

VOLUNTARY SUB-NATIONAL REVIEW ON LOCALIZATION OF SDGS IN ZAMBIA



A report on the review of the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level in Zambia, prepared to contribute to the 2026 Voluntary National Review of the Government of Zambia to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, and to strengthen the Local Government Association of Zambia's advocacy efforts for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.

NOVEMBER 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



This Publication was Produced with Financial Support of the European Union. Its contents are sole responsibility of LGAZ and do not necessarily reflect the view of the European Union

Conceptualised and Designed by : Mulo Creations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Country Context	2
3.	Methodology for the Development of the Report	3
3.1	Research Design and Data Collection	3
3.2	Data Analysis Framework	4
3.3	Limitations	4
4.0	Enabling Environment for Local Authorities to Localize the SDGs	5
4.1	Structure of Local Government in Zambia	5
4.2	Role of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	5
4.3	Role of the Local Government Association of Zambia	5
4.4	Decentralization by Devolution	5
4.4.1	Administrative Decentralization	5
4.4.2	Political Decentralization	7
4.4.3	Fiscal Decentralization	7
4.5	Policy Alignment: Vision 2030 and 8th National Development Plan	7
4.5.1	Structure of SDG Localisation	8
4.6	National Challenges in SDG Implementation	8
5.0	Conclusion	9
6.0	Local Actions to Localize	10
6.1	Awareness and Institutional Integration of SDGs	10
6.2	Local Authorities SDG Awareness and Commitment	10
6.3	Multi-Sectoral SDG Awareness and Integration	11
6.5	From Awareness to Action: Council-Led SDG Implementation	12
6.6	Council-Led Contributions to the SDGs	13
6.7	Lusaka City Council Spotlight	25
6.8	Synthesis of Local Perspectives, Audit Findings, and Localisation Challenges	25
6.9	Localisation of SDGs at Provincial and District Level	26
6.9.1	Provincial SDG Localisation	26
6.9.2	District SDG Localisation	27
7.0	National Perspective: 2026 Budget and SDG Alignment	27
8.0	Conclusion	28
9.0	Recommendations	29
10.0	References	30
11.0	Annexes	31

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, provides a global framework for promoting inclusive growth, human development, and environmental sustainability. Central to this agenda is a participatory follow-up and review mechanism designed to ensure that no one is left behind. While Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) track progress at the national level, subnational reporting through Voluntary Sub-National Reviews (VSRs) has emerged as a critical tool for accelerating SDG localization, strengthening local governance, and enhancing community engagement.

The Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ), with funding from United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), has undertaken Zambia's first VSR to document the role of Local Authorities (LAs) in implementing the SDGs. The VSR provides a platform for councils to showcase local initiatives, share experiences, and identify challenges and opportunities in advancing sustainable development at the community level.

This VSR complements Zambia's 2023 VNR, which was developed during a period of overlapping challenges including economic stress, climate shocks, and post-pandemic recovery. It focuses on ten priority SDGs, highlighting local contributions to national development objectives and reinforcing the importance of participatory, inclusive, and evidence-based local planning.

2. Country Context

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, covering an area of 752,614 km² and sharing borders with eight nations. Endowed with rich natural resources including copper, cobalt, freshwater, fertile soils, and diverse wildlife the country possesses significant potential for sustainable economic growth. However, its heavy reliance on mining, coupled with high poverty levels and vulnerability to climate shocks, presents persistent development challenges.

Zambia's population was estimated at 19.7 million in 2022, characterized by a youthful demographic with nearly half under the age of 15. While this offers a potential demographic dividend, it also exerts substantial pressure on public services such as education, health, and employment. The population remains predominantly rural (55.3%), with 44.7% residing in urban centres, many of which are concentrated along the strategic line of rail corridor. Administratively, the country is divided into 10 provinces and 116 local authorities (5 cities, 15 municipals, and 96 town councils), which form the backbone of sub-national governance (ZamStats, 2022). The table below shows the population distribution by province and sex.

S/n	Provinces	Males	Females	Total
1	Central	1,122,7351,	138,601	2,261,336
2	Copperbelt	1,361,013	1,407,179	2,768,192
3	Eastern	1,215,490	1,247,192	2,462,682
4	Luapula	747,398	772,080	1,519,478
5	Lusaka	1,497,994	1,595,623	3,093,61
6	Muchinga	455,278	466,935	922,213
7	Northern	800,648	823,205	1,623,853
8	North-Western	626,652	651,705	1,278,357
9	Southern	1,168,167	1,219,924	2,388,091
10	Western	661,88	5713,719	1,375,604
Total		9,657,260	10,036,163	19,693,423

Table 1: Population by province, Source: Zamstats (2022)

Politically, Zambia is a unitary republic and multi-party democracy, operating under a three-tier system of government: national, provincial, and local. The Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016 provides the overarching legal framework, while the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019 specifically empowers councils as the primary institutions of local democracy.

Economically, the country has historically been shaped by its dependence on copper, with national fortunes often tied to global commodity prices. Since independence in 1964, successive governments have pursued economic diversification and structural reforms to build a more resilient and inclusive economy. This transformation agenda is articulated in the Eighth National Development Plan 2022–2026, which prioritizes industrialization, agricultural development, tourism, green growth, and governance reforms to overcome challenges such as poverty and inequality and steer the nation toward its long-term Vision 2030 goals.

3. Methodology for the Development of the Report

The methodology for this VSR was designed to provide a balanced, evidence-based understanding of Zambia’s progress in localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It combined desk-based research, primary data collection, and stakeholder engagement to capture both institutional perspectives and community-level experiences.

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

The study was conducted in three interrelated phases:

Desk Review: A comprehensive review of national and local policy documents was undertaken to establish the enabling environment for SDG localization. This included analysing the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016, the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019, the National Decentralisation Policy (2023), the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), and Zambia's 2023 Voluntary National Review (VNR). Furthermore, specific council documents, such as the pioneering Lusaka City Council Voluntary Local Review (VLR) and various Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), were examined to understand local planning contexts.

2. Primary Data Collection: Primary data was gathered through a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools to obtain a ground-level view of SDG implementation.

Council Surveys: In-depth data was collected from a purposively selected sample of 15 local authorities, representing a diverse cross-section of Zambia's 116 councils across its 10 provinces. The participating councils were:

- City Councils (3): Kitwe, Lusaka, Livingstone
- Municipal Councils (3): Mazabuka, Choma, Chipata
- Town Councils (10): Shibuyunji, Zimba, Pemba, Mafinga, Kapiri Mposhi, Lumezi, Chipangali, Nyimba, Sinda, Lufwanyama

This engagement generated the detailed case studies on council-led projects that form the core of Section 6.0, documenting specific initiatives, funding sources, and outcomes across the ten priority SDGs.

Multi-Stakeholder Surveys: To gauge broader institutional engagement, a survey was conducted with 35 organisations from national government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and academia. This provided a comparative perspective on SDG awareness and integration beyond the local government sphere.

Community Surveys: To assess grassroots awareness and the reception of local services, surveys were administered to 217 community members across the participating districts. The objective of this data collection was to measure levels of SDG familiarity and perceptions of service delivery at the community level. The results of this survey are presented in Sections 6.1 and 6.4.

3.2 Data Analysis Framework

Quantitative data from surveys were analysed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews were analysed thematically. Findings were triangulated across sources to enhance validity and reliability.

3.3 Limitations

While rigorous, the methodology faced several constraints:

- Council Sample: The study engaged 15 councils, providing a robust and diverse qualitative snapshot. However, the findings from these councils are not statistically representative of all 116 local authorities in Zambia.
- Fieldwork and Community Sample: The community survey sample of 217 individuals, while providing valuable indicative data, cannot be generalized to represent all Zambian communities. The depth of fieldwork in each district was also restricted.
- Data Gaps: The study encountered inconsistencies in the availability and quality of disaggregated data at the district and ward levels, which is a challenge for monitoring SDG indicators locally.
- Reliance on Self Reporting: A significant portion of the data on local actions was based on self-reporting by councils, which, while valuable for capturing local perspectives, could be subject to reporting biases.

Despite these limitations, the methodology successfully generated a credible and insightful foundation for understanding SDG localisation in Zambia. It highlights the significant contributions of Local Authorities (LAs), identifies key enabling factors and systemic bottlenecks, and provides a baseline for future reviews. In addition, a request was made to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development for data on projects approved and implemented under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), as reported through the CDF Dashboard, and this information has been incorporated into the VSR report.

4.0 Enabling Environment for Local Authorities to Localize the SDGs

Zambia has established a robust institutional, legal, and policy framework that enables LAs to effectively localize the SDGs. This environment is anchored in the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016, which enshrines sustainable development as a national value and principle, and operationalized through Vision 2030, the 8th National Development Plan, the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019 and the Decentralisation Policy (2023).

4.1 Structure of Local Government in Zambia

Zambia's local government system is grounded in the Constitution. The country comprises 116 LAs, classified into five (5) cities, fifteen (15) municipalities, and ninety-six (96) towns, each functioning as a council and operating as a corporate body with legal personality.

4.2 Role of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) is the principal oversight body for Zambia's local governance system. The Ministry provides policy direction, supervises councils, and supports the progressive decentralisation of functions. It administers key fiscal mechanisms, including the Local Government Equalisation Fund (LGEF) and the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

4.3 Role of the Local Government Association of Zambia

LGAZ plays a pivotal role in strengthening the enabling environment for SDG localization. Its mandate is to advocate on behalf of councils, promote policy dialogue, and provide capacity-building support. LGAZ actively advocates for the autonomy and recognition of local governments as essential actors in achieving the SDGs. It strengthens institutional capacity by providing training, facilitating the integration of SDG targets into local development plans, and supporting evidence-based monitoring and reporting, including through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Beyond capacity building, LGAZ fosters inclusive and participatory governance by promoting multi-stakeholder engagement and raising public awareness of the SDGs. It advocates for local councils to develop localized indicators and data systems that align with the Zambia Statistical Agency, ensuring that development planning is both informed by local realities and aligned with national and global frameworks. In essence, LGAZ acts as a vital enabler bridging global commitments with local implementation to improve service delivery, enhance community participation, and accelerate Zambia's progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

4.4 Decentralization by Devolution

Zambia is implementing decentralisation through devolution, which involves transferring administrative, political, and fiscal powers to LAs. The National Decentralisation Policy and the 8NDP identify decentralisation as a key driver of inclusive and sustainable development.

4.4.1 Administrative Decentralization

Zambia has made notable progress in administrative decentralization, particularly through the formal transfer of functions to LAs. This progress was institutionalized through Cabinet Office Circular No. 2 of 2023 and Cabinet Minute CM31 of 2024, which mandated the devolution of 13 key functions, (Cabinet Office, 2023; 2024). To guide implementation, each line ministry has developed sector devolution plans aligning service delivery with the mandates of LAs. The table below shows all the 13 devolved functions and their parent ministries.

Ministry	Function
Ministry of Transport	Pontoons, Ferries, Jetties and Piers Harbours Vehicle Licensing
Ministry of Youth, Sport and Art	Community Sport
Ministry of Tourism	Cultural Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security	District Archives
Ministry of Health	District Health Services including Ambulance Services
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	Veterinary Services Ministry of Agriculture Agricultural Services
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock Fisheries	Livestock
Ministry of Community Development Community Development	Social Welfare 13

Table 2: Devolved Functions

4.4.2 Political Decentralization

Political decentralization has deepened democratic participation by introducing direct elections of councillors under the 2016 constitutional reforms (National Assembly, 2016). Grassroots engagement is further strengthened through Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), which allow citizens to participate in local decision-making and prioritization of SDG-related projects.

Despite these advances, political decentralization faces challenges due to persistent power struggles among key actors. Tensions often arise between Town Clerks/Council Secretaries, District Commissioners, Mayors/Council Chairpersons, and Members of Parliament (MPs), owing to overlapping mandates and unclear lines of authority. The role of MPs remains particularly contentious, as they exert influence over CDFCs despite constitutional provisions for the separation of powers. This has sometimes undermined the autonomy of elected local officials and weakened the principle of subsidiarity in local governance (LGAZ, 2014).

4.4.3 Fiscal Decentralization

Fiscal decentralization constitutes a fundamental component of Zambia's devolution agenda, establishing the financial architecture that enables LAs to implement their development mandates. Guided by the Decentralization Policy, the framework is structured around four core elements: expenditure assignments, which ensures that 'finance follows function'; revenue assignments, empowers councils to generate local revenue; intergovernmental transfers, including the LGEF and the CDF; and regulated borrowing and debt management mechanisms under the Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019.

The transfer of budgets for devolved functions to LAs has been a key step in operationalizing this framework, supported by Treasury Guidelines from the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP) to ensure accountability. A significant milestone has been the development of the Intergovernmental Fiscal Architecture (IFA) framework, which aims to harmonize intergovernmental fiscal relations and introduce performance-based criteria for resource allocation.

A central instrument in this fiscal devolution is the CDF, which has seen substantial increases in annual allocations growing from K249.6 million in 2021 to K5.6 billion in 2025. This exponential rise underscores the national commitment to empowering local governance. The CDF is structured to support community projects (60%), youth and women empowerment programs (20%), and educational bursaries (20%), following a 5% deduction for administrative costs (GRZ, 2022).

The effectiveness of fiscal decentralization hinges on institutional accountability, robust oversight, and continuous capacity development at the local level. Through these mechanisms, fiscal decentralization aims to enhance service delivery, promote community-led development, and accelerate the localization of the SDGs across Zambia's 116 local authorities.

4.5 Policy Alignment: Vision 2030 and 8th National Development Plan

The enabling environment for localizing the SDGs is given strategic direction and coherence through Zambia's principal national planning frameworks. Vision 2030 which provides the long-term aspiration of a prosperous, middle-income nation, while 8NDP serves as the detailed five-year blueprint for its achievement. The 8NDP's four strategic pillars Economic Transformation and Job Creation; Human and Social Development; Environmental Sustainability; and Good Governance are not only interlinked but are deliberately structured to mirror the integrated nature of the SDGs.

This alignment creates a clear channel for translating global commitments into local action. By prioritizing challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate vulnerability, the 8NDP ensures that national resource mobilization and sectoral reforms are directly targeted at SDG outcomes. For LAs, this means that their development priorities, as outlined in Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), are inherently contributing to national goals when they are aligned with the 8NDP.

4.5.1 Structure of SDG Localisation

Zambia's framework for localising the SDGs is anchored in a coherent, multi-tier coordination structure that connects national visioning with local implementation. This structure operationalises the principle of "leaving no one behind" through integrated planning, participatory governance, and collaborative accountability across all levels of government (VNR, 2023).

At the national level, the coordination of SDG implementation is guided by the National Development Coordinating Committee (NDCC), which advises Cabinet on the formulation and monitoring of the National Development Plans. The NDCC ensures that the SDGs are embedded within national policy and budgeting systems. Supporting the NDCC are Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), established under the four strategic pillars of the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), bringing together ministries, agencies, civil society, academia, and the private sector to provide thematic oversight and technical coordination of SDG-related interventions.

At the provincial and district levels, the Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs) and District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCCs) play a critical role in aligning sectoral programmes and council priorities with national targets. These committees ensure vertical and horizontal coherence between local planning instruments such as IDPs and the strategic outcomes of the 8NDP. Through these mechanisms, subnational institutions are empowered to integrate SDG targets into local development planning, budgeting, and performance tracking.

At the community level, Ward Development Committees (WDCs) serve as the foundation for participatory localisation. The WDCs provide an interface between communities and local authorities, facilitating the identification, prioritisation, and monitoring of development projects. The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) strengthens this participatory process by financing community-driven projects aligned with the SDGs, thereby ensuring that local development outcomes are citizen-led and inclusive (VNR, 2023).

LGAZ reinforces this architecture by promoting capacity development, knowledge exchange, and advocacy on behalf of councils. It also facilitates linkages between local authorities and national institutions, ensuring that lessons from local implementation and participation inform policy decisions at higher levels.

Together, these structures form a vertically integrated and participatory system for SDG localisation ensuring coherence between national policy direction, local implementation, and citizen engagement. This institutional design reflects Zambia's commitment to a whole of government and whole-of-society approach in advancing sustainable development, where local authorities serve as the pivotal link in translating global commitments into tangible community outcomes (VNR, 2023).

4.6 National Challenges in SDG Implementation

Zambia has established a strong policy and institutional framework to support the localization of the SDGs. Nevertheless, persistent challenges continue to constrain full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These challenges operate at both national and subnational levels and understanding them is critical for evidence-based advocacy and policy action.

National-level challenges are systemic and policy-oriented constraints that influence the ability of all local authorities to implement SDGs effectively. Key challenges include:

i) Incomplete Decentralization and Limited Fiscal Autonomy

While decentralization policies have devolved certain responsibilities to local authorities, the transfer of financial and human resources remains partial. Many councils remain highly dependent on central government grants, limiting flexibility, innovation, and ownership in SDG planning and implementation (VNR, 2023).

ii) **Fragmented Institutional Coordination**

Coordination mechanisms across governance levels remain weak. Past national and subnational plans often lacked a spatial dimension, and Development Coordinating Committees operated without fully approved Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), reducing accountability and coherence (MLGRD, 2024).

iii) **Weak National Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**

National M&E systems are not fully integrated with local data systems, limiting the ability to track progress in a timely and accurate manner. This affects evidence-based decision-making and reduces the visibility of local successes and challenges (VNR, 2023).

5.0 Conclusion

Zambia has established a conducive and progressively strengthening enabling environment for SDG localization, integrating a supportive constitutional and legal mandate with clear devolution policies and strategic national plans aligned to the 2030 Agenda. The significant scaling-up of the Constituency Development Fund provides a tangible financial mechanism to empower Local Authorities, while the formal transfer of key functions marks substantial progress in administrative decentralization. Despite persistent challenges in coordination and capacity, this robust framework demonstrates a clear national commitment to participatory, locally led development, creating the essential conditions for translating global goals into community-level impact.

Table 1: Population by province, Source: Zamstats (2022)



6.0 Local Actions to Localize

Zambia’s journey towards achieving the SDGs is fundamentally a local one. While national frameworks such as the 8NDP provide the overall strategic direction, the realisation of these goals ultimately depends on their effective translation into action by the country’s 116 LAs. The SDGs under review are those discussed during the 2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and those for which the Association sought to obtain data.

As frontline implementers, councils operationalise the SDGs through WDCs, financing mechanisms like the CDF, and partnerships with communities, civil society, the private sector, and development partners. This localisation process is shaped by a dynamic interplay of institutional capacity, community engagement, and strategic financing.

6.1 Awareness and Institutional Integration of SDGs

The assessment reveals a clear gradient of SDG awareness and integration, ranging from advanced engagement at the institutional level to limited familiarity within local communities.

6.2 Local Authorities SDG Awareness and Commitment

Awareness in Local Authorities

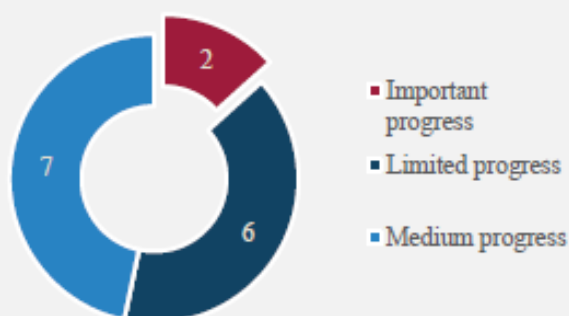


Fig 1: SDG awareness in councils

Findings from 15 councils show that SDG awareness and integration remain at an early stage. In terms of awareness, most councils reported either medium (seven) or limited (six) levels of familiarity with the agenda, while only two reported strong understanding. Integration into local planning is similarly modest, with five councils making notable efforts to embed the SDGs into instruments such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), while the majority ten councils remain at a limited stage

Commitment to SDG implementation

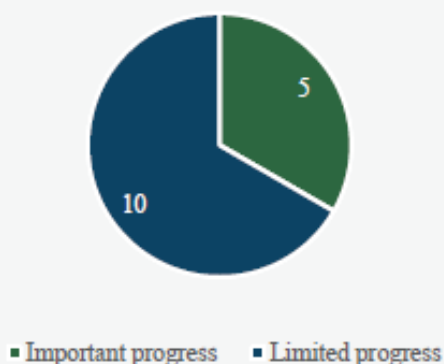


Fig 2: Councils' commitment to SDGs implementation

This points to a clear gap between recognition of the SDGs and their full operationalization. Nonetheless, reported initiatives such as aligning strategies with IDPs, implementing projects like water reticulation and classroom construction, and conducting stakeholder meetings illustrate emerging but tangible steps toward embedding the SDGs into council mandates.

Stakeholder Integration of SDGs in programming

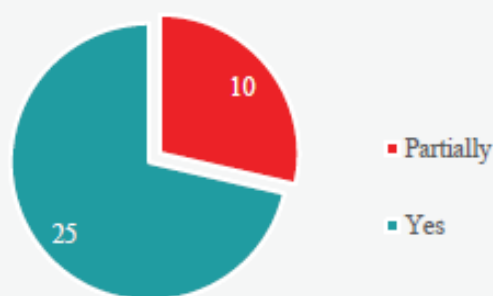


Fig 3: SDG integration by stakeholders

6.3 Multi-Sectoral SDG Awareness and Integration

A survey conducted among 35 organisations comprising national agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and academia indicates a relatively advanced level of formal integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within institutional frameworks. A strong majority (25 organisations) reported fully integrating the SDGs into their plans and programmes. However, a nuance emerges when these same organisations rate their internal awareness; most (23 organisations) considered it moderate rather than high. This suggests that while the SDGs are firmly on the institutional agenda, a deep, nuanced understanding across all staff levels is still developing.

Community SDG awareness

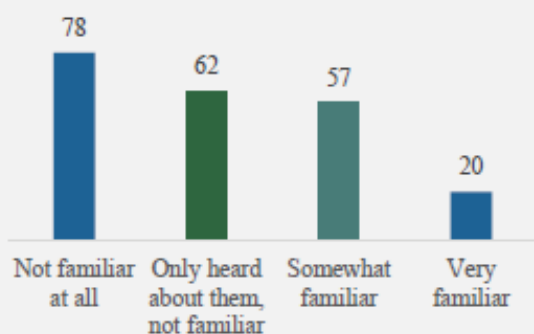


Fig 4: SDG awareness the community members

6.4 Communities Awareness

Awareness of the SDGs at the community level remains limited, posing one of the most significant challenges to effective localisation. During the VSR fieldwork, a total of 217 community members consisting of 93 females and 124 males across the participating districts were engaged through a community survey. The findings revealed that knowledge of the SDGs as a formal global framework was very low. A large proportion of respondents were either “not familiar at all” (78 respondents) or had “only heard about them” (62 respondents).

This limited awareness was consistent across age groups, occupations, and both rural and urban settings, indicating that global goals have not yet been effectively translated into relatable local priorities. The lack of familiarity also highlights missed opportunities to connect council-led development projects with the broader SDG narrative at the community level.

Community perception of council SDG services

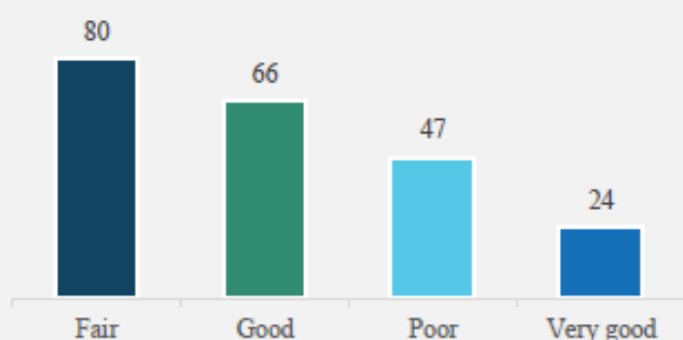


Fig 5: Community perception of council SDG services

This disconnect is particularly critical, as communities are the ultimate beneficiaries of SDG-aligned interventions. When asked to rate council services that contribute to the SDGs, the largest group of respondents (80) rated them as “Fair.” This suggests that while service delivery is visible, the link between local development outcomes and the global SDG agenda is not well communicated limiting community ownership and participation in sustainable development efforts.

6.5 From Awareness to Action: Council-Led SDG Implementation

Despite awareness gaps, Zambia's local authorities have emerged as critical agents of change, translating their mandates into tangible actions across multiple SDGs. The following analysis, summarised in the table below and illustrated with specific examples, showcases the breadth of local implementation.

SDG	Key Actions	Councils
SDG 3: Good Health	Maternity annexes, rural health posts, sanitation outreach	Kapiri Mposhi, Livingstone, Chipangali, Mazabuka, Zimba
SDG 4: Quality Education	Classrooms, staff housing, libraries, desks, bursaries	Kapiri Mposhi, Chipangali, Zimba, Mazabuka, Lufwanyamaba
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Women's skills training, enterprise support, gender mainstreaming	Kapiri Mposhi, Livingstone, Sinda, Nyimba, Chipata
SDG 6: Clean Water	Boreholes, water schemes, ablution blocks, solar systems	Kitwe, Chipangali, Sinda, Mazabuka, Nyimba
SDG 8: Decent Work	Youth/women cooperatives, council businesses, skills training	Kitwe, Sinda, Nyimba, Kapiri Mposhi, Choma
SDG 9: Industry & Infrastructure	Roads, bridges, markets, urban infrastructure	Kapiri Mposhi, Kitwe, Zimba, Livingstone, Mazabuka
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Social welfare, disability-friendly infrastructure	Kapiri Mposhi, Mazabuka, Chipata
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities	Urban drainage, waste management, street lighting	Chipangali, Livingstone, Kitwe, Mazabuka
SDG 14: Life Below Water	Ecosystem protection, sustainable fishing	Mazabuka, Kapiri Mposhi, Siavonga
SDG 17: Partnerships	Donor, private sector, and international collaborations	Chipata, Kapiri Mposhi



6.6 Council-Led Contributions to the SDGs

The practices presented below illustrate the diverse ways in which councils are aligning local priorities with global goals, demonstrating tangible contributions to sustainable development at the community level.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being

Councils are making significant strides in improving healthcare access, primarily through infrastructure development and public health initiatives. The focus is on reducing maternal mortality, expanding rural health services, and enhancing sanitation.

- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council is implementing a comprehensive Community Health Access and Sanitation Enhancement Project. Funded through the CDF and executed in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, this initiative goes beyond construction. It focuses on building and rehabilitating rural health posts, creating sanitation facilities, and supporting community health outreach programs specifically targeting maternal and child health and disease prevention in underserved communities.
- Livingstone City Council has directly addressed maternal health challenges by upgrading the Maramba Clinic with a maternity annex. This project has yielded immediate, life-saving results, with the facility reporting zero infant mortality since its opening. The council has also constructed two health posts in Kabela ward and rehabilitated the Dambwa North Clinic, demonstrating a multi-pronged approach to expanding access.
- Chipangali Town Council completed the Nyaviombo Rural Health Centre maternity annex, a CDF funded project that serves a catchment population of 6,375 people. Initiated by the community in 2017 and completed in 2025, this project is a prime example of community-led development finally being realized through local government support.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council constructed the Kangila Maternity Annex, a facility that was integrated with a borehole to ensure a provision of clean drinking water, addressing both health and water access simultaneously.
- imba Town Council constructed Mulamfu Rural Health maternity annex equipping it with a complete package: a water scheme for clean water, two staff houses and a solar power system for reliable electricity.
- Kitwe City Council has taken a strategic, data-driven approach to public health by developing a solid waste management performance dashboard. This tool serves as a critical planning and monitoring instrument, enabling the council to manage waste collection more efficiently and mitigate public health risks associated with poor sanitation.
- Nyimba Town Council reported on the Kacholola Rural Health Centre, where they constructed a maternity annex equipped with a solar system, furniture, and even a motorcycle for the transport of medical supplies, ensuring the facility is functional and reachable.
- Lufwanyama Town Council constructed the Melibela health post, which was fully equipped with water, sanitation facilities, and furniture, highlighting a focus on making new facilities operational from the outset.



Kangila Maternity Annex, Mazabuka

SDG 4 – Quality Education

The councils are critically involved in dismantling barriers to education by constructing essential infrastructure, providing learning materials, and offering financial support to students. The efforts are widespread, targeting both urban and rural educational deficits.

- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council - The council has distributed over 13,000 desks to alleviate critical shortages and constructed 21 new classrooms. A standout initiative is the Girls' Boarding Facilities Construction and Rehabilitation Project, funded by CDF, which specifically aims to retain girls in school by addressing the barrier of long travel distances, thereby advancing both SDG 4 and SDG 5.
- Chipangali Town Council The council completed a 1 x 3 classroom block at Kaleza Primary School, which included 90 desks for learners and a waterborne ablution block, creating a more conducive and sanitary learning environment.
- Zimba Town Council The council has constructed classroom blocks, provided desks, and installed solar systems to ensure a reliable power supply. Furthermore, they have actively supported human capital development, providing bursaries for 372 secondary school students and 147 skills training students at institutions like the Livingstone Trades and Business Institute
- Sinda Town Council The project at Kayoozi Primary School exemplifies integrated development. The council constructed a 1 x 3 classroom block, an ablution block, and a water reticulation system, ensuring that the new infrastructure is supported by essential water and sanitation services
- Chipata City Council Built a 1 x 3 classroom block at Kauzu Primary School, complete with an ablution block and a water scheme, and has been actively constructing schools and staff houses across the district.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council is has invested in education, constructing new classrooms and teacher houses in rural schools. The council has also sponsored 3,685 learners through secondary school boarding and skills development bursaries, ensuring financial constraints do not hinder education.
- Kitwe City Council reported a massive investment in student support, providing skills bursaries to 11,571 young people and distributing approximately 13,000 school desks across the district.
- Livingstone City Council has sponsored a total of 761 students for secondary education and 3,152 for skills development, leveraging its CDF allocations.
- Lufwanyama Town Council constructed a 1 x 3 classroom block at Nkana Primary School with hydro-powered electricity and desks, improving the learning infrastructure in the district.
- Nyimba Town Council constructed a 1 x 3 classroom block at Tumbatwa Primary School, which was furnished with 90 desks and a solar installation, addressing both infrastructure and energy needs.



Tumbatwa Primary School, Nyimba





Councils are promoting women's economic empowerment and gender-responsive governance through targeted programs, policy development, and inclusive planning processes.

- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council promotes gender equality by supporting women's empowerment programs, allocating CDF funds for women-led enterprises, integrating gender-responsive budgeting, and collaborating with local women's groups and traditional leaders to address gender-based violence and promote equal participation.
- Sinda Town Council supports women groups with empowerment grants for small livelihood activities and has drafted a gender policy. The Tiomboke Women Club received K20,700 for a village banking project, growing the funds to K94,000 and supporting members with mealie-meal during drought impact.
- Nyimba Town Council empowers women groups through grants and loans under CDF. The Chikondi Women Group received a K25,000 grant for a piggery and later qualified for a K180,000 loan for business expansion, with capacity building from the Department of Livestock.
- Livingstone City Council implemented a change project with ICLD to improve gender equality in women's participation in local democracy, helping the council incorporate a gender lens in its budgeting and planning processes.
- Chipata City Council has a gender policy and implements initiatives like a market women's leadership and savings initiative to support women's economic activities.
- Kitwe City Council conducted sensitization of communities to ensure marginalized groups are represented in local governance processes.
- Lufwanyama Town Council engages women to access funding through council grants. The Chimoto disabled cooperative runs a goat-rearing project that grew from 13 to 40 animals.
- Mafinga Town Council has a gender workplace policy to ensure inclusive participation of men, women, and people with disability in governance of the local authority.
- imba Town Council implements the Girls Education and Women Empowerment and Livelihoods (GEWEL) project aimed at supporting girls' education and women's economic activities, leading to more women venturing into business and formalizing their enterprises.



Tiomboke Women Club, Sinda

SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

Councils are implementing various water supply and sanitation projects to improve access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. This is one SDG that nearly all the councils are involved in.

- Chipangali Town Council has a drilling rig for borehole drilling, installs water reticulation schemes, and constructs waterborne facilities in schools and health facilities.
- Chipata City Council constructed 7 ablution blocks under CDF and implemented water schemes including the Feni water scheme in Singo ward.
- Choma Municipal Council focuses on provision of water schemes to improve water access in the communities.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council invests in construction and rehabilitation of boreholes and sanitation facilities through CDF funding, promoting community-led total sanitation programs.
- Kitwe City Council constructed 8 water schemes across all constituencies, drilled 132 boreholes in peri-urban and rural areas, and built ablution blocks.
- Livingstone City Council implements the Newza project with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), training health technicians and volunteers in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) behavioral change.
- Lufwanyama Town Council drilled 52 boreholes across communities, constructed 3 water schemes, built VIP toilets, and constructed three ablution blocks in markets.
- Lumezi Town Council addresses water and sanitation through its integrated development plan and strategic plan, emphasizing community contribution towards sustainability.
- Mafinga Town Council sank boreholes through the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation to provide clean and safe drinking water to communities.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council drilled boreholes, constructed water schemes and dams to improve water access in the district.
- Nyimba Town Council constructed solar powered water reticulation systems in 25 communities, including at Kazolwe Health Center.
- Sinda Town Council constructed 8 water reticulation schemes in selected communities, including the Kapungwe system with Innovation Africa.
- Zimba Town Council constructed an ablution block in the main market equipped with borehole and connection to national power grid.



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION





SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Councils are creating employment opportunities and supporting local development through various initiatives.

- Chipangali Town Council provides empowerment funds to women and youths for economic activities and supported Mary Banda with a soft loan to start an agro-business creating four permanent jobs.
- Chipata City Council constructed 5 market shelters to provide decent trading spaces for marketeers in Magazine compound.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council promotes local entrepreneurship through CDF-funded market infrastructure projects, skills training for youth and women, and creating enabling environments for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).
- Kitwe City Council empowered 58 cooperatives funded by World Bank and 33 youth groups through Bloomberg, creating substantial employment opportunities.
- Lufwanyama Town Council implements cash for work programs across all 20 wards targeting marginalized groups.
- Lumezi Town Council engages stakeholders through planning processes to promote economic growth.
- Mafinga Town Council provides empowerment programs for youths, women and community under CDF loans and grants for business startups.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council implements cash for work programmes and supports beneficiaries venturing into vegetables business and other ventures.
- Nyimba Town Council runs a council motel employing 12 people and supports various economic enterprises.
- Sinda Town Council supports businesses including an oil expeller employing 8 people and a block-making business employing 6 people.
- imba Town Council implements cash for work programmes, CDF empowerment grants and loans to organized groups and SMEs.



SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Councils are developing infrastructure to enhance economic growth and community connectivity.

- Chipangali Town Council graded 98km of feeder roads in selected wards and improved crossing points.
- Chipata City Council graded 210km of gravel roads, installed 50 streetlights, and constructed 10 crossing points (bridges and culverts).
- Choma Municipal Council did not report specific industry and infrastructure initiatives.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council invests in construction and rehabilitation of roads, markets, and public facilities through CDF funding.
- Kitwe City Council constructed bridges, 7 concrete roads, tarred 16.25km to bituminous standard, and graded feeder roads in all wards.
- Livingstone City Council constructed Botswana Road drainage (700m), installed 900 streetlights, developed cycle lanes, and rehabilitated CBD roads.
- Lufwanyama Town Council constructed a market at Chikabuke and bus shelter in Katebula ward and graded 91km of roads.
- Lumezi Town Council addresses infrastructure development through its integrated development plan and stakeholder engagements.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council constructs health, livestock and educational infrastructure, and graded 54km of township roads using CDF purchased equipment.
- Nyimba Town Council graded 50km of feeder roads, installed 85 solar-powered streetlights, installed solar systems on government facilities, and procured 4 earth-moving equipment for road maintenance.
- Sinda Town Council constructed 4 WDC offices and a community hall. library, and graded feeder roads including 18km of Chimunsi-mwembezi
- Zimba Town Council graded 87km of gravel roads, constructed Nkologonozya Bridge, and is constructing a skills center.



- Nkologonozya Bridge, Zimba



SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Councils are supporting the implementing of programs to support vulnerable populations and promote social inclusion.

- Chipangali Town Council provides social cash transfer and cash for work programs and implements sustainable agricultural financing facility for vulnerable communities.
- Chipata City Council conducts due diligence in provision of empowerment funds to vulnerable community members and supports groups like Umodzi Women Cooperative.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council implements social protection programs, Public Welfare Assistance Scheme, and Social Cash Transfer Scheme for vulnerable groups.
- Kitwe City Council considers most vulnerable groups in community project selection processes.
- Lufwanyama Town Council promotes equal access to education through the GEWEL project.
- Lumezi Town Council addresses inequality through strategic planning and awareness raising.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council uses CDF Management Information System to capture data on vulnerable groups and implements Food Security Pack program.
- Nyimba Town Council provides CDF empowerment funds to vulnerable communities and implements cash for work programs to cushion drought effects.
- Sinda Town Council constructs WDCs offices to improve access to services and builds inclusive infrastructure like classroom blocks.
- Zimba Town Council implements social programs including CDF, cash for work and social cash transfer to support vulnerable populations.

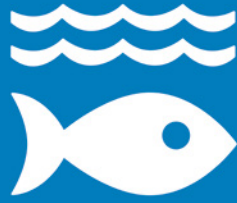


SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

Urban development projects focus on cleaner, safer environments and inclusive city services. Councils are working to create sustainable urban environments and improve community services.

- Chipangali Town Council implements Keep Zambia Clean campaign and purchased a tractor for waste management collection.
- Chipata City Council digitalized payment platforms for council services and supports local football teams.
- Choma Municipal Council designs local area plans considering principles of sustainable development.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council implements its Integrated Development Plan focused on urban infrastructure and modernizing public spaces.
- Kitwe City Council implements youth climate change adaptation project, provides solar street lighting, and installs traffic lights.
- Livingstone City Council facilitates numbering and issuance of titles in settlements and implements national titling program.
- Lufwanyama Town Council installed 2km of solar street lighting in Central Business District (CBD) and collects solid waste in CBD and neighbouring communities.
- Lumezi Town Council promotes sustainable communities through strategic planning and collaboration.
- Mafinga Town Council builds modern infrastructure to support sustainable community development
- Mazabuka Municipal Council established Mazabuka Estate as a green city and installed streetlights on major roads.
- Nyimba Town Council upgrades unplanned settlements in the district to improve living conditions.
- Sinda Town Council constructed 30 housing units for staff, a modern bus station, and market with 19 shops and 132 stands.
- imba Town Council collects garbage twice weekly, installs refuse bins, solar street lights, and grades roads.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



SDG 14 – Life Below Water

Councils are protecting water ecosystems and ensuring sustainable use of aquatic resources.

- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council promotes sustainable fishing along the Lukanga Swamps and improves water access and quality.
- Kitwe City Council protects and creates buffer zones around streams to maintain water quality.



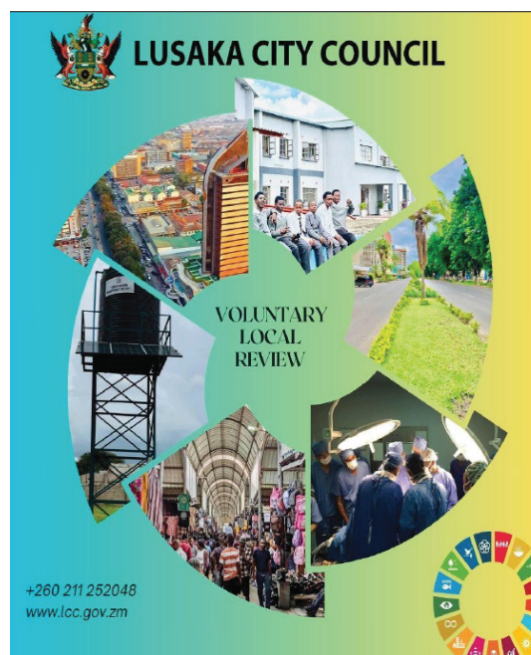
SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

Councils are forging partnerships with development agencies, private sector actors, and international cities to drive sustainable development.

- Chipangali Town Council works with The Hunger Project, Family Health and Nutrition, Living Water and JTI on development projects.
- Chipata City Council has twinning partnership with Dormagen, Germany for knowledge exchange.
- Kapiri Mposhi Town Council partners with World Vision Zambia, national ministries, private sector and civil society.
- Kitwe City Council cooperates with United Nations (UN) -habitat, World Bank, local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and chamber of commerce on urban development.
- Livingstone City Council collaborates with UN Habitat on smart city planning initiatives.
- Lufwanyama Town Council partners with mines supporting communities through school infrastructure and internet provision.
- Mazabuka Municipal Council partners with GIZ, World Vision, KfW, WaterAid on various projects.
- Nyimba Town Council works with UNDP, WWF, DAPP, WFP, GIZ on conservation and sustainable agriculture.
- Sinda Town Council partners with Zhongmei for market construction and benefits from Road Development Agency Road projects.
- Zimba Town Council partners on climate change adaptation, education support, health promotion and economic empowerment.

6.7 Lusaka City Council Spotlight

As Zambia's capital, Lusaka City Council has cemented its leadership by producing the nation's first-ever Voluntary Local Review (VLR), a groundbreaking report that translates global Sustainable Development Goals into a tangible local action plan. This pioneering effort establishes Lusaka as a benchmark for data-driven and accountable urban governance, showcasing how large-scale, integrated SDG implementation can be achieved. Between 2022 and 2025, the Council leveraged decentralized financing, including a K231 million investment from the CDF, to execute a vast portfolio of over 500 community projects, directly impacting over 18,000 residents.



The VLR spotlights several key findings from Lusaka's innovative approach, underpinned by concrete data. A prime example is its integrated service delivery, where projects are designed to advance multiple SDGs simultaneously, such as constructing 10 new maternity wings and deploying 13 new boreholes to advance both health (SDG 3) and clean water (SDG 6). Furthermore, the city's large-scale "Cash-for-Work" programme has engaged 193,799 residents and disbursed K217.5 million in wages, providing immediate income while improving local infrastructure. In education, the council supported 14,874 students with bursaries and built over 90 new classrooms and more than 16,000 desks, demonstrating a direct investment in human capital.

Ultimately, the VLR process itself is Lusaka's most significant innovation, establishing a robust baseline of data that informs everything from infrastructure planning to resource allocation. Lusaka's experience proves that in a complex urban environment, strategic, multi-sectoral approaches backed by decentralized financing and robust data systems are essential for achieving meaningful, sustainable development.

6.8 Synthesis of Local Perspectives, Audit Findings, and Localisation Challenges

The qualitative feedback from councils reveals that the greatest value of the SDG framework lies in fostering a transformative culture of collaborative, participatory, and inclusive local governance. This shift is evident in the ways councils are implementing CDF funded projects and aligning them with the SDGs. Many councils reported that the SDG agenda has encouraged new partnerships and strengthened coordination across sectors. Collaborative efforts have included co-financing arrangements with NGOs, joint planning with ministries, and deeper engagement with communities through WDCs.

Councils also emphasized the importance of tangible outcomes. The councils surveyed reported achievements such as reductions in maternal deaths, improved school enrolment, and expanded access to clean water demonstrating how local actions can directly improve well-being. CDF has emerged as the most significant enabler of this progress, serving as both a financing mechanism and a catalyst for community participation. Through CDF, councils have advanced local ownership of development priorities and strengthened the link between local needs and national SDG targets. However, both council perspectives and independent audits highlight persistent systemic challenges that continue to limit the depth and pace of SDG localisation. While decentralisation has created a strong policy foundation, the operational environment is weakened by inadequate institutional capacity, governance lapses, and significant data gaps at the subnational level.

Findings from the 2023 Auditor General's Report, analysed by Transparency International Zambia (TIZ), reinforce these concerns. The audit revealed that despite successive increases in CDF allocations, only 41.9 percent of funds allocated to community projects were utilised, while administrative expenditure reached 98.2 percent. This imbalance suggests that while operational costs are absorbed, developmental spending remains low. The audit further identified widespread financial and governance irregularities, including weaknesses in budget execution, procurement, asset management, and compliance with empowerment grant guidelines.

These findings illustrate that Zambia's local governance system continues to face structural constraints in financial management, contract supervision, and accountability factors that undermine the localisation of the SDGs. They also confirm that there is no comprehensive data system to track local progress across the 17 goals. Most councils report on activities rather than outcomes and lack the analytical capacity to measure SDG indicators such as poverty reduction, gender equality, or learning outcomes at the district level.

Despite these weaknesses, the audit also reflects the growing importance of local government in national development. The rapid scaling-up of the CDF has increased the visibility of local authorities as implementers of the SDGs. However, without stronger monitoring systems, digital data platforms, and performance-based funding mechanisms, it will be difficult to demonstrate measurable impact.

Taken together, council perspectives and audit findings paint a consistent picture: Zambia has made commendable progress in institutionalising local action for the SDGs, but the process is constrained by weak financial discipline, limited technical capacity, and the absence of reliable local data. Strengthening local accountability systems, investing in data-driven planning, and building ward-level monitoring frameworks will be essential to ensure that decentralisation translates into real, measurable progress toward the 2030 Agenda.

6.9 Localisation of SDGs at Provincial and District Level

This section presents quantitative evidence of SDG localisation using administrative data provided by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) CDF Dashboard, 2022-2025. The dataset captures all approved and completed projects under the CDF framework across Zambia's 116 local authorities, thereby complementing the fieldwork findings and audit evidence discussed earlier.

The analysis of approved and completed CDF projects between 2022 and 2025 illustrates the scale and geographic spread of local action in advancing the SDGs. A total of 13,210 projects were approved, of which 7,886 approximately 60 percent had been completed by mid-2025. The data shows that most of these projects are concentrated in sectors that directly advance SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG8, and SDG 9. This performance demonstrates that fiscal devolution under the CDF framework has become the central vehicle for translating national SDG commitments into tangible outcomes at the community level. The figure below shows the approved and completed projects for the period 2022 to 2025.

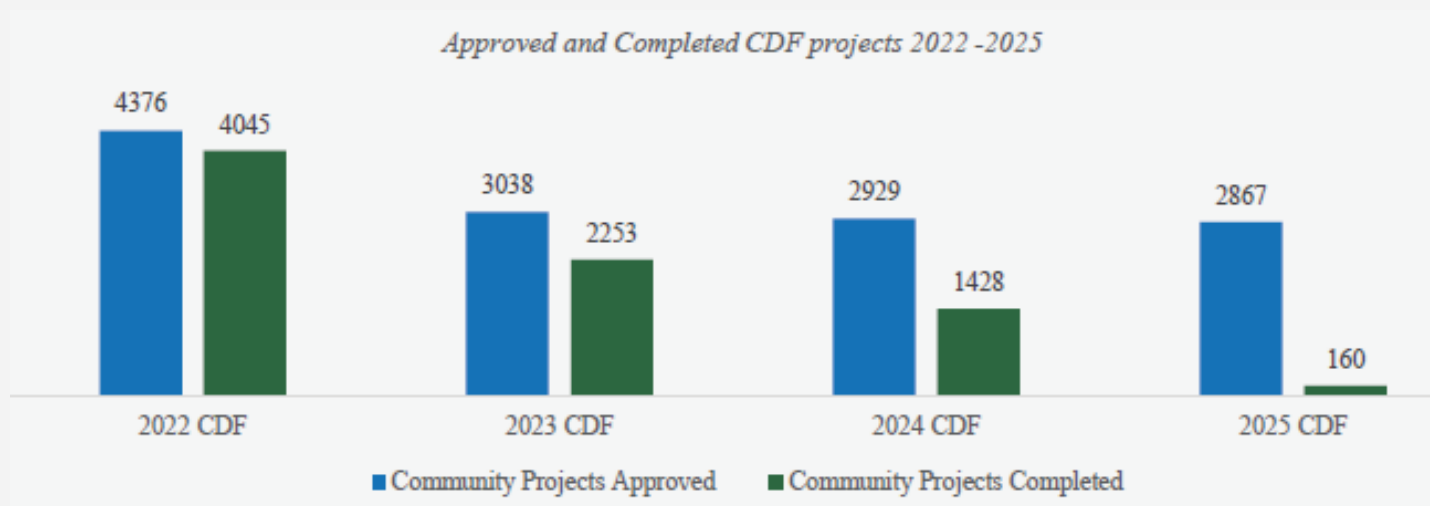


Fig 6: Approved and Completed CDF Projects (2022–2025).

6.9.1 Provincial SDG Localisation

Provincial disparities in both project approval and completion reflect the uneven pace of localisation across the country. Western, Southern, and Eastern provinces registered the highest numbers of approved projects (2,043; 1,891; 1,848 respectively), indicating robust local mobilisation and high community demand for service delivery. Western Province also recorded the highest number of completed projects (1,208), followed by Southern (1,149) and Eastern (1,128), showing that these regions combine both scale and efficiency in project execution.

In contrast, Lusaka and Muchinga provinces, while showing strong fiscal allocations, had lower completion rates 239 and 355 projects respectively suggesting capacity bottlenecks linked to urban complexity, delayed procurement, or limited technical supervision.

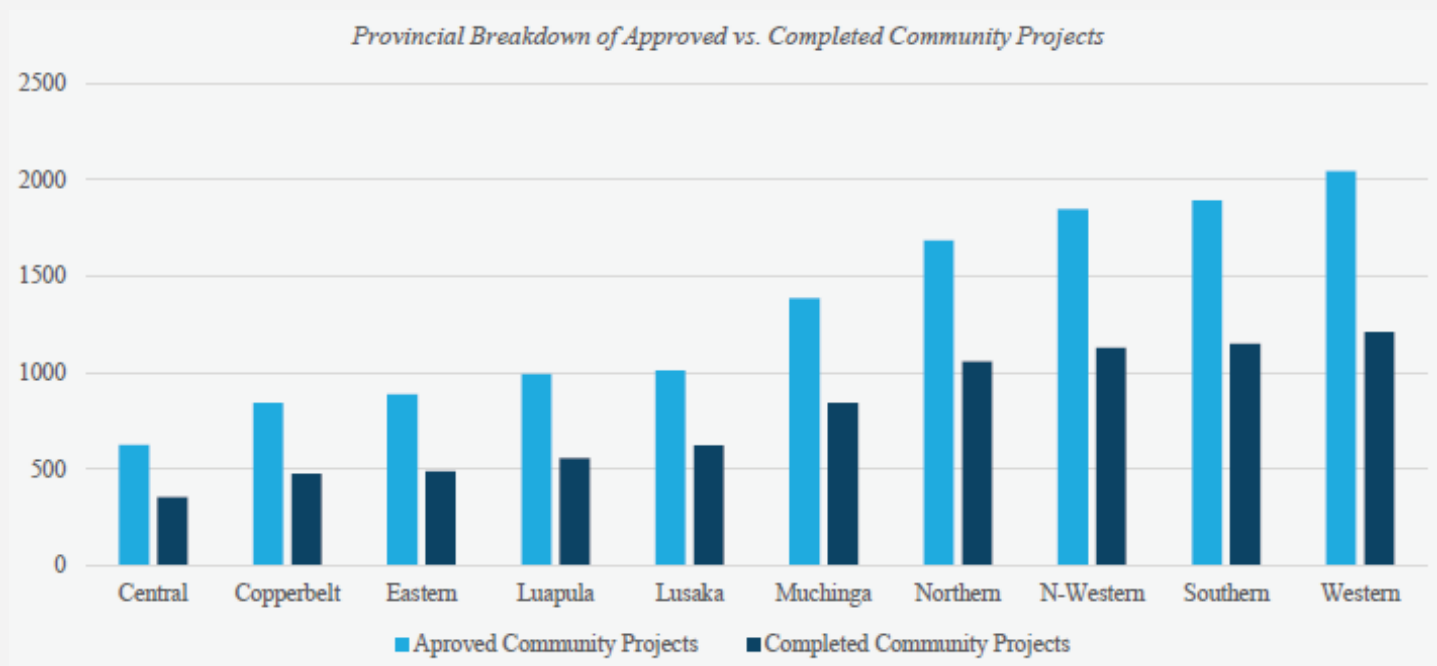


Fig 7: Approved and Completed Projects by Province (2022–2025)

6.9.2 District SDG Localisation

Localisation performance at the district level shows significant variation, reflecting differences in institutional capacity, population size, and geographic accessibility. Districts such as Kalabo (314 completed projects), Kalomo (250), Kitwe (231), Monze (226), and Sinda (222) emerged as the strongest performers, each completing over 200 community projects. These councils exemplify strong coordination of CDF Committees, timely procurement processes, and proactive engagement of communities through WDCs.

In contrast, districts such as Samfya (18 completed projects), Lunga (19), and Milenge (20) recorded the lowest completion levels. This trend points to potential challenges such as delayed fund disbursements, limited contractor capacity, or logistical difficulties associated with remote locations. The district approved and completed projects has been attached as annex 5.

The provincial and district level distribution of projects confirms that Zambia’s decentralisation policy has successfully activated local authorities as the primary implementers of the 2030 Agenda. The scale of completed infrastructure schools, maternity annexes, and boreholes demonstrates how devolved financing directly accelerates progress on human-development goals. However, disparities in completion rates highlight the need to strengthen results-based planning, enhance technical supervision, and embed digital monitoring dashboards to track progress in real time.

Moving forward, aligning CDF implementation cycles with provincial development coordination frameworks, and linking allocations to performance metrics such as completion rates and community impact, will be essential for ensuring that no province or district is left behind in Zambia’s SDG localisation journey.

7.0 National Perspective: 2026 Budget and SDG Alignment

The 2026 National Budget provides the strategic fiscal framework for advancing the SDGs, channeling substantial investments and policy reforms toward infrastructure, social protection, education, health, water, sanitation, and economic empowerment. The table below gives a national picture, presenting the key achievements that enable and contextualize the community-level implementation of the SDGs showcased in this report.

SDG	National Picture
SDG 3: Good Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 282 health facilities constructed since 2022 (seven are Level 1 hospitals, 111 mini-hospitals, 33 health centres, and 131 health posts.) - 18,305 health personnel recruited
SDG 4: Quality Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.3 million additional learners enrolled due to free education - 42,000 teachers recruited since 2022 - 151 secondary schools constructed - Bursaries given to 28,212 students and trained 209,864 youths
SDG 5: Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment Programme: 317,608 supported in Phase One; 1.5 million targeted in Phase Two
SDG 6: Clean Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2,189 boreholes drilled since 2021 - 491 piped water schemes built - 517,000 people served with water in urban areas
SDG 8: Decent Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K2.9 billion disbursed to 103,000 individuals and 9,800 MSMEs - 19,819 SMEs supported via Credit Guarantee Scheme
SDG 9: Industry & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1,500 km of roads under PPP agreements - 130 rural electrification projects completed
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.3 million households beneficiaries of Social Cash Transfer (up from 895,000 in 2021) - 2.4 million beneficiaries of Cash for work
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 127 km of urban roads under rehabilitation in 8 districts
SDG 14: Life Below Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21 fish breeding areas mapped - 56 chiefdoms participating in Emission Reduction Programme
SDG 17: Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PPPs valued at US \$1.7 billion in road sector - Collaboration with international partners on debt relief, infrastructure, and climate action

While the localisation of the SDGs in Zambia is primarily driven by councils through the CDF and devolved functions, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is also dependent on national financing frameworks. The 2026 National Budget, amounting to K253.1 billion, provides the macro-level context within which local authorities operate.

8.0 Conclusion

Zambia's Local Authorities are dynamic agents of change in advancing the SDGs. Their activities cut across health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, economic growth, and urban management. They demonstrate responsiveness to community needs despite low grassroots awareness of the SDGs. However, systemic bottlenecks funding delays, weak technical capacity, and inadequate coordination continue to limit impact and sustainability.

9.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed primarily to the national government, with complementary actions for local authorities and LGAZ. They are informed by the challenges identified in Section 4.6 and aim to accelerate SDG localization, strengthen governance, and enhance community impact:

Accelerate Decentralization and Enhance Fiscal Autonomy

- Complete the transfer of financial and human resources to councils to strengthen local ownership and decision-making.
- Promote sustainable local revenue generation to complement central government transfers and reduce overreliance on grants.

2. Strengthen Planning and Coordination Mechanisms

- Reinforce Development Coordinating Committees to ensure coherent, participatory, and accountable planning processes.

3. Invest in Local Capacity Development

- Provide training for council staff in planning, monitoring, SDG mainstreaming, and evidence-based decision-making.
- Facilitate partnerships with academia, civil society, and other councils for knowledge transfer and technical support.

4. Improve Data Systems and Monitoring

- Establish ward and community level M&E mechanisms aligned with national statistical systems.
- Promote regular reporting and feedback loops to track SDG progress, identify gaps, and inform policy adjustments.

5. Harmonize Legal and Policy Frameworks

- Clarify institutional mandates and align national policies with local responsibilities to reduce duplication and conflicts.
- Ensure timely harmonization of sectoral policies affecting local SDG implementation.

6. Promote Co-Production of Policies and Solutions

- Engage local authorities and communities in jointly designing SDG interventions to ensure context-specific solutions.
- Use participatory approaches to foster ownership, sustainability, and inclusivity.

7. LGAZ Commitment and Follow-Up

- LGAZ will continue supporting councils through capacity building, advocacy, and knowledge sharing.
- Monitor progress, document successes, and highlight challenges to inform national policy dialogue and future VSR cycles.

10.0 References

Cabinet Office. (2023). Circular No. 2 of 2023: Devolution of functions to local authorities. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Cabinet Office. (2024). Cabinet Minute CM31 of 2024: Devolution of additional functions. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2016). Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2019). Local Government Act No. 2 of 2019. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2022). Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Guidelines 2022. Lusaka: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2023). National Decentralisation Policy. Lusaka: Cabinet Office.

Government of the Republic of Zambia. (2023). Voluntary National Review 2023: Towards an accelerated achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ). (2014). 50 years in local government. Lusaka: LGAZ. Lusaka City Council (LCC). (2025). Voluntary Local Review. Lusaka: LCC.

Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2021–2025). Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure (Yellow Book), Head 29 – Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2022). Eighth National Development Plan (2022–2026). Lusaka: Government Printer.

Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2023). Intergovernmental Fiscal Architecture (IFA) 2023–2027. Lusaka: Government Printer.

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. (2024, March 26). Background paper on the relevance of Integrated Development Plans to achieve sustainable local development. Presented by the Director of Physical Planning, Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka.

National Assembly of Zambia. (2016, November 1). Ministerial Statement: Terms of reference for mayors and council chairpersons. Parliamentary Debates. Lusaka: National Assembly.

Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z). (2025). Analysis of the 2023 Auditor General's Report on the Constituency Development Fund. Lusaka: TI-Z.

Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats). (2021). Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Baseline Report Zambia 2021. Lusaka: ZamStats.

Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats). (2022). Annual Statistical Bulletin 2022. Lusaka: ZamStats.

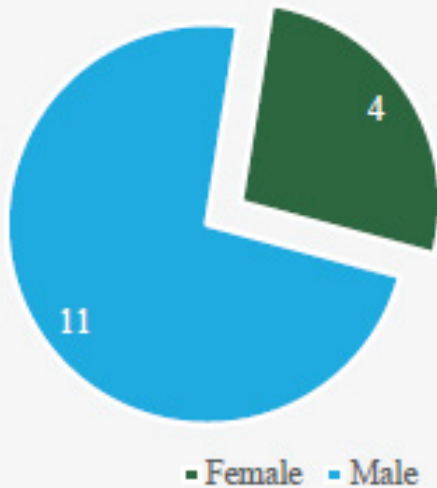
Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats). (2025). Revised Population Summary Report, Vol. II. Lusaka: ZamStats

Annex 2 - Detailed Data Tables and Statistics

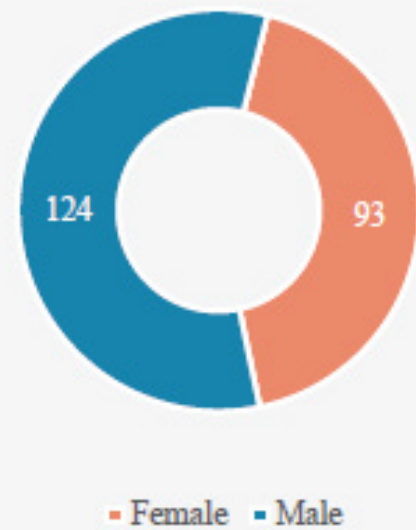
Category	LAs/Stakeholders
Local Authorities (15 Councils)	Shibuyunji Town Council, Zimba Town Council, Pemba Town Council, Mafinga Town Council, Kapiri Mposhi Town Council, Lumezi Town Council, Chipangali Town Council, Nyimba Town Council, Sinda Town Council, Mazabuka Municipal Council, Choma Municipal Council, Lufwanyama Town Council, Kitwe City Council, Chipata City Council, Livingstone City Council, Lusaka City Council
National Government & Parliament	National Assembly Constituency Offices (Kamfinsa, Nkana, Livingstone)
Local Government Structures	CDF Chairperson Livingstone
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Kitwe District Land Alliance, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection; Environment Africa Zambia; Market Association
Private Sector & Financial Institutions	Chamber of Commerce (Kitwe, Livingstone); Grizzly Mining Limited; Chipata Water and Sanitation Company Ltd.; ZANACO Bank,
Academia & Research Institutions	David Livingstone College of Education, Livingstone College of Nursing and Midwifery, Livingstone Institute of Business and Engineering Studies, Rockview University, Copperbelt University
Community & Development Partners	Copperbelt Education Health Project, District Health Office, Ward Development Committees Chairpersons, Students

Annex 2 - Detailed Data Tables and Statistics

Disagregation by Sex - LAs Respondents



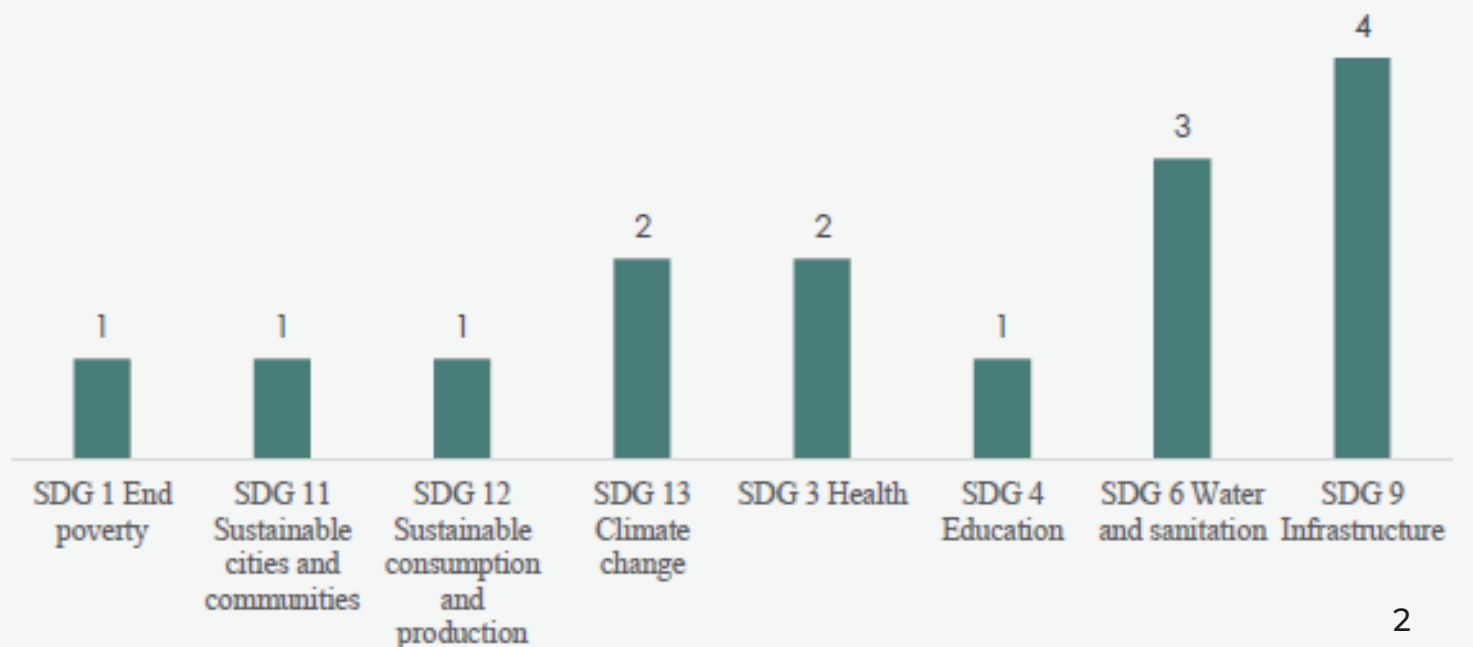
Disagregation by Sex - Community Respondents



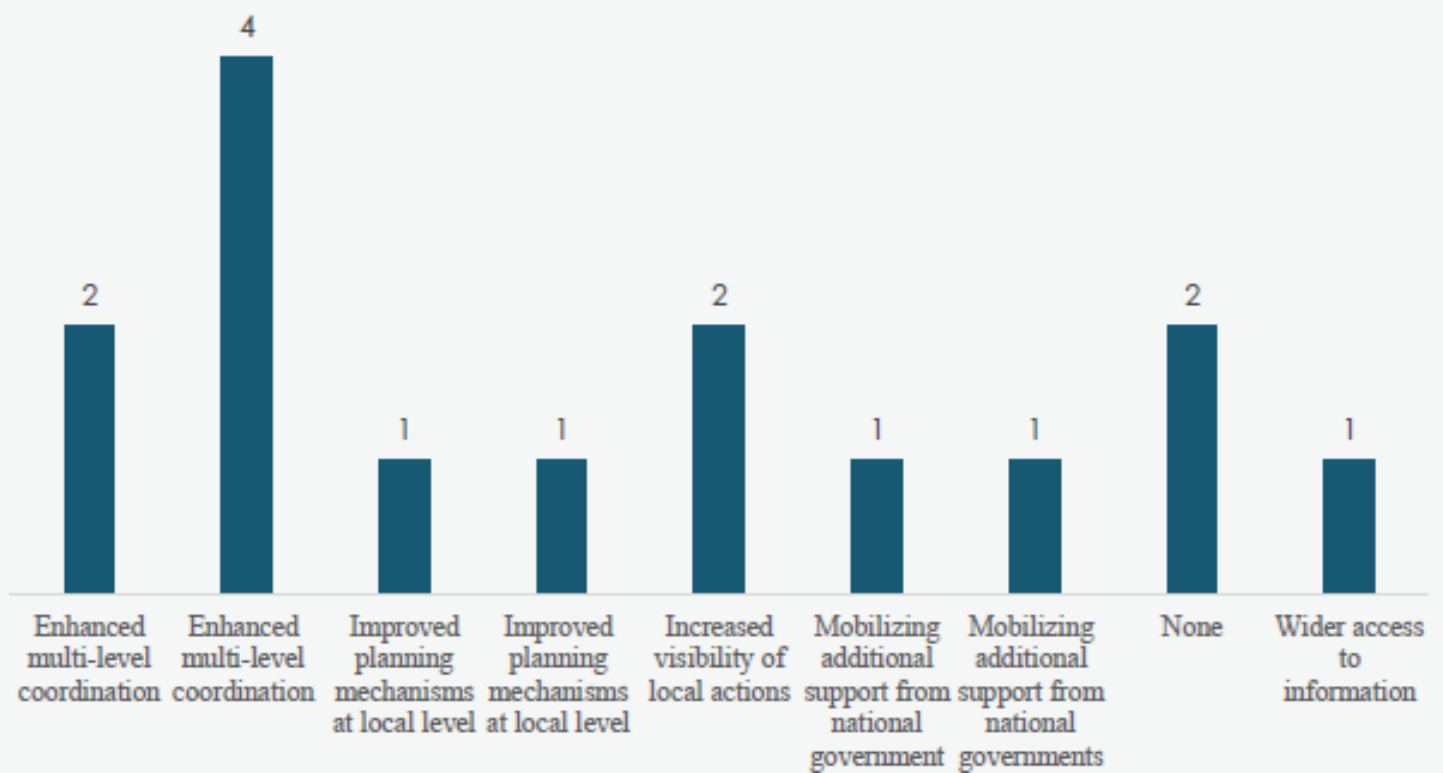
SDGs implementation coordination in councils



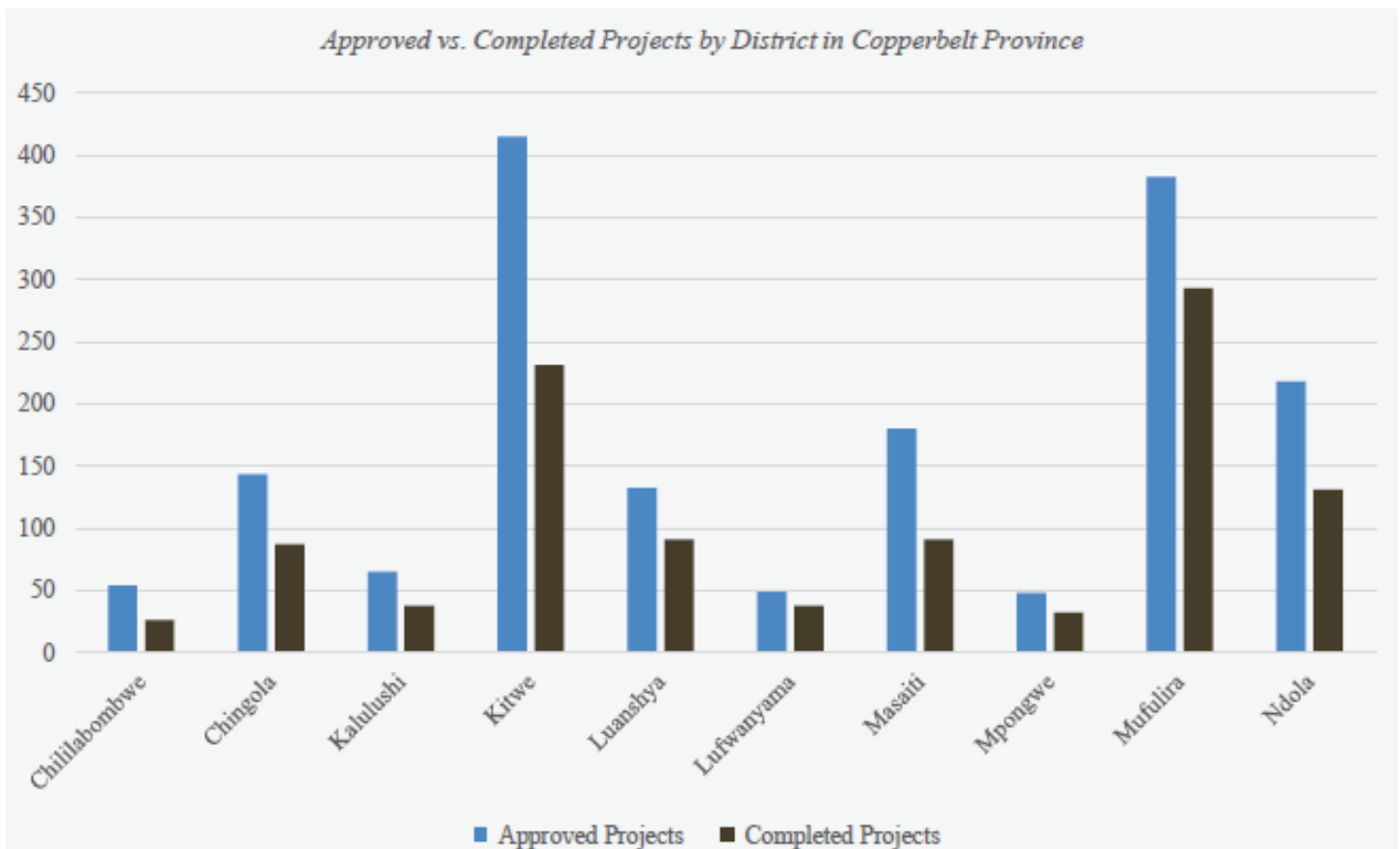
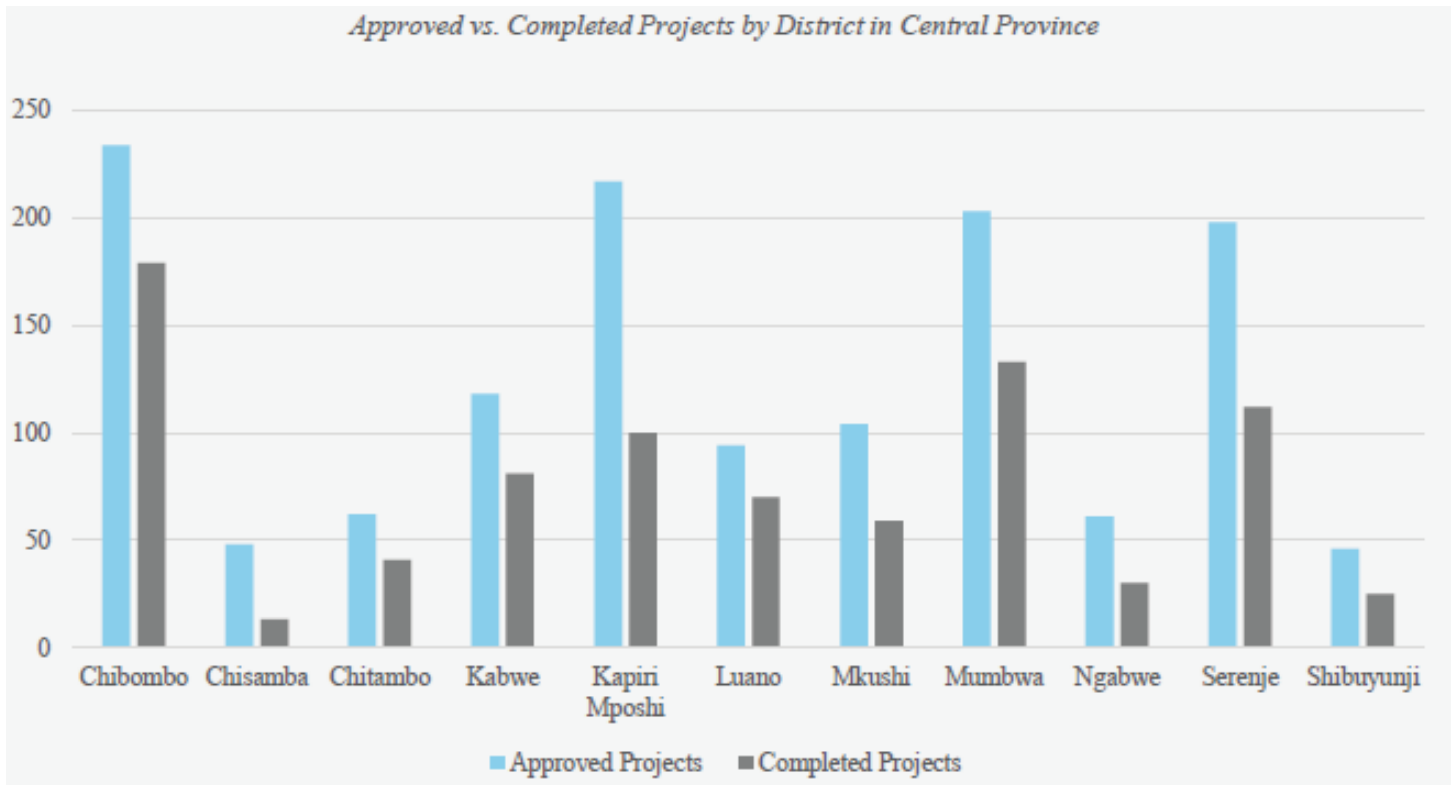
SDG priorities in councils



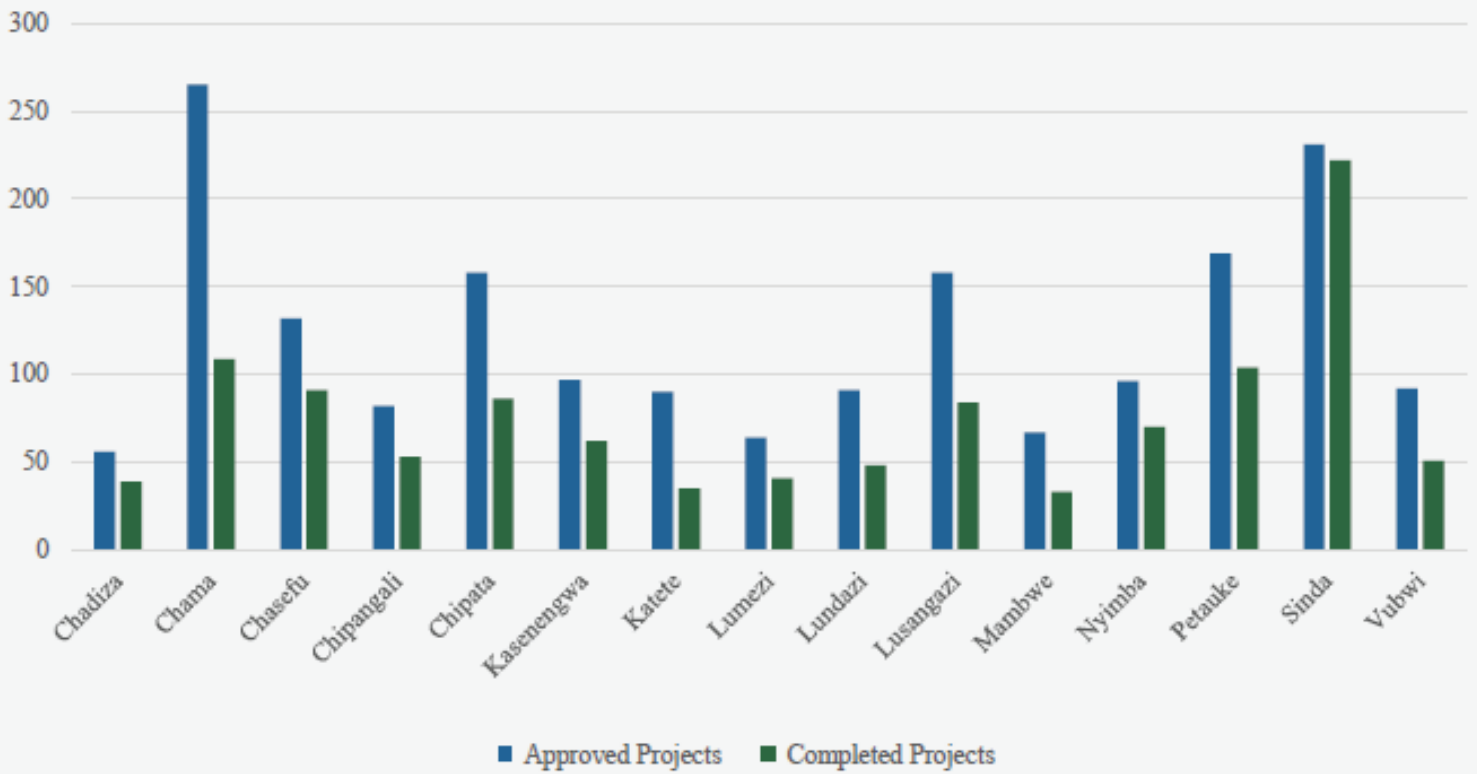
Benefits of SDG implementation



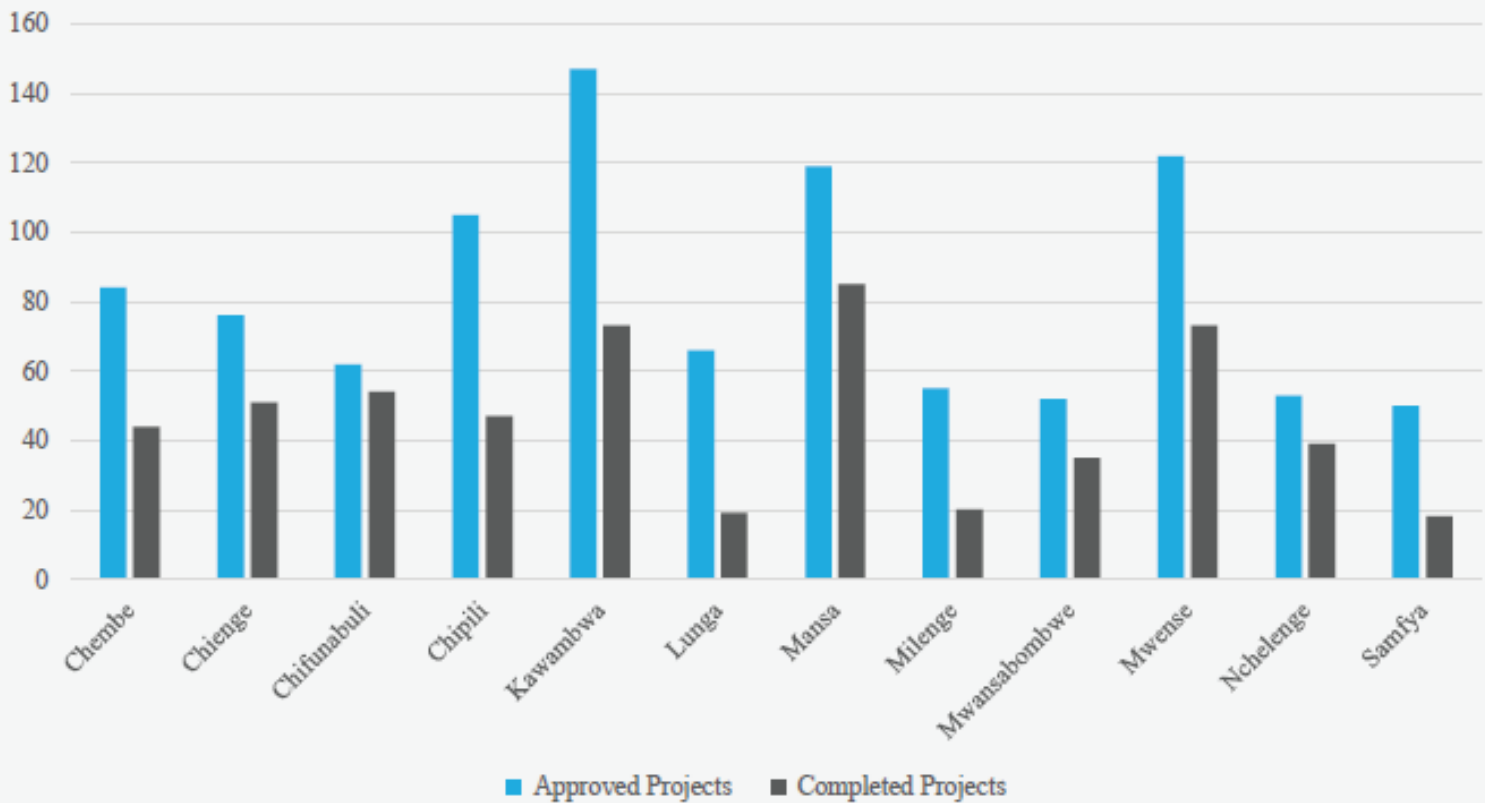
Annex 5: Approved and Completed Projects by District Per Province



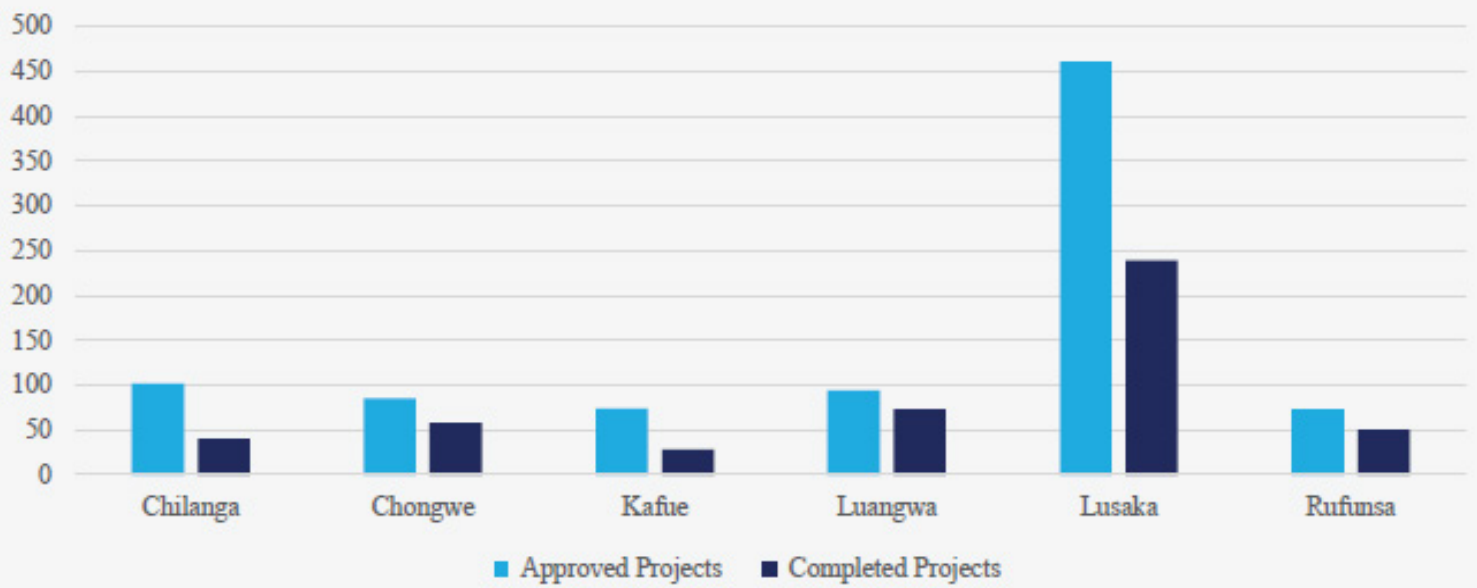
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Eastern Province



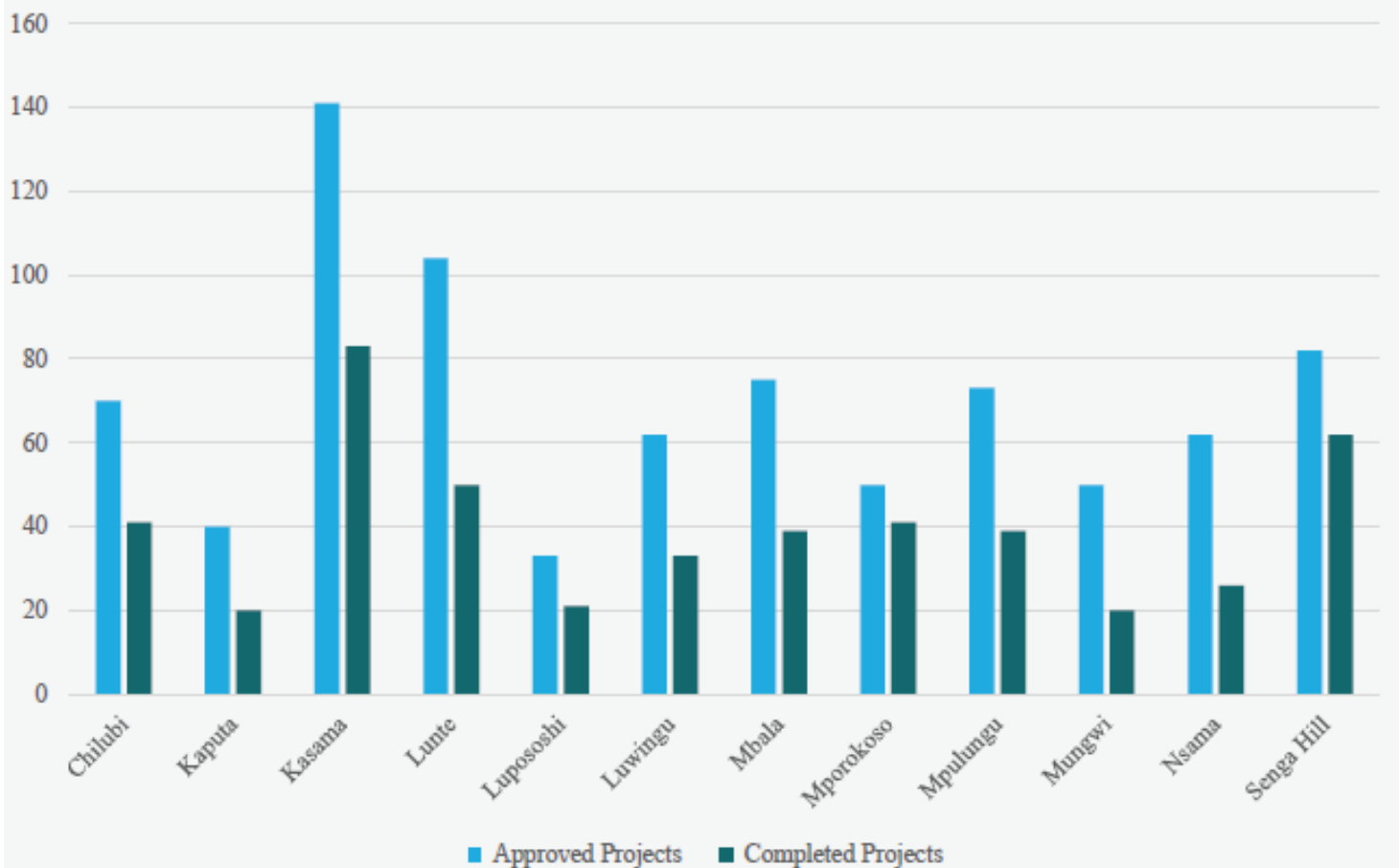
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Luapula Province



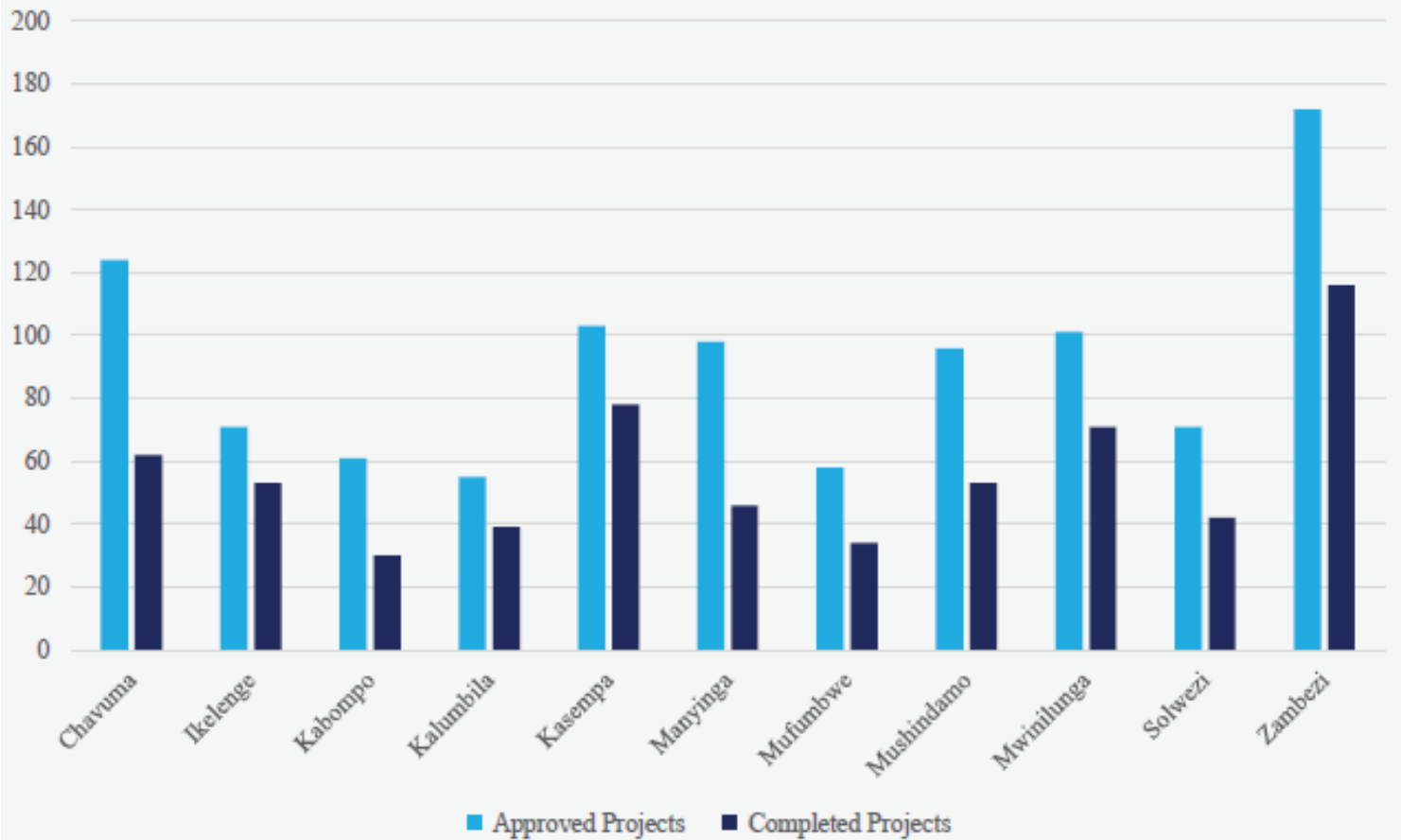
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Lusaka Province



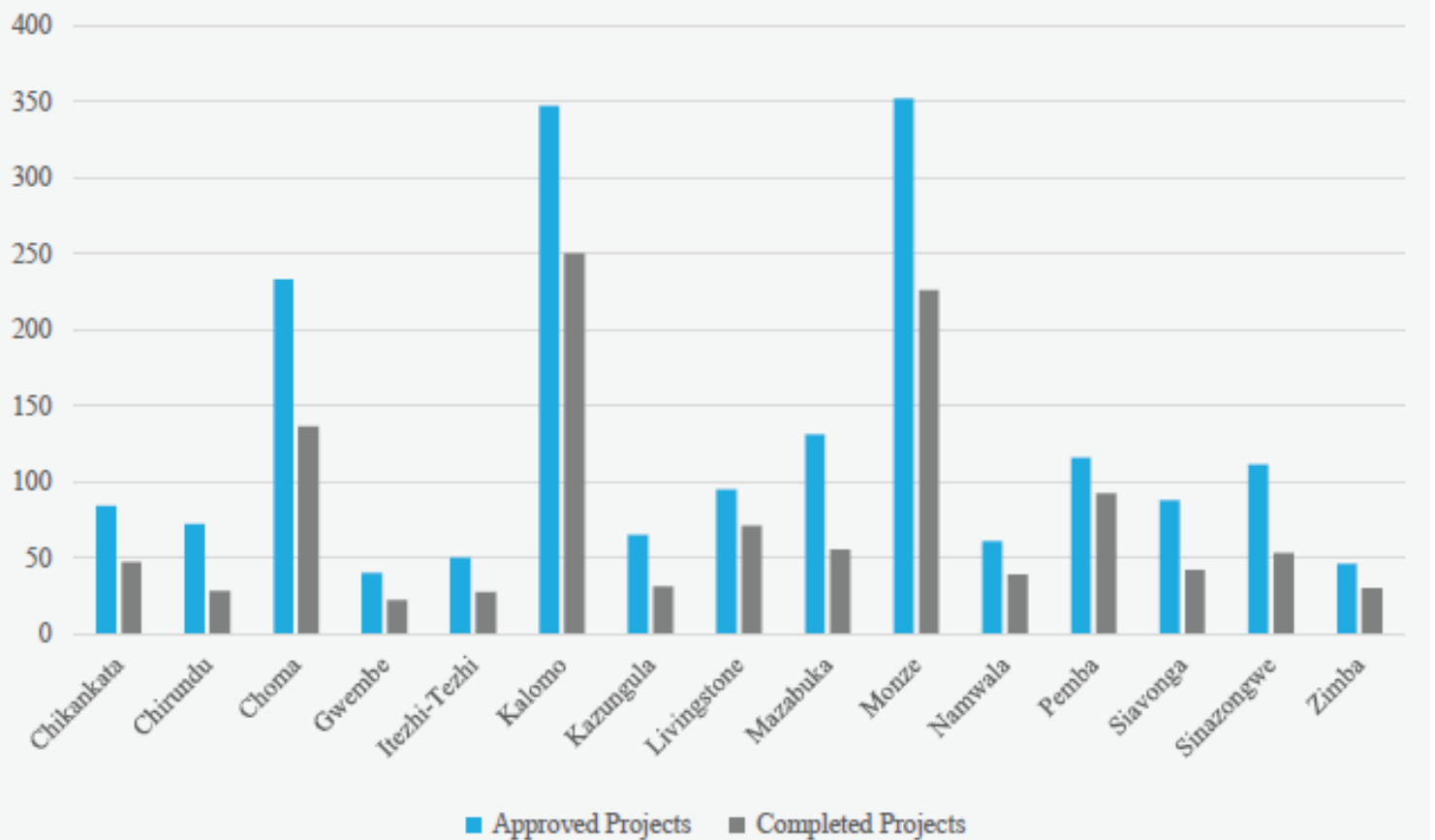
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Northern Province



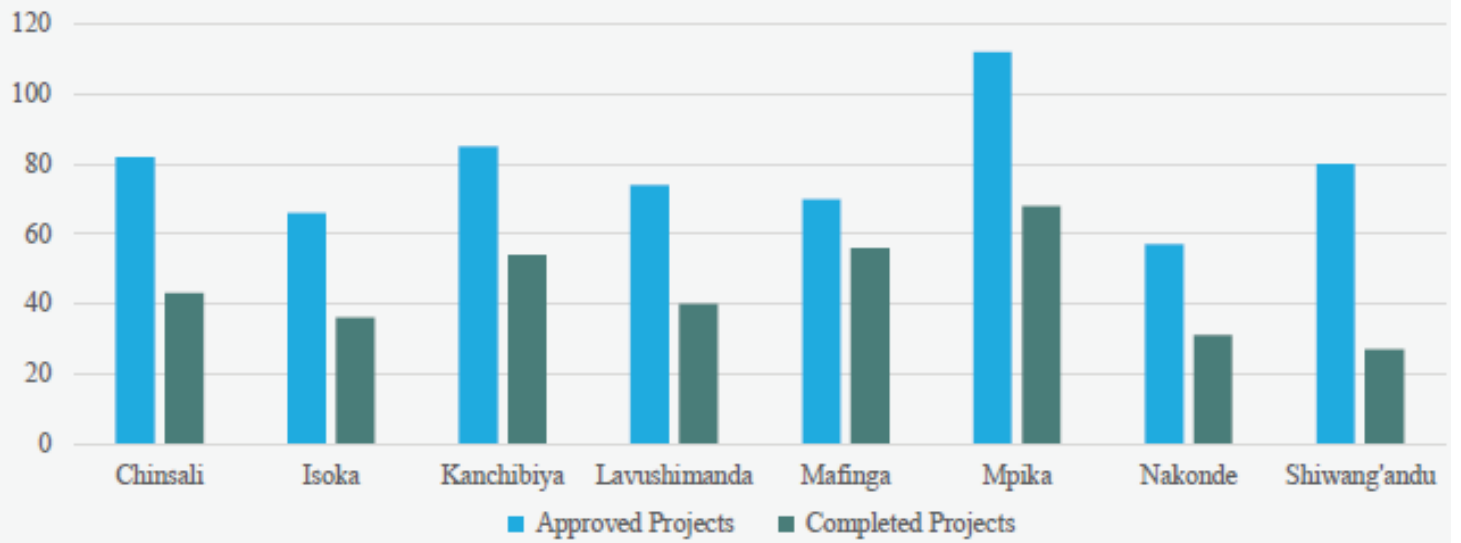
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in N-Western Province



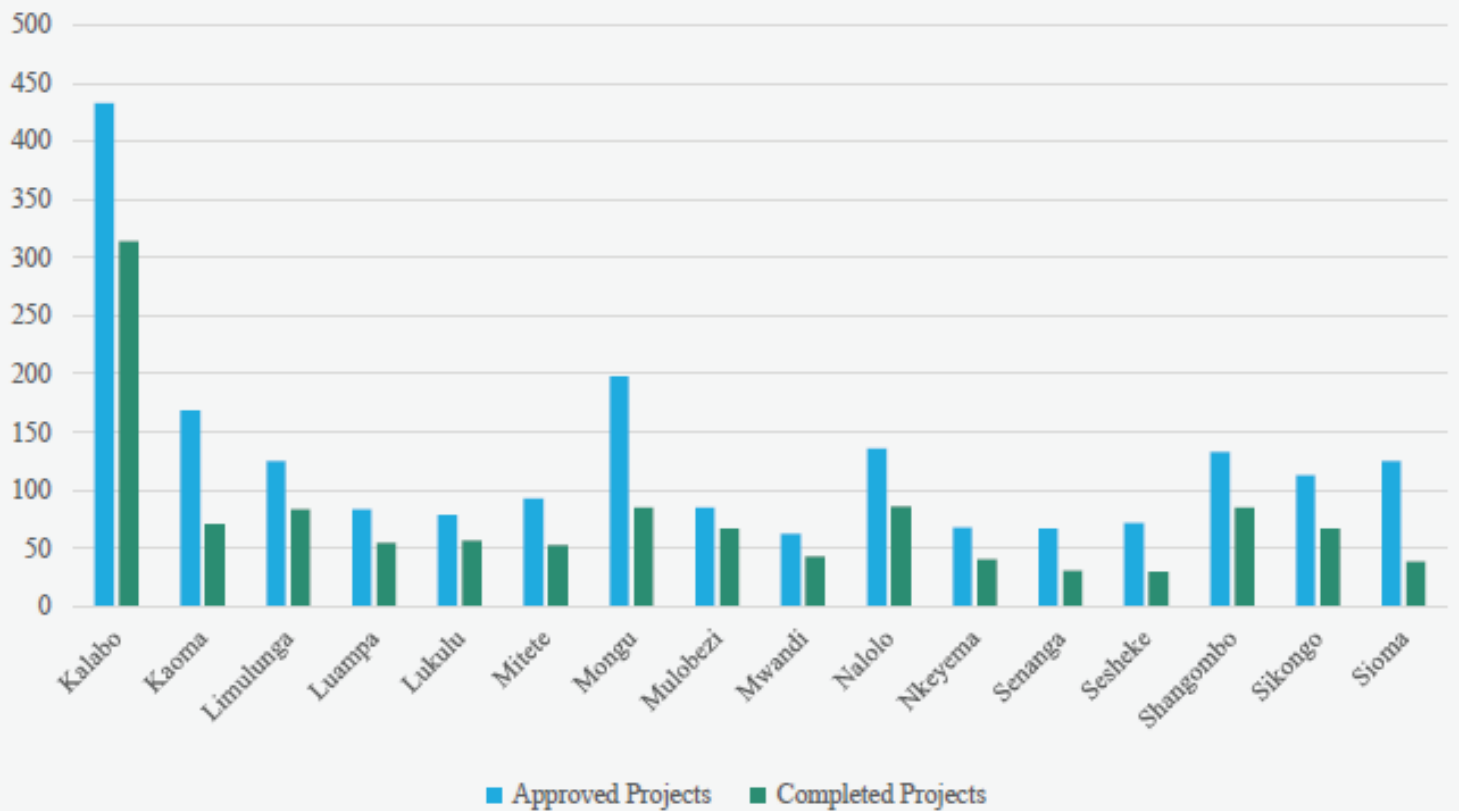
Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Southern Province



Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Muchinga Province



Approved vs. Completed Projects by District in Western Province



Field Photos



Zimba Town Council



Rockview University, Chipata



Lufwanyama Town Council



Kitwe City Council



Livingstone City Council



Chipata City Council