

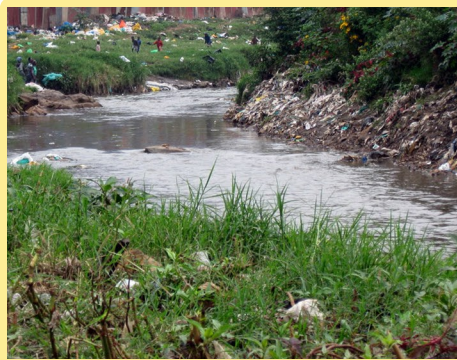
**The KENYA INSTITUTE for PUBLIC
POLICY RESEARCH and ANALYSIS**

Thinking Policy Together

Potential for cleaning Nairobi River in creating green jobs for the youth in Kenya



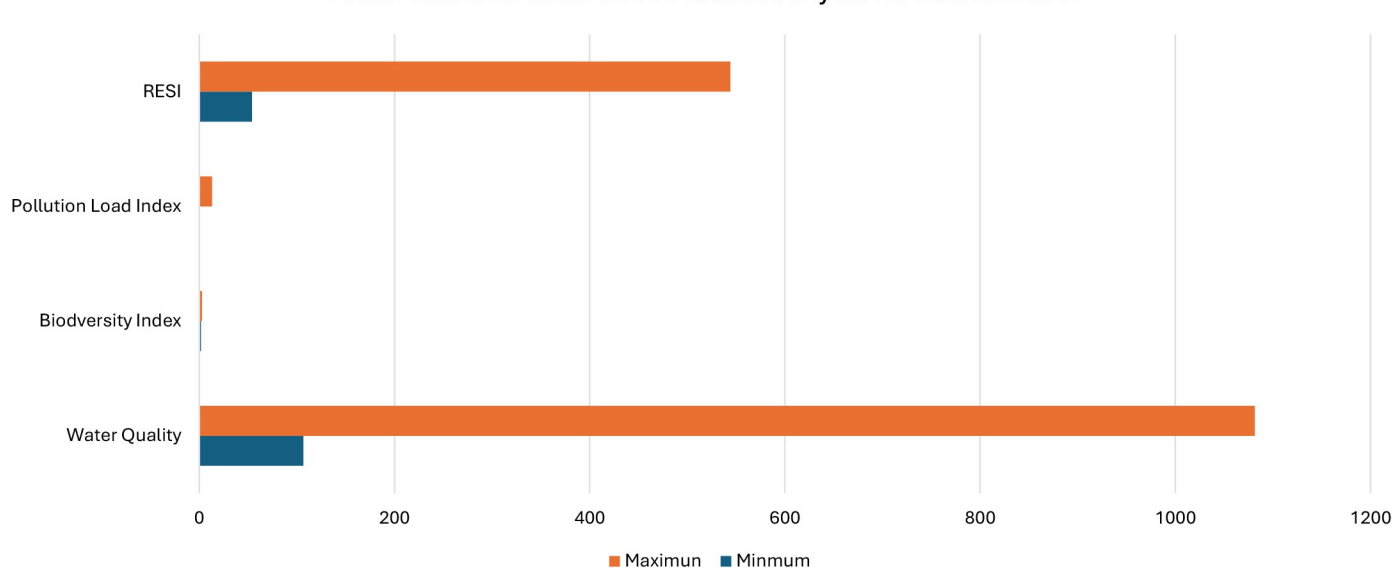
Introduction



The Nairobi River, once a vital water source, has suffered severe pollution due to rapid urbanization and poor waste management.

This environmental crisis presents a unique opportunity: cleaning the river can generate green jobs for Kenya's youth while restoring the ecosystem.

River Environmental Stress Index Analysis for Nairobi River



Key Messages



1. Nairobi River is Critically Polluted

- Contaminants like lead, chromium, and E. coli exceed safe levels, endangering public health and aquatic life.



2. Population Growth Fuels Waste Generation

- Nairobi's population grew from 3.1M in 2009 to 4.1M in 2019, increasing pressure on sanitation and waste infrastructure.



3. Government and Donors Are Investing Heavily

- Kenya has allocated KES 800M for initial cleanup and over KES 20B more in medium- to long-term plans.
- African Development Bank is committing KES 22B to sewerage systems.



4. Unemployment Degradation

Exacerbates

Environmental

- With youth unemployment at 5.7% in 2021, idle labour contributes to poor waste practices. However, this can also be redirected to green work.



5. Global Examples Show Promise

- The Chicago River cleanup generated 11,200 jobs per \$1 billion invested. Nairobi can emulate such models.



6. Wide Scope for Green Job Creation

- Opportunities exist in waste collection, eco-tourism, riverbank restoration, urban farming, conservation, and urban planning.

Policy Recommendations



1. Design River Cleanup Projects as Employment Programmes

- Structure Nairobi River rehabilitation to include youth training and employment in green job sectors.



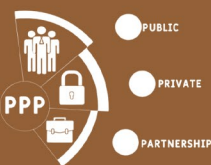
2. Enforce Environmental Regulations

- Strengthen monitoring and penalize polluters to deter further contamination and protect cleanup gains.



3. Promote Community Engagement and Awareness

- Encourage local participation in cleanup and maintenance through civic education and environmental stewardship programs.



4. Foster Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

- Mobilize private sector and donor investments in sustainable waste management, recycling, and eco-tourism.



5. Replicate Best Practices from Global Projects

- Use insights from successful river restoration projects like the Thames and Chicago River to shape Nairobi's approach.



6. Integrate Environmental Restoration with Urban Planning

- Align river cleanup with broader city development plans to ensure long-term sustainability and improved quality of life.