



**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

**CHIENGWE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Chiengwe Town Council Citizen  
Engagement Strategy**



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## 1. Introduction

The Chienge Town Council recognizes the importance of citizen engagement in local governance and is committed to creating a platform that fosters inclusive participation, transparency, and accountability. Our Citizen Engagement Strategy aims to bridge the gap between the Local Authority and the people of Chienge District, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and valued in decision-making processes. By implementing this Citizen Engagement Strategy, the Chienge Town Council aims to create a more participatory, transparent, and accountable governance system that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of the people of Chienge District.

### 1.1 Background

Chienge Town Council faces challenges in ensuring effective citizen participation in budget and project decision-making processes, resulting in limited awareness and understanding of budget and project cycles among citizens, inadequate inclusion of diverse citizen perspectives, and weak mechanisms for citizen monitoring of budget and project implementation. To address this upheaval, there is need for an effective citizen engagement strategy as citizen engagement is a cornerstone of democratic governance. CES enables citizens to participate in decision-making processes and hold elected officials accountable. At the local level, citizen engagement is crucial for ensuring that public resources are allocated effectively and efficiently to meet the needs and priorities of the community. The budget process is a key area where citizen engagement can make a significant impact, as it determines how public funds are spent and what projects and services are prioritized.

Therefore, the development of this Citizen Engagement Framework fulfills legal and policy obligations to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in local governance. This framework is a plan to achieve the goals of empowering citizens, improving decision-making, and fostering trust between government and the public. By engaging citizens in the budget process and other decision-making processes, the Chienge Town Council fulfills this legal obligation and aims to ensure that its activities are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community, and that citizens have a greater sense of ownership and accountability in local governance.

### 1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Chienge Town Council

To ensure inclusive and participatory budgeting, Chienge Town Council successfully conducted two stakeholder engagement meetings, bringing together key stakeholders to provide input and feedback on the budget. Additionally, the Council partnered with local radio stations, Kalungwishi Radio in Mununga and Lubuto Radio in Kaputa, to broadcast 36 ongoing radio programs. This strategic outreach effort is aimed to achieve wider coverage and engage a broader audience, particularly in remote areas of the district, to ensure that the people of Chienge District are informed and involved in the budgeting process and other key governance and decision making processes.

The local authority has engaged citizens through community meetings, community radio programs, and online platforms, where community representatives have aired their views and concerns, leveraging their local knowledge. This approach has catered to various community groups, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations, ensuring inclusivity and balancing diverse interests to achieve developmental goals. By engaging citizens and stakeholders in the budgeting and other decision making processes, Chienge Town Council demonstrates its commitment to transparency, accountability, and participatory governance.



## 2. Vision, Aim and Objectives

**2.1 Vision:** Transforming Chiengwe District through Inclusive Governance and Sustainable Development by 2028.

- During the three (3) year duration of CES, each year will contain an annual implementation plan. Feedback from each year will be incorporated in the following year action plan and a full revision will be submitted at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the CES implementation period.

**2.2. Aim:** To establish a citizen-centric governance framework that fosters inclusive participation, enhances transparency, and promotes accountability in decision-making processes, thereby ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Chiengwe District are effectively represented and addressed.

### 2.3 Objectives

- Increase current levels of citizen awareness and understanding of the budget and project cycle processes.
- Enable more inclusion of citizens to participate in budget and project decision-making and prioritization.
- Improve mechanisms for citizen monitoring of budget and project implementation from current practice.

## 3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement

The Chiengwe Town Council team will employ the following initiatives for inclusive engagement, recognizing that citizens come from diverse contexts. Consideration will be given to how citizens will interact with civic leaders to ensure a two-way process. As the citizen engagement process is ongoing, the Council intends to utilize various avenues and mechanisms to communicate with different stakeholders. The engagement methods will therefore include:

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

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

### B. Citizen Monitoring of Budget and Project Implementation

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

## 4. Implementation Plan

The implementation plan of the Chiengwe Town Council 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. Stakeholder Meeting	WDC's & Business Community,	Last Quarter 2025
	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.	WDC's	Last Quarter 2025
	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	WDC's and line ministries	Last Quarter 2025
	iv. LAs produce a summarized stakeholder report from all Wards and submit report to MLGRD.	LA, WDC's and MLGRD	Last Quarter 2025
	v. Conduct budget hearings & Town Hall meetings.	LA, WDC's, Business Community and line ministries	Last Quarter 2025
	vi. The Town Clerk/Council Secretary shall present the reports to the full council.	LA	Last Quarter 2025
	vii. Feedback meetings to WDCs on what projects and activities have been included in the budget	WDC's and LA	Last Quarter 2025
	viii. Reports including minutes must be submitted to the PLGOs office for review and consolidation for onward submission to MLGRD.	LA, PLGO and MLGRD	Last Quarter 2025
	ix. MLGRD will submit the consolidated reports to MoFNP.	MLGRD and MoFNP	Last Quarter 2025
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.		First Quarter 2026
	ii. Feedback to WDCs and other stakeholders of the final approved budget	LA, WDC's, Business Community	First Quarter 2026
Budget execution and monitoring (for transparency in budget implementation)	i. Track the effective utilisation of funds in line with planned activities.	LA	Throughout the budget circle
	ii. Report back on a regular basis to WDCs on implementation of activities and projects	LA and WDC's	Quarterly
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.	LA	Quarterly

**5. Communication Plan**

- The Chieng'e Town Council will implement a comprehensive communication plan to disseminate information about the Citizen Engagement Strategy (CES) and its contents to the public. This will include:
- **Awareness Creation:** The Council will use various channels to inform citizens about the CES, including local radio stations, community meetings, social media, and public notices.
- **Meeting Announcements:** Details of meetings, including dates, times, and venues, will be announced through local radio stations, community notice boards, and social media platforms while other notice will be delivered in person



- **Information Dissemination:** The Council will provide regular updates on the implementation of the CES through its website, social media, and community meetings.
- **Grievance Redress Mechanism**  
The Council is committed to capturing feedback from citizens and responding to their concerns in a timely and effective manner. A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) will be established to:
  - **Receive and Record Feedback:** Citizens can provide feedback through various channels, including a dedicated phone number, email, and online feedback form on the Council's website.
  - **Investigate and Respond:** The Council will investigate feedback and respond to citizens in a timely and respectful manner.
  - **Improve Services:** Feedback will be used to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes to improve service delivery.

The GRM will be accessible, transparent, and accountable, ensuring that citizens' concerns are heard and addressed. By establishing this mechanism, the Council demonstrates its commitment to citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability.

**Table 2: Proposed Communication Plan Summary**

DELIVERABLE/ ACTIVITY	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PROPOSED TIMELINE/ DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNICATION METHOD	COMMENTS
Radio program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Residents of Chienge</li> <li>▶ Local leaders and stakeholders</li> <li>▶ Media and influencers</li> <li>▶ Line ministries (devolved ministries)</li> </ul>	Weekly/monthly	From January to December	CDF awareness	Radio	
Stakeholders meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ WDC's, Business Community and line ministries</li> </ul>	Quarterly	31 <sup>st</sup> October, 2025 5 <sup>th</sup> November, 2025	Budget consultative meeting	Meetings Radio	
Website management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Residents of Chienge</li> <li>▶ Local leaders and stakeholders</li> <li>▶ Media and influencers</li> <li>▶ Line ministries (devolved ministries)</li> </ul>	Weekly	Throughout the year	Upload necessary information	Social media	
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ All community members especially youths</li> </ul>	Daily	Throughout the year	Upload necessary information	Social media	



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

Section	Content Example:	Requirements	Costings (ZMW)
Ward Development Committees		Transport refunds & refreshments	Transport refunds $45 \times 300 = 13,500$
			Refreshments $45 \times 65 = 2,925$
			Sub total 16,425
Business Community		Refreshments	Refreshments $50 \times 65 = 3,250$
			Sub total 3,250
General Members of the Public		Refreshments	Refreshments $100 \times 65 = 6,500$
			Sub total 6,500
Civic Leaders		Transport refunds, refreshments & Lunch	Transport refunds $18 \times 300 = 5,400$
			Refreshments $30 \times 65 = 1,950$
			Lunch $30 \times 100 = 3,000$
			Sub Total 10,350
Grand Total			K36,525.00

## 7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The Chiengwe Town Council will employ a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and adjust the Citizen Engagement (CE) action plan as needed. The following techniques will be used:

- ▶ **Regular Progress Reports:** Quarterly reports will be prepared to track progress against set indicators and milestones. Monitoring Reports will be published via various platforms including the website, notice boards etc
- ▶ **Citizen Feedback Surveys:** Surveys will be conducted to gather feedback from citizens on the effectiveness of the CE action plan and identify areas for improvement. It will also include the commitment towards the use of the existent Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) procedure to ensure for continuous flow of information over concerns or inquiries that may arise during the budget and project cycle phases.
- ▶ **Stakeholder Meetings:** Regular meetings will be held with stakeholders, including citizens, community groups, and council officials, to discuss progress, challenges, and lessons learned.
- ▶ **Indicator Tracking:** Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be established to measure the success of the CE action plan, including metrics such as citizen participation rates, feedback response times, and satisfaction levels.

## 8. Conclusion

The Chiengwe Town Council Citizen Engagement Strategy (CES) underscores our commitment to valuing citizen participation in democratic governance and ensuring effective public spending that prioritizes people-centered development. This strategy builds on existing citizen engagement efforts, systematizing a previously fragmented process to ensure consistency, inclusivity, and impact. Through this CES, we reaffirm our dedication to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in budget and project implementation processes. By working together with our citizens, we aim to foster a culture of trust, improve decision-making, and deliver better outcomes for the people of Chiengwe District. This strategy will guide our efforts to create a more participatory, responsive, and accountable local government, ultimately enhancing the well-being of our community.

