



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Petauke Council Citizen Engagement Strategy

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

Zambia Devolution support program
2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that local development is responsive, transparent, and accountable to the people it serves. The Petauke Town Council is committed to fulfilling its legal and policy obligations for public participation, particularly in the local budget process and project cycle. This Citizen Engagement Strategy (CES) provides a structured plan to empower citizens, improve decision-making, and foster trust between the Council and the public.

1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Petauke Council

The Council has made deliberate efforts to engage citizens through various channels, including Ward Development Committees (WDCs), town hall meetings, and local radio programs. These efforts have yielded benefits such as improved information sharing and community input on projects.

However, gaps remain, including:

- The need for more systematic and inclusive participation, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Limited real-time feedback on project implementation.
- A need to strengthen the link between citizen input and the formal budget cycle.

This CES is designed to systematize and enhance these existing efforts, providing a clear framework for consistent, meaningful, and inclusive engagement throughout the budget and project cycle

2. Vision, Aim and Objectives

2.1 Vision

To create an inclusive, transparent, and participatory environment that empowers all citizens of Petauke to actively contribute to the development and decision-making processes of Petauke Town Council by 2027.

2.2 Aim

The main aim of this Strategy is to provide a structured approach for engaging citizens in the budget and project cycle processes to enable transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the public financial management of the council.

2.3 Objectives

- **Increase citizen awareness and understanding** of the Output-Based Budget and project cycle processes from current levels.
- **Enable more inclusive citizen participation** in budget and project decision-making and prioritization, particularly for women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- **Improve mechanisms for citizen monitoring** of budget execution and project implementation to ensure accountability and service improvement.

3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement

3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement

The Petauke Town Council will use the following initiatives for inclusive engagement, considering the diverse contexts of its citizens. The process is ongoing, and the Council will use different avenues to ensure two-way communication.

A. Citizen Participation in Key Decision-Making and Informing through the Budget Cycle:

- Conduct pre-budget consultations and town hall meetings to present budget outlines and gather feedback on project prioritization.
- Strengthen WDC engagement by providing them with project lists for review and empowering them to accept, reject, or propose new projects for their wards.
- Conduct budget hearings and provide feedback to WDCs on what projects have been incorporated into the final approved budget.

B. Citizen Monitoring of Budget and Project Implementation:

- Foster citizen involvement in project monitoring by including selected stakeholders in Council monitoring visits.
- Improve reporting to citizens using technology (e.g., SMS alerts, social media), regular updates on notice boards, and bi-annual newsletters.
- Maintain accessible channels for feedback and grievances, such as feedback desks at Council offices and dedicated radio shows.

4. Implementation Plan

Section content example is presented as follows:

The implementation plan of the CES will include the following:

1. Assessment of the current status of citizen engagement in the budget process and other relevant subject matters.
2. Identify engagement opportunities and develop a detailed outline of timelines and responsibilities. Example given in Table 1 below.
3. Outline the Stakeholders with reference to the level of and period of engagement with the council.

As displayed in table 2 below, the stakeholders to be engaged by the council may include citizens, Ward Development Committees (WDCs), Neighborhood Health Committees(NHCs), Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), government agencies at various levels, community organizations, Traditional and Community leaders, businesses, civil society groups, academic institutions, media outlets, and potentially affected groups within the community.

Table 1: Proposed Stakeholder Engagement Plan Summary Table

BUDGET STAGE	KEY FEATURES/ACTIVITIES	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY INVOLVED	TIMELINE
Preparation for budget formulation	i. LAs provide communities with proposed dates for consultation	Budget Committee; Council Management	Preceding the fiscal year. Oct week 1

	ii.	LAs provide WDCs with a list of proposed projects for consideration in this budget cycle as well as a list of ongoing projects and completed projects for the past 2 years.	All WDCs	Oct Week 2
	iii.	Using the project lists provided, communities may accept or reject project proposals and make their own proposals for development projects and activities for their Wards to be included in the budget based on their priorities	All WDCs, Traditional Leaders, Residents, CBOs, Special Interest Groups (Women, Youth, PWDs), Private Sector	Oct Weeks 3 & 4
	iv.	LAs produce a summarized stakeholder report from all Wards and submit report to MLGRD.	Council Management	November
	v.	Conduct budget hearings & Town Hall meetings.	All WDCs, Traditional Leaders, Residents, CBOs, Special Interest Groups (Women, Youth, PWDs), Private Sector	November
	vi.	The Town Clerk/Council Secretary shall present the reports to the full council.	Finance Committee; Council Members	December
	vii.	Feedback meetings to WDCs on what projects and activities have been included in the budget	All WDCs	December
	viii.	Reports including minutes must be submitted to the PLGOs office for review and consolidation for onward submission to MLGRD.	Budget Committee; Council Management	December
	ix.	MLGRD will submit the consolidated reports to MoFNP.	All WDCs, Traditional Leaders, Residents, CBOs, Special Interest Groups (Women, Youth, PWDs), Private Sector	December
Budget approval (public awareness of budget details)	i.	Review the proposed budget and assess whether input from community, especially vulnerable groups i.e. women, PWDs and children has been incorporated.	MLGRD	December
	ii.	Feedback to WDCs and other stakeholders of the final approved budget	Budget Committee; Council Management	January Weeks 1-2
Budget execution and monitoring (for transparency in budget implementation)	i.	Track the effective utilisation of funds in line with planned activities.	Budget Committee; Council Management	Jan-Dec
	ii.	Report back on a regular basis to WDCs on implementation of activities and projects	Budget Committee; Council Management; WDC	Jan-Dec

Budget evaluation and Review	i. Evaluate the impact of allocated funds, focusing on agreed upon programmes with a bias towards gender, persons with disabilities, child-related and climate change outcomes.	Council Management	Jan-Dec	
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5. Communication Plan

This comprehensive plan ensures timely, accessible, and two-way communication between the Council and its stakeholders throughout the engagement process.

Table 2: Proposed Communication Plan Summary

DELIVERABLE/ACTIVITY	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PROPOSED TIMELINE/ DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNICATION METHOD	COMMENTS
Town Hall Meetings	Residents, WDCs, Traditional Leaders, Special Interest Groups	04	January April August December	Directors Planning/ Finance	Community engagement	
CDF radio shows	General Public	Weekly (52 sessions per year)	weekly	PRO	Live phone-in shows on Petauke Explorers' Radio and Pasma Radio	
WDC Capacity Building	Ward Development Committees	04	Quarterly	SEP, CDO, DP	Quarterly Workshops (Q1 and Q2)	
Newsletter and Reports	WDCs, Community Centres, Government Agencies, Development Partners	04	Bi annual		Printed Copies to WDCs/Offices, PDF on Website and Email Distribution	
SMS Alerts and social media	Residents (with access), Media		All the time	IT Officer	Bulk SMS Platform	
Notice Boards	General Public		All the time			
Social Media and Website	Youth, General Public, Media, Diaspora		Daily Updates and Major Announcements	IT Officer and PRO	Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp Broadcasts, Council Website	
Pre-Budget Consultations	WDCs, Traditional		Annual (Quarter 4)	Council Secretary	Official Letters, Radio	

	Leaders, Residents, Special Interest Groups, Business Community				Announcements, Physical Town Hall Meetings in all 13 Wards	
Council Notice	General Public, Market Traders, Visitors		Updated Weekly	PRO	Strategic Placement: Council Offices, Main Market, Bus Station, Clinic	
Feedback and Grievance Redress	All Citizens		Continuous (24/7 Availability)	Council Secretary / Grievance Committee	Multiple Channels: - Physical Feedback Desks at Council - Dedicated Phone Line and WhatsApp Number - Suggestion Boxes in Wards - Mention on Radio Shows - Grievance Forms (Online and Offline)	

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

The Council has allocated **K37,000** under the "Citizen Engagement" line in the Local Governance Programme budget to support the activities outlined in this strategy. Additional resources will be leveraged from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and through partnerships with NGOs and the private sector. A detailed annual activity-based budget will be developed for each year of this strategy's implementation.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Progress on this CES will be continuously monitored, evaluated, and reported to ensure its effectiveness.

- **Monitoring:** The Council will use feedback forms, attendance registers, and social media analytics to track participation and reach.
- **Evaluation:** Key performance indicators (KPIs) include the number of community meetings held, percentage of CPRODF/CFW funds disbursed, and results from annual stakeholder satisfaction surveys.
- **Reporting:** Quarterly progress reports will be submitted to Council Management and the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC). Monitoring reports and the

approved budget will be published on Council notice boards and its website to ensure transparency.

- **Grievance Redress:** The Council's existing Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be used to address concerns arising during the budget and project cycles.

8. Conclusion

The development of this Citizen Engagement Strategy underscores the Petauke Town Council's deep appreciation for the role of citizens in democratic governance and effective public spending. This Strategy will help systematize a process that, while existent, has been fragmented. The Council is fully committed to fostering an environment of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability throughout its budget and project implementation processes, ultimately building greater public trust and achieving sustainable, people centered development for Petauke .