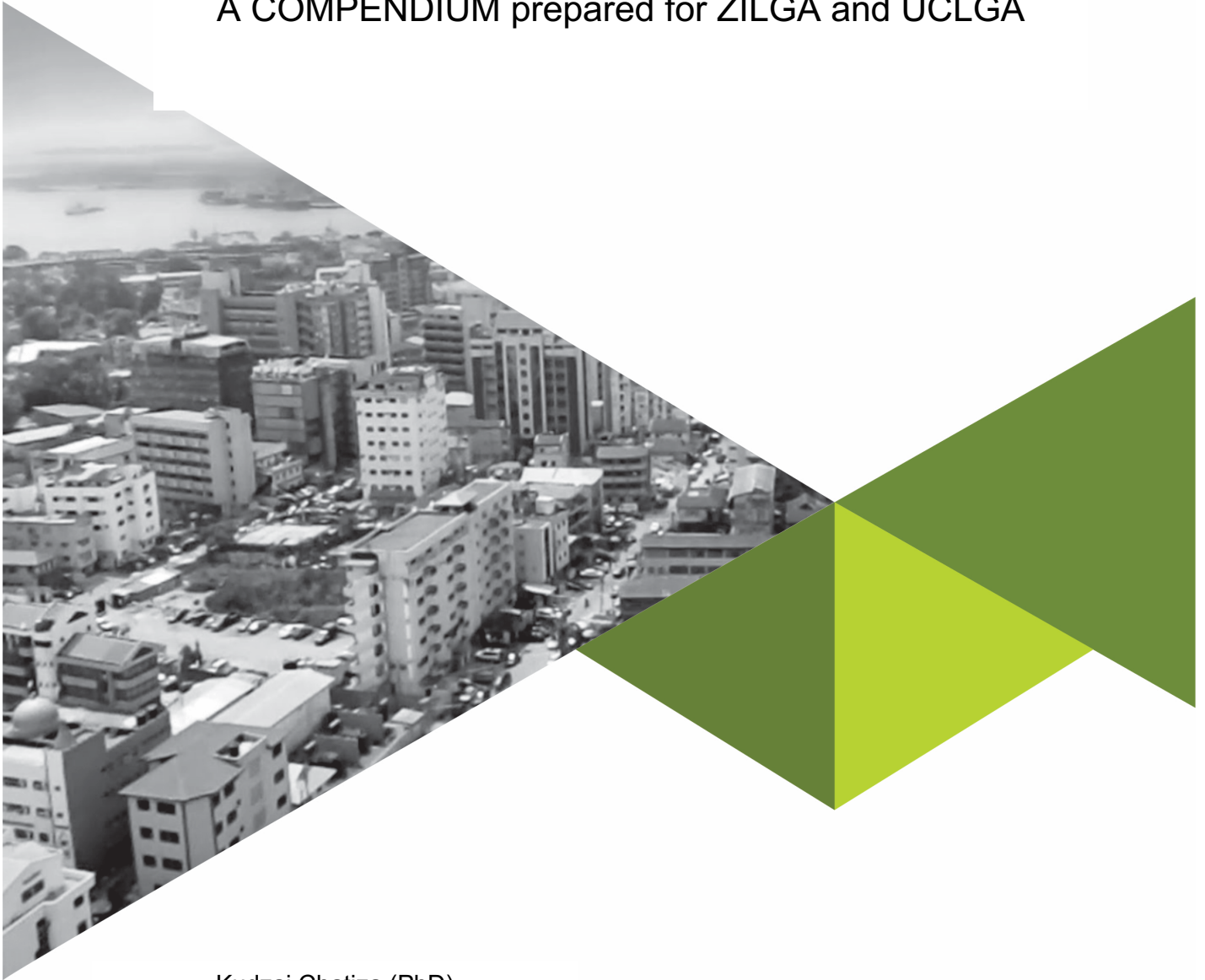




Integrating Zimbabwe's Local Authorities into the 2021 to 2027 European Cooperation Agreement

A COMPENDIUM prepared for ZILGA and UCLGA



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Acronyms	1
List of Key Documents Consulted	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Context of the mission	3
1.2 Zimbabwe’s Governance: An Introduction	3
1.3 Methodology	4
2. National Development Policies and Strategies	4
Box 1: National Development Policies 1980-2018	4
2.1 National Development Planning	4
2.1.1 Long-term National Vision and Development Perspectives	5
2.1.2 Transitional Stabilisation Program (TSP), October 2018 to December 2020.....	5
2.2 National Sectoral Planning and Implementation	5
2.2.1 Sector Policies	5
2.2.2 National SDG implementation architecture.....	6
2.2.3 The Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF).....	6
3. National Decentralisation Policy	7
3.1 Brief Historical Background	7
3.2 Decentralisation debates and their local governance and local government implications	7
Table 1: Categories of Councils in Zimbabwe.....	7
Box 2: 13 Principles of Decentralization, 1996.....	9
3.3 Legal Framework Governing Decentralisation	9
3.3.1 The 2013 Constitution & Local Government’s Constitutional Mandate.....	10
3.3.2 Framework for national and local competence sharing.....	10
3.3.3 Resources allocation to local governments.....	10
3.3.4 Policy Guidelines on Decentralisation	11
3.3.5 The National Association for Local Governments	11
4. Cooperation with the European Union (EU)	12
4.1 National Indicative Programme, Implementation and Evaluation	12
4.2 EU Pre-Programming and Priority Sectors for 2021-2027 Programming Period	13
5. Conclusion	13

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronyms

ARDCZ:	Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe;
CLGF:	Commonwealth Local Government Forum;
CSO:	Civil Society Organization;
ESAP:	Economic Structural Adjustment Program;
EU:	European Union;
HIV and AIDS:	Human Immune Virus-Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome;
LA:	Local Authority;
LACEP:	Local Authority Capacity Enhancement Program;
MDP:	Municipal Development Partnership;
NDP:	National Development Program;
NIP:	National Indicative Program;
RDC:	Rural District Council;
SADC:	Southern Africa Development Community;
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals;
TSP:	Transitional Stabilisation Program;
UCAZ:	Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe;
UCLGA:	United Cities and Local Governments-Africa;
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program;
VNGi:	Association of Dutch Municipalities International;
WLGf:	Women in Local Government Forum;
ZILGA:	Zimbabwe Local Government Association;
ZIMASSET:	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation;
ZUNDAF:	Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

Compendium of References

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the mission

The EU Commission adopted a Communication on 'empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes', a culmination of dialogues with local authority representatives from 2000. The dialogue was conducted with the framework of the Cotonou Agreement. EU's 2013 Communication recognised local authorities as state actors capable of exercising their rights and deploying capacities alongside national governments within a multi-level governance framework.

The current assignment informs the basis for Zimbabwean local authorities' participation in European cooperation procedures, which include a focus on i) institutional strengthening of local authority associations as Commission partners, and ii) establishment of political dialogue with the Commission around implementation of the 2013 Communication. The twin objectives got further impetus in the 2017 European Consensus, a commitment to the 2030 Agenda (SDGs), the place of local authorities in SDG implementation and the emphasis of territories in framing cooperation.

1.2 Zimbabwe's Governance: An Introduction

The Republic of Zimbabwe attained independence from British colonial rule in 1980. It is an active member of SADC and other regional, continental and international bodies.



At the last count in 2012 Zimbabwe's national population was 13 061 239 in ten (10) administrative provinces and ninety-two (92) local government areas. Eight (8) of the provinces are rural while two (2) are urban i.e. Harare and Bulawayo, largest and second-largest cities respectively. Thirty-two (32) of the country's local governments are urban while sixty (60) are rural. Zimbabwe's local governments are divided into 1958 Wards. Each is represented by a Councillor elected based on universal adult suffrage.

The country has a two chamber Parliament with a 210-member Lower House and 80-member Upper House (Senate). 210 Members of Parliament are elected on a constituency basis while the 80 Senators include 60 (6 per province) elected via proportional representation from party lists that have a woman at the top and alternating male and female representatives. These are joined by 18 Chiefs and 2 representatives of people

with disabilities. Parliament has legislative, representational and oversight roles. Of its many Parliamentary Committees, it has one with local government oversight functions.

Key state institutions involved in governance at national level are divided into the Executive headed by a President directly elected by all citizens, the Judiciary, the Legislature (as set out above) and five Independent Commissions¹ that support democracy. Zimbabwe's executive authority derives from the people and vests in the President who exercises it through Cabinet.

Zimbabwe has three tiers of government. These are defined in Section 5 of the Constitution (2013) as i) National Government, ii) Provincial and Metropolitan Councils and iii) Local Authorities (urban and rural). Government is tasked with facilitating rapid and equitable development in a manner that i) involves the people in formulating and implementing development plans and programs, ii) protects and promotes people's rights particularly women, and iii) ensuring that people benefit from resources in their areas (Section 13 of the Constitution).

1.3 Methodology

In undertaking this assignment iterative consultations were held with the association of local authorities. This involved strategic meetings, consultation of documents and request for submission of written input from the two constitutive members of the Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA), i.e. the Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) and the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ). Value was also drawn from two UCLGA-SARO convened online meetings on the 9th and 16th of July as well as correspondence from UCLGA. An online meeting with a key official of the EU Delegation in Zimbabwe on July 9th was also very strategic. The official is responsible for supporting local governance work and thus has a close working relationship with the Associations of Local Governments and CSOs implementing EU-supported projects. A meeting at Zimbabwe's Office of the President and Cabinet of July 22nd 2020² added critical updates on the decentralisation process in the country. Throughout the implementation of this task comments to drafts by the UCLGA Focal Person (Charles Patsika) also helped with preparation of this document.

2. National Development Policies and Strategies

2.1 National Development Planning

The country has guided its development processes based on macro-economic policies since the adoption of Economic Structural Development Program (ESAP) in 1991. Box 1 shows the development policies Zimbabwe has prepared and implemented before and since then. The adoption of ESAP also coincided with the end of the first National Development Plan.

Between 2013 and 2018 the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) guided national development. This was replaced by a Transitional Stabilisation Program (TSP) in October 2018 following elections of July 31st 2018 that ushered in Zimbabwe's 'New Dispensation Government'

Box 1: National Development Policies 1980-2018

1. Growth with Equity, 1981;
2. Transitional National Development Plan, 1982;
3. First Five-Year National Development Plan, 1986;
4. Economic Structural Adjustment Program, 1991;
5. Zimbabwe Program for Economic and Social Transformation, 1996;
6. Vision 2020, 1999;
7. Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Program, 2000;
8. National Economic Revival Program, 2001;
9. Macro-Economic Policy Framework, 2005;
10. National Economic Development Priority Program, 2006;
11. Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy, 2007;
12. Short-Term Emergency Recovery Program I, 2009;
13. Short-Term Emergency Recovery Program II, 2010;
14. Medium-Term Plan, 2011;
15. Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, 2013; and

Source: Sibanda and Makwata (2017)

¹ These are the Zimbabwe Electoral, Human Rights, Gender, National Peace and Reconciliation and Media Commissions

² Representatives of the two Associations of Local Authorities met with Ambassador Nicholas D. Kitikiti, Deputy Chief Secretary and three senior officials in his office

that was hewed out of a military-assisted political transition in November the previous year.

2.1.1 Long-term National Vision and Development Perspectives

Zimbabwe developed a Vision 2020 at the end of the 1990s. The country mainstreamed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reported on them at a time it vigorously fought the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Critical development programs in the 2000's include the land reforms. The 'New Dispensation Government' is pursuing 'Upper Middle-Income Economy' status by 2030.

Strategies for attaining Vision 2030 include i) investment promotion (foreign and domestic) and private sector friendliness, ii) fiscal stability, iii) debt sustainability, iv) re-engagement and breaking decades of isolation, and v) resolving the land question including compensating ex-farm owners. The policy document acknowledges the need for reconstruction and transformation of the national economy, fixing broken relations with the international community, restoring the essential principles and systems of democracy and development. The analysis in Vision 2030 acknowledges past leadership failures and places value on rule of law, servant leadership and alignment of laws as well as administrative practices to the Constitution.

The TSP (2018-2020) and two National Development Plans (NDP's, i.e. I for 2021-2025 and II for 2025-2030) are the instruments for attaining the Vision 2030. Specific programs have been and will be set up to deliver on the Vision. Some of these specific initiatives speak directly to decentralisation as discussed below i.e. TSP and a relevant Presidential Policy.

2.1.2 Transitional Stabilisation Program (TSP), October 2018 to December 2020

The TSP's priorities include fiscal consolidation, economic stabilization, stimulating growth and creating employment. Some of the policy instruments deployed include fiscal and monetary policies, attracting investment, diversified production, value addition and reduction of export dependence. The Program's stabilisation emphasis arises from national government's intention to setting a sound base for two five-year National Development Plans (NDP I for 2021-2025 and NDP II for 2025-2030). Some of the proposed institutional reforms of TSP include 'empowerment of local government to improve service delivery', 'empowerment of provinces through devolution and decentralisation', 'ease of doing business reforms, and 'strengthening institutions to combat corruption and rent seeking behaviour'. These reform areas are particularly important to local governments.

2.2 National Sectoral Planning and Implementation

2.2.1 Sector Policies

There are a number of national government policies most of which are prepared with the support of the UN and other development partners. These are largely sector-based and are rarely aligned in terms implementation periods. Zimbabwe has recently updated its Gender, Youth, Education, Health, Social Protection, Climate Change and Investment Policy Frameworks. As same time some legislative reforms have been concluded except that local government sector laws remain outstanding.

Largely because of the weak economic performance Zimbabwe's most active policy making and implementation sphere has been the economic one led, on behalf of government by the Ministry responsible for finance. As such, Fiscal and Monetary Policy have had considerable pervasiveness in national development and governance discourse.

Delays have been experienced in terms of the policy areas of land, agriculture, urbanisation, human settlements and local government. These are sectors where serious transformations have occurred in recent years making policy development somewhat contested.

A culture of considerable research and public engagement during policy formulation has been established in the country. Specific social and economic groups, associations active in a particular sector and individuals are

engaged. Gaps however exist in implementation, whole-of-government approaches and articulating the place of local authorities.

2.2.2 National SDG implementation architecture

Although Zimbabwe is implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals it has placed emphasis on Goals 2 to 9, Goals 13 and 17. The country has also committed to mainstreaming the SDGs in National Development Plans and Budgets including expressing a focus on building the capacities of sub-national agencies to align their policies and strategies to ensure achievement of the Goals. Institutional arrangements set up include the following:

- Parliamentary Thematic Committee on SDGs³ focused on enhancing domestication and ownership, legislation development, oversight and monitoring as well as resource appropriation;
- A Steering Committee⁴ chaired by the Chief Secretary to President and Cabinet;
- A Technical Committee⁵;
- Thematic Clusters on SDG localization, monitoring and evaluation;

Overall the architecture is national government led with the Ministry responsible for finance coordinating guided by the Office of the President and Cabinet.

2.2.3 The Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF)

The office of the UN Resident Coordinator and Heads of UN Agencies working in Zimbabwe operate on the basis of a five-year development assistance framework negotiated with the Government of Zimbabwe. The current Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) covers the 2016 to 2020 period and was estimated to cost USD1.6 billion to be spend on six interconnected priorities of:

1. Food and Nutrition Security;
2. Poverty Reduction and Value Addition;
3. HIV and AIDS;
4. Gender Equality;
5. Public Administration and Governance; and
6. Social Services and Protection.

The current ZUNDAF was developed in the context of ZIMASSET and the national commitments towards Agenda 2030. Disaster risk reduction, prevention and response were mainstreamed into ZUNDAF. A Joint Implementation Matrix (JIM) was also prepared. Flowing from the ZUNDAF, each UN Agency prepares strategic and program plans as well as specific projects in close consultation with partner national government Ministries. These initiatives are implemented in different local authority areas in partnership with civil society organisations and the private sector as needed. UNDP Zimbabwe has an active capacity development program hosted by the Ministry responsible for local government and an Urban Resilience Program being piloted in three local authorities. Other UN agencies principally work through their partner Ministries and with civil society organizations with minimum local authority association and individual Council involvement.

³ Members are drawn from the chairpersons of other Parliamentary Committees including the one responsible for local government

⁴ Members include all Permanent Secretaries of national government line Ministries and Head of UN Agencies

⁵ Chaired by the Secretary for Ministry responsible for finance and economic development while members are the line Ministry SDG Focal Persons, representatives from UN Agencies, development partners, the private sector, civil society and the Office of the President and Cabinet

3. National Decentralisation Policy

3.1 Brief Historical Background

At independence Zimbabwe adopted a policy of decentralization based on principles of active citizen participation in national development. The policy was issued as a Prime Minister's Directive in 1984 and was later made into law, the Provincial Councils and Administration Act. Under the policy, decentralized structures were established at village, ward, district, provincial and national level to facilitate bottom up planning. A National Planning Commission was set up to steer the planning and implementation processes based on this system.

Alongside this policy were a number of capacity development and local government reform programs that saw the amalgamation of Rural and District Councils in former European commercial farming areas and African tribal areas respectively. In urban areas a one-city concept was also implemented to eliminate the race-based dualities that characterized pre-independence development planning in Zimbabwe. Urban and Rural District Councils received structured capacity development from the late 1980s and received additional governance functions or powers.

3.2 Decentralisation debates and their local governance and local government implications

From the mid 1990s Zimbabwe's local governance institutions particularly traditional, religious and civil society actors grew in strategic influence and numbers. This had the effect of creating spaces where democratic debates flourished. Social and residents' movements in urban and rural areas continued to rise more steeply after 2000 occupying socio-economic development spaces in which national government was becoming ineffective because of inadequate resources.

In some instances, some developmental alliances were built with local governments to innovate regarding both service delivery and local governance. These innovations included alternative models of civic engagement. Essentially, the debates repeatedly wandered into decentralisation by devolution as the most appropriate governance model that would harness the creativity needed for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. Implementation of the decentralization policy peaked in 1996 when 13 Principles were adopted (see Box 2 below).

The decentralisation agenda was partly aided by economic structural adjustment reforms in the 1990s where state functions were being redesigned with some being ceded to sub-national levels. At the same time, some key governance reforms included the alignment of elected and hereditary governance institutions especially in rural areas through the enactment of the Traditional Leaders' Act, revisions to the Rural District and Urban Councils Acts as well as Regional Town and Country Planning Act. However, progress was affected by socio-economic decline and political tensions in the first decade of the 2000's. The period saw some decentralisation reversals. This was seen in the design and implementation of national government programs like the Fast Track Land Reform Program from 2000. Further, the pre-colonial form of decentralisation by de-concentration remained resilient. The early to mid-2000s saw a slow-down in decentralisation implementation in Zimbabwe.

Table 1: Categories of Councils in Zimbabwe

Total	Urban/Rural	Urban categories
92	32 Urban 60 Rural	Cities, 7; Municipalities, 9; Town Councils, 12; & Local Boards, 4

Table 1 shows the different categories of local governments in Zimbabwe. Besides these 92 local authorities and particularly in rural Zimbabwe there are at least 450 other small urban centres with the more visible of these being some 60 District Service Centres most of which acting as the Headquarters of the Rural District Councils. Below this level are Rural Service and Business Centres all which are planned as urban settlements although their populations vary considerably. Some of these are fast growing economic nodes serving agricultural, tourism and mining areas.

Box 2: 13 Principles of Decentralization, 1996

1. That decentralisation is necessary and desirable based on the clear understanding that it promotes and strengthens democracy and civic responsibility as citizens participate in their governance and development. It also helps in minimizing bureaucracy by reducing levels of decision-making and thereby achieving greater efficiency of operations. However, it will not be taken as a strategy for dumping problems of sector ministries to the rural district councils.
2. That decentralisation be defined and understood to mean the legislated transfer of functions and authority from central government to local authorities such as the rural district councils on a permanent basis. Once provided for in law, such transfer of powers and functions can be reversed only on the basis of an amendment to the appropriate law.
3. That there is need for all Ministries to use the same local institutions for the implementation and management of decentralized functions and not to create parallel or separate institutions. Where parallel institutions exist, these should be harmonized.
4. That decentralisation is a process and not an event, as such, it should be implemented cautiously and progressively, having regard to the human, financial and material capacities of the local authorities to whom the transfers would be made.
5. That in respect of those activities and projects to be undertaken by local authorities, sector ministries retain the power and authority to set standards, monitor performance and consistency to national policies and standards, and intervene appropriately to ensure compliance. This means that local authorities will, in executing their legal powers and responsibilities, be required to comply with the requirements of national policies, laws and regulations.
6. That an inter-ministerial committee of Ministers to manage decentralisation and capacity building be established. In this regard, the existing inter-ministerial Capacity Building Co-ordinating Committee will report to a Working Party of Heads of Ministries, who in turn will report to Ministers on policy issues.
7. That central government, in implementing decentralisation, shall strengthen financial, human and material resource capacities of rural district councils so as to make them effective institutions in the provision of the social and infrastructural services needed for sustainable local development.
8. That central government will continue to be responsible for the provision of trunk services which impact upon more than one local authority area or are of a national character. This refers to all social, infrastructural and economic projects that impact upon more than one local authority and call for more resources than can be mobilized by one local authority. For this purpose, line Ministries concerned will provide guidelines on which projects are to be undertaken by local authorities having regard to the social and economic impact of projects, the capital outlay required, and the level of professional and technical expertise needed to execute the projects.
9. That the transfer of powers and functions by line ministries to rural district councils be done by the line ministry concerned and that the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development will co-ordinate and facilitate this effort.
10. That all monies for recurrent and capital expenditure sourced by line ministries and are earmarked for rural district councils be disbursed to the rural district councils soon after the promulgation of the Appropriation Act. Such grants will not pass through the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development.
11. That all loans to rural district councils should be channelled through the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development except for those loans from the National Housing Fund administered by the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing which will be disbursed direct to the councils by that ministry. The Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing will disburse the loans only after the local authority concerned has been granted borrowing powers by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development.
12. That in Zimbabwe there be only two levels, which collect taxes, levies, and other user charges namely central government and local authorities. Thus, rural district councils should collect such taxes, levies, fees and user charges for those services they should provide in terms of any appropriate law, or regulation.
13. That the Public Service Commission will manage the transfer of personnel from central government to rural district councils where this happens as part of decentralisation.

3.3 Legal Framework Governing Decentralisation

Zimbabwe's Provincial Councils and Administration Act is the principal law that defined cross-sector governance structures and processes for the pursuit of decentralisation. Reforms to critical laws like the laws governing water, the environment, education, health and rural local governance in the late 1990s provided scope for decentralised governance even though structures created were managed more by sector Ministries. The country has therefore had different laws governing decentralisation resulting in a simultaneous

implementation of varying forms of decentralisation in different sectors. Within the sectors national government has retained considerable control regarding the depth and breadth of decentralisation.

3.3.1 The 2013 Constitution & Local Government's Constitutional Mandate

The above state of incomplete decentralisation guided the development of coalitions of interests and governance innovations towards deepening decentralisation. The interests pooled local government practitioners, activists in civil society and the academia. This resulted in a consolidation of perspectives on needed governance reforms. The ambition was distilled into a call for local government constitutionalisation based on the notion that this would allow reduced subjugation of sub-national elected institutions by national government. This stream of influence was sufficiently mobilised and broad. It gathered momentum from the late 1990s and was central to the rejection of Zimbabwe's 2000 Constitution largely because the proposals did not go far enough in terms of divesting power from the national level. This momentum effectively sponsored relevant constitutional provisions through the reform process instituted under the Government of National Unity from 2009. The result was a contribution, alongside other political party actors to provisions on devolution in the 2013 Constitution.

Zimbabwe's Constitution has provisions on devolution and decentralisation of governmental powers and responsibilities (Sections 3, 5 and 264) setting clear objectives particularly in the latter section. Section 276 states the functions of local authorities as 'the right to govern...the local affairs of the people within the area for which...established...the power to make by-laws, regulations or rules for the effective administration of [their] areas...levy rates and taxes and generally to raise sufficient revenue...to carry out their objects and responsibilities'. Although local government laws are yet to be aligned to the 2013 Constitution, they have detailed schedules of powers or functions including with respect to revenue.

3.3.2 Framework for national and local competence sharing

As observed before the Provincial Councils and Administration Act of 1985 remains the principal law governing intergovernmental relations. The Constitution (Section 265.3) provides that:

'An Act of Parliament must provide appropriate mechanisms and procedures to facilitate coordination between central government, provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities' (Government of Zimbabwe 2013).

National government has made attempts to implement this provision. Principles for the relevant law have been prepared. At the same time, Constitutional amendments have been proposed for purposes of proper definition of the institutional arrangements for intergovernmental relations. In essence, Zimbabwe currently functions on the basis of institutional arrangements predating the 2013 Constitution. The division of functions of competences across the three tiers of government is thus generally unaltered. Two related points can be made in this respect. One is to acknowledge the relative functional clarity⁶ albeit steeped in centralisation. The second it to reiterate that the current competence sharing framework is insufficiently decentralised.

3.3.3 Resources allocation to local governments

Zimbabwe's national budget has traditionally been a Decentralisation Implementation Instrument. From independence national government disbursed sector funding in the form of grants and public sector investment loans through the budget to local governments. Health, social sector and education grants used to be disbursed directly to local governments until the early to mid 1990s. As national fiscal performance became constrained loans and grants dried up while also increasingly being administered by national government institutions. At the same time revenue sources that were previously managed exclusively by local governments got centralised. Examples include vehicle licensing.

⁶ Current local government legislation (the Urban Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act) has schedules or detailed lists of the powers of local governments

The 2013 Constitution has provided a new and more predictable resource sharing framework. Starting in the 2019 National Budget the Parliament of Zimbabwe appropriated funds to local authorities based on provisions of Section 301 of the Constitution. Though the Act of Parliament anticipated in the same constitutional provision remains outstanding national government has thus set a 'learning-by-doing' approach to having determinate inter-governmental fiscal transfers to local authorities. Circular No. 1 of 2019⁷ was issued to provide guidance on the use of 'devolution funds' determined in relation to population, poverty and infrastructure indices using proportions of 20-30-50 respectively for purposes of weighting. Expenditure priorities were defined as schools and clinics, roads, plant and equipment, water, wastewater and solid waste, energy, facilities promoting tourism and economic development as well as any other capital activities related to service delivery.

Lessons are being drawn, which will hopefully assist in the development of the relevant law including details of the revenue sharing framework. The World Bank and other development partners separately have supported initial thinking on an inter-governmental fiscal transfer framework appropriate to Zimbabwe's political economy. The association of local authorities has been considerably active in setting the agenda and providing evidence on the fiscal aspects of decentralisation.

3.3.4 Policy Guidelines on Decentralisation

The Presidential Policy Guidelines on Devolution and Decentralisation were issued in May 2019. Their focus is on addressing gaps, ambiguities and inadequacies observed in the 2013 Constitution regarding devolution and decentralisation. Through their implementation government seeks to promote sustainable, representative, accountable and inclusive governance, socio-economic development and to guide the deepening of democracy while bringing national government services closer to the people. Their delivery is under the leadership of a Cabinet Committee on Devolution and Decentralisation chaired by the President. This shows considerable seriousness in national government's efforts to realise both the political and socio-economic outcomes of devolution and decentralisation. The constitutional amendment proposals referred to above are being promoted as part of the reform process envisaged in the Guidelines.

3.3.5 The National Association for Local Governments

Apart from the constitution, other laws and policies local governments also get good practice guidance through the association, which has both policy and technical/staff forums. The association, Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA) also provides a platform for lobbying and advocacy. It brings together established associations for urban (UCAZ) and rural (ARDCZ) local governments. Through its various platforms and activities ZILGA is thus the mechanism through which local governments navigate the national governance institutional framework (see Figure below).

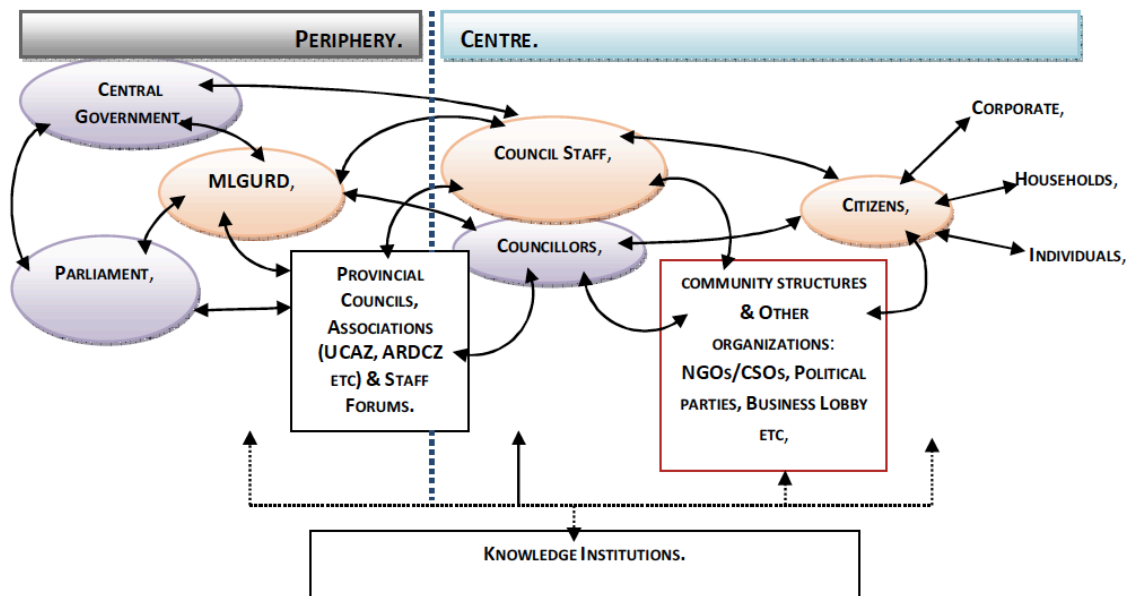
UCAZ is one of Africa's oldest associations of local authorities having been established in 1923 as a loose forum of Municipalities before adopting a Constitution seventeen (17) years later in 1940 becoming the Local Government Association of Southern Rhodesia with a permanent Secretariat. It changed names as the country went through political transitions until independence. The last constitutional review was in 2002. The Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) came under the 1988 Amalgamation Act. Because the Act was held in abeyance till 1993 the association was thus officially established that year. Both associations (and by extension ZILGA) pursue the mission of advancing and safeguarding the rights, powers and duties of local authorities in furtherance of their service delivery and overall development mandate.

The constituent associations forming ZILGA have longstanding relations with national government often working through the national Ministry responsible for local government. Members of the association and their secretariat hold meetings and invite Ministry and other state institutions to their general meetings where they raise strategic issues. The Ministry also involves the associations in strategic engagements at times on issue-basis. Besides engaging on an *ad hoc* basis, the association also developed an advocacy plan, the Devolution implementation Matrix to focus engagement with national government on devolution. The engagement was

⁷ Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Government, 29th May

initiated at two 2019 national meetings separately organised by the two associations and is continuing with EU support through the Local Authority Capacity Enhancement Project (LACEP), which is providing technical advice to ZILGA.

The Figure below shows the general institutional picture for local government in Zimbabwe.



Source: Chatiza et al (2013: 2)

4. Cooperation with the European Union (EU)

4.1 National Indicative Programme, Implementation and Evaluation

European Union (EU) support to Zimbabwe is longstanding and multisector. A 2016 'Strategy for EU Support to Local Authorities' based on a 'Scoping Study of the Local Government Sector' elaborates the focus of the support provided to Zimbabwe. The focus and details of EU Cooperation with/in Zimbabwe is detailed in a 2014-2020 National Indicative Program (NIP), which is set to be replaced by a new framework for 2021 to 2027 currently under consideration with a 'Confidential Country Assessment' already concluded. The global COVID19 emergency interrupted the processes of consultations envisaged. Ordinarily these involve national government, local authorities and their representatives, civil society and other stakeholders often separately.

Support to local authorities is currently through a CSO/LA window receiving Euro6 million or (2.6%) out of a budget of Euro234 million. This is consistent with how development cooperation is being managed in Zimbabwe currently. Further, because of existing restrictive measures and Zimbabwe's arrears with the European Investment Bank the country is not receiving concessional loans. NIP support is not going through the government system but UN Agencies and other non-state agencies. Neither local authorities nor their associations are receiving direct support. The focus is on i) health and ii) agriculture-based economic growth (Euro 88 million each), and iii) governance and institution building.

The National Authorisation Officer for the EU-Republic of Zimbabwe Cooperation is the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry responsible for finance and economic development. Negotiations are led by the EU Head of Mission (Ambassador) and the Permanent Secretary.

The 2017 Scoping Study highlighted four options for administering and targeting EU support towards Zimbabwe's local government sector. These include:

- Rolling out service-level benchmarking to all local authorities with leadership of the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ), which has been implementing the initiative with World Bank support since 2012;
- Setting up a Local Government Institute driven by the Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA) to provide focused capacity development for the sector;
- Piloting and disseminating Rural District Council (RDC) good practices; and
- Strengthening elected and appointed female local government officials through the Women in Local Government Forum (WLGf).

Support to local authority associations proceeded under the CSO/LA window enabled by two projects (the one managed by the VNGi/MDP and another by CLGF). As such, these options were not fully explored under the current NIP and thus remain open for exploration in the ensuing cycle.

4.2 EU Pre-Programming and Priority Sectors for 2021-2027 Programming Period

As observed above, plans to prepare the successor National Indicative Program were initiated in 2019 leading to a 'Confidential Country Assessment' report being concluded. Further, recommendations of the 2017 Scoping Study were not fully operationalised. As such, there is a satisfactorily shared starting point for 2021 to 2027 programming cycle negotiations between the EU Delegation and Zimbabwe's National Association of Local Authorities. Additionally, ZILGA's own analytical work especially under this project⁸ provides a good starting point.

5. Conclusion

The extent of local authority integration into national development and empowerment in terms of the geographical spaces falling under their jurisdiction is relatively established in Zimbabwe. This got impetus in 2013 through sector constitutionalisation. Local authorities are now i) a defined tier of national government not established based on legislation as previously, ii) defined constitutional powers (Section 274 to 276), and iii) having a constitutional entitlement to national resources.

Alignment of laws to operationalize these constitutional provisions has been delayed. As a result, existing governance relations managed by national government still remain. The articulation of territory-based development has not been fully developed. Resources available for purposes of decentralisation implementation have been considerably limited since the turn of the century itself a reflection of Zimbabwe's position within the family of nations as well as its strained capacity to fund its development.

Considerable scope for embedding decentralization implementation across the different policies, programs and strategies in use in the country including the ZUNDAF and specific sector policies exists. The EU supports some of these initiatives as do individual EU Member states in Zimbabwe.

⁸ The Analytical Report