

Complementing this is Institutional Theory, advanced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which explains how organizations adapt to external pressures within institutional environments. These pressures manifest in three forms: coercive (e.g., donor requirements), mimetic (imitation of successful models), and normative (professional standards and cultural norms). For IGAD, institutional conformity helps secure legitimacy, resources, and credibility while fostering accountability and regional coordination. By adhering to donor expectations, adopting proven models, and aligning with regional values, IGAD projects can strengthen capacity-building efforts and improve organizational efficiency.

However, Institutional Theory also reveals important limitations. While institutional pressures can enhance transparency and mobilization of resources, they may not always produce optimal outcomes. For instance, coercive donor demands may undermine local ownership, mimetic adoption of external models can result in strategies ill-suited to local contexts, and normative pressures may surface conflicting stakeholder priorities. Moreover, rigid compliance with institutional norms may constrain innovation and flexibility, which are essential in responding to evolving climate risks. Thus, sustainable success requires balancing institutional conformity with context-specific adaptation and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Taken together, the two theories highlight complementary dynamics. Stakeholder Theory underscores the internal processes of inclusivity, communication, and legitimacy-building, while Institutional Theory highlights the external pressures shaping organizational conformity and coordination. For IGAD's climate adaptability projects in Kenya, integrating these perspectives suggests that stakeholder engagement, when combined with strategic

responsiveness to institutional pressures, is key to enhancing project performance. The theoretical synergy provides a foundation for evaluating how inclusivity, legitimacy, and institutional alignment collectively drive the sustainability and effectiveness of climate adaptation initiatives.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Performance of Climate Adaptability Projects under IGAD

Globally, stakeholder engagement has been increasingly recognized as central to the performance of climate adaptability initiatives. In high-capacity contexts such as Germany, multi-actor collaboration between communities, government agencies, and the private sector ensures interventions remain context-sensitive and sustainable. Rane, Thakker, and Kant (2021) argue that embedding local knowledge within climate resilience strategies not only strengthens project relevance but also fosters ownership, thereby improving long-term viability. Similarly, Cadarin, Klofsten, and Löfsten (2021) emphasize that stakeholder participation builds trust and accountability, which are essential for reducing resistance and ensuring smoother implementation. In the United Kingdom, Wehn et al. (2020) demonstrate that transparent communication systems align stakeholder expectations, mitigate conflicts, and sustain project momentum. While these studies validate key tenets of Stakeholder Theory—particularly inclusivity, communication, and legitimacy—they are limited in scope as they focus on resource-rich settings, offering fewer insights into replicability within resource-constrained environments such as the Horn of Africa.

Evidence from Africa reveals the importance of contextually grounded stakeholder engagement in enhancing project outcomes. In Algeria, Biygautane and Clegg (2024) found that integrating indigenous leadership with technical expertise improved water management practices by 40%. Comparable results were observed in Nigeria, where participatory frameworks combining traditional and modern agricultural practices enhanced community resilience. In Ghana, Asamoah and Anyinah (2024) report that structured communication systems in mangrove restoration projects increased scalability and community buy-in. Similarly, Naud (2022) documents a 60% rise in community involvement in Senegal's Sine Saloum Delta when participatory forums were facilitated by NGOs and government agencies. These findings align with Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating how legitimacy and inclusivity build support and strengthen performance. However, gaps remain in evaluating whether such

frameworks systematically empower marginalized groups such as women, youth, and pastoralists, who are often critical yet underrepresented actors in climate adaptability.

Within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), stakeholder engagement is institutionalized as a cornerstone for climate resilience programming. Rane et al. (2021) highlight that IGAD's performance improves significantly when participatory mechanisms are embedded in decision-making structures. Yet, Mutambuki and Kabui (2022) critique the inconsistency of engagement practices across member states, noting the absence of a unified protocol. This gap often results in fragmented communication, duplication of interventions, and uneven project outcomes. While IGAD has established dialogue nodes in Nairobi and Mombasa to enhance information flows between governments, civil society, and technical actors, empirical evidence assessing inclusivity of grassroots stakeholders—especially pastoralist communities and women's groups—remains limited. This lack of evidence undermines efforts to assess whether IGAD's stakeholder platforms fully embody the principles of equity and representation central to Stakeholder Theory.

National-level case studies from IGAD member states further illustrate both progress and persistent gaps. In Tanzania, Mkonda (2022) reports that collaboration among local communities, civil society organizations, and government has facilitated adoption of climate-smart agriculture by integrating local farming knowledge with technical expertise. However, equitable representation remains a challenge in rural districts where women and smallholder farmers are often marginalized. In Uganda, Masika (2020) documents how mobile-based alert systems and participatory forums improved climate information dissemination, enhancing legitimacy and local ownership of adaptation measures. These initiatives reflect the Stakeholder Theory principle of transparency, but sustainability depends on maintaining continuous dialogue beyond donor-funded cycles.

Kenya offers notable examples of stakeholder-driven climate adaptability. In Mombasa County, Kioko and Moi (2024) found that partnerships between residents, government officials, and community-based organizations successfully addressed coastal vulnerabilities by aligning interventions with lived experiences. Fishermen and farmers contributed observations on sea-level rise and shifting weather patterns, improving project design and outcomes. Similarly, in Kisumu County, Awino and Mungai (2024) observed that combining community radio, digital platforms, and workshops established a multidimensional communication system that strengthened feedback loops, thereby enhancing trust and sustainability. While these cases resonate strongly with the stakeholder principles of inclusivity and communication, they also

highlight gaps in ensuring that such practices are standardized and scaled across other IGAD regions.

Critically, the literature demonstrates that stakeholder engagement is consistently associated with improved climate adaptability outcomes, but several challenges persist. Many studies prioritize success stories without addressing institutional and political barriers that hinder genuine participation. Moreover, evidence from IGAD remains fragmented, with few comparative evaluations across member states to establish best practices.

Stakeholder Theory provides a useful lens for addressing these gaps: inclusivity demands that marginalized groups be intentionally incorporated; communication requires robust and transparent systems beyond project lifecycles; and legitimacy entails aligning local needs with regional priorities to foster ownership and sustainability.

1.2.2 Comparative Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes

Table 1: Comparative Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes

Country/Region	Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes	Identified Gaps
Germany & UK	Strong multi-actor collaboration; transparent communication reduces conflict and builds trust (Rane et al., 2021; Wehn et al., 2020).	Evidence largely from resource-rich contexts; limited applicability to resource-constrained regions.
Algeria	Collaboration with traditional leaders improved sustainable water management by 40% (Biygautane & Clegg, 2024).	Limited focus on marginalized groups; replicability across diverse communities not assessed.
Nigeria	Participatory frameworks integrating traditional and modern methods enhanced agricultural resilience.	Lack of systematic frameworks to ensure long-term institutionalization.
Ghana	Structured communication supported mangrove restoration scalability (Asamoah & Anyinah, 2024).	Inclusivity of vulnerable groups (e.g., women, youth) not clearly demonstrated.
Senegal	NGO and government forums increased community participation by 60% (Naud, 2022).	Sustainability dependent on continued external facilitation.
Tanzania	Collaboration enhanced uptake of climate-smart agriculture (Mkonda, 2022).	Unequal representation, especially in rural districts.
Uganda	Mobile-based alert systems and forums improved information dissemination and ownership (Masika, 2020).	Dependence on donor support threatens sustainability.
Kenya (Mombasa)	Collaboration between residents, government, and CBOs aligned adaptation to local realities (Kioko & Moi, 2024).	Limited evidence of integration into broader IGAD frameworks.
Kenya (Kisumu)	Use of radio, digital platforms, and workshops strengthened feedback loops (Awino & Mungai, 2024).	Practices remain localized; scaling across counties is limited.
IGAD Regional	Establishment of dialogue nodes improved cross-sector communication (Rane et al., 2021).	Lack of unified engagement protocol; limited inclusion of pastoralists and women's groups (Mutambuki & Kabui, 2022).

In sum, while stakeholder engagement has been shown to enhance the performance of climate adaptability projects within IGAD, the literature reveals uneven implementation, weak empirical assessments of inclusivity, and inadequate frameworks for cross-country standardization. Aligning practice more fully with Stakeholder Theory offers a pathway for IGAD to strengthen both equity and effectiveness in delivering climate resilience interventions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel design to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the research problem (Tankiz & Atman Uslu, 2023). Data collection occurred simultaneously, with each dataset analyzed independently before being merged for triangulation (Taherdoost, 2021). Integrating multiple methods enhances validity, reliability, and trustworthiness by minimizing bias and improving consistency (Meydan &

Akkaş, 2024). This approach broadened the scope of generalizability and strengthened the robustness of findings.

3.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in Kenya, focusing on climate change initiatives implemented by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Kenya serves as a strategic hub for IGAD’s regional climate programs, largely through the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), which develops early warning systems and adaptation strategies to mitigate extreme events such as droughts and floods. ICPAC supports governments in integrating scientific forecasts into policy and community-level planning.

In addition, the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) promotes food security by safeguarding pastoral livelihoods. IGAD programs in Kenya emphasize sustainable land management,

reforestation, water conservation, and disaster risk reduction, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions that are highly vulnerable to climate change. Kenya also hosts high-level dialogues for regional policy harmonization, advancing the IGAD Regional Climate Change Strategy. Despite this progress, IGAD faces persistent challenges, including limited funding, weak policy enforcement, and insufficient community engagement.

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised 766 individuals engaged in nine climate adaptation projects coordinated by IGAD in Kenya, including staff, stakeholders, and implementing partners (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The projects ranged from climate services and early warning systems to drought resilience and pastoral livelihoods support. In addition, nine Climate Adaptation Specialists from organizations such as the Red Cross Climate Centre, RCMRD, and CARE International were consulted as key informants.

Table 2: Target population

Project Name	Target Population
Intra ACP – ClimSA	61
GMES & Africa	25
EW4IGAD	18
SCIDA III	110
PASSAGE	111
ARiPHA	171
AICCRA	37
Wiser Kenya	113
WISER DARAJA SCALE UP	111
Key informants	9
Total	766

Source: IGAD Climate Program Implementation (2025)

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sample Size

Sample size was determined using Yamane’s formula (1973) as adapted in Arusei, Cheboi, and Bonuke (2023). From the target population of 766, a representative sample of 263 respondents was calculated. The final dataset

included 263 participants, comprising staff and key informants.

3.4.2 Sampling Procedures

A stratified random sampling approach ensured proportional representation of each project (Lohr, 2021). The population was divided into nine strata, with sample sizes determined proportionally to their actual representation (Nguyen et al., 2021). Participants within

each stratum were then randomly selected to minimize bias and increase generalizability.

Table 3: Target Population and Sample Size per Stratum

Project Name	Target Population	Sample Size
Intra ACP – ClimSA	61	21
GMES & Africa	25	9
EW4IGAD	18	7
SCIDA III	110	38
PASSAGE	111	38
ARiPHA	171	59
AICCRA	37	13
Wiser Kenya	113	39
WISER DARAJA SCALE UP	111	38
Total	766	263

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire comprised seven sections capturing variables such as political support, institutional capacity, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Key informant interviews with project

managers and climate experts provided complementary qualitative insights (Bhat & Huang, 2021).

3.5.1 Reliability Test Results

The study assessed internal consistency reliability through Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient with an alpha above 0.7 considered reliable for additional analysis such as correlations and multiple regression.

Table 4: Reliability Results

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Comment
Performance of climate projects	9	0.789	Reliable
Political Support	8	0.956	Reliable
Stakeholder Engagement	9	0.719	Reliable
Resource Mobilization	9	0.913	Reliable
Institutional Capacity	9	0.742	Reliable
Organizational Coordination	9	0.788	Reliable

The results indicate that the Political Support scale had the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.956$), indicating very consistent responses across items. Resource allocation also demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.913$). Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Capacity had acceptable alphas ($\alpha = 0.719$ and $\alpha = 0.742$, respectively), suggesting the items reliably measured their intended constructs. The Performance and Organizational Coordination scales also met the reliability threshold ($\alpha = 0.79$), reinforcing confidence in the measurement instruments used for the study.

3.5.2 Pilot Testing of Instruments

A pilot test involving 10% of the sample was conducted in Garissa County, which shares similar characteristics with the study area (Tseng & Sim, 2021). The pilot ensured clarity, validity, and reliability of the instruments (Althubaiti, 2023). Content validity was evaluated using Lawshe’s (1975) formula, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, with $r \geq 0.7$ considered acceptable (Adeniran & Jahankhani, 2021).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and NACOSTI, followed by approvals from IGAD institutions. Participants were contacted in advance, and informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed (Benjamin, 2024). Data were collected through questionnaires and audio-recorded interviews, then securely stored for analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis and Processing

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS v30, employing descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression, to test relationships between independent variables and project performance (Gawali, 2023). The regression model was specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Where:

- Y = Performance of climate adaptability projects
- X1 = Political support
- X2 = Institutional capacity
- X3 = Stakeholder engagement
- X4 = Resource allocation

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically through manual coding, capturing emerging patterns and participant perspectives.

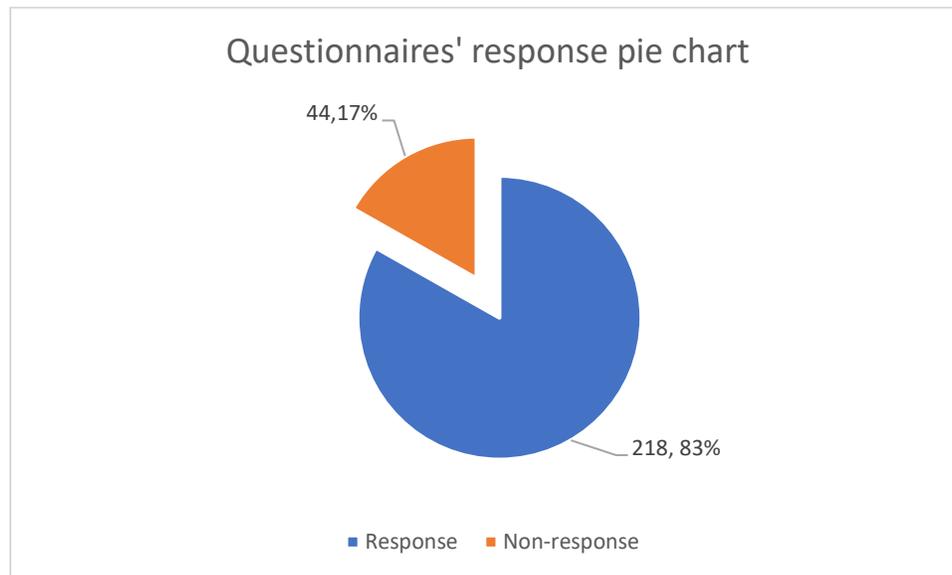
3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality (Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021). Participants retained the right to withdraw at any time, and they could skip sensitive questions if needed. Approval was secured from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and NACOSTI to ensure compliance with research standards.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study administered a total of 262 questionnaires to staff, of which 218 were successfully returned, resulting in a response rate of 83.2%. Additionally, 12 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were planned, but only 8 were successfully conducted. A questionnaire response rate of over 80% is considered adequate (Holtom, Baruch, Aguinis & Ballinger, 2022). This high return rate suggests that the topic of climate adaptability projects within IGAD was relevant and resonated with the respondents.



4.2 Descriptive Statistics Analysis Results for Background Variables

The study sought the gender, experience, or years worked in climate adaptability projects and the highest level of education of the respondent.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Background Data

Variable	Sub-variable	n (%)
Gender	Male	122 (56.0%)
	Female	96 (44.0%)
Years Worked	Less than 1 year	21 (9.6%)
	1–3 years	91 (41.7%)
	4–6 years	81 (37.2%)
	7–10 years	19 (8.7%)
	More than 10 years	6 (2.8%)
	Level of Education	Diploma
	Bachelor’s Degree	107 (49.1%)
	Master’s Degree	24 (11.0%)
	Doctorate (PhD)	13 (6.0%)

Gender

The findings indicate that 122 (56.0%) of the respondents were male while 96 (44.0%) were female. This shows a fairly balanced gender representation among staff working on climate adaptability projects in Kenya, although male dominance is slightly more pronounced. The representation aligns with regional workforce gender trends in development-oriented organizations, where efforts are ongoing to attain gender parity (UNDP, 2022). Gender diversity in project implementation teams is important, as it brings varied perspectives and fosters inclusive decision-making, which can enhance project outcomes (World Bank, 2021).

Years Worked in Climate Adaptability Projects

A majority of respondents had 1–3 years (41.7%) or 4–6 years (37.2%) of experience, indicating that over 78% of the respondents had 1 to 6 years of experience. Only 2.8% had worked for more than 10 years, and 9.6% were in their first year. This suggests that most staff members are relatively new to the projects, possibly due to expansions or staffing changes within IGAD programs. While this brings in fresh perspectives and energy, it may also point to limited institutional memory and continuity (Goh, 2016).

Level of Education

The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents held a Bachelor’s degree (49.1%), followed by those with a Diploma qualification (33.9%). Respondents with a Master’s degree constituted 11.0%, while those with a Doctorate were 6.0% of the total sample. This distribution suggests that the workforce involved in climate adaptability projects under IGAD-Kenya is well-educated, with over 66% possessing at least a bachelor’s degree or higher. This high educational attainment is crucial for the effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of climate-related programs, which require technical knowledge, policy understanding, and strategic thinking. These results align with findings by Bourne et al. (2020), who emphasized that educational attainment positively influences project performance through better analytical capacity and stakeholder engagement. It also supports the Human Capital Theory, which posits that education enhances productivity and organizational outcomes, particularly in knowledge-driven sectors like climate change adaptation.

Descriptive statistics results: Stakeholder Engagement

The study analyzed the respondents’ perceptions of stakeholder engagement with indicators such as Stakeholder Participation, Communication Effectiveness, Collaboration and Partnerships.

Table 6: Respondents' opinion on stakeholder engagement

Statement	SD	D	M	A	SA	M	SD
Stakeholders regularly participate in the design and implementation of climate adaptability projects.	6 (2.8%)	14 (6.4%)	46 (21.1%)	109 (50.0%)	43 (19.7%)	3.78	.931
The project hardly considers stakeholder feedback in decision-making.	4 (1.8%)	2 (0.9%)	48 (22.0%)	97 (44.5%)	67 (30.7%)	4.01	.856
Community stakeholders actively engage in discussions on climate adaptability strategies.	3 (1.4%)	14 (6.4%)	23 (10.6%)	120 (55.0%)	58 (26.6%)	3.99	.869
Project updates and key information are always communicated clearly to all stakeholders.	1 (0.5%)	20 (9.2%)	71 (32.6%)	79 (36.2%)	47 (21.6%)	3.69	.927
Communication breakdowns frequently delay project implementation.	4 (1.8%)	18 (8.3%)	43 (19.7%)	104 (47.7%)	49 (22.5%)	3.81	.940
The organization effectively uses digital platforms to share climate adaptation project updates.	1 (0.5%)	12 (5.5%)	74 (33.9%)	99 (45.4%)	32 (14.7%)	3.68	.807
The project effectively collaborates with local and international partners to enhance climate adaptability.	7 (3.2%)	42 (19.3%)	65 (29.8%)	67 (30.7%)	37 (17.0%)	3.39	1.077
Partnerships hardly contribute to resource-sharing for climate resilience projects.	1 (0.5%)	25 (11.5%)	57 (26.1%)	90 (41.3%)	45 (20.6%)	3.70	.940
The organization regularly engages multiple stakeholders to improve climate adaptation outcomes.	1 (0.5%)	16 (7.3%)	67 (30.7%)	101 (46.3%)	33 (15.1%)	3.68	.835

Stakeholders Participation

The majority of respondents agreed that stakeholders regularly participate in the design and implementation of climate adaptability projects (M = 3.78, SD = .931), with 69.7% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, 75.2% of respondents acknowledged that stakeholder feedback is considered in decision-making (M = 4.01, SD = .856), while 81.6% affirmed that community stakeholders actively engage in discussions on climate adaptability strategies (M = 3.99, SD = .869). These findings suggest that participation mechanisms are fairly well-structured. KII 01 (male) emphasized, “We don’t proceed with any key climate initiative unless we’ve had barazas or local consultative forums; it’s now part of our standard approach.” KII 05 (female) reinforced this by stating, “Stakeholders have begun owning the process, especially now that their views are genuinely influencing project adjustments.” This underscores the positive trajectory of inclusivity in stakeholder engagement. These findings align with a study by Thondhlana and Hove (2021), which found that participatory planning enhances local ownership and sustainability of climate resilience projects. Similarly, the study by Singh et al. (2020) in sub-Saharan Africa emphasized that inclusive stakeholder

engagement significantly improves adaptive capacity at the community level. However, Djenontin et al. (2020) argued that while participatory structures are often in place, the actual influence of local actors remains superficial without genuine co-decision-making authority.

Communication Effectiveness

Regarding communication, 57.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that project updates and key information are communicated clearly to all stakeholders (M = 3.69, SD = .927), and 70.2% acknowledged that communication breakdowns still occasionally delay project implementation (M = 3.81, SD = .940). In terms of digital communication, 60.1% confirmed that digital platforms are effectively used to disseminate project updates (M = 3.68, SD = .807). KII 02 (female) stated, “WhatsApp groups and emails are often used to share information, but sometimes these platforms exclude the less tech-savvy, especially elderly community members.” KII 03 (male) added, “We do our best, but truthfully, sometimes the delay in getting approvals or response from HQ causes us to stall even when we have timely updates ready.” These findings reveal that while communication systems exist, there is a need to bridge digital literacy gaps and improve internal

coordination. This is supported by Ochieng et al. (2022), who found that effective communication is a major driver of successful implementation in decentralized climate adaptation programs, although digital inequalities limit its reach. Likewise, Nalau et al. (2021) emphasized that two-way communication enhances feedback loops but is often undermined by bureaucratic bottlenecks. On the contrary, Few et al. (2019) contended that many adaptation projects overestimate the impact of communication channels without addressing underlying power and access disparities.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration efforts were somewhat less positive, with only 47.7% of respondents agreeing that the organization effectively collaborates with local and international partners ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.077$), and 61.9% affirmed that partnerships contribute to resource-sharing ($M = 3.70$, $SD = .940$). Additionally, 61.4% agreed that the organization engages multiple stakeholders to improve outcomes ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .835$). KII 06 (female) noted, “We have good intentions, but collaborations are often ad-hoc or tied to funding cycles.” Meanwhile, KII 08 (male) stated, “Our collaboration with UN agencies and local CBOs has brought in both technical capacity and co-funding, although not consistently.” These perspectives suggest that while partnerships exist, they could be better structured, institutionalized, and sustained to maximize climate resilience outcomes. These results resonate with the findings of Broto et al. (2020), who noted that fragmented partnerships often limit the scale and sustainability of adaptation programs, particularly in low-income contexts. Similarly, a study by Wamsler et al. (2020) argued that collaborative governance enhances adaptive capacity when backed by formalized institutional frameworks and predictable funding streams. Conversely, Reckien et al. (2019) highlighted that some municipalities overly depend on donor-led partnerships, which may not align with local priorities or timelines, leading to poor implementation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study revealed an overall robust engagement of stakeholders in climate adaptability projects within IGAD-Kenya, supported by a high response rate of 83.2%, which underscores the relevance of the subject to staff members. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, though slightly male-dominated, reflecting broader regional workforce patterns. The majority of respondents possessed between one and six years of experience, suggesting a relatively new workforce with limited institutional memory, while

the high level of educational attainment highlights the technical competence of staff involved.

On stakeholder engagement, the findings demonstrated that participatory structures are reasonably established, with most respondents confirming that stakeholder views are increasingly shaping project decisions. However, communication challenges persist, particularly due to digital literacy gaps, bureaucratic delays, and exclusion of less tech-savvy stakeholders. Collaboration and partnerships, though present, were found to be weak, fragmented, and often donor-driven, limiting their sustainability and alignment with local priorities.

Overall, the study confirms that stakeholder engagement positively influences climate adaptability projects, but gaps remain in communication inclusivity, institutional memory, and structured collaborations. These results align with global scholarship emphasizing that inclusive participation, effective communication, and institutionalized partnerships are critical to climate resilience (Singh et al., 2020; Thondhlana & Hove, 2021; Wamsler et al., 2020).

5.2 Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Institutional Memory and Capacity Building**
IGAD should invest in staff retention and systematic documentation of project experiences to address the risks posed by a relatively new workforce. Establishing knowledge management systems and continuous professional development will ensure continuity and build technical expertise in climate resilience.
2. **Enhance Inclusive Communication Systems**
Project teams should diversify communication tools to bridge digital literacy gaps. For instance, integrating traditional methods such as community radio and barazas with digital platforms like WhatsApp will ensure that less tech-savvy stakeholders, particularly older community members, are not excluded.
3. **Institutionalize Partnerships**
IGAD and partner organizations should formalize collaboration frameworks with clear roles, shared funding mechanisms, and long-term strategies. Moving away from ad-hoc, donor-driven collaborations will strengthen ownership, alignment with local priorities, and sustainability of climate projects.
4. **Promote Gender-Responsive Engagement**
Efforts should be scaled up to achieve greater gender parity in climate adaptability teams. Targeted recruitment, mentorship programs for

women, and gender-sensitive project design will enhance inclusivity and harness diverse perspectives for better adaptation outcomes.

5. Strengthen Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms

Stakeholder feedback should be systematically integrated into decision-making processes. Establishing regular feedback loops, participatory monitoring, and transparent reporting will enhance trust, ownership, and responsiveness of climate projects.

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