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The blue economy concept: untapped potential of Baringo County

Blue Economy Concept (BEC) refers to economic gains got by sustainable utilization of the oceans. This concept has gained prominence from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goal number 14 on life under water. Whereas BEC gives emphasis on Oceans, in Kenya fresh water systems (FWs) accounted for 80% of fish production translating to KES 943,365.20 million accounting for 0.11% of our GDP in 2018. Therefore, BEC is important in FWs. Baringo County constitutes mainly Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). Although agriculture is practiced in the highlands, pastoralism is the main economic activity whereas the riparian communities depend on fishing. This county is endowed with many aquatic ecosystems for BEC, thus promoting the Big Four Agenda. This paper examines the potential of BEC in Baringo County towards securing a robust economy by reviewing literature on success stories from water bodies in the country. A case study of Lake Naivasha showed that its fish production tripled from 633 tonnes in 2014 to 2,287 tonnes in 2018 translating to KES 4,810.80 M and 17,381.20 M respectively. This is because of restocking of the lake unlike L. Baringo whose fishery is on a declining state (i.e. 302 tonnes in 2014 to 145 tonnes in 2018; KES 1,193.20 M loss) due to overfishing. Restocking of aquatic systems within Baringo County can improve fish production 50 fold thus create wealth. We recommend for the adoption of BEC in Baringo County for sustainable development.

Keywords

Blue Economy Concept; Sustainable development; Aquatic ecosystems; Lake Baringo; and Arid and Semi-Arid Lands

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