

## **Abstract**

The Republic of Kenya initiated key reforms in 1999 for its water sector governance, which culminated with the release of a water act in 2002. In compliance to the Water Act 2002 and to enhance their water security, local stakeholders in Ngaciuma-Kinyaritha came to create the unique Water Resource Users' Association (WRUA) in that catchment in 2006 amid many Water Service Providers (WSPs) and Community Water Management Systems (CWMSs). How would the Water Resource Management Authority (WRMA) integrate the existing CWMSs in the legal and institutional frameworks guiding the development, supply, utilization and conservation of local water resources by the new WRUA? Should these CWMSs seek registration to qualify as WSPs? This study sought to assess the performance of all the above key institutions involved in the management of water resources and supply of water services in Ngaciuma-Kinyaritha Catchment of the Tana Basin of Mount Kenya Region. It basically aimed to isolate the contribution of CWMSs to domestic water security in the catchment among other Water Service Providers (WSPs) and managers (WRUAs). Empirical tools of scientific research employed to achieve these objectives included a household survey of 165 farmers and 36 in-depth interviews. The analysis encompassed an appraisal of the performance of these water governance institutions based a Performance Assessment and Evaluation (PAE) approach. Findings revealed that CWMSs played and keep playing a key role in developing the existing water resources, thus increasing farming water profitability in the catchment. These CWMSs were achieving 30% of the targets of the water sector reforms in ensuring domestic water security in Ngaciuma-Kinyaritha Catchment among other WSPs and the WRUA. If their technological innovativeness on water supply and catchment management was enhanced, these institutions would perform better and make a greater contribution to the success of the water sector reforms therein. Hence, WRMA, WRUA and WSPs shall not neglect to integrate them in their legal and institutional frameworks for future collaboration.