REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Kasenengwa Town Council Citizen Engagement Strategy

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

Zambia Devolution support program

2025

Contents

1. Introduction 2
1.1 Background 2
1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Kasenengwa Council 2
2. Vision, Aim and Objectives 3
3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement 3
4. Implementation Plan 4
5. Communication Plan 6
6. Budget (for the Implementation of the CE Process) 7
7.Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting 7
8. Conclusion 8

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone of democratic governance, particularly at the local level where public resources directly impact livelihoods. Meaningful participation enables communities to influence planning, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation processes, thereby ensuring that public spending is transparent, inclusive, and aligned with community priorities.

Zambia's decentralization reforms guided by the Local Government Act, the National Planning and Budgeting Act, the Public Finance Management Act, and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Guidelines mandate Local Authorities to actively involve citizens in the budget and project cycle. This obligation is reinforced under the Zambia Devolution Support Programme (ZDSP), which promotes people-centred planning and improved service delivery.

Kasenengwa Town Council recognizes the critical role of empowering citizens to contribute to district development. This Citizen Engagement Strategy provides a structured framework through which citizens are informed, consulted, and involved in decision-making processes relating to planning, budgeting, project selection, and implementation.

The CES aims to strengthen trust between the Council and the community, promote accountability, and create a participatory environment where development outcomes reflect the needs and aspirations of residents across all eight wards.

1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Kasenengwa Council

Kasenengwa Town Council has initiated several efforts to enhance citizen engagement during the budgeting and project cycle processes. These include:

Existing Engagement Practices

- Public Consultations and Community Meetings: Regular engagement sessions, including CDF and project identification meetings, involving WDCs, CWACs, traditional leaders, business owners, and civil society groups.
- Engagement of Community Structures: The Council collaborates with WDCs, NHCs, CWACs, and traditional leadership to capture diverse inputs.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Platforms such as suggestion boxes, phone calls, social media pages, and stakeholder forums allow citizens to share concerns and suggestions.
- Use of Radio and Social Media: Information dissemination for public meetings, budget hearings, and general updates.

Benefits of Current CE Efforts

- Increased transparency in public resource allocation.
- Strengthened community ownership, resulting in better project sustainability.
- Enhanced inclusivity, with improved representation of women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Reduced misinformation and improved trust in local authority processes.

Gaps and Limitations

- Low participation levels due to limited awareness and inadequate communication channels.
- Unequal representation, with more active groups dominating consultations.
- Capacity gaps among community structures in interpreting budget information.
- Delayed feedback loops, leading to unrealistic expectations.
- Fragmented reporting, making it difficult for citizens to track project progress.

How the CES Will Improve Current Efforts

The CES will:

- Expand and diversify engagement channels (radio, social media, ward-level outreach).
- Enhance the inclusion of vulnerable groups: women, youth, the elderly, PLWDs.
- Strengthen feedback and grievance redress mechanisms.
- Introduce regular reporting and publication of project implementation updates.
- Establish structured CE activities throughout all budget stages.

2. Vision, Aim and Objectives

2.1 Vision

"Creating an inclusive, transparent, and participatory local governance environment that empowers citizens to contribute effectively to the development and decision-making processes of Kasenengwa Town Council by 2030."

2.2. Aim

To provide a structured, coordinated, and inclusive framework for engaging citizens in the budget and project cycle processes to enhance transparency, accountability, and public participation in local governance.

2.3 Objectives

1. To increase citizen awareness and understanding of the budget and project cycle processes.
2. To promote inclusivity by ensuring active participation of women, youth, PLWDs, and marginalized groups.
3. To strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms throughout the planning, budgeting, and implementation processes.
4. To improve citizen monitoring of budget execution and project implementation.
5. To institutionalize feedback and grievance redress systems that enhance responsiveness in service delivery.

3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement

Kasenengwa Town Council will use the following initiatives for inclusive engagement taking into consideration that citizens are drawn from varying contexts. Consideration will be taken about how citizens will engage with civic leaders as well, to ensure that the process is not one sided. The citizen engagement process is ongoing, hence the Councils intention to use different avenues and mechanisms to communicate with various stakeholders. Engagement methods will therefore include:

A. Citizen Participation in key Decision-Making and keeping citizens informed through the budget cycle:

- The presentation for the budget hearings will be presented ahead of time to stakeholders to obtain feedback, including allocations to different programs/sub-programs, key outputs, and selected projects;
- The CE in prioritizing projects will be strengthened to provide a good venue for informed consultation with WDCs;

B. Citizen Monitoring of Budget and Project Implementation

- CE in project implementation will be fostered via updated openings to engage citizens and local structures in monitoring project implementation;
- Improve reporting to citizens on the outputs of the budget implementation. This will be achieved using the following examples:
  - Use technology for real-time reporting on project progress;
  - Publish regular updates and reports;
  - Create accessible channels for concerns or feedback.
- Selected stakeholders will form part of the team as the council conducts monitoring visits.

C. Multiple Engagement Channels

- Public meetings
- Radio programs
- Social media updates
- Stakeholder workshops
- Focus group discussions
- Surveys and questionnaires

4. Implementation Plan

The Citizen Engagement Plan is a crucial component of our local governance framework, designed to foster inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. As we embark on implementing this plan, it is essential to acknowledge the progress made so far in engaging citizens in key areas such as budget preparation, property rates, and market fees.

Currently, citizen engagement in these areas is proceeding smoothly, demonstrating a strong foundation for further enhancement.

To build on this momentum, we have identified various engagement opportunities that will facilitate meaningful interactions between citizens, local government officials, and other stakeholders. Through the successfu implementation of this plan, we are confident that we can further strengthen the bonds between citizens and loca government, driving collective progress and development.

The implementation plan of the CES will include the following:

1. Assessment of the current status of citizen engagement in the budget process and other relevant subject matters
2. Identify engagement opportunities and develop a detailed outline of timelines and responsibilities. Exampl given in Table 1 below.
3. Outline the Stakeholders with reference to the level of and period of engagement with the council. As displaye in table 2 below, the stakeholders to be engaged by the council may include citizens, Ward Developmen

Committees (WDCs), Neighbourhood Health Committees(NHCs), Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), government agencies at various levels, community organizations, Traditional and Community leaders, businesses, civil society groups, academic institutions, media outlets, and potentially affected groups within the community.

Table 1: Proposed Stakeholder Engagement Plan Summary

STAKEHOLDERS	KEY FEATURES/ACTIVITIES	FORM OF ENGANGEMENT	INTEREST/ POWER	FREQUENCY	ENGAGEMENT GOAL	TYPE OF ENGANGEMENT
Community members, CWACs	Empowerment grants Meetings, website,	Meetings, website, social media	High/High	Quarterly	Community participation	Pre-engagement
Community Members Welfare Assistance Committees CWACs	Empowerment Loans	Meetings, website, social media	High/Low	Quarterly	Community participation	Pre-engagement
Youths, Learning institutions	Secondary & Skills bursaries	Meetings, Website, Social Media	High/High	Quarterly	Participation	Pre engagement
Community members, WDCs, Civic leaders, MLGRD	Community Projects	Council meetings	High/High	Quarterly	Policy directive Implementation	Pre engagement Implementation Post engagement
Community members, FBO, DC, LA, Civic leaders, Neighborhood Health Committee NHCs	Public Health/ Environmental interventions	Public campaigns, radio, social media	High/High	On-going	Participation	Implementation
Community members, WDCs, Headmen	Development Control	Physical meetings	High/Low	Quarterly	Policy makers	Pre/During/Post implementation
Community members, Planning department, CS, Civic leaders	Planning Agreement	Physical meetings	High/High	Quarterly	Policy Implementation	Pre implementation engagement
Traditional leaders, WDCs,	Security of land within boarders	Physical meetings	Low/Low	Quarterly	Control over traditional boundaries and cultural practices and Act as intermediary between Government and community	Pre implementation engagement

5. Communication Plan

Kasenengwa Town Council disseminates information to create awareness about its stakeholder engagement plan through various channels, including its website, stakeholder meetings, public outreach programs, and minutes of council meetings, news updates, and targeted community engagement initiatives. These efforts provide transparency and accountability, keeping stakeholders informed about ongoing initiatives, decision-making processes, and opportunities for participation, while also amplifying citizen participation and fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement.

To build on the communication plan in line with citizen engagement, we have identified several strategies that will facilitate effective interactions between the council, citizens, and other stakeholders. Through the implementation of these initiatives, which include enhancing transparency and accountability, amplifying citizen participation, fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement, and evaluating efforts, we are confident that Kasenengwa Town Council can further strengthen the bonds between citizens and local government, driving collective progress and development.

Table 2: Proposed Communication Plan Summary

DELIVERABLE/ ACTIVITY	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PROPOSED TIMELINE/ DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNICATION METHOD	COMMENTS
Radio Program	Community Members	Weekly	Jan Dec 2025	PRO	Radio	None
Press Statements	Media & Community Members	Weekly	Jan Dec 2025	PRO	Social Media	None
Facilitate Interviews Press Briefings	Council Secretary, Council Chairperson, Councilors, Media	Weekly	Jan Dec 2025	PRO	Radio & Tv	None
Social Media Engagement	Community Members	Daily	Jan Dec 2025	PRO	Social Media	None
Community Sensitization/ Awareness	Community Members	Weekly	Jan Dec 2025	PRO	Road Show	None
Council Meetings Briefings	CS, HODS, PRO, All Departments	Once Every Quarter	Jan - Dec 2025	PRO	In-Person Meetings	None
News Letters	MLCRD, Business Houses, Investors, All Departments, Full Council DC CS	Once A Year	December 2025	PRO	E-Mail & Hardcopy News Letter	None

CDF Branding	Community Members, MLGRD	Once A Year	August 2025	PRO	Billboards, Black Cards, T-Shirts, Caps, Posters, Vehicles	None

6. Budget (for the Implementation of the CE Process)

In accordance with the Output-Based Budgeting (OBB) strategy, citizen engagement activities are currently allocated funds under the Local Governance Program. To further augment the financial resources required for effective implementation, stakeholder engagement will be undertaken with Cooperating Partners to mobilize supplementary funding and ensure successful program delivery.

7.Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Kasenengwa Town Council will monitor and evaluate CES implementation through:

Key Indicators

- Number of engagement activities conducted
- Diversity and number of participants
- Levels of satisfaction (survey results)
- Number and nature of grievances received and resolved
- Timeliness of feedback to citizens

Tools

- Attendance registers
- Monitoring reports
- Meeting minutes
- Feedback forms
- GRM database

Reporting

- Quarterly CE reports to the Full Council and MLGRD
- Publication of updates on notice boards, website, social media
- Annual CES performance review to inform revisions

8. Conclusion

Kasenengwa Town Council Citizen Engagement Strategy reaffirms the Council's commitment to inclusive, transparent, and people-centered governance. Through structured engagement processes, citizens will have increased opportunities to participate meaningfully in decision-making, thereby ensuring that development is aligned with community aspirations.

By institutionalizing feedback, strengthening monitoring, and improving information flow, the CES will enhance accountability and service delivery, build community trust, and foster a collaborative approach to sustainable development across all eight wards.

Kasenengwa Town Council remains committed to empowering its citizens, upholding democratic values, and ensuring effective utilization of public resources.

KASENENGWA TOWN COUNCIL

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COUNCIL SECRETARY