Involving Local Authorities  
In the programming process of EU Cooperation in Zimbabwe

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ROADMAP  
FOR THE 2021-2027 CYCLE OF EU COOPERATION

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December 2020
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OF EU COOPERATION
(September 2020)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARDCZ</td>
<td>Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe;</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLGF</td>
<td>Commonwealth Local Government Forum;</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Economic Structural Adjustment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immune Virus-Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACEP</td>
<td>Local Authority Capacity Enhancement Program</td>
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<td>LED</td>
<td>Local Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Development Program;</td>
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<td>NIP</td>
<td>National Indicative Program</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>RDC</td>
<td>Rural District Council;</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Community</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>UCAZ</td>
<td>Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe;</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCLGA</td>
<td>United Cities and Local Governments-Africa;</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program;</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLGF</td>
<td>Women in Local Government Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZIMASSET</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation;</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZILGA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Local Government Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZUNDAF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this roadmap document is to review the current status of decentralisation in Zimbabwe with a view to develop local governance that responds to the needs of communities and can harness local resources towards meeting those needs in order to foster holistic development for their areas. The report envisages support from the European Commission (EC) to strengthen local authorities and their national association over its programming period from 2021 to 2027.

In Zimbabwe, the role of local authorities has long been recognised as pivotal to strengthening governance and for the better provision of basic public services. For more than a century there has been some form of local authority administration in the country beginning with function councils through to the holistic local authorities undertaking a wide range of local services. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has, through enactments at different epochs of its history assigned responsibilities for the provision of public services to local authorities. At independence from the British in 1980, the new GoZ adopted a policy of decentralisation that not only sought to confer responsibilities and authority to local authorities to undertake public services but also removed the racial orientation of previous colonial regimes.

Part 1 of this report reviews the current status of Zimbabwe’s local authorities in development and their involvement in cooperation policy. This part briefly explores the development of decentralisation policy in the country and assesses its import for local governance. Following the adoption of a new Constitution in 2013 that advocated devolution and decentralisation as the model of governance for the country, Presidential Policy Guidelines on Devolution and Decentralisation of Governance and Economic Development were issued to provide a framework for the elaboration of the policy. This Part highlights the existing gaps especially between the policy enactments and its implementation. The increasing rift between the policy and the actions of line ministries that tend to act in ways that contradict the intentions of the decentralisation policy has been the main challenge limiting decentralisation.

Furthermore, despite the EC 2013 Communication recognising local authorities as state actors as distinct from the previous non-state actor status, this concept, while implied in the laws governing decentralisation remains elusive in its implementation on the ground.

In Part 2, the report considers options for improving the environment for local authorities, what can be done on the side of the policymakers at national and EU levels to create an enabling environment for enhancing National Associations of Local Authorities (NALAs) in participating in the definition and implementation of national development and cooperation policy, highlighting the added value this participation brings into the efficiency and impact of the development and cooperation policy in the country. It also addresses the priority goals of EU cooperation and identifies appropriate mechanisms for LAs to access funding to improve their delivery capacity. The revenue sharing mechanism indicated in the Constitution should be applied if local democracy and good governance are to thrive in Zimbabwe. The report argues the importance of recognising local authorities and the national association as state actors and the responsibility for the holistic development of their areas. The Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) facilitates this holistic development and galvanises local resources and entrepreneurship in the development of the local areas. The national association, being the representative and voice of local authorities should also be accorded the status of state actor. For this reason the NALA should partake in the negotiation process as the representative of local authorities. The NALA should further be accorded the right to receive state funds as well as support from the EC through a Framework Partnership Agreement.

Finally, Part 3 focuses on the way forward indicating what can be done on the side LAs to enhance NALAs involvement in national development and cooperation policy – from addressing possible structural issues to planning advocacy activities. ZILGA is the umbrella association of local authorities.

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in Zimbabwe but lacks the institutional housing to operationalise its work. For ZILGA to effectively function as the ‘voice’ of local authorities, it urgently requires institutional strengthening. It is recommended that ZILGA sets up its deliberative organs that express the needs of local authorities and engages in negotiations on all matters affecting them and that it establishes an operational office. The necessary capacity building for local authorities and the national association are elaborated. The operationalisation of the political and technical platforms to harmonise local authorities’ responses to generic issues is vital. Building the capacity of the political leadership as well as the managerial and technical competence of staff is also addressed. Of immediate concern is the capacity to implement the policy changes emanating from the Constitutional provisions and the Presidential Guidelines on Devolution and Decentralisation. Also, the resuscitation of the local government learning institutions the country once had is considered of vital importance for supporting the capacity development of local authorities.

In light of the needs for strengthening decentralisation and ensuring its proper implementation, the report recommends the negotiation for a Framework Partnership Agreement between the EC and ZILGA through which the national association can be strengthened and support for local authorities’ capacity development should be channelled and managed.
INTRODUCTION

The establishment of subnational governments is a recognition of the need to devolve power and responsibility to levels closer to the citizens in order to enhance governance responsiveness to needs. Increasingly the principle of subsidiarity has over the years gained traction and its import widely adopted by governments in Africa and abroad. The principle espouses the undertaking of governmental functions at a lower level unless such level is incapable and the performance of such functions would be more efficiently executed at a higher level. Section 264 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) states that “Whenever appropriate, governmental powers and responsibilities must be devolved to provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities which are competent to carry out those responsibilities efficiently and effectively”. The Constitution further elaborates the rationale for devolution as including, inter alia, to give power of governance to the people; promote democracy, effectiveness, transparency, accountability and coherence; preserve peace and national unity; to recognize the right of communities to manage their own affairs and development; ensure equitable sharing of local and national resources; and to transfer responsibilities and resources to the sub-national level. It is clear that the intent of the law is to devolve responsibilities and means to the local level for the conduct of governance. The experience of Zimbabwe on the path of decentralization, especially after the attainment of political independence from Britain in 1980, is marked by consistent policy position in favour of decentralization with episodes of disjuncture between agreed policy and its implementation. As reported in the study this disjuncture has exacerbated due to the deteriorating economic performance of the country that has led to dwindling of financial resources in recent years.

Recently, however, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has taken initiatives to strengthen decentralisation through measures to harmonise the constitutional provisions and the operating legislative and administrative environment and processes including structured sharing of resources. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) states that one of the reasons for devolving responsibilities to the sub-national level is to ensure the equitable sharing of local and national resources. The underlying assumption in any devolution of functions is that the sub-national level government is capable of undertaking those responsibilities. This excuse has been used to stall decentralisation efforts and, in some instances, to recentralise functions and resources. Another disturbing trend that the study highlights is the centralisation of resources previously under local governments such as vehicle licencing.

In order to address issues and concerns relating to the operationalization of constitutional provisions on devolution, capacity development of local governments, and advocacy for necessary reforms to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, the national association of local government plays a pivotal role as interlocutor between central and local governments, collecting and collating issues requiring decisions, and negotiating and championing agreed local government positions. The UCLG Africa recognizes the important role that national associations play in supporting initiatives that improve the environment in which local governments operate to better manage areas under their jurisdiction. By launching this support project, the UCLG Africa seeks to strengthen the association to undertake its role as the representative of the collective voice of local governments in the country. The specific focus of this support aims at ensuring that the national associations participate in the EU country programming process for the period 2021-2027.

The European Commission has concluded a new financing instrument, the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that will guide its next programming

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of the next 6 years (2021 to 2027). The EU programming exercise is meant to identify strategic and priority areas and sectors for interventions to be financed by the EU cooperation within the framework of a political dialogue to be launched with the central governments, the local authorities and other development actors of (civil society, private sector ...) The NDICI shifts the main focus and “centre of gravity” of the future EU cooperation to the geographic dimension in order to improve the coherence and efficiency of EU cooperation.

Supported by the 2013 EU Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”, this project aims at preparing national associations and the local governments sphere to participate effectively in the programming phase and ensure that they benefit from EU funding to strengthen decentralisation. It is at the programming phase that stakeholders of the partner countries are consulted, and that a dialogue is established with the EU delegation to define the specific priorities and programs of the EU cooperation aligned with the political objectives identified during the pre-programming phase for each country. Local authorities, through their national association, should therefore be integral part in the programming process alongside the representatives of the national government, in the dialogue with the EU delegations. The project seeks to support the national associations to better represent their members by effectively engaging in the EU programming process in order to benefit their members through creating an enabling environment to better deliver on their mandates as devolved from the centre.

The UCLG Africa project has offered support in producing: (1) a compendium of key reference documents with a summary reader note on the three issues - National Development Policy and Strategies; National Decentralization Policy; Status of EU Cooperation; (2) an Analytical Report appraising the political economy on decentralization; a rapid SWOT analysis of the national association; and the extent to which territorial approach to local development (TALD) had been recognized and applied in the country; and (3) support in the development of a roadmap towards strengthening the national association within the framework of the EU country programming for the 2021-2027 period.

This roadmap is, thus, a culmination of an exploration on and analysis of the environment of decentralisation in the country and indicates pointers towards addressing the imperatives for strengthening the national association to become an effective interlocutor for local governments in their relations with central government and other developmental stakeholders.
PART 1

ASSESSING LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY

1.1 Main conclusions resulting from the Compendium

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.

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) organs with defined constitutional powers (Section 274 to 276), and iii) having a constitutional entitlement to national resources.

The 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, thus, not been fully developed.

Section 264 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe specifies that the objective of the devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities to provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities is to give powers of local governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in the making of decisions affecting them. The underlying assumption of the Constitution is, thus, that responsibilities and means will be devolved to the appropriate subnational level.

There is coherence with the European Union policies on this principle. The EC 2013 Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”, recognizes local and subnational governments (local authorities) as state actor in their own rights and capacity, working as proximity public authorities besides the central government according to the principle of subsidiarity based on the key dynamics and interaction between the two levels of public governance.

Local authorities, through their national association, should therefore be integral part in the programming process alongside the representatives of the national government, in the dialogue with the EU delegations.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a priority programme for the country. Although Zimbabwe is implementing all 17 SDGs 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. The architecture of the institutional arrangements set up to operationalize the SDGs are primarily central government led and anchored to Office of the President and Cabinet, the highest office in the country.

The Presidential Policy Guidelines on Devolution\(^3\) states that the overall objective of the policy ‘...will be to unlock the development potential of the regions that will translate into attainment of higher investments, outputs, employment, value addition and equitable development’. It further expects the collection of accurate data on local GDP that will highlight disparities in the development of various sub-national territories. The import of this policy aligns well to the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD).

It is clear from the constitutional and other policy enactments that the political intent of the Government of Zimbabwe is to strengthened devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities that facilitates citizens participation in development as well as maximally utilise local resources to propel local development. The extent to which this positive framework is implemented and how this process is facilitated is the bedrock of the proposals in this roadmap.

1.2 Main findings from the analytical report

i. The Context for Decentralisation

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) clearly spelt out the principles that guide decentralisation in the country. These principles underpin central government policy on decentralisation (Appendix 1) and demonstrate the GoZ commitment to the model. Zimbabwe espouses the devolution model for the country’s governance.

Local ownership for development planning and implementation is a key factor in the enhancement of the drive for the mobilisation of local resources drawing from all sectors, private and public. The close relationship between policy formulation, development prioritisation and implementation enhances citizens’ commitment to contribute to the development of their area. Furthermore, local ownership of development enhances the accuracy and relevance of data on which development programmes are built. In the following paragraphs we summaries the main findings of the study commissioned by the UCLG Africa.

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). Further to defining a three-tier system of government, the Constitution provides elaborate rights for citizens citing specific groups for whom associational powers are guaranteed (Chapter 4)\(^4\). The constitution also has national development as a key objective whose attainment requires involvement of the people adding that the state must ensure that local communities benefit from resources in their areas (Section 13:2 and 3).\(^5\)

The political economy of decentralisation in Zimbabwe can be understood with reference to the publicly pronounced motivations for this policy choice while simultaneously contrasting these with evidence of implementation of the pronouncements. The study observes that a general response to

\(^3\)Government of Zimbabwe: Presidential Policy Guidelines on the Zimbabwe Devolution and Decentralisation of Governance and Economic Development to Provincial Councils and Local Authorities, May, 2019

\(^4\)Constitution of Zimbabwe - 20th Amendment 22 May 2013

\(^5\)ibid
the governance challenges has been recentralisation despite a 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe that has devolution as one of its founding principles. The Executive arm functions through the Cabinet, individual Ministries and the agencies administered by each Ministry (departments, state-owned enterprises etc.). These perform functions open to decentralised performance and thus are critical to the competence sharing, which if sufficiently decentralised results in empowered local governments. Two other arms of the state critical in the analysis of decentralisation implementation are Judiciary and Independent Commissions⁶ that support democracy. The authority that each of the arms of state exercises in Zimbabwe executive derives from the people. Clearly, a discussion on decentralisation ought to explain whether such authority is exercised in a manner that benefits the people. Alternatively, the question becomes about how the state can be better designed for that to happen. 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).

While the Constitution provides a strong framework for devolution, the Zimbabwe environment has since 2000 been mired in challenges that have jeopardised the effective implementation of the decentralisation policy. The country has undergone a combination of i) de-industrialisation, ii) de-urbanisation, and iii) informalisation of both urban development and socio-economic activities. Many settlements have suffered from service deficits, rising unemployment and stressed Municipal finances. The internal domestic political strains coupled with international response and also to the land reform programme has gradually eroded the country’s economic performance leading to depleted resources. The political contestations seriously affected local governments. Polarization and economic decline resulted with local government finances almost but collapsing. The legacy of degenerated i) national economic levers, ii) international relations, and iii) the domestic governance environment remains. National government’s image generally and with respect to its relations with local governments has foundationally drifted away from cooperative governance. These challenges need a clear policy that will guide their resolution in a context of urban resilience, inclusion and sustainability. Citizen participation broadly and the role of specific social groups like women and young people, those living with disability needs strengthening. Local and national policies, laws and good practices are needed. The harmonisation of policy as pronounced by the Constitution and other governmental expressed and documented positions and their translation into reality requires close scrutiny and clear definition of the way forward if these political aspirations are to be realised.

ii. Towards a Territorial Approach to Development (TALD)

Decentralisation has often been understood as referring to the devolution of functions and responsibilities from the national to sub-national and local levels. Zimbabwe has 92 democratically elected local governments that prepare and approve their own budgets, raise resources locally and finance most of their activities representing their populations and well informed to respond to their needs. They have revenue raising powers in the form of service charges, unit or land taxes, rates or property taxes, levies and can borrow (subject to approval), enter into partnerships and/or receive donations to deploy to programs they set and execute. Budgets are prepared and adopted by the Councils through resolutions before being submitted for ‘approval’ at national level. Local governments in Zimbabwe are empowered to make their own by-laws and policies governing their areas. Furthermore, Provincial and Metropolitan Councils have been created in the process of

⁶ These are the Zimbabwe Electoral, Human Rights, Gender, National Peace and Reconciliation and Media Commissions
strengthening devolution. These are strong ingredients for TALD, however, lacking the spatial integration necessary for holistic development.

A recent development in support of TALD are the Presidential Policy Guidelines on Devolution and Decentralisation that 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.

However, it is important to point out some threats to the opportunities presented for TALD. The study points to a tendency to progressively adjust national and local government relations. Some previously decentralised service delivery structures have been being recentralised starting from the late 1990s. It points out the key factors determining this recentralisation as including “...fiscal space shrinkage, a growing orientation towards control by national government and declining development planning and management capacity in the public sector overall. The resultant approach mix currently favors centralisation not decentralization. This can be summed up as projectised development where national plans and projects are developed and local authorities are selected places where ‘the projects will be implemented’. The risk is, thus, local authorities become recipients of projects and programs developed with limited to no direct participation. Furthermore, this weakens the bottom-up model of development, a cornerstone for genuine devolution and citizens participation in governance.

The recentralisation of funds is a threat to TALD as it seriously adversely affects decentralisation. For example, the discontinuance of health grants has affected decentralised health service delivery. Furthermore, the depreciated national fiscal space and national government’s reliance on donor funding for most of the social sectors has also presented a weak starting point for discussing decentralisation. The reluctance of donors to support development through State organs has meant that some of the sector funding administered through UN agencies is disbursed to civil society organisations that are directly implementing activities in local government areas. The study further points out that at these levels provincial and local arms of national government directly coordinate development more than Councils and as such, effective state coordination of development planning, implementation and evaluation are lacking at both national and local level. Development Plans are instruments that are critical for territorialisation.

There are current initiatives aimed at clarifying and strengthening the GoZ devolution agenda in order to better effectively operationalise the 2013 Constitution. The critical areas identified were:

i) intergovernmental fiscal transfers,
ii) citizen participation, and
iii) intergovernmental relations (functions and structures)

The delay in the alignment of local government laws to conform to the provisions of the 2013 Constitution has exacerbated the tendency for central government departments to continue holding on to functions that should have been devolved to the sub-national level. Councils, thus, deliver basic

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services in education, health, water and sanitation in an inadequately territorialised development framework.
National government leads the architecture for the SDGs as well as ZUNDAF. Local authorities are currently not directly involved in discussing development cooperation agreements. These are also coordinated by national government with the Ministry responsible for finance.

1.3 Main ideas deriving from the first consultations of National government and EU delegation on the analytical report

While there has not been direct formal engagement between organised local government and the Government and EU Delegation on the 2021-2027 Programming Process, preliminary informal contacts have been made.

The national association has had engagements with the EU on specific projects, however, these engagements have been on a project to project basis. The EU has, for example, offered the national association technical expertise to develop project proposals for funding under its sponsorship.

The EU has also offered training to the national association, for example, on Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD). The EU has also supported some international conferences where the association has benefitted from exposure to innovative practices and learning.

However, there are some practices in the relationship that need improvement. There are cases where the EU has engaged contractors to implement projects on behalf of the national association. The implementation of these projects has tended to drift away from the influence of the national association to the extent of de-linking the association from its membership. Furthermore, the monitoring of the projects’ implementation is rendered redundant as the technical partners engage members directly without any reference to the national association. Support for specific projects outside the framework of operations of the national association or the local authority has tended to create ‘project islands’ that are not sustainable once the initial funding ends. The failure of the association or the local authority to mainstream the activities in their operations leads to the risk of abandonment once the project ends. Such projects should be implemented by the national association with the support of technical experts from partners and not the reverse. This will, not only strengthen the technical capacity of the national association but also its relationship with its membership. The supporting experts should be accountable to the beneficiary institution. It is only in this way that the results of the intervention will benefit the intended.

1.4 Conclusion

The perception of local authorities as mere extensions of central government is strong giving rise to top-down approaches that regard these local authorities as implementers of centrally conceived projects. In practice grants to local authorities are paid on need basis rather than on policy as envisaged in the Constitution.

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. The constitutionally defined tiers of government once fully set up may provide an institutional framework for territory-based development. What is important is for a more accountably facilitated sharing of competences followed by a well-funded capacity development process to be implemented. This is because the current emphasis by national government of a more
economic than political decentralisation has an underlying risk of ongoing reforms leading to inadequate institutional arrangements.

Areas for improvement include strengthening research, lobbying and advocacy as well as international links. The links are weak owing to failure to raise affiliation fees making it difficult for ZILGA to participate at events at that level. Research has been very weak affecting evidence-based policy lobby and advocacy. This area used to be one of the strongest pillars when staff forums were vibrant and donor funding was readily available. At present there is no dedicated research capacity. This has seriously affected the work currently in progress on decentralisation ‘asks’ and related reforms. Association and member capacity building is project-based due to limited financial capability of both the association and member local authorities. There is reliance on various civil society organisations who provide ad hoc support as well as through EU-funded projects where Association is co-applicant. Pursuing strategic capacity development and coordination of many initiatives are also key gaps. There is no updated or consolidated ZILGA strategy in place currently.

The decentralisation agenda in Zimbabwe requires law reforms as well as the necessary capacity development. Specific areas of law development include on i) intergovernmental fiscal transfers, ii) citizen participation, and iii) intergovernmental relations (functions and structures). The national structure steering decentralisation and devolution is currently headed by the national executive (President as Chair and Minister responsible for local government as Deputy). This is not considered to be the best framework to steer the necessary negotiations for the transfer of functions between national and local government.

Zimbabwe currently lacks a comprehensive framework for assessing local government capacities and developing human resources. Public Service institutions that used to develop relevant competences have lost the role (and capacity) to perform this function. Key formal local government capacity building institutions were Domboshawa Training Centre and the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management (ZIPAM). This has in many ways affected the philosophy of local governance in Zimbabwe as each local authority has steered its own way based on available resources and the kind of partnerships it is able to mobilise. A National Framework and Strategy is needed.

The articulation of these challenges and negotiation with various central government agencies requires a strong united voice of local governments. At present, the umbrella national association, ZILGA remains weak at the apex as the two associations, one representing urban councils and other rural councils remain dominant. There is need to strengthen the ZILGA to enable it to provide the much needed single voice of local authorities in Zimbabwe. The effective implementation of the legal framework provided by the Constitution and the Presidential Guidelines on Devolution and Decentralisation to address the needs of local authorities requires an effective national association.
PART 2

ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM DECISION-MAKERS AT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND AT EU DELEGATION LEVEL

The effectiveness of decentralisation, that is, the well-functioning of subnational governmental levels is largely a factor of the policy and legal environment that defines the intergovernmental relations in the country. In Zimbabwe, the supreme law of the country, the Constitution, defines devolution and decentralisation and sets their overall guiding parameters. The Constitution is further strengthened by the Presidential Policy Guidelines on the Zimbabwe Devolution and Decentralisation of Governance and Economic Development to Provincial Councils and Local Authorities of May 2019. While the environment for devolution is clearly defined in the policy and legal realms, its implementation or realisation remains elusive. In the next paragraphs we explore and highlight the key ingredients for effectiveness and how these have been achieved in Zimbabwe.

2.1 Recognizing the Local Authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities as Public/State Actor: Which formalization?

The Constitution (Section 264, 2 (a)) states one of the objectives of devolution in Zimbabwe as “to give powers of local governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them”. The intent of the law is to confer State functions to subnational governments. Devolution will also include the transfer to resources to the subnational level. Local authorities in Zimbabwe are run by democratically elected politicians representing their communities to chart local development. This democratic representation gives them political mandate to make decisions on behalf of their communities. For the first time the 2013 EU Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” recognized local authorities as state actors. The policy positions of both the GoZ and EU are congruent on the recognition of local governments as state actors. The ZILGA is yet to become an integral part of this relational framework. Also, the full realization of the potential policy implications are yet far from being attained by both GoZ and the EU.

A holistic recognition of local authorities as state actors must acknowledge their potential to harness the contributions of all territorial stakeholders such as businesses, organized civil society, and other social and environmental movements in local development in a bottom-up approach rather than the top down technocratic approaches that hitherto have tended to dominate intergovernmental relations. The complexity of development challenges requires a more interactive/cooperative approach guided by the principle of subsidiarity in which spheres of government engage in co-design and building synergies to ensure coherence and impact. The principle of subsidiarity has informed other countries or regions in guiding their decentralisation policy formulation and implementation. It advocates for devolving responsibility to the lowest level endeavouring as far as possible to manage affairs as closely to the citizen as possible and to depart from this principle only for reasons of absolute necessity. The African Union has proposed a Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation,

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8 Report prepared for the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Authorities (CDLR) “Definition and Limits of the Principle of Subsidiarity”, Local and regional authorities in Europe, No. 55
Local Governance and Local Development as a guide to nation states in their decentralization effort. This benchmark provides African governments with a pragmatic tool for ensuring a governance system that responds to the concerns of its citizenry and recognises the right of citizens to choose their own development priorities and organise for their realisation. The top down approaches adopted by central governments fail to recognize the potential of local authorities to mobilize local resources, including from the private sector. In this regard, territorial development approach has distinct opportunities for contributing to national economic growth and social cohesion in that it leverages the potentialities of the territory and overcomes the limitations inherent in top-down approaches and spatially blinded policies.

While the Zimbabwe espoused policy and legal environment confers state actor status, the current implementation practice seems to reflect agency type relationship under which local authorities implement national government policy and have increasingly become projectized, carrying out assignments as delegated by central government.

Furthermore, even though local governments are state actors, their representative national association is not accorded such status. The local governments have established local government associations with the urban one nearly a century old. The national association is only informally recognized, being accorded ‘sounding board’ status by central government sector ministries and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government. The ZILGA is also consulted by other Parliamentary Select Committees. Although regularly consulted, this is not defined by any legislative or policy requirement. To illustrate the importance of this representation in Parliament is the arbitrary nature by which central government changes the policy on local government without any consultations being held. The centralisation of vehicle licencing by central government dealt a severe blow on the revenues of local authorities. If local authorities had a representation in Parliament, this move could have been averted as debate on the matter would have ensued prior to the arbitrary take over with local authorities given a platform to argue their case.

It is recommended that the consultation between local authorities and Parliament represented by the national association is formally structured with a clear mandate to represent the interests of local authorities. Consideration may, for example, be given to conferring seats in Parliament to represent local authorities.

The national association does not receive any funding from central government relying entirely on membership subscriptions.

2.2 Implementing the Local Authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities involvement mechanisms: information, consultation, dialogue, partnership measures

The EU programming process is intended to identify strategic priority areas and sectors for interventions to be financed by the EU cooperation within the framework of a political dialogue with central governments, local authorities and other development actors such as civil society and private sector. It is essential for the local authorities and their national association to be cognisant of the necessary pre-conditions to effectively participating in the dialogue process. As indicated earlier in this paper, the EU has, following protracted negotiations with global representatives of local governments, agreed to recognise local authorities as state actors leading to the issuance of the 2013
Communication. However, despite this commitment, the effective participation of local authorities in the EU Development Cooperation has been very limited. The EU’s new Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) under which the EU Country Programming Process for the period 2021 to 2027 is being carried out offers an opportunity to effectively strengthen local authorities’ involvement in and benefit from the EU support. It is, thus crucial for local authorities and their national associations to enter into this process with clear goals and objectives in order to derive their deserved recognition and participation in the process. It is the EU Country Delegation that will be responsible for managing the geographic component of the NDICI.

First, local authorities and their national association should take an active role in the programming process. Beyond the recognition by the EU of local authorities as state actors, the Union has also recognised them as key stakeholders in the implementation and localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda 2030. The following steps are recommended for local authorities to engage in the dialogue process:

**Understanding the new EU Programming Environment:** The UCLG Africa has conducted an awareness raising seminar involving all national associations in Africa. The information shared and the documents disseminated during the seminar should be widely circulated to local authorities to inform them of the new environment and prepare them to enter this new phase of the EU programming process. The EU programming process is guided by its key policy documents. Relevant to the local governments, the national associations should insist on the inclusion in the programming guidelines of the following EU policy documents:

i. The EU Lisbon Treaty section which recognizes the principle of subsidiarity and the Union’s own Cohesion Policies - as this would open the door to also promote territorial development in EU external action.

ii. The Communication of 2013 on Local Authorities and related EU commitment to “empower” LRGs as development actors and catalysts of territorial development. This would provide a clear mandate to EUDs to engage strategically with Local and Regional Governments (LRGs).

iii. The Agenda 2030 components that stress the need to “localize” the SDGs (as condition for effective implementation) and on the “5 Ps” (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership). This principle strongly supports the localisation of public services and strengthens the case for local authorities as territorial approach to local development.

iv. The Paris Agreement and the EU Green Deal. Considering the central place of climate related issues in future programming, it will be key to ensure a clear link to the role of LRGs.

Furthermore, three guiding principles could also enhance the relevance of local authorities and national associations integration into EU programming (i) the integration of the spatial dimension in programming shifts the focus from vertical ‘silo type’ planning to holistic territorialisation of public policies; (ii) the effective integration of LRGs in the EU programming in line with the 2013 EU Communication; and (iii) the promotion of territorial approaches to local development, a concept already in sync with EU programming policy. By aligning their support requests to these principles, local authorities and national associations enhance the relevance of their support needs to the fundamental approaches preferred by the EU.

**Engage Local Authorities:** The national association should actively engage their members, provide training and launch a discussion on the strategies and priorities to present to the EU programme negotiating platform. The members will also reflect on the modalities of mainstreaming local authorities in the EU cooperation. In this regard, a seminar should be conducted bringing together

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9 EU Communication Empowering Local Authorities in Partner Countries for Enhanced Governance and more Effective Development Outcomes, May 2013
local authorities to share information, discuss and produce a position paper on the 2021-2027 EU cooperation.

Engaging National Government: It is essential that the national association engages the national government department responsible for coordinating the programming process with the EU Delegation in order to, inter alia (i) define ways and means to involve local authorities in the definition of priorities aligned to national development policies; (ii) modalities for applying the subsidiarity principle for the implementation of the EU cooperation in the agreed priority areas. Opportunity should be taken to set up a permanent mechanism for engagement to allow local authorities to input the programming process through their national association. The adoption of a place-based approach by the national level aiming at localising public national policies in all sectors of development including SDGs and other global agendas. The adoption of a Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) would strengthen local authorities preparing them to become strong development centres.

Engaging the EU Delegation: The national association takes agreed positions with its membership and central government to the EU Delegation. The presentation of the agreed position paper is crucial input to the programming process. The engagement with the EU should also strengthen the already agreed to EU position on recognising local authorities as state actors in their own right. On the basis of the general mandate for developing their territories normally conferred by legislation on local authorities the national association should advocate for the entrenchment of this position to ensure that local authorities are an integral part of the negotiations process leading to the conclusion of the 2021-2027 programming process. In light of the past weaknesses in realising this goal, the national association should also insist on a roadmap for the strengthening of the local authorities’ integration in the definition, implementation and follow up of the country’s priorities for inclusion in the 2021-2027 EU cooperation agenda. This roadmap elaborating the implementation of the multi annual cooperation programme would provide for sustainable engagement with the EU and national government. A key component of the resulting EU Cooperation Agenda support for the local authorities and the national association should be a capacity building programme to strengthen their institutional capacity.

2.3 Funding

From independence through the mid-1990s urban local governments generally funded their budgets in full while rural local governments were more dependent on national fiscal transfers and sector funding. Decentralisation implementation is thus feasible from the perspective of existing revenue raising and expenditure capacity. The Constitution of Zimbabwe specifications for intergovernmental fiscal transfer\(^{10}\) provides a predictable revenue sharing framework between local governments and the other two tiers of government. The overall rider states that “...not less than five per cent of the national revenues raised in any financial year must be allocated to the provinces and local authorities as their share in that year”. However, there is still a strong tendency to project-based funding or ‘earmarked’ financial allocations to subnational governments. The local authorities cannot, at present, apply any of the 5% allocation to meet recurrent expenses. The provisions of the law that gives power of taxation and other local revenue generating options enhances locally determined priorities setting for development.

Areas for refinement include the i) ‘national government approval and monitoring of budgets’, ii) full implementation of Section 301 transfers, iii) degree of autonomy in entering into partnerships at a local level, and iv) the administration of state land including the clarity of revenue raising powers associated with such administration. In urban areas land administration overlaps between national

\(^{10}\) Constitution of Zimbabwe, op cit, p.117
and local governments as was recently exposed by a Commission of Inquiry into the sale of urban and peri-urban state land since 2005. The Commission found how national government had mishandled key processes of planning, allocation, valuation and development control processes leaving informal settlements that are not fully within the control of urban areas in which they grew. In rural areas fast track land reforms dislodged an established unit tax system when commercial farmland was transferred from farmers to the state. The revenue previously accruing to local governments was affected and the relations between land reform beneficiaries and the local governments for the areas where they farm are yet to be fully established. Most farmers owe loyalty to national government unfortunately depriving local governments of much needed revenue for development.

Over the last two decades most rural local governments have not been able to re-establish this revenue stream and the land reform beneficiaries are neither fully connected to nor committed to contributing to local development financing through Councils. This is partly because of tenure security issues but also variable citizen valuation of local government. The latter is also a legacy of the politically polarised manner in which land was redistributed. Councils were inadequately involved to establish their authority.

As such, while the legislative framework is clear, and the pre-crisis traditions are known local government financing is at its lowest. The disruptions cited above require attention. Further, though known to national government (technical and political actors) the disrupted financial architecture is rarely acknowledged as a cause for ineffective local governments. Often, within the context of political point-scoring local governments are blamed for non-delivery, which has curiously been used for decentralisation policy reversals. The main ones relate to the takeover of urban water, sanitation and hygiene in the mid 2000s, vehicle licensing, and weak involvement of local governments in sector programs in agriculture, health and other sectors.

The adverse financial position of local authorities has also been exacerbated by a general tendency for donors to fund development in local areas through civil society organisations and in some cases, private sector. For example, the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) which was developed in the context of Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) coordinates all United Nations agencies in the preparation of strategic and programme plans in consultation with national government ministries with the resulting projects implemented in partnership with civil society and private sector with minimum local authority association and individual councils involvement.

For some civil society organisations Councils are not even involved when they prepare proposals in response to Calls for Proposals or when the organisations negotiate memoranda of understanding. Often these start at national level cascading to province and local authority through national government agencies. Critically, with local authority development planning having slowed down to a halt by the mid 1990s and Master Plans for most urban local authorities being out of date Councils lack appropriate frameworks for guiding not only Council-steered development but the work of external agencies including national government. The fragmented funding for development programmes and their implementation largely premised on avoidance of state organs has led, not only to territorial development distortions but increased the perception of local authorities as irrelevant by the citizens. This is setting a dysfunctional precedent in the management of local development. The mono-sectoral approaches now dominating local development are not sustainable.

The adoption of a territorial approach to local development where the local authority takes its rightful constitutional mandate is recommended. Local authorities are the appropriate institution that provide a framework in which the territory can define an endogenous process of development policies that includes other actors, is spatially integrated and operates with a vision set in the long term. Within this context, local authorities can mobilize and coordinate the contributions of all development actors such as civil society and private sector, thus, potentially increasing financial resource base to address
territorial development needs. The operationalisation of the revenue sharing scheme already agreed upon would provide further latitude to local authorities to respond to the real needs of their territories and compliment the inputs from local stakeholders. When such contributions are not restricted to specific projects, they provide needed budget support allowing the allocation of funds to the real needs of communities rather than centrally determined priorities and also to strengthen the financial health of the organisation. However, in practice, even where local authorities are entitled to receive grants, their actual disbursement is at the mercy of central government. For example, for some councils, grants that should have been paid in January/February 2020 remained unpaid in September making it challenging to cope with the demands of the covid-19 induced financial difficulties. There is, thus, no consistency in the way funds are disbursed to local authorities.

2.4 Conclusion

Building appropriate institutional frameworks and developing appropriate financial mechanisms and tools in engaging LAs of Zimbabwe in policy- and decision-making processes pertaining to national development and cooperation policy:

Key ingredients to mobilize

The main challenge to Zimbabwe’s devolution and decentralisation policy seems to be the inability to translate the policies into implementable programmes. The provisions of the Constitution supported by the Presidential Guidelines provide a solid foundation for effective decentralisations albeit limited in scope by lack of territorialisation of local development. Effort should, thus, be directed at developing and applying appropriate instruments to realise the political ambition of devolution and decentralisation enunciated by the Constitution and introducing citizen protection measures to contain state excesses, especially on tendencies to recentralise devolved functions on spurious grounds.

The international isolation of the Zimbabwe government by the main donor countries has also adversely affected the local governments, being state actors. Funding has been diverted to flow to communities mainly through civil society organisations instead of the political and democratic representatives, local authorities. Consequently, development planning and implementation has been fragmented leading to absoluteness of local and master plans drawn up by local authorities. Clearly, there is need to harmonise relations and restore the legitimate financing framework that recognises local authorities as recipients of aid.

With regard to involvement in EU programming the challenges confronting local authorities and national associations may not emanate from the EU Delegation. Experience has shown the problem does not lie in the EU guidelines as these tend to be very clear on the inclusive nature of programming. The real obstacles lie in (i) resistance from central governments (ii) the structural capacity constraints of LRGs and their associations to effectively engage in programming processes and (iii) lack of tradition and know how at the level of the EUDs on how to dialogue with LRGs.

Key steps to take

Zimbabwe local authorities have demonstrated resilience in withstanding the adverse economic and political conditions obtaining in the country for nearly twenty years. They have continued to operate even when resources have dwindled under severe hyperinflation. Devolution and decentralisation under conditions that promote territorial approach to development will mobilize local resources to promote overall development in the country. There is need to promote the adoption of the TALD
through wide information dissemination and training of various agencies including central government and local authorities political and technical leaders.

Concomitantly the recognition of the principle of subsidiarity will strengthen TALD and decentralisation outcomes. The principle clearly places responsibility for planning and implementation of development on the local authority with the support of national government. Furthermore, the localisation of global agendas such as the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Green Deal strengthens decentralisation and correctly places responsibility for actions affecting the local to the local.

The national association should take the lead in engaging local authorities in order to mobilise their participation in the EC programming process. Briefing on the issues discussed during the UCLG Africa webinar with regard to the role of local authorities in development as well as the modalities for engaging the EU should receive wide dissemination among local authorities. Local authorities should be briefed on the new EU NDICI policy and embrace its geographic focus that must also transcend to the country level. According the national association the state actor status and availing national resources will enhance their role as interlocutor and enable them to provide the support that local authorities require for harmonising policies and responses to generic issues as well as strengthening their capacity.

The ZILGA should take the lead in engaging national government in bringing local authorities to the engagement table with the EC Delegation. It is essential that there is agreement with national government on this to ensure that the nation engages EC as a united country voice. Engaging the EC Delegation should, thus, be undertaken jointly with the national government and the national association.

Funding for local authorities remains weak and unpredictable in Zimbabwe. As proposed under the Devolution Matrix of Local Authorities, Provincial Councils and National Government the sharing of tasks should also lead to the sharing of resources for undertaking devolved responsibilities.
PART 3

ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Meaningful LAs involvement requires input and action from both sides: policy- and decision-makers at national level and development partners on the one hand; and LAs and their representative national associations on the other hand. LAs and NALAs should therefore be ready and able to fulfil a proactive and leading role in this process. Different aspects are key when it comes to the development of meaningful LAs involvement.

Due to the adoption and implementation of decentralization (shift of responsibilities from the national to the subnational and local governments) in most African countries, local authorities become more and more important, and are having a more and more direct impact on the living conditions of people. This requires that the national associations master different knowledge and capacities, in particular the capacity and resources to communicate with national policy makers and other stakeholders, especially the development partners, including the EU; and to be able to formulate policy messages in a sensible way as well as implementable actions plans. In this Part attention will be put on the key issues identified in the SWOT analysis of the ZILGA and on prioritizing areas of improvement to address.

3.1 Organizing a meaningful and competent voice of Local Authorities: The critical political and institutional role of the Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA)

National associations of local authorities (NALA) are organisations established to represent the interests of their members and undertake activities as defined by their constitutions or other establishment statutes. In Africa and elsewhere, NALAs have played a crucial role in steering decentralization policy and the environment of local governments. They have also been instrumental in supporting the growth and effectiveness of their members as well as providing a platform for international cooperation with other world institutions.

National associations of local government play a pivotal role in the strengthening of local governments to provide a good service to their citizens. They perform both ‘upstream’ roles of advocacy and lobbying to establish conducive environments for the effective operation of local governments and a ‘downstream’ role of supporting the capacity development of their members to achieve the same goal.

The key raison d’être for establishing an association is the belief in the strength of collective action as being more effective than that of individuals operating in isolation of others. Advocacy, thus becomes, the most important role of the national association. Advocacy is about representing the collective views of members in order to influence decisions that affect members by others such as central governments, various national policy platforms, financial institutions, development partners and their platforms, and other significant stakeholders. The voice of local authorities is the organised expression of the aspirations of members and the articulation of negotiations to achieve their desired goals.

There are two main dimensions of engagement considered essential for the national association to have meaningful impact on influencing policy formulation and implementation. The political dimension involves elected councillors and mayors while the technical dimension engages the operational levels of the interacting institutions. In both dimensions, it is the quality of engagement that determines the impact of the intervention. ZILGA plays a crucial role of representation of the 92
local governments in the country, both urban and rural. Their primary role is to articulate the needs and policy positions adopted by local governments in relations with all key stakeholders, primarily central government, civil society and external international partners.

Advocacy must be supported by well researched and documented positions in order to gain the respect of the targeted stakeholders. Where advocated positions are based merely on anecdotal evidence, the impact of advocacy activities tends to be weak as it may be difficult to convince the targeted audience. It is, therefore, essential for NALAs to be supported by well researched position papers. Ideally, this capacity should be in-house as it is usually an on-going activity. Where the national association has gained sufficient respect by central government, the latter may refer issues to the association for immediate feedback response. In such instances, there may be insufficient lead time to source external research to inform response positions.

With a clearly enunciated policy framework and policy position on the political agenda of the national association, the next important activity is to engage in lobbying activities that seek to influence the position of external stakeholders to align their own policy with that of the association. The results of these lobbying activities signify the success or otherwise of the association’s and that of its members’ ambitions. In order to influence central government policy, lobbying effort may be directed at various stakeholders, the general citizenry, through press briefings, discussion forums, non-governmental organisations, periodic general meetings of the national association, the association’s own newsletter bulletins, and other media.

There is need to develop a lobbying strategy framework and prioritisation scheme in order for the association to focus on the most important issues. The main engagement platform between the national government and ZILGA representing the local authorities is the Annual Conference organised by the national association. The Annual Conference brings together mayors and chairpersons of local authorities to deliberate on policy issues. Sector ministries are invited to attend the Annual Conference. The Head of State also attended the last Annual Conference and took a keen interest in the proposals put forward by the national association on devolution and decentralisation. The proposals submitted by the national association were subsequently considered by the cabinet. The occasion provides a platform at which councillors and ministers of government interact on various sector policy issues. The participation of the Head of State sends a signal to sector ministries of the importance that he confers on local government and seems to enhance the latter’s responsiveness.

The following may contribute towards strengthening the voice of local governments in Zimbabwe:

**Political Platforms:** The current reliance on the Annual Conference, although seemingly effective, remains informal and does not guarantee reliable commitment to any agreed positions. There is need for ZILGA to explore the establishment of formal engagement platforms through which organised dialogue can be instituted between central government and local governments represented by their national association. Such platforms could be established at all the three governance levels, national, provincial and local.

**Technical Platforms:** The existing technical forums – Town Clerks, Treasurers, Engineers, etc – play a crucial role in preparing issues for decision-making by the political leaders. They also provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and sharing of innovations. The scope of activities of these platforms should be extended to reach out to engagement with relevant central government sector ministries. For example, Town Clerks could engage the permanent secretary of the ministry responsible for local government on a regular basis in structured meetings designed to deal with operational matters; the Treasurers Forum could engage with ministry responsible for finance on various issues concerning the financing for local authorities; similarly the Engineers Forum could hold engagements with ministry responsible for transport, water, etc.
In the table below a summary of a SWOT analysis carried out on ZILGA is presented. It highlights the areas in which ZILGA is strong as well as those where improvement is required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Rating (5 best &amp; 1 least)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Representation</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Effective representation of all 92 Councils. National government and other stakeholders recognise ZILGA as united voice of local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lobbying &amp; Advocacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Association has worked to protect interests of Local Authorities in formulation of legislation, policy and operational frameworks including, at strategic moments engaging the National President. Association’s organs need more research capacity to inform lobby and advocacy issues &amp; strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research has been very weak affecting evidence-based lobby and advocacy. Used to be one of the strongest pillars when donor funding was readily available. There is no dedicated research capacity at ZILGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information &amp; Communication</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Knowledge Management is weak. This is attributed to lack of effective information gathering techniques. The Association relies on telephones, social media and email to gather information which has a poor response rate. There is some social media visibility and a partially viable website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Members Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Service provision is fair as Association has been able to provide legal advisory services, knowledge and skills exchange, information dissemination, job evaluations, policy review and on demand training for Councilors and Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Capacity Building</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Capacity building is project-based due to limited financial capability of both Association and members. Currently reliant on various civil society organisations through EU-funded projects where Association is co-applicant. Pursuing strategic capacity development and coordination of many initiatives are key gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Projects &amp; Programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Association has fared fairly with national Roads Condition and Inventory Survey as well as the Service Level Benchmarking as key initiatives. However, due to financial constraints most initiatives remain unexecuted. Association is Co-Applicant on some European Union funded projects with CLGF and VNGi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Employer Representative</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The National Employment Council for Rural District Councils has managed to deal with welfare of workers by regularly negotiating with the Workers’ Unions on conditions of service. Also oversees operations of a self-administered Pension Fund created for the membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Networking</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Participates in key local networking platforms. Links with regional and international bodies is weak owing to failure to raise affiliation fees and thus unable to participate at events at that level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Rating (5 best &amp; 1 least)</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Structure, Human Resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Association has a lean structure due to financial constraints. This compromises ability of Secretariat to effectively deliver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Availability of Office Space</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ARDCZ owns a three-story building where the Offices are housed. The urban side is in rented accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Availability of Strategic Plan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No consolidated current ZILGA strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Lobbying &amp; Advocacy Strategy in place</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No updated strategy in place. Work in progress on decentralisation ‘asks’ and related reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Availability of Communication Strategy</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No communication strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Democratic Governance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Policy makers democratically elected at all levels and same chain of accountability applies for decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Financial Sustainability Plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No financial sustainability plan in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Relationship between Political and Technical Officials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Considerably uneven across member Councils. Some Mayors/Chairpersons and CEOs relate poorly while in other Councils cordial relations exist between policy and executive staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Informed Executive Board</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Board well informed of its mandate. There is need for continuous capacity building to match demands of the dynamic policy environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Visibility &amp; recognition by stakeholders</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Association recognised as the representative of local government Conducting a customer satisfaction survey on member and stakeholder views.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the relative strengths of the national association is that there is effective representation of all 92 Councils. National government and other stakeholders recognise ZILGA’s constituent parts as the united voices of urban and rural local governments. Policy makers are democratically elected at all levels. The ARDCZ owns a three-story building where its offices are housed though the urban side is in rented accommodation. Further, the association participates in key local networking platforms and has some links with regional and international bodies.

As indicated in the SWOT analysis, the main areas in which ZILGA needs to improve are:

a. Financial sustainability
b. Lack of Strategic Plan
c. Communication strategy
d. Lobbying and advocacy strategy
The immediate challenge for ZILGA is for the organisational set-up to be put in place. ZILGA does not have offices and relies on the infrastructure of the two associations. The national association relies entirely on membership subscription fees for its recurrent expenditure with development partners supporting agreed projects. The second impact of poor financial sustainability is the lack of adequate professional staff to undertake various activities.

### 3.2 Capacity Building

Zimbabwe is engaged in the process of implementing the provisions of the Constitution relating to devolution and decentralisation. The new Devolution and Decentralisation policy will change the entire subnational governance architecture environment in Zimbabwe. When devolution is further reinforced by the adoption of the territorial approach to local development (TALD) these changes will have profound implications for the capacity building for all levels of governance. Capacity building will cascade from the broad demands of overall policy changes to the more specific positional functional requirements for performance. From this perspective, the major drivers for capacity building will include the following capacity development:

**Capacity for Implementation of New Policy:** It is essential for the personnel of all the levels of decentralisation to comprehend fully the new policy on devolution and decentralisation and its implications. The intentions of the law and how it will be implemented should be clearly explained to primarily to mayors, provincial governors, sector ministers, and the respective technical staff of these institutions. This will include the adoption of the Territorial Approach to Local Development and its implications on conferring holistic responsibility for planning and implementation of local development on the local authorities.

The national association has recently developed a Human Resources Development (HRD) plan in order to guide its capacity development requirements. The NALA is also engaged in developing an Organisational Development Plan (ODP). These initiatives are aimed at reviewing and re-aligning the entire national association organisation to enable enhanced responsiveness to the membership needs. The review will better inform the NALAs capacity building roadmap.

Human resources are the link between policy formulation and its realisation in practice. This transformation from a decision to a product requires the ability to undertake the processes and tasks that lead to that realisation, the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes. Equipping the personnel is usually achieved through training.

**Local Economic Development (LED):** A key role of local authorities is the promotion of local economic development. However, this can only be effectively done in a decentralised governance system. It is at the local level that the full potential of an area can be exploited to propel LED. LED, a *process in which relationships local governments, communities, civic groups, and organisations and the private sector are established to manage existing resources to create jobs and stimulate the economy of a well-defined area*, is the bedrock for the growth and prosperity of an area and is a key ingredient and off spin of the TALD. The local authority is the place where local citizens who have local connections, are familiar to the various local drivers; where institutions for supporting LED can be developed; where complimentarity of investment decision-making can be harnessed; and where there is local knowledge.

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11 See: Erusmus University, Rotterdam, Local Economic Development: https://www.coursera.org
about what investments have succeeded or failed in the past from which to learn. The success of LED is strongly linked to local entrepreneurship and local management by institutions that have relevant knowledge concerning various investment options. This is best coordinated by the local authority. The NALA can provide a pivotal role of preparing their members to better manage LED through training, peer exchange, and linking to external networks that can support the process.

**Localisation of Global and National Agendas:** Global institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, and various other development institutions now recognise the importance of local government as a key development institution. Increasingly, these institutions actively seek to engage local authorities through their representative associations. Notable instruments such as United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); New Urban Agenda; and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda among others, all recognise the importance of engaging local governments in international negotiations on development agendas. The local government sphere is now recognised by key development partners as plausible legitimate recipients of development finance. Increasingly, therefore, NALAs are engaged in discourse and planning platforms by international development organs. This requires local government associations to be well prepared for these negotiations in order to take up their rightful place in such engagements. Engagement of national associations at the regional level has also become an essential platform for regional policies development. The African Union places importance on these Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as key institutions for preparing Africa for continental integration and harmonisation of national and regional plans. Continental associations of local government such as the United Cities and Local Governments – Africa (UCLG-Africa) play a key role of lobbying for local and sub-national governments at the regional, continental and international levels. Most national associations of local government in Africa have joined membership of the UCLG-Africa. This membership has facilitated engagement between NALGs and the continental network leading to greater sharing of knowledge and experiences; the acquisition of information and specific knowledge about key global and African agendas; a platform for dialogue and the articulation of policy positions on matters concerning local governance that impact global policy frameworks.

International networking by NALAs brings local governments into sync with globalisation at both policy conception and implementation levels. During the lead up to the renewal of the Millennium Development Gaols (MDGs) into Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) there was widespread consultation of NALAs in recognition of their position as development interlocutors with local governments. This engagement with NALAs facilitates capacity development of local governments to effectively respond to globalisation and global and African agendas.

In recent years, the UCLG-Africa has organised Regional Strategic Seminars and Meetings to prepare national associations’ leadership to engage in global agendas both as negotiating partners at international level and implementers of the resulting development programmes at the local level.

**The Role of the NALA:** Training is one of the important services that a NALA provides for its members. As new challenges and knowledge areas emerge, the NALA organises training to impart new knowledge to their members. The training function should cover both the elected or appointed political representatives as well as technical staffs of local governments. ZILGA should organise for or provide training for newly elected members in order to speedily orient them to their new role as policy makers for the local level. The new members need to understand the prevailing legislation for decentralisation, the procedures to be followed in conducting local government business and the basic rules to be observed. Indeed, in most African Countries, the HRM is presented as one of the weakest field in the Local Governance and is cited as one of the main causes of poor performance of Local Governments in Africa.

African Local Government Academy (ALGA)
The Observatory of Human Resources of Local Government in Africa
The UCLG-Africa has also established the Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA). ALGA specifically addresses the human resources development needs of Africa’s local governments. In addition to providing focused short training courses, ALGA now offers relevant Master Degree programme. The ZILGA can source training from ALGA in various areas with confidence as ALGA is specifically aimed at ensuring that capacity development of local government is relevant and appropriate.

Training impacts all NALA activities. It is instrumental in ensuring common understanding and harmonisation of the NALA messages to its members.

The NALA also has responsibility of monitoring training provided by external organisations to advise on relevance and appropriateness for the local government environment, that is, providing quality assurance to their members. They should recommend to their members suitable training opportunities for their personnel in the various disciplines.

The NALAs requires advocacy and organizational capacities as well as professional capacities and skills in the following fields: Leadership capacity; Management capacity; Technical capacity:

**Leadership capacity:** The formulation and propagation of an authentic political vision and mission, based on the knowledge, expertise and close relationship to members; cooperation with and relation to relevant stakeholders, including national policy-makers, CSOs, the private sector, development partners, etc.; inspiration and motivation of relevant stakeholders; development of a strong reputation as a reliable and knowledgeable partner. The development of such capacity requires intervention in several ways. The provision of training for the political leader as soon as possible following elections is vital to orient the newly elected councillors to their role, the expectations of citizens and understanding of the environment of local government and how governmental system operates. This entry level training should be based on a well-defined curriculum by the national association. One of the challenges persistently arising among local authorities is conflict between elected representatives and appointed executives. Training often can alleviate these tensions by clearly defining the respective roles during induction of newly elected councillors. The training should also cover the newly elected members of Provincial Councils in order to quickly harmonise relations.

The lack of preparedness of the councillors has had some adverse implications. The quality of Policies/Resolutions has occasionally been an area of concern. The Ministry responsible for local government has intervened at times asking local authorities to rescind Policies/Resolutions considered to be at variance with national policies or good governance principles. Incidences of this nature have often been seen as interference. In some instances, Ministry-inspired investigations have resulted in suspension of Councillors (including Mayors) particularly in urban areas. Because most urban areas have had opposition party representatives while the Minister has always been a ruling party member in a politically polarised environment interventions have generally been considered to be interference or usurping Council powers. Fortunately, the constitutional protection against unprocedural dismissal of Councillors is set to improve their security of tenure.

Surprisingly, politicians from different political parties have collaborated well at the level of ZILGA working together to address challenges without any ‘political party stances’ stalling dialogue. ZILGA’s deliberative organs have worked in harmony to address challenges affecting local authorities.

Policy making in a context of depressed financial performance has also resultantly been poor. At the same time, the technical skills local political leaders possess immediately after being elected have not been sufficient. Given limited capacity to finance ongoing capacity development the entry-level competences are rarely bettered. Local authority research is underfunded at the level of individual Councils as well as at association level because of funding but also polarization, which reduce the appetite to seek and use evidence for/in decision making. Citizen participation or engagement has also not always been consistent and cooperative.
Management capacity: In order for ZILGA’s governing organs to perform their roles effectively, they require the support of an efficient qualified personnel. ZILGA lacks adequate personnel necessary to provide support for its governing organs as well as the membership. For ZILGA to better service its members, it would be necessary for the organisation to be decentralised. Decentralisation to regions would contribute to improving visibility of the association and to domesticating programme activities. It would improve ZILGA outreach to its members, however, the major constraint identified concerns the financing of such decentralised structure which, on the basis of the current financial status of these associations, would be a major challenge to achieve. Support will be required to set up the structure of the association and to provide for its sustenance.

The ZILGA requires to develop a HRM plan specifying its organisational structure, personnel needs, remuneration scheme, performance management and alignment of human resources to the objectives of the national association. The development of such plans requires support to engage the necessary expertise.

The development of standards of operations is important if ZILGA is to provide a consistent service to its members. These standards provide guidance on the organisation’s values, how the organisation is managed and administered, its protocols, and especially to ensure transparency and accountability

Technical capacity: Limitations on decentralisation of responsibilities to local authorities has often been attributed to lack of technical skills among employees. However, decentralisation should be accompanied by both the devolution of responsibilities and also the means to achieve, that all the resources required including personnel. Attempts to retain personnel at the ministries for decentralised functions is often the cause for resistance to the transfer of resources to local authorities.

At the national association level, strengthening the technical capacity to facilitate the carrying out of support services to local authorities may necessitate the transfer of personnel from the central government central offices to the national association and when established to the regional or provincial centres.

In respect of both the local authorities and the national association, technical capacity is also aided by personnel training schemes. The relevant training programmes may be provided at the national level and also at regional and international training establishments. The UCLG Africa has established its Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) to provide relevant training for the sub-national sector. The training includes higher level development of senior personnel of sub-national governments at master level as well as other short-term training to address specific needs pointedly to address the real needs of the sector.

Furthermore, international partnerships can provide practical training through decentralised cooperation between sub-national governments in Africa and global. Personnel can be seconded to more advanced sector institutions for exposure to innovative systems in various disciplines. NALAs staff on Policy and political frameworks (understand how the policy system works and how policies are developed); understanding Policy cycles (know the relevant policy cycles on local and national level in order to understand when advocacy activities need to be organized to create impact); Strategic partnerships: be aware of the relevant stakeholders in the field and know their role and position; know which stakeholders might support (allies) or oppose (enemies); motivate, inspire and stimulate potential allies to support specific advocacy activities;

3.3 Setting the Objectives of the Local Authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities

Zimbabwe’s decentralisation has a longstanding history of implementation. There are factors that have stalled effective and continuous implementation. While these may not be unique to Zimbabwe, in the
country’s case they have had an enduring effect as they have been associated with deep socio-economic and political challenges over an extended period. These challenges have seriously reduced the available financial, technical and political resources necessary for the design and implementation of decentralisation programs. Local authorities have been a major casualty as central government cut grants available to support services as well recentralise some services previously undertaken by local governments. These changes have impacted negatively giving rise to some immediate challenges for local governments and the national association.

Local authorities in Zimbabwe have experienced profound challenges especially regarding financing of services. Not only has central government taken over some reliable sources of revenue such as vehicle licencing, there has been a downward slope in the disbursement of grants, in some cases, especially for the urban council, the cessation of any meaningful transfers. Working with civil society as well as international development organizations it is however possible to design and implement decentralisation as part of supporting implementation of the country’s 2013 Constitution. Consistent with devolution and decentralisation the adopting of TALD can significantly increase revenues by opening up opportunities for mobilizing resources locally. The following summarises the objectives recommended for consideration to guide the strengthening of local authorities and the ZILGA:

1. **Strengthening Devolution and Decentralisation**

   **Localising the Public Service:** Developmental State functions should be devolved to the local level under the principle of subsidiarity. The outcome will be local authorities empowered to drive local development with the authority and power to carry out holistic planning for their territories; mobilize resources, including from private sector, civil society and other local stakeholders; and organise for and implement development programmes. and in the adoption of a Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD).

   This approach settles some of the challenges brought by sector approaches that tend to create uncoordinated ‘silo’ development. This principle resonates with the already constitutionalised devolution and decentralisation and expounded by the presidential guidelines.

   **Enable the Localisation of Global Agendas:** Local authorities being the closest governmental institution to communities and in the best position to engage them should be strengthened to enable them to play their key role in the implementation, monitoring and review of global programmes such as the SDGs and the Agenda 2063

   **Recognition of Local Authorities and National Associations of Local Authorities as State Actors**

   The outcome will be Local authorities that contribute to national economic development through managing the full exploitation of potential resources in their areas. Local authorities are not ‘non-state actors’ but state actors in their own right as amply recognised by the European Commission Communication of 2013. As such they partake in the management of natural resources of the country with a focus on the local areas under their jurisdiction. This includes the management of Local Economic Development which is increasingly recognised as a strong pillar to propel national development. Local and provincial councils must take their full role and responsibility and engage in a meaningful dialogue on the strategic priorities to be adopted for the new cooperation agenda with national governments on the one hand, and with the EU delegations on the other hand.

Local authority residents in mineral-rich territories (e.g. granite, diamond, timber, coal and other) complain about marginalisation for which the Shona have an apt description of ‘being thirsty while one’s legs are immersed in water’. Based on the desire to address this challenge (both before and after independence) Zimbabweans fought a liberation
The national association as representative of local authorities should similarly be recognised as ‘state actor’ to align to the status of their members. The national association plays a crucial role of interlocutor between national and local government, as the platform for policy discourse, the expression of their voice and as well as the conduit for capacity development. It, thus, plays a crucial coordinating role for local authorities.

**ii. National Association to Contribute to and Engage in the Development and Implementation of Mechanisms to Operationalise Devolution and Decentralisation**

The new devolution and decentralisation policy introduced a new subnational governance architecture that demands realignment of the systems of management at all three governance levels.

In order to harmonise national, provincial and local development planning and implementation, there is need for clear definition of roles for policy execution, responsibilities and powers for each level and for greater collaboration among the three levels. There is also need to concrete revenue sharing protocols between national government and the two sub-national governments. Platforms for collaboration are, at present, weak, with central government wielding the determining decision-making power. The resulting disconnect between national government policy and its translation into implementable programmes at the local level leads to inefficiencies and unnecessary conflicts due to poor role definition and defiance of decentralisation policy for self-preservation of status, influence and control of resources. The outcome of this objective will be a smooth-running subnational governance system that operates with vision, collaboration, transparency and accountability primarily to the citizen.

**iii. Strengthening of Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA)**

ZILGA is poised to assume its full responsibility as the primary interlocutor between central government, other development organs and local authorities. The transformative changes taking place in Zimbabwe will require the services of a politically and professionally sound national association that can effectively express the voice of local governments to external stakeholders, on the one hand, as well as render downstream support to their members. The UCLGA Africa study identified the following key areas of support required for ZILGA:

a. Financial sustainability: To develop a financial sustainability strategy for the fully amalgamated ZILGA
b. Research: To build in-house capacity for ZILGA to carry out research required to support decision-making function and lobbying and advocacy
c. Lack of Lobbying and Advocacy Strategy: To develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy for each budget year
d. Communication strategy: To develop an effective communication strategy that provides both internal vibrancy for the membership network and stakeholder external influence.
e. Capacity building: To build a comprehensive capacity development strategy and plan for institutional and human resources development.

The relevant targets and scheduling will be developed.

**3.4 Defining the National Association of Local Authorities Plan of Action**

In order to realise the goals and objectives indicated in this roadmap the following actions are envisaged:
Section A: Preliminary Engagements

1. Understanding the new EU Programming Environment

Local authorities and national association’s leadership require information on the new programming environment. At a minimum this includes the following elements:

- The import of the new EU Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI);
- The Role of Local and Regional Governments in the EU Cooperation, especially the import of 2013 EU Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”
- Initiatives taken by Five International Local and Regional Governments Associations (AIMF, CEMR/PLATFORMA, CLGF, UCLG, UCLG-AFRICA). The group has developed strong arguments justifying the role of local authorities and their NALAs in future EU programming which all local authorities must be aware of and able to articulate in engagement negotiations;

**Methodology:** Information circulars and seminars

**By Who?** The UCLG Africa has offered to provide the required information dissemination for this activity.

2. Engaging and Mobilizing Local Authorities in the EU Programming Process

The organisation of local authorities to effectively participate in the EU programming process is essential to create common understandings on the key issues concerning the envisaged changes. This engagement should include the following:

- Organisation of dialogue platforms to discuss and agree position paper and strategy
- Assessment of needs of local authorities for support under the programme

**Methodology:** Meetings and workshops

**By Who?** National Association should organise and conduct these engagements.

3. Engaging Central Government

The national government is the legal nexus for negotiations with external development partners. There is need for early discourse between local authorities’ leadership and central government, firstly, the ministry responsible for local government and decentralisation followed by engagements with the ministry responsible for coordinating with the EU. These engagements will scope the programming process and agree on strategy. It is essential that the local governments, together with the national association work in harmony with central government on any negotiations with the EU.

**Methodology:** Meetings

**By Who?** The national association will lead local authorities in these engagements

4. Engaging EU Delegation

Within the framework of an agreed country strategy, local authorities will join national government in the negotiations for the 2021-2027 EU programming.
Methodology: Meetings

By Who? Central government will lead the engagements with the EU Delegation.

Section B: Support Request under Programming Phase

5. Strengthening the ZILGA for Effective Support of Local Governance

ZILGA was established to represent the interests of members and undertake activities as defined by their constitutions or other establishment statutes. In Africa and elsewhere, NALAs have played a crucial role in steering decentralization policy and improving the environment of local authorities. They have also been instrumental in supporting the growth and effectiveness of their members as well as providing a platform for international cooperation with other world institutions. They perform activities in support of their membership, the local authorities. NALAs ‘downstream’ activities refer to all services that are directed at local governments and communities as distinct from the ‘upstream’ activities that are directed at central government, regional, continental and global institutions. Services provided by national associations to their members are usually driven by the incentive to achieve representational effectiveness, economies of scale, and the desire to foster mutual learning and the sharing of experiences. A major challenge that NALAs address is that while central governments in Africa have devolved responsibilities to the local governments, often this has not been accompanied by commensurate means of resources, both human and financial. NALAs take up negotiations with central government and other stakeholders to address decentralisation concerns. NALAs have also taken up the task of building the capacity of their members in order to enable local governments assume these new tasks with competence. The following areas of support for ZILGA were identified:

i. Devolution and Decentralisation Dialogues

The participation of ZILGA in the operationalisation of the devolution and decentralisation policy requires the mobilisation, preparation and facilitation of local authorities in the process. The national structure steering decentralisation and devolution is currently headed by the national executive (President as Chair and Minister responsible for local government as Deputy). It is necessary for local authorities to be consulted throughout the process in order to ensure that the views and needs of the local level are appropriately collated and expressed to influence the emerging form of local governance in Zimbabwe.

Methodology and by Who?: ZILGA organises meetings with representatives of local authorities to provide the sounding board and platform for recommending actions.

ii. Institutional and Organisational Set up & Strengthening

ZILGA is a unified voice of local authorities in Zimbabwe, however, the organisation does not itself have a functional office nor dedicated staff establishment. For the organisation to effectively represent and express the unified voice of local governments in Zimbabwe, it will be necessary to undertake the following:

- ZILGA Strategic Plan
- Establishing ZILGA headquarters Building: ZILGA requires a unified headquarters
- Organisational structure and Human Resources establishment and Development study
- Office operationalization – staffing
- Office operationalisation – Office fit and tools
Methodology and By Who: The Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) and the Rural District Councils Association of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) should jointly manage the process leading to the establishment of a unified office.

6. Enhance Local Authorities meaningful involvement in development and cooperation policy

The devolution and decentralisation policy that has been fully adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe through its 2013 Constitution as well as elaborated through the Presidential Policy Guidelines\(^\text{12}\) requires elaborate planning and programming for its proper realisation. Experience has already demonstrated the naivety of assuming that policy will be implemented once enacted. The country has witnessed ‘back-and-forth’ movements on decentralisation as various reasons are posited for recentralising decentralised functions. It is therefore incumbent upon both the Government of Zimbabwe and its supporting development partners to seriously develop a programme of action for the genuine implementation of devolution and decentralisation that can be ‘seen’ by the citizens who expectantly await their full participation in development for their local areas and territories.

The following Actions are envisaged:

i. **Fostering a deeper understanding of devolution and decentralisation supported by TALD:** The TALD envisages a paradigm shift in the way in which devolution is applied. In order for this concept to be adopted it will be necessary to conduct learning sessions for both national government and local authorities’ leadership and other functionaries.

ii. **State Architecture for Decentralisation Implementation - Intergovernmental Relations Definition:** Implementation of Devolution Matrix Local Authorities Provincial Councils and National Government: This will entail the organisation of engagement platforms bringing together local and national leaders to consider options for the devolution matrix as organised by the offices of the President and ministry responsible for local government.

iii. **Programme of Action for Implementing Constitutional Provisions on Decentralisation:** The consensus on the practical implications of the Constitutional provisions on devolution and decentralisation will lead to the elaboration of a programme of action with the participation of the relevant national government departments and local authorities coordinated by the ZILGA. The specific tasks to be performed will be defined during the deliberations on the implementation programming.

iv. **Building Urban Resilience, Inclusion and Sustainability:** ZILGA will engage in a protracted process of strengthening local democracy through building platforms for citizens’ participation in governance; building the capacity of local authorities to operationalise national policies and laws at the local level; developing programmes for enhance the participation of women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups in the governance processes; and taking measures to promote and apply appropriate response to the climate challenges.

v. **Local Government Finance Resuscitation – Fiscal space shrinkage:** ZILGA will engage in a process of developing a comprehensive financing system for local authorities in partnership with national government. This will include local revenue sourcing; grants from national government; and loans.

vi. **Organizing a meaningful and competent voice of Local Authorities:**

vii. **Formal Institutions to support capacity building for local governments: National Framework and Strategy**
   - Leadership capacity
   - Management capacity

\(^\text{12}\) Government of Zimbabwe: op.cit
– Technical capacity

**Need for National Strategy for Capacity Building for Decentralisation:** The lack of strategy leads to failed mandates under haphazard decentralisation. There is need to create a platform to manage decentralisation policy in order to ensure that devolved functions are executed appropriately. This should be comprehensive covering all aspects of decentralisation and its implications for local authorities. ZILGA should develop a focused Human Resources Development strategy that ensures that it is able to render all the support services for local authorities envisaged under this roadmap. The implementation of the capacity building strategy will include the support of dedicated learning establishments. The resuscitation of formal training centres such as Domboshawa Training Centre and strengthening of the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management must form an integral part of the devolution and decentralisation support effort. The national government, the owners of these institutions, should revamp these to be robust institutions offering all levels of training capacity development to political leaders and managerial staff of local authorities.

**viii. Developing a Framework Partnership Proposal for support over the period 2021-2027:** The realisation of the aforementioned interventions to strengthen devolution and decentralisation with the aim to improve governance and services delivery to communities requires the efforts of all the key stakeholders: national government, local authorities, national association of local authorities; organised civil society, for profit organisations; and development partners. The holistic approach envisaged in this roadmap requires a comprehensive support framework over an appropriate period. Isolated pockets of disjointed projects will not address the holistic goal of territorial approach to local development. It is therefore envisaged and recommended that the national association enters into a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission over the period 2021 to 2027.

### 3.5 CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe has a long history of decentralised system of governance. Local authorities have been a feature of the governance system for a century developing from single-function authorities such as road councils, through racially segregated local authorities into fully-fledged decentralised democratic governance system as now envisaged under the 2013 national Constitution. The country’s demise over the last twenty years of economic and political turmoil has negatively impacted on the efficient operation of local authorities. The scarcity of financial resources has led to the re-centralisation of some previously decentralised functions giving national authorities the power to allocate resources guided by national priorities. Unfortunately, this perspective has not been without pitfalls as the quality of local services has seriously declined in many locations countrywide. The centralisation of resources does not lead to equitable distribution but is often fraught with political favouritism as perceived by opposition parties and generally the urban population who charge that central government favours the rural areas where they obtain the largest share of votes during elections. Devolution and decentralisation provide opportunities to foster local development through equitable distribution of national resources fairly over the country. It also offers opportunities under TALD to harness local resources more effectively towards local development. Through TALD each local authority is given the right to exploit its local resources to the full and in a manner that addresses the real concerns of the local population. Under the TALD approach, local economic development will be a key driver of economic growth for the local area galvanising local resources and mobilising local entrepreneurship.
In light of the pivotal role that local authorities perform in development, it is essential that they are recognised as state actors. Following the recognition by the EC through the adoption of the 2013 EC Communication “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”, the EC signed Framework Partnership Agreements with the five main regional and global associations of local governments to strengthen them in support of local authorities. In the same way, it is recommended that the EC, through its country Delegations enters into Framework Partnership Agreements with the national association in Zimbabwe, ZILGA, to support its strengthening and that of local authorities. The ZILGA should be the interlocutor of development support for local authorities.

The Government of Zimbabwe has enacted a Constitution that strongly advocates for devolution and decentralisation. The main inputs to the provisions of the Constitution on devolution and decentralisation came from the citizens who clearly articulated their desire for greater authority to be conferred on local authorities. This, a realisation of the value of self-determination of development priorities and a rejection of dictation from the centre. The implementation of the new policy will require concerted support, especially to develop mechanism that translate the policy into implementable governance practices. This need has been acknowledged through the setting up of a Presidential Committee that will oversee the rolling out of the decentralisation effort.

In order to harmonise policies to build congruence with nationally determined priorities, national associations play a crucial role as the ‘voice’ of local authorities and synthesiser of common practices in order to maintain a national character in the socio-economic development of the country. The proposals in this roadmap emphasize the important role that the national association, ZILGA, should take in building the governance system envisaged under the 2013 Constitution and as elaborated by the Presidential Directive on devolution and decentralisation. ZILGA is the interlocutor providing a key link between the national and local level and between local authorities and other developmental stakeholders. In order for the ZILGA to effectively perform its role, it is necessary to, first, recognise the functions that it will be expected to perform and commensurately provide the capacity building required to perform.
## Annexure 1. ZILGA ROADMAP: PRELIMINARY TABLE OF NEEDS FOR PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2021-2027

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nº</th>
<th>Need Identified</th>
<th>Intervention Mode Proposed</th>
<th>Anchor of Solution</th>
<th>Funding Sources Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Preliminary Engagements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1.</td>
<td>Understanding the new EU Programming Environment</td>
<td>Webinar: Dissemination of information on new NDICI and programming process</td>
<td>UCLG Africa, National Association</td>
<td>UCLG Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2.</td>
<td>Engage Local Authorities</td>
<td>Seminar to formulate strategies and prepare position paper</td>
<td>National Association</td>
<td>National Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.</td>
<td>Engaging Central Government</td>
<td>Communicate to national government department responsible for coordinating EU cooperation to define modalities for engagement with LAs</td>
<td>National Association</td>
<td>National Association, Local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.</td>
<td>Engaging EU Delegation</td>
<td>Communicate to EU Delegation to define modalities for engagement with LAs</td>
<td>Responsible Ministry &amp; National Association</td>
<td>National Association, Local authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Devolution and Decentralisation Dialogues</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Operationalisation of the devolution and decentralisation policy</td>
<td>Office of the President, National Association</td>
<td>National Government, Local authorities, EU Delegation</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Strengthening the ZILGA for Effective Support of Local Governance</td>
<td>Institutional and Organisational Set up &amp; Strengthening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZILGA Strategic Plan</td>
<td>National Association &amp; Local Authorities</td>
<td>Defining focus and programme development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>№</td>
<td>Need Identified What actions to undertake for change to occur?</td>
<td>Intervention Mode Proposed</td>
<td>Anchor of Solution Who will carry them out?</td>
<td>Funding Sources Proposed</td>
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<td>3.2.</td>
<td>Establishing ZILGA headquarters Building: ZILGA requires a unified headquarters</td>
<td>National Associations &amp; Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation, National Government</td>
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<td>3.3.</td>
<td>Organisational structure and Human Resources establishment and Development study</td>
<td>National Associations &amp; Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation, National Government</td>
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<td>3.4.</td>
<td>Office operationalization – staffing</td>
<td>National Associations &amp; Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation, National Government</td>
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<td>3.5.</td>
<td>Office operationalization – Equipment/tooling</td>
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<td>EU Delegation, National Government</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Enhance LAs meaningful involvement in development and cooperation policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.</td>
<td>State Architecture for Decentralisation Implementation</td>
<td>The State infrastructure to support devolution</td>
<td>Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) and Joint Ministry-National Association Task Force</td>
<td>EU Delegation, National Government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reversing Re-centralisation</td>
<td>National Government, National Associations</td>
<td>National Government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partnership with Independent Commissions that support democracy</td>
<td>National Association</td>
<td>EU Delegation</td>
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13 These are the Zimbabwe Electoral, Human Rights, Gender, National Peace and Reconciliation and Media Commissions
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<th>Funding Sources Proposed</th>
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</table>
|    | Intergovernmental Relations Definition Implementation of Devolution Matrix  
  – Local Authorities, provincial councils and National Government  
  – Provincial Councils and local authorities | National Government  
National Association | National Government | National Government |
| 4.3. | Building Urban Resilience, Inclusion and Sustainability | Citizen Participation Enhancement | National Association | EU Delegation  
Local authorities |
| | Operationalising National Policy and Laws at the local level Comprehensive Platforms | – National Government  
– National Association | – EU Delegation  
– National Government | – EU Delegation  
– National Government |
| | Women Enhanced Participation | – National Association  
– Local Authorities  
– UCLG Africa REFELA | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation |
| | Youth Participation | – National Association  
– Local Authorities | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation |
| | Disabled Participation | – National Association  
– Local Authorities | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation | – Local Authorities  
– EU Delegation |
| | Response to the Climate Challenge | – National Association  
– Local authorities  
– UCLG Africa | – EU Delegation  
– Local authorities  
– National government | – EU Delegation  
– Local authorities  
– National government |
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Organizing a meaningful and competent voice of Local Authorities</td>
<td>ZILGA Research Capacity Strengthening</td>
<td>National Associations – Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation – Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZILGA Political National Conference</td>
<td>National Association – Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation – Local Authorities</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZILGA Political Regional Platforms</td>
<td>National Association – Regional Executive</td>
<td>EU Delegation – Local Authorities</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZILGA Engagement Platform – Sector ministries – Civil Society – Private Sector</td>
<td>National Association – ZILGA Regional Executive – Local Authorities</td>
<td>EU Delegation – Local Authorities</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZILGA Technical Engagement Forums – Engaging central government technical level – Engaging other stakeholders at technical level</td>
<td>National Association</td>
<td>EU Delegation – Local Authorities</td>
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| 5.6. |                                                                                 | Strengthening ZILGA International Linkages  
|      |                                                                                 | – Membership Affiliation to international organs  
|      |                                                                                 | – Participation at international events                                                   | National Associations  
|      |                                                                                 |                                                                                           | UCLG Africa               | EU Delegation            |
|      |                                                                                 |                                                                                           | Local Authorities        |                        |
| 6.   | Capacity Building                                                                |                                                                                           |                                            |                         |
| 6.1. | Formal Institutions to support capacity building for local governments: National Framework and Strategy |                                                                                           |                                            |                         |
|      |                                                                                   | a. Resuscitation of formal training institutions for local government training in support of devolution and decentralisation  
|      |                                                                                   | Central Government National Association                                                   | Central Government  
|      |                                                                                   |                                                                                           | EU Delegation            |
|      |                                                                                   |                                                                                           | EU Delegation            |                        |
|      |                                                                                   | b. Strengthening ZILGA to provide services to members (Legal services)                      | National Association     | EU Delegation            |
|      |                                                                                   |                                                                                           | EU Delegation            |                        |
|      |                                                                                   | c. Projects and Programme Management                                                       | Training Institutions UCLG Africa – Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) | EU Delegation            |
|      |                                                                                   |                                                                                           | National government     |                        |
|      |                                                                                   | d. Training on TALD                                                                          | Central Government National Association UCLG Africa – Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) | Central Government  
<p>|      |                                                                                   |                                                                                           | EU Delegation            |                        |</p>
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| 6.2. | Leadership capacity | a. Political leadership capacity development programmes | – National Association  
– UCLG Africa – Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) | – EU Delegation  
– Local Authorities |
|  | | b. ZILGA Annual Conference | National Associations | – Local authorities  
– National Association |
|  | | c. International peer exchange | UCLG Africa | – EU |
|  | | d. Advocacy and negotiating skills training | National Association  
UCLG Africa – Africa Local Government Academy (ALGA) | – EU Delegation |
| 6.4. | Technical capacity | a. Strengthening of existing technical forums (Town Clerks, Treasurers, Engineers, etc) | – National Association  
– UCLG Africa Programmes | Local authorities |
|  | | b. Facilitating Issue driven engagements supported by research-based discussions | National Association | – Local authorities  
– EU Delegation |
|  | | c. Strengthening Local Economic Development knowledge & skills capacity | – National Association  
– UCLG Programmes | |
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<td>What actions to undertake for change to occur?</td>
<td>Developing a Framework Partnership Proposal for support over the period 2021-2027</td>
<td>National Association</td>
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Annexure 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.