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Multi-level and Multi-actor governance in the management of air pollution in Kenya: case of Nairobi and Kisumu Counties

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Kenya continues to suffer decreased air quality levels attributed to the overreliance on biomass as a primary source of energy coupled with rapid economic development. This has resulted in environmental degradation and widespread health challenges arising from prolonged exposure to poor air quality. To address this problem, Kenya institutionalized a devolved governance system to make decisions regarding air pollution management. However, little is known about the effectiveness of the devolved air quality management and governance system. This paper therefore aimed at assessing the outcomes and challenges in management of air pollution in a devolved governance system in Kenya. The paper explored the views of multi-actors involved in management and governance of air pollution in both Nairobi and Kisumu counties. The study highlights the conflicting roles of national and county government in the management of air pollution coupled with power influence over resources and the limited opportunities for citizen involvement in decision-making processes in the management and governance of air pollution in Kenya. County Governments therefore need to be further empowered in order to play a robust role in the enforcement of air pollution standards within their jurisdiction which will ultimately influence the overall air quality levels in Kenya.

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