

# Interdepartmental Coordination: A Mechanism for Governing Cross-Cutting Issues Toward Sustainable Dairy Development in Kenya

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## Abstract

Navigating the interactions among Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), manifesting as both synergies and trade-offs, requires mechanisms that facilitate coordinated responses among the multiple actors involved in governing Kenya's dairy sector. This study investigates existing mechanisms that facilitate coordination between Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), and how they contribute to governing the SDG interactions. The analysis draws on insights from 31 semi-structured interviews with selected officers situated in different MDAs, complemented by a review of relevant policy documents. The findings reveal that several institutional arrangements function as mechanisms of coordination to govern the interactions that characterize Kenya's dairy sector. These mechanisms include the centre of government efforts, interdepartmental coordination, policy integration, and regulatory impact assessment—each operating through a set of sub-mechanisms including inter-ministerial committees, sector working groups, thematic task forces and joint planning platforms. Collectively, these mechanisms ensure cross-cutting gender (SDG 5) and climate (SDG 13) issues are mainstreamed into dairy-related policies and programmes. Through these same mechanisms, issues of productive employment and fair wages (SDG 8), as well as equitable access to resources and recognition of inequalities faced by smallholder dairy farmers (SDG 10), are increasingly prioritized by actors across the MDAs as key considerations that could guarantee the sector's long-term sustainability. While the identified mechanisms have limitations in ensuring effective governance of SDG interactions, this study provides supporting evidence of their contribution towards governing the dairy sector across its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Nonetheless, there remains a window of opportunity to further strengthen the identified coordination mechanisms.

## Keywords

Governance, Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Dairy Development, Coordination Mechanisms, The Kenyan Dairy Sector