



TRANSPARENCY
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ZAMBIA



PILOT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Status of Implementation of the 2023 NATIONAL DECENTRALISATION POLICY in 10 selected Districts of Zambia during the year 2024

Issues Brief
July 2025

Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) is a local chapter of the global movement – Transparency International. It is dedicated to the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance. TI-Z is a non-profit-making non-governmental organization with a registered office in Lusaka and has existed since June 2000.

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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of July 2025. Nevertheless, Transparency International Zambia cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

Contents

1. BACKGROUND	1
2. ISSUES.....	2
3. RECOMMENDATIONS	3

1. BACKGROUND

Zambia reaffirmed its commitment to decentralised governance by signing the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance, and Local Development in 2015. This commitment was further solidified in 2016 when decentralisation was formally enshrined in the Constitution of Zambia. Building on this foundation, the 2023 National Decentralisation Policy was introduced, guided by seven core principles: Good Governance, Equity, Inclusiveness, Participation, Transparency, Accountability, and Responsiveness. Central to the policy is the promotion of citizen participation in decision-making and the transparent, accountable use of public resources.

To support the effective implementation of this policy and to strengthen citizen demand for transparency and accountability in local public resource management, Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) conducted a pilot assessment. The assessment focused on evaluating the status of implementation of the 2023 National Decentralisation Policy across ten selected districts.

Using selected indicators from four key objectives outlined in the 2023 National Decentralisation Implementation Plan, TI-Z developed a comprehensive online data collection tool incorporating both quantitative and qualitative questions. Data was collected between April and July 2025 from the following districts: Chipata, Choma, Kasama, Katete, Livingstone, Mansa, Mongu, Ndola, Petauke, and Solwezi. To assess performance, TI-Z compared district-level progress against the best-performing district, due to the absence of uniform district-level targets. Districts were ranked based on their performance under each thematic area, and a weighted average was used to determine overall performance. The findings were validated through consultative meetings with district officials and a national-level stakeholder validation session.

2. ISSUES

The assessment revealed varying levels of progress in implementing the 2023 National Decentralisation Policy across the ten pilot districts:

- Overall Performance: The average implementation rate stood at 60%, with Decentralised Governance scoring highest at 66%, followed by Policy Coordination at 58%, and Fiscal Decentralisation at 57%.
- Top Performers: Livingstone (73%) and Katete (72%) led in overall implementation.
- Lowest Performers: Petauke (48%) and Kasama (47%) recorded the lowest scores.

A notable development was the Government's effort to realign sub-national structures to the Ward Development Committees (WDCs), positioning them as the primary platform for citizen engagement in local governance. However, the process remains unclear due to the pending finalisation of the Alignment Manual by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

The assessment also highlighted strong support from Cooperating Partners, who contributed to:

- Capacity building initiatives
- Development of service charters and financial management systems
- Sensitisation and awareness campaigns
- Exchange visits for local officials

Despite this support, several implementation challenges persist:

- Low participation of line ministry officials in WDC meetings
- Postponement of the transition to accrual

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings from the assessment, **Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z)** proposes the following actions to strengthen the implementation of the 2023 National Decentralisation Policy:

1. **Strengthen Financial Management Systems;** Local Authorities should expedite the development and rollout of robust financial management and revenue mobilisation systems to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the use of public resources.
2. **Scale Up Capacity Building and Awareness;** Local Authorities should actively leverage the technical and financial support of Cooperating Partners and other stakeholders to expand awareness-raising, sensitisation, and capacity-building initiatives at the local level.
3. **Enhance Coordination and Communication;** The Decentralisation Secretariat should improve coordination and communication mechanisms across national and district levels to ensure that all stakeholders clearly understand their roles, responsibilities, and expected actions.
4. **Finalise the Alignment Manual;** The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development should prioritise the completion and dissemination of the Alignment Manual to provide clear guidance on the realignment of sub-national structures to Ward Development Committees (WDCs).
5. **Promote Peer Learning and Knowledge Exchange;** Government, Cooperating Partners, and Civil Society Organisations should facilitate evidence-based peer learning platforms among Local Authorities to share best practices and enhance policy implementation outcomes.

[African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance, and Local Development](#)

[2023 National Decentralisation Policy](#)

[2023 National Decentralisation Implementation Plan](#)