REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mbala Municipal Council Citizen Engagement Strategy

(With Focus on Output Based Budgeting and Project Implementation Management)

Zambia Devolution Support Programme

2025

Contents

Mbala Municipal Council Engagement Strategy ……..….0

Introduction ……1

Background……..1

Current C.E efforts by Mbala Municipal Council ……2

Vision, Aim and Objectives ……...3

Approaches and Methods of Engagement……..4

Implementation Plan……...5

Communication Plan……..6

Budget for the Implementation of C.E Process……..7

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting……..8

Conclusion……8

INTRODUCTION

Background

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone of democratic governance and effective service delivery. For Mbala Municipal Council, engaging our community ensures that project and programme implementation and allocation of resources reflects the true needs of the people. This strategy aligns with the Constitution of Zambia, the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019, and the National Planning and Budgeting Act No. 1 of 2020, and the Constituency Development Fund guidelines which mandate the participation of citizens in planning, budgeting and implementation.

As Zambia's oldest district, Mbala holds a unique historical and cultural position. This document serves as a roadmap to modernize our governance, empower our citizens, enhance accountability, and nurture trust between the Local Authority and the public. It marks a shift from intermittent consultations to systematic, inclusive dialogue that leaves no one behind, consistent with the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP).

CURRENT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS BY MBALA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Mbala Municipal Council has already invested in several citizen engagement efforts during budgeting, programme and project cycles. Current practices include:

- **Stakeholder Consultative Meetings:** Stakeholder meetings are held quarterly with business owners, market committees, and transport operators regarding specific projects, such as the construction of the Truck Park at the Mbala–Mpulungu Junction and the Construction of a modern market shelter at Mbulu Market.
- **Citizen Town Hall Meetings:** Town Hall meetings are held with citizens regularly to consult them aswell as give them progress reports on various projects, programmes and activities undertaken by Mbala Municipal Council.
- **Ward Development Committees (WDCs):** The Council relies heavily on WDCs to identify community projects under the Constituency Development Fund. Orientation Trainings are conducted to operationalize these committees in compliance with the Local Government Act and the Constituency Development Fund guidelines.

- **Media Engagement:** Utilization of local radio stations (i.e Radio Luswepo 89.5 FM) and the Council's Facebook page to engage various stakeholders within and outside our district borders, and disseminate information.
- **Public Notices:** Placement of notices at the Civic Centre and public places regarding property rates and licensing.

GAPS TO BE ADDRESSED

While these Citizen Engagement efforts are progressive, participation has often been limited to the Central Business District (Kazimolwa Ward). Remote areas, in the District, risk facing information gaps due to the long distance between the Civic Centre and the rural wards. Furthermore, feedback loops have sometimes been delayed.

This Citizen Engagement Strategy therefore aims to bridge these gaps by formalizing engagement schedules and expanding reach to vulnerable groups including women, youths, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

VISION

Our vision is to create a transparent, responsive, and community driven governance system where every resident of Mbala actively participates in shaping a diversified and resilient local economy by 2028.

During the three (3) year duration of this CES, each year will contain an annual implementation plan. Feedback from each year will be incorporated into the following year's action plan.

AIM

The main aim of this Strategy is to provide a refined and more structured approach to engaging Mbala citizens in the Output Based Budgeting (OBB) and project cycle processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the public financial management of the Council.

OBJECTIVES

To address existing challenges, Mbala Municipal Council commits to:

1. **Enhance Inclusion:** Ensure that at least 40% of participants in consultative meetings are drawn from marginalized groups (women, youth, and PWDs).
2. **Increase Awareness:** Increase citizen awareness and understanding of the CDF guidelines, budget cycles, and rating laws by 20% annually.
3. **Strengthen Monitoring:** Establish a joint monitoring mechanism where community representatives actively participate in inspecting Council projects (e.g. construction of classroom blocks, rehabilitation of feeder roads).

APPROACHES AND METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT

Mbala Municipal Council will use an inclusive approach to ensure no stakeholder is left behind. Recognizing our district's vast geography and cultural heritage, engagement methods will include:

1. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING & BUDGETING

- Budget Hearings: Draft annual budgets will be presented to stakeholders (including the Chamber of Commerce and Market Associations) at least two months before National Budget Hearings for Local Authorities.
- Town Hall Meetings: Bring citizens from all walks of life in one setting to engage them and receive feedback and recommendations on the Council's service delivery.
- Traditional Ceremonies as Venues: Leveraging gatherings like the Mutomolo ceremony to disseminate information and gather high-level feedback from Traditional Leadership (Chiefs and Headmen) regarding land and developmental priorities.
- WDC Consultations: Continue empowering WDCs to hold zonal meetings to prioritize projects before submission to the Constituency Development Fund Committee (CDFC).

2. CITIZEN MONITORING OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Project Site Visits: Community Steering committees will be formed to help the Council during inspections of projects.

3. REPORTING AND FEEDBACK

- Digital Platforms: Enhancement of real-time updates on project status via the Mbala Municipal Council Website and Facebook page.

- Radio Programs: Biweekly radio programs will be conducted on Radio Luswepo to discuss status reports of projects and programmes, receive feedback and answer live questions.
- Suggestion Boxes: Suggestion boxes will be placed at strategic locations Markets and Bus Stations incuding the Civic Centre for anonymous feedback.

Mbala Municipal Council Communication Strategy Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan

Stakeholder	Classification	Power/ Interest	Involvement Decision	Current Engagement Level	Desired Engagement Level	Engagement Strategy	Engagement Goal	Engagement Method
Traders/ Business	Primary	High/High	High	Resistant	Supportive	Frequently	Community Participation	Town Hall Meetings
Traditional Leaders	Primary	High/Low	High	Supportive	Supportive/ Leading	Quarterly	Act as intermediary between the Council and the Community	Council Meetings and Town Hall Meetings
Community Members	Primary	Low/High	High	Neutral	Supportive	Frequently	Community Participation	Town Hall Meetings
Focal Point Person	Secondary	High/High	Medium	Leading	Leading	Quarterly	Community Participation	Committee meetings and Full Council meetings
Civic Leaders	Secondary	High/High	High	Supportive	Leading	Quarterly	Policy Directive	Committee meetings and Full Council meetings
Member of Parliament	Secondary	High/High	High	Supportive	Leading	Quarterly	Policy Directive	Committee meetings and Full Council meetings
Financiers	Tertiary	Low/High	Low	Leading	Leading	Bi-annually	Keep Satisfied	Virtual Meetings
Transporters /Truckers	Primary	Low/High	High	Neutral	Supportive	Monthly	Participation	Town Hall Meetings

Persons With Disabilities	Primary	Low/High	High	Unaware	supportive		Inclusivity	Physical meetings
Ministry of Transport	Secondary	Low/Low	Medium	Leading	Leading	Bi-annually	Keep informed	Virtual Meetings
Ministry of Agriculture	Secondary	Low/Low	Medium	Leading	Leading	Bi-annually	Keep informed	Virtual Meetings
NGOs	Tertiary	Low/Low	Low	Neutral	Supportive	Annually	Participation	Physical Meetings
Civil Society Organisation	Tertiary	Low/Low	Low	Neutral	Supportive	Annually	Participation and Support	Physical Meetings
Faith Based Organisations	Tertiary	Low/Low	Low	Neutral	Supportive	Annually	Participation	Physical Meetings

Communication Plan for Mbala Municipal Council

Communication Plan Summary

Activity	**Stakeholder Category**	**Communication Strategy**	**Timeline**
Project Identification	• Citizens (General Public) Zonal Representatives • WDCs • Vulnerable Groups (Women/Youth clubs)	Public Notices, Radio Announcements, Facebook, Website and Ward Sensitization Meetings,	Q3 (Aug/Sept)
Budget Preparation consultation	Business Owners, Market Committees, Chamber of Commerce, the general public.	Public Notices, Radio Announcements, Facebook, Website. Stakeholder Meetings.	Q3 August
Budget Outcome Hearings	Business Owners, WDCs, FBOs, Market Committees,	Public Notices, Radio Announcements, Facebook, Website.	Q4 (Dec)

	Chamber of Commerce, the general public.	Stakeholder Meetings.	
Budget Approval	• Councillors • Council Management • Media	Public Notices, Radio Announcements, Facebook, Website. Full Council and management Meetings.	Q4 (Dec)
Project Updates	Citizens, CDFC, WDC, Traditional Leaders.	Public Notices, Radio Announcements, Facebook, Website. Stakeholder Meetings.	Q2, Q3, Q4
Grievance Redress Mechanism	• All Stakeholders	Stakeholder Meetings.	Q1 (Mar)
Monitoring and Evaluation	• All Stakeholders	Management Meetings, Council Meetings, Virtual Meetings, Stakeholder Meetings	Q4 and Q1 (2026)

BUDGET FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

To ensure this strategy is actionable, Mbala Municipal Council will allocate a total of K100,000 from:

1. Locally Generated Revenue: To fund Radio Announcements, Public Service Announcements, Stationery and refreshments for the meetings.
2. CDF Administrative Component: Utilization of the 5% administrative allocation to support WDC transport refunds and monitoring logistics.
3. Partner Support: Lobbying for support from development partners (e.g World Bank under ZDSP) for capacity building and media airtime.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Council will establish a Citizen Engagement Strategy Monitoring Committee comprising the Social Economic Planner, Public Relations Officer, and two community representatives.

- **Monitoring:** We will track "Engagement Indicators" such as:
    - Number of citizens attending budget hearings (disaggregated by gender).
    - Percentage of WDC project submissions included in the final budget.
    - Number of grievances resolved within 14 days.
- **Reporting:** A "Citizen Engagement Report" will be annexed to the Council's Annual Report and shared with the Provincial Local Government Officer (PLGO) and the public via the website.
- **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM):** The Council will operationalize a dedicated desk for complaints regarding project implementation or budget exclusion, ensuring feedback is provided within standard timeframes.

CONCLUSION

The development of this Citizen Engagement Strategy emphasizes Mbala Municipal Council's appreciation for the role of its people in the democratic governance system. By moving from passive information dissemination to active collaboration, we ensure that public spending on projects genuinely leads to people centred development. We commit to inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, ensuring Mbala remains a model of participatory governance in the Northern Province.

Approved by: Signature: .....

Name: MUSONDA S. MUMPA

Designation: DIR. HR & ADMINISTRATION

Date: 15/12/2025

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MBALA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
15 DEC 2025
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
P.O. BOX 420057, MBALA

CamScanner