



Story of change: Spotlight on Peter Thobora

Strengthening evidence-informed policymaking and integrated energy planning in Kenya

By Belinda Korir and Dr Violet Murunga

As Kenya accelerates its transition toward sustainable and low-carbon energy systems, the ability to make policy decisions grounded in credible evidence has become increasingly critical. Within Kenya's Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, State Department for Energy, Peter Thobora, Deputy Director of Renewable Energy, plays a central role in shaping this transition. Working at the heart of national energy policy formulation and implementation, he plays a critical role in guiding strategy, overseeing implementation, and coordinating technical processes across the renewable energy sector.

Through his engagement with the Africa LEEPS project, Peter helped strengthen the Ministry's capacity to integrate evidence more systematically into energy planning and policymaking. Serving as the Ministry's focal point for the initiative, Peter coordinated participation, ensured alignment with institutional

The Alliance for Evidence and Equity in Policy-making in Africa (AEEPA) is led by the African Institute for Policy Development (AFIDEP). AEEPA is one of three Africa LEEPS initiatives who lead technical capacity strengthening and policy engagement activities. The Alliance aims to accomplish the following objectives:


- Strengthen institutional and individual EIP technical capacity at local and national levels to enhance decisionmaking in policy and programs with initial priority to reproductive health and clean energy
- Integrate gender equity in EIP processes at program and institutional levels with initial priority given to reproductive health and clean energy
- Nurture EIP networking and learning within countries and across the region
- Stimulate improvements in reproductive health and clean energy programmatic interventions in Kenya and Nigeria

AFIDEP

African Institute for
Development Policy

1

LEEPS
Learning together to advance
Evidence and Equity in Policymaking



priorities, and directly engaged in several project-supported activities aimed at strengthening evidence-informed policymaking (EIP).

Peter's experience illustrates how targeted capacity strengthening can enhance institutional decision-making, improve the use of analytical tools, and embed evidence more systematically into policy formulation processes, particularly during a time when Kenya is reviewing and refining key energy policies to guide its long-term development, energy and climate goals.

Gaps in evidence use and technical capacity

Before engaging with the LEEPS project, the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum was already incorporating evidence into policymaking. However, Peter noted that this practice was not yet fully institutionalised. Capacity gaps existed at both individual and institutional levels, particularly in the ability of staff to consistently access, interpret, synthesise, and apply evidence to policy development.

These capacity gaps were particularly evident in the implementation of the Kenya

Carbon Emission Reduction Tool 2050 (KCERT 2050), an analytical model designed to guide the country's carbon emission reduction pathways. Although the tool, launched in 2021 by the ministry and partners, was in place, application of the tool was yet to be institutionalised. The technical committee responsible for its rollout had not yet been constituted, sensitised and trained on its use. Limited sensitisation and training meant that staff lacked the awareness, confidence and practical skills needed to operationalise the tool effectively.

At the same time, the ministry was undertaking a review of the national energy policy, creating an opportunity for stronger evidence use to inform policy choices and implementation strategies.



Peter Thobora, Deputy Director of Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum at the Evidence 2025 in Benin.

Evidence use capacity development and community of practice engagements

Through the Africa LEEPS project, Peter participated in multiple, mutually reinforcing activities. These included training on evidence-informed policymaking, hands-on development of an evidence brief, organising and co-facilitating the first KCERT 2050 sensitisation and training workshop on operationalising the tool, and participation in the Evidence 2025 conference in Benin to share Kenya's experience and learn from evidence-to-policy practices across Africa and beyond.

As the ministry's focal point, Peter coordinated the identification and participation of staff in the EIP training, managed logistics and timelines, and ensured that the activities aligned with ongoing policy processes. He also actively participated in the training, contributing to the review and analysis of literature that was later synthesized into an evidence brief on clean cooking and coordinated its internal review within the Ministry.

Building skills for evidence analysis and policy translation

The LEEPS-supported activities strengthened Peter's technical and analytical capacity in several ways. He gained practical skills in contextual analysis and structured document review, enabling him to conduct desktop research, assess sector-specific evidence, and develop clear policy profiles.

The training also enhanced Peter's ability to synthesize quantitative and qualitative evidence and to evaluate its relevance for policy and strategy development. Importantly, these skills were applied immediately, as the training coincided with the review of Kenya's Energy Policy. Peter and other trained staff were able to integrate evidence more systematically into policy deliberations, contributing to a more robust review process.

Applying evidence to decision-making and technical tools

Peter applied the knowledge gained from the training across multiple areas of his work. During the energy policy review, he used evidence synthesis and analysis techniques to inform policy options and guide discussions within review committees. The policy review process progressed to Cabinet approval, marking a significant milestone in Kenya's energy policy reform.

The KCERT training strengthened the ministry's capacity to use modelling tools for decision-making. Peter and his colleagues are now better positioned to interpret model outputs, assess the implications of different interventions, and use evidence to guide carbon emission reduction strategies.

Strengthened collaboration and institutional processes

Beyond technical skills, the project improved collaboration across sectors and institutions. Through the KCERT 2050 sensitisation and training workshop, Peter and his colleagues engaged with stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, and civil society. These interactions strengthened cross-sectoral dialogue and reinforced the value of inclusive, evidence-driven approaches to policymaking.

Peter's involvement in the initiative as the ministry focal person enhanced his ability to navigate internal decision-making structures. As a senior technical officer involved in policy direction-setting, he reported improved engagement with colleagues and leadership, contributing to clearer communication and more informed decision-making processes within the ministry.

Integrating gender and cross-cutting considerations

Gender emerged as an important cross-cutting theme during Peter's training, particularly in relation to clean cooking and renewable energy. Peter noted that the training strengthened his team's capacity to mainstream gender considerations into energy planning and community engagement. These skills are applied in both rural and urban contexts to ensure that energy interventions are inclusive and responsive to the needs of different population groups.

By integrating gender into programme design, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis, the ministry is better positioned to deliver energy solutions that leave no one behind.

Looking ahead: Sustaining evidence-informed energy policy

Looking forward, Peter sees the LEEPS training as directly relevant to the next phase of work within the energy sector. With the national energy policy review nearing completion, attention is shifting toward revising and implementing sectoral strategies that will guide Kenya's energy transition in the coming years.

These future processes will continue to rely on robust evidence evaluation, stakeholder engagement, integrated energy planning, and attention to cross-cutting issues such as gender. The skills and insights gained through the LEEPS project have strengthened Peter's individual capacity while also contributing to institutional readiness for more systematic, evidence-informed policymaking.

Reflecting on the experience, Peter describes the project as a timely and valuable opportunity that deepened understanding of evidence-based policy formulation and enhanced the ministry's ability to translate analysis into actionable policy decisions. What began as targeted training has evolved into a foundation for sustained improvement in how evidence shapes Kenya's renewable energy and climate policy agenda.