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STOP CORRUPTION

2025

**Institutional-Based Corruption
Perception Index (CPI) for the Rural
Electrification Authority in Zambia**

Final Study Report

Final CPI Study Report: 2025 Institutional-Based Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for the Rural Electrification Authority in Zambia

Client

The Rural Electrification Authority

Author

Transparency International Zambia

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Executive Summary

The Rural Electrification Authority (REA) is a special-purpose vehicle that aims to increase and sustain the availability of electricity in rural areas, ensuring access to electricity for the rural population. The Authority has been using an inward-looking tool to assess internal processes and practices within the institution, as well as to evaluate the level of corruption vulnerability. As such, this Monitoring and Evaluation Assessment (MEA) tool did not provide an external view of perceptions of stakeholders who interact with REA activities. To address this gap, REA contracted Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) to develop an institutional-based CPI measure as a tool to assess external perceptions of corruption in its operations.

The Institutional-based CPI assessment therefore sought to evaluate the level of corruption within REA by collecting Corruption Perceptions from relevant external stakeholders and to generate recommendations aimed at mitigating corruption risks and vulnerabilities across various operational areas. The assessment employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, which included the collection of quantitative data through a Corruption Perception Survey, preceded by the collection of qualitative data through key informant interviews, and desk-based research. This methodology enabled a deeper explanation, the identification of corruption risks, and good practices to complement the quantitative survey results.

The overall CPI score for the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) in 2024 was 90/100, with 0 representing the highest perceptions of institutional corruption and 100 representing the lowest. The CPI score of 90/100 suggests that the Authority has implemented considerable measures to mitigate the risks of corruption. However, it is essential to note that the institutional-based CPI score is not directly comparable to Zambia's CPI score for 2024, which was 39/100, as the underlying data sources and corruption types differ. Nonetheless, the Institutional-based CPI score for REA is comparable to future CPI scores as well as other Institutional-Based CPI scores for public and private sector entities. In terms of corruption types, the highest perceptions of corruption were concerning bribery (88/100), Extortion (89/100) and Fraud (89/100), while the REA departments with the highest risk of corruption were the Procurement Unit (82/100) and the Engineering Services Department (86/100).

It was also notable that the departments with the highest corruption risks were those with the most frequent interactions with external stakeholders, such as contractors and suppliers, suggesting that corruption tends to increase with the frequency of interactions. In light of these findings, REA should establish a corruption risk register for the Procurement Unit and the Engineering Services department, based on the risks identified

in this study. The Authority should also enhance capacity-building training programmes targeting staff and incorporate corruption-related elements into the training manuals, along with good practices identified in this study. Furthermore, given the technical nature of engineering, the staff from the Audit and Risk Unit should undergo technical trainings in engineering-based project management in order to better anticipate and identify corruption risks.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Defining Corruption

Transparency International defines Corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development, and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis.¹ Corruption can take several forms, including bribery, embezzlement, fraud, extortion and nepotism. Furthermore, although these types of corruption overlap and are sometimes interchangeable, each has unique characteristics that distinguish it as a separate concept.

Bribery, for example, is the payment, in money or kind, that is given or taken in a corrupt relationship.² According to the Anti-Corruption Act No. 3 of 2012,³ Corruption is the "soliciting, accepting, obtaining, giving, promising or offering of a gratification by way of a bribe or other personal temptation or inducement, or the misuse or abuse of a public office for advantage or benefit for oneself or another person. It is therefore notable that the Act largely defines Bribery, as it is the most common form of corruption."⁴ Embezzlement, on the other hand, is a special type of theft, which is the misappropriation of funds by someone whose duty it is to safeguard them,⁵ while Fraud is a deliberate act, or failure to act, to obtain an unauthorised benefit, either for oneself or for an institution.

It is essential to note that Fraud is also characterised by the use of deception, false suggestions, suppression of the truth, or other unethical means, thereby depriving another person or institution of a legitimate benefit or entitlement.⁶ Extortion, however, is the "act of utilising, either directly or indirectly, one's access to a position of power or knowledge to demand unmerited cooperation or compensation as a result of coercive threats."⁷ Extortion is therefore similar to fraud, except that it is characterised by coercion, and it is similar to Bribery, except that the perpetrator is the person in a position of power and not the one seeking a favour.

Nepotism is another form of corruption, based on acquaintances and familiar relationships, whereby someone in an official position exploits their power and authority to provide a job or any other favour to a family member or friend, even though they may not be qualified or deserving.⁸ It is similar to Clientelism and Patronage, with the former relating to the exercise of such favouritism towards special voters, political supporters and the abuse of public resources and institutions as compensation for political support.⁹ Transparency International defines Patronage as a form of favouritism in which public officials select a person, regardless of qualifications or entitlement, for a job or government benefit because of affiliations or connections.¹⁰

1.2 Direct and Indirect Measures of Corruption

There are two approaches or methods to measuring corruption, and each has its own merits and drawbacks. Due to the complexities in measuring Corruption, each method detects certain aspects while conceptually ignoring other aspects of corruption.¹¹ The Manual on Corruption Surveys¹² provides in-depth details on these different approaches to measuring corruption, as it offers guidance on monitoring progress toward achieving Target 16.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹³ The Manual stresses that experience-based and contextualised country-based measurement methods are far more precise than indirect or composite methods, or those that attempt to produce international rankings. The Manual classifies the various approaches to corruption measurement into direct and indirect methods.¹²

Direct methods of measuring corruption aim at collecting evidence-based information on corruption through statistical and standardised procedures. They measure actual experiences of corruption, rather than perceptions of corruption and can include official data, such as reported cases of corruption, conviction figures, and electoral scrutiny findings. These are experience-based surveys that collect data on the experience of representative samples of a given population.¹² A good example of a direct method-based measure of corruption in the Zambian case is the Zambia Bribe Payers Index (ZBPI) Survey. The ZBPI Survey is jointly conducted by Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), on a biennial basis in selected districts across the country. It is a corruption household experience-based sample survey, which measures the likelihood of an individual having a bribery experience when seeking a public service or good in a public or private sector institution. The survey also measures the amount involved in the exchange, the consequences of failing or refusing to pay a bribe, and factors that lead to paying a bribe.¹⁴

On the other hand, indirect methods of measuring corruption are based on perceived levels of corruption and therefore do not gauge the actual occurrence of corruption. They are preferred when the actual occurrences of corruption are difficult to measure since they are based on much easier-to-measure “expert assessments.” Under these indirect methods, researchers ask selected experts to assess corruption trends and patterns in a given country or group of countries or institutions. The results are sometimes presented as composite measurements or “surveys of surveys,” combining various statistical data into a single indicator.¹² Some good examples of indirect measures of corruption, which include results on Zambia, are the Afrobarometer Survey and the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The CPI ranks 180 countries and territories around the world by their perceived levels of public sector corruption,¹⁵ while the Afrobarometer

is an African-led, non-partisan survey research project that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.¹⁶

Established by an Act of Parliament No. 5 of 2023, the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) is a special-purpose vehicle that seeks to spearhead the rural electrification programme in a transparent, accountable, and equitable manner. REA has been using an inward-looking tool to assess internal processes and practices within the institution and to assess the level of corruption vulnerability. As such, this Monitoring and Evaluation Assessment (MEA) tool did not provide an external view of perceptions of stakeholders who interact with REA activities. To address the gap, REA contracted TI-Z to develop an institutional-based CPI measure as a tool to assess external perceptions of corruption in its operations.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study sought to improve the evidence base for anti-corruption interventions at the Rural Electrification Authority, as a way of assessing progress in the fight against corruption and other related vices. The Institutional-based CPI assessment sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the level of corruption within REA by collecting Corruption Perceptions from relevant external stakeholders of the Rural Electrification Programme.
2. To generate Recommendations aimed at mitigating corruption risks and vulnerabilities across various operational areas.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Customising the CPI Methodology

Transparency International (TI) established the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) in 1995 as a composite indicator used to measure perceptions of corruption in the public sector in different countries around the world. During the past 20 years, both the sources used to compile the index and the methodology have been adjusted and refined. In 2012, researchers from Transparency International made some important changes to the methodology to allow for score comparison across time, which was not possible prior to 2012. The methodology follows four basic steps. These include the selection of source data, rescaling of source data, the aggregating of rescaled data and, finally, the reporting of a measure for uncertainty. The calculations also incorporate a strict quality control mechanism, which consists of parallel independent calculations conducted by two in-house researchers and two academic advisors with no affiliation to Transparency International.¹⁷

This study has customised the CPI methodology in measuring the perceptions of corruption within the Rural Electrification Authority (REA). **Table 1** presents how the approach has customised the CPI methodology in developing an Institutional-Based (IB) Aggregate Measure of Corruption for REA.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Institutional-Based CPI Methodology and CPI Methodology

Methodology Aspect	CPI Methodology	Institutional-Based CPI Methodology
Respondents	The CPI captures the assessment of experts, business people, or executives.	The IB-CPI captures the assessment of external stakeholders, including suppliers and contractors, and funders of REA projects.
Types of Corruption	The CPI measures various types of corrupt behaviour in the public sector, including Bribery, diversion of public funds, use of public office for private gain, nepotism in the civil service, and state capture, among others.	The IB-CPI measures various types of corrupt behaviour within the Rural Electrification Authority, including bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, and nepotism, and focuses on eight operational areas (units and departments).

Aggregation Approach	The CPI is an aggregate measure of corruption drawn from 13 independent measures or data sources. Each score is standardised to a scale of 0 to 100, and then a weighted average is generated.	The IB-CPI is an aggregate measure of corruption drawn from 5 types of corruption across eight operational areas within the Rural Electrification Authority. The scores are also standardised to a scale of 0 to 100, and then a weighted average is generated as the overall CPI score.
Interpretation of Score	A CPI score of 0 implies that the country is highly corrupt, and a score of 100 means the country is very clean.	The IB-CPI score of 0 means that REA is highly corrupt, and a score of 100 means that REA is very clean.

3.2 Research Design

The assessment employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, which included the collection of quantitative data through a Corruption Perception Survey, preceded by the collection of qualitative data through key informant interviews, and desk-based research. This methodology allowed for deeper explanation, identification of corruption risks and good practices, to complement the quantitative survey results.

3.3 Desk-Based Research and Key Informant Interviews

This aspect of the methodology included a detailed review of the operations of the Rural Electrification Authority to identify corruption vulnerabilities and actions taken to address the vice. Further, the researchers also conduct Key Informant Interviews targeting various staff members from the Procurement, Finance, Strategy and Planning, Legal, Human Resource and Administration, Engineering Services, Audit and Risk, and the Corporate Affairs Departments. The semi-structured interview guide, used for this purpose, was generated following the desk-based research and pre-tested to ensure reliability. The interview transcripts were peer-reviewed to eliminate analysis bias, and findings were derived using thematic analysis.

3.4 Corruption Perception Survey

The survey targeted 40 suppliers and contractors working with the Rural Electrification Authority during the year 2024. The Corruption Perception Survey involved the administering of a structured questionnaire measuring five types of corruption, namely bribery, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, and nepotism, to the randomly selected respondents, selected from a stratified list based on their level of participation in the procurement process. The researchers used Statistical software and Microsoft Excel to generate scores, tables and graphs to aid the presentation of the findings. The Aggregate Measure of Corruption (AMC), which was termed the 2024 IB-CPI score for REA, is the weighted average of the scores across the eight (8) REA departments and across the five (5) corruption types.

3.5 In-depth Interviews with External Stakeholders

Following the desk-based research and KIIs with REA departments, the team of researchers conducted key informant interviews targeting external stakeholders, including development partners such as the World Bank, GIZ, African Development Bank and European Union. Others were government ministries such as the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; public entities such as the Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU), ZESCO, Energy Regulation Board and the Zambia Statistics Agency. Finally, the researchers also targeted academic institutions such as the University of Zambia and the Copperbelt University, and implementing partners such as selected local authorities.

4. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

4.1 Sample Characteristics

The Corruption Perceptions Survey sampled 39 Suppliers and Contractors, characterised as local businesses with an average of 11.8 years of operation. Further, the sampled businesses were suppliers or contractors to REA for an average period of 4.68 years. **Figure 1** presents the characteristics of the suppliers with respect to their participation and winning of tenders from REA in 2024.

Figure 1: Characteristics of Sampled Suppliers and Contractors, 2024

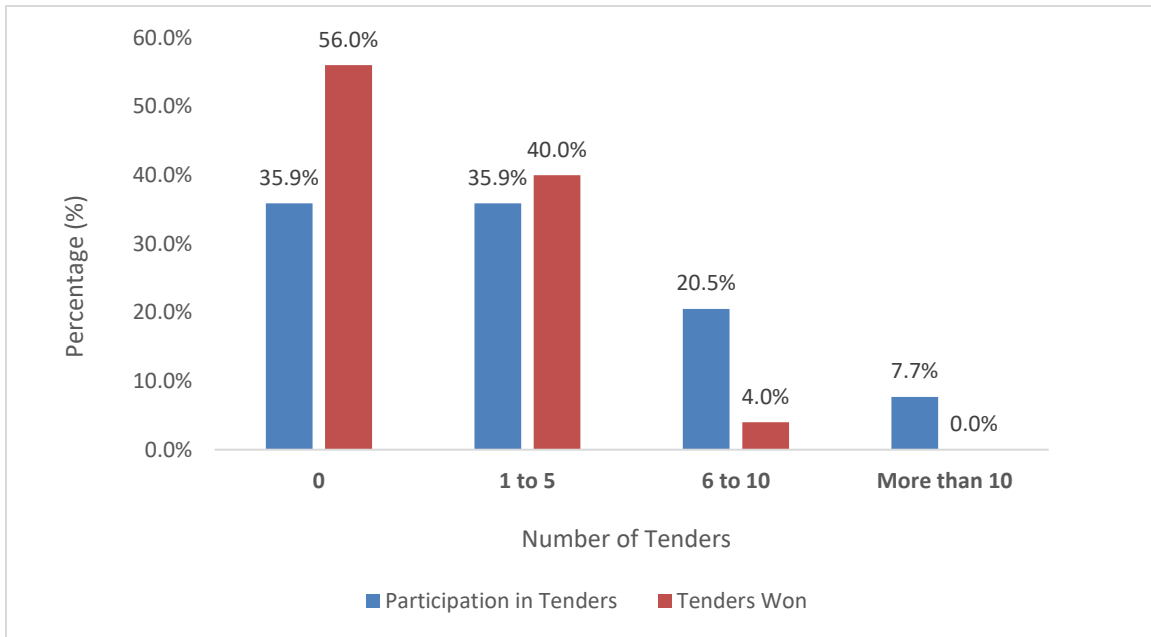


Figure 1 indicates that out of the 39 contractors sampled, 35.9% did not participate in any tenders in 2024, while another 35.9% participated in 1 to 5 tenders, 20.5% participated in 6 to 10 tenders, and the remaining 7.7% participated in more than 10 tenders. In terms of success rate, out of the 25 contractors that participated in tenders, 56% did not win any tenders, while 40% won 1 to 5 tenders, and another 4% won 6 to 10 tenders. No contractor or supplier in the sample won more than 10 tenders.

4.2 The 2024 Rural Electrification Authority Overall CPI Score

The overall CPI score for the Rural Electrification Authority in 2024 was 90/100, with 0 representing the highest perceptions of institutional corruption and 100 representing the lowest perceptions of corruption in the institution. It is notable from the findings that the institutional-based CPI is not directly comparable to the country CPI score for Zambia, which was 39/100 in 2024,¹⁸ as the underlying data sources or corruption types are different. The CPI score for REA is, however, comparable to future REA CPI scores as well as institutional-based CPI scores of other public and private sector entities generated using the methodology used in this study. **Figure 2** presents the distribution of the REA CPI score by the five corruption types, and **Table 2** presents the corresponding summary of the scores.

Figure 2: Distribution of REA CPI Score by Corruption Type

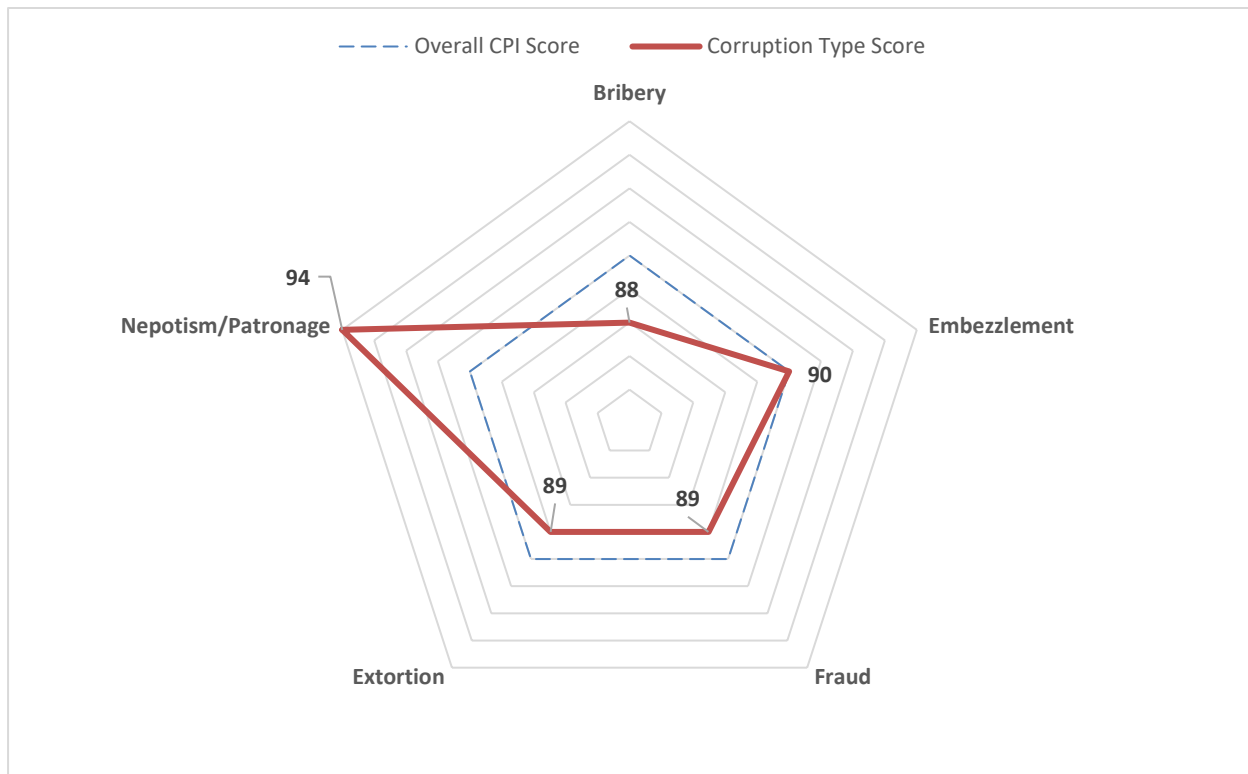


Table 2: Summary of REA CPI Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	88*
Embezzlement	90
Fraud	89*
Extortion	89*
Nepotism/Patronage	94
Overall CPI Score (2024)	90

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 2 indicates that the highest perception of corruption was with respect to Bribery (88/100), followed by Fraud (89/100) and Extortion (89/100). Embezzlement (90/100) and Nepotism and Patronage (94/100)

had the lowest levels of corruption perceptions. **Figure 2** also indicates that only Nepotism and Patronage were greater than 90/100, while Embezzlement was equal to 90/100.

4.3 The Rural Electrification Authority Overall CPI Score by Departments

The departments with the highest perceptions of corruption were Procurement (82/100) and Engineering Services (86/100). **Figure 3** presents the distribution of corruption perceptions by REA departments, while **Table 3** presents the corresponding summary of the department scores.

Figure 3: Distribution of REA CPI Score by Department

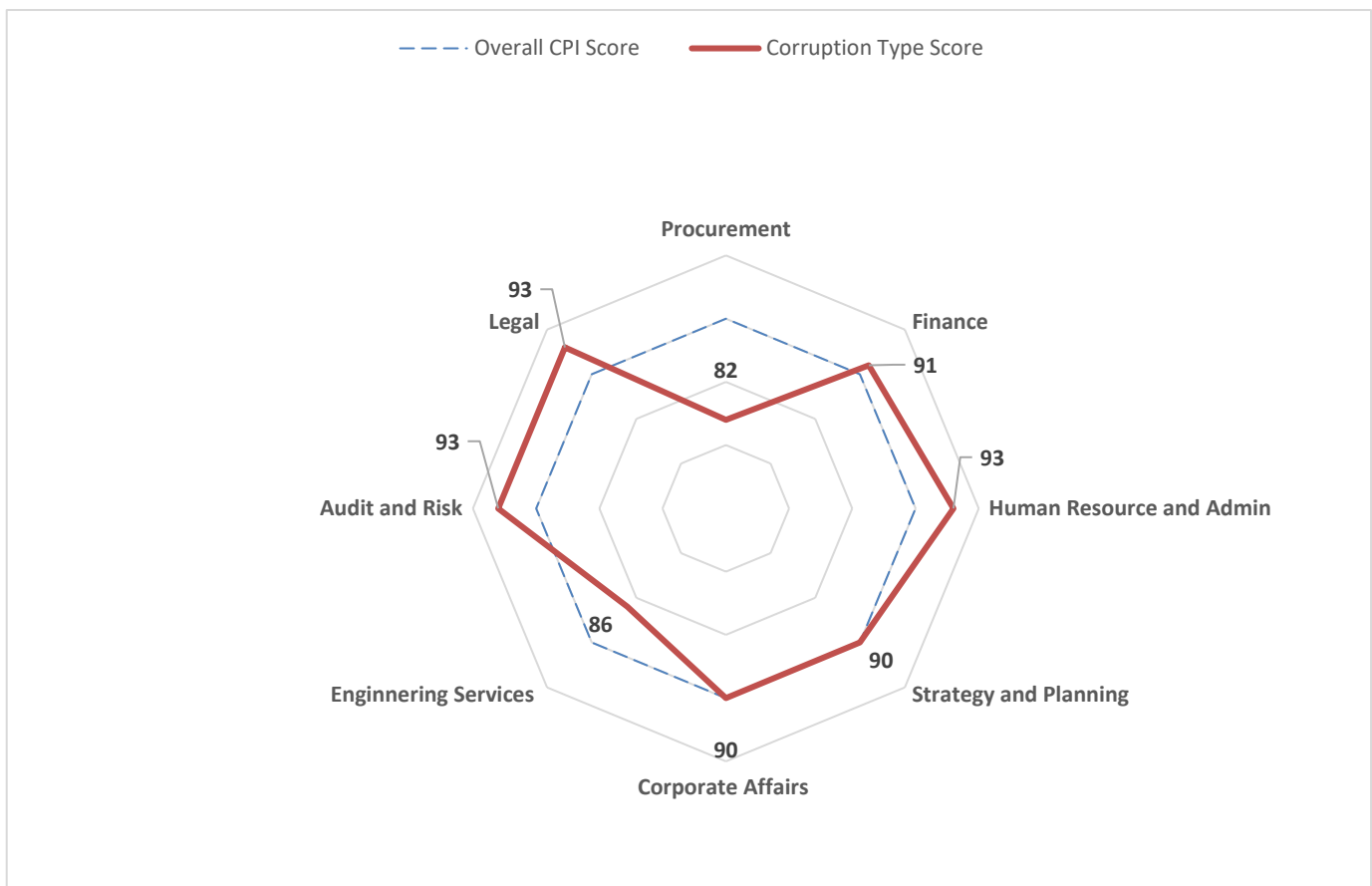


Table 3: Summary of REA CPI Score by Department

REA Department	Score out of 100
Procurement	82*
Finance	91
Human Resource and Administration	93
Strategy and Planning	90
Corporate Affairs	90
Engineering Services	86*
Audit and Risk	93
Legal	93
Overall CPI Score (2024)	90

*means the department/unit score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Figure 3 indicates that the Procurement and Engineering Services departments were the only two departments with scores below 90/100 and thus had the highest perceptions of corruption among the departments. In contrast, all the other departments had CPI scores either equal or above the overall CPI score for the institution.

4.4 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Procurement Unit

The Procurement Unit is responsible for procuring goods and services in accordance with the Public Procurement Legislative Framework, contributing to the overall mandate of REA. In terms of administrative structure, the Procurement Manager serves as the head of the Unit, reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and acts as secretary of the Procurement Committee. The Procurement Committee comprises the CEO, the Director of Finance, other selected department heads, external members, and the Procurement Manager. The Director of Finance is also part of the Procurement Committee to confirm availability of funds before making commitments, and the Committee has the authority to award all contracts, even though those exceeding K1million require approval from the Attorney General.

The workflow for the Unit begins with the user departments, such as the Engineering Services Department, which raises requests for approval by the CEO before submitting them to the Unit for bid flotation. Thereafter, the Procurement Unit facilitates the constitution of an Evaluation Committee through the office

of the CEO, comprised of various technical staff from the departments, to assess the bids and make recommendations. The Unit then presents the recommendations to the Procurement Committee for consideration and decision. Consequently, the Unit interacts with external stakeholders, including contractors and suppliers, as well as other departments requesting goods and services, and management during the decision-making process.

The Procurement Unit had a 2024 CPI score of 82/100 and thus had the highest perception of corruption among all the REA departments. **Table 4** provides a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 4: Summary of Procurement Unit Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	78*
Embezzlement	81*
Fraud	82*
Extortion	80*
Nepotism/Patronage	92
Overall Unit CPI Score (2024)	82

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 4 indicates that only Nepotism and Patronage had scores greater than 90/100, and that within the procurement unit the risk of bribery was the highest (78/100), followed by Extortion (80/100), Embezzlement (81/100) and Fraud (82/100).

4.5 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Engineering Services Department

The Engineering Services Department is responsible for the development, planning and implementation of all rural electrification projects. This includes the provision of core services, such as site identification, technology identification, and project costing, among others. In collaboration with the Procurement Unit, the Department also develops technical specifications and participates in Evaluation Committees. During the project implementation, the Department is responsible for inspecting projects, certifying works done, and recommending payments. In terms of organisational structure, a director, supported by six managers, heads the Department. The six managers comprise four regional managers, one manager responsible for

Off-grid Projects and another manager responsible for Grid Development. Furthermore, senior engineers and engineers divided into two operational units: planning and implementation, to support each of the six managers.

The workflow of the Engineering Department begins with site identification, as guided by the Strategy and Planning Department, which is the REA department responsible for long-term and medium-term planning, as outlined in the Rural Electrification Master Plan (REMP).¹⁹ The Engineering Services Department had a 2024 CPI score of 86/100 and thus had the second-highest perception of corruption among all the REA departments. **Table 5** presents a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 5: Summary of Engineering Services Department Scores by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	82*
Embezzlement	86*
Fraud	86*
Extortion	85*
Nepotism/Patronage	92
Overall Department CPI Score (2024)	86

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 5 indicates that only Nepotism and Patronage had scores greater than 90/100, and that the risk of bribery was the highest (82/100), followed by Extortion (85/100), Embezzlement (86/100) and Fraud (86/100).

4.6 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Corporate Affairs Unit

The Corporate Affairs Unit comprises three sections: a Public Relations (PR) section responsible for managing the Authority's image, communication, stakeholder engagement, media relations, and brand visibility, to promote public awareness. The second section is Community Development, which is responsible for stakeholder management and brings together project stakeholders to ensure project sustainability, ownership and security. The third section is the Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which handles ICT-related issues, including computers, websites, and all other external and internal systems. The

ICT Unit is thus responsible for the ICT infrastructure, encompassing both hardware and software, as well as security.

As a cross-cutting unit, Corporate Affairs works closely with other departments, such as the Engineering Services Department, in mobilising and sensitising stakeholders before and during project development. The department also manages REA’s relationships with key external stakeholders, including provincial administrations, district administrations, traditional leadership, and local authorities, among others. Furthermore, once REA is ready to commission electrification projects, the PR Unit informs the nation about project milestones and their impact, including the cost and the number of beneficiaries.

The Corporate Affairs Department achieved a 2024 CPI score of 90/100, which was equal to the overall CPI score for REA. **Table 6** presents a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 6: Summary of Corporate Affairs Unit Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	90
Embezzlement	88*
Fraud	89*
Extortion	90
Nepotism/Patronage	92
Overall Department CPI Score (2024)	90

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 6 indicates that Nepotism and Patronage had scores greater than 90/100, while Bribery and Extortion were both equal to 90/100. Further, the analysis indicates that the risk of Embezzlement was the highest (88/100) and followed by Fraud (89/100).

4.7 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Strategy and Planning Department

The Strategy and Planning Department is responsible for providing specific support services during the implementation of REA projects. These services include, among others, long-term planning as guided by the Rural Electrification Master Plan;¹⁹ conducting pre-feasibility studies; undertaking Environmental and Social

Impact Assessments (ESIAs), securing project environmental and social clearance from the Zambia Environmental Management Authority (ZEMA); and monitoring and evaluation of projects. The Department has several sections, which conduct economic analysis, environmental management, project planning, resource mobilisation, strategic partnerships building, and monitoring and evaluation.

The department works closely with the Engineering Services Department. This collaboration includes, among others, undertaking joint field visits to conduct Environmental and Social Impact Assessments and detailed line route surveys, as well as monitoring contractors to ensure compliance and effective project implementation. In its compliance-monitoring role, the department interacts directly with contractors to prevent or mitigate adverse environmental and social impacts on the community, such as labour-related grievances and noise pollution. The Environmental Management Unit supports this goal by promoting adherence to the ZEMA conditions outlined in the Decision Letters and ensuring the effective implementation of the contractors' environmental and social management plans. The Strategy and Planning Department achieved a 2024 CPI score of 90/100, which was equal to the overall CPI score for REA. **Table 7** presents a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 7: Summary of Strategy and Planning Department Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	88*
Embezzlement	89*
Fraud	89*
Extortion	89*
Nepotism/Patronage	95
Overall Department CPI Score (2024)	90

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 7 indicates that Nepotism and Patronage had scores greater than 90/100, while all other types of corruption has scores greater than 90/100. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the risk of Bribery was the highest (88/100), followed by Embezzlement, Fraud, and Extortion, all of which had scores of 89/100.

4.8 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Finance Department

The Finance Department is responsible for spearheading the finance function, including budget management and the generation of financial reports. It also ensures that there is adequate financing for all REA projects and adherence to financial regulations in the utilisation of these resources. The Zambian Government funds REA through the national budget, in accordance with the REA Act²⁰ and disburses funds every quarter through the Rural Electrification Fund. REA therefore develops its annual budgets and submits them to the Board of Directors for approval.

In terms of operation, the department collaborates closely with the Engineering Services Department to process payments. When contractors follow up on payments, the Finance Department provides an update. In facilitating field visits, staff from the Finance Department accompany a team of engineers and ministry officials to the project sites. The Finance Department achieved a 2024 CPI score of 91/100, indicating a CPI score higher than the overall CPI score for REA, which implies a lower corruption risk compared to the institutional average risk. **Table 8** provides a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 8: Summary of Finance Department Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	93
Embezzlement	91
Fraud	91
Extortion	88*
Nepotism/Patronage	93
Overall Department CPI Score (2024)	91

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 8 indicates that only Extortion has a score less than 90/100, while the other types of corruption, including Bribery, Embezzlement, Fraud and Nepotism/Patronage, all had scores greater than 90/100. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that the risk of Extortion was the highest (88/100), followed by Embezzlement (91/100) and Fraud (91/100).

4.9 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the Legal Services Unit

The Legal Services Unit has limited interaction with external stakeholders, including contractors and suppliers, as it is responsible for drafting contracts, reviewing internal policies and guidelines from other departments, and developing REA’s legal processes. The Unit collaborates with the Procurement Unit and the Engineering Services Department in drafting and reviewing contracts, as well as obtaining approval from the Attorney-General, for contracts exceeding K1 million. The Unit also provides legal analysis and guidance on laws and policies, and corresponds with law enforcement agencies in the event of investigations.

The Legal Services Unit achieved a 2024 CPI score of 93/100, indicating a CPI score higher than the overall CPI score for REA, which implies a lower corruption risk compared to the institutional average risk.

Table 9: Summary of Legal Services Unit Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	93
Embezzlement	93
Fraud	92
Extortion	93
Nepotism/Patronage	96
Overall Department CPI Score (2024)	93

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 9 indicates that all the corruption types, including Bribery, Embezzlement, Fraud, Extortion, and Nepotism or Patronage, had scores greater than 90/100. Further, the analysis reveals that the risk of Fraud (92/100) was the highest in the department, followed by Bribery, Embezzlement and Extortion, which were all at 93/100. At the same time, Nepotism/Patronage had the least corruption perceptions at 96/100.

4.10 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in the HR and Administration Department

The REA Human Resource and Administration Department is responsible for recruiting qualified staff within the institutional structure of REA, monitoring employee workload to prevent burnout, and ensuring that employees receive the appropriate compensation, including salaries and incentives. The department also conducts training, manages performance, and handles logistics, including transportation. In performing these functions, the HR and Admin Department collaborates with other departments to meet the staff and skills demand, improve the work environment and attend to the transport needs of the departments, including the transportation of essential materials by the Engineering Services Department.

The HR and Administration Department interacts directly with external stakeholders, such as members of the public during the recruitment process, and contractors and suppliers during the transportation of materials to and from project sites. In terms of recruitments, the Department advertises all vacant positions and recruits staff based on strictly followed job descriptions and prerequisites for positions. The HR and Administration Department had a 2024 CPI score of 93/100 and thus had a CPI score greater than the overall CPI score for REA, implying less corruption risk as compared to the institutional average risk. **Table 10** presents a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 10: Summary of HR and Administration Department Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	95
Embezzlement	95
Fraud	92
Extortion	93
Nepotism/Patronage	91
Overall Unit CPI Score (2024)	93

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Table 10 indicates that all the corruption types, including Bribery, Embezzlement, Fraud, Extortion, and Nepotism or Patronage, had scores greater than 90/100. Further, the analysis indicates that the risk of Nepotism/Patronage (91/100) was the highest, followed by Fraud (92/100) and Extortion (93/100), while Bribery and Embezzlement had the least corruption perceptions at 95/100.

4.11 Corruption Perceptions and Risks in Audit and Risk Unit

The Audit and Risk Unit is responsible for ensuring that internal controls are working effectively, as mandated by the REA Board, through the Audit Committee. The Unit therefore provides periodic reports on the status of internal controls, in order to safeguard REA’s assets. These reports detail findings from compliance, systems and performance audits; and outline the threats that may affect the institution as well as mitigation measures. The unit interacts with every department on a monthly basis in conducting audits, and conducts quarterly reviews and monitoring visits of projects in rural areas. During these quarterly reviews and monitoring visits, the Unit interacts with contractors and their staff, as well as REA staff in the different regions.

The Audit and Risk Unit had a 2024 CPI score of 93/100 and thus had a CPI score greater than the overall CPI score for REA, implying less corruption risk as compared to the institutional average risk. **Table 11** presents a summary of these CPI scores.

Table 11: Summary of Audit and Risk Unit Score by Corruption Type

Corruption Type	Score out of 100
Bribery	-
Embezzlement	93
Fraud	90
Extortion	91
Nepotism/Patronage	97
Overall Unit CPI Score (2024)	93

*means the corruption type score is less than the overall Institutional CPI of 90/100. The risk or perception of corruption is highest when the score is 0 and lowest when the score is 100.

Figure 11 indicates that Embezzlement, Extortion, and Nepotism/Patronage has scores greater than 90/100, while Fraud has a score equal to 90/100. Further, the analysis indicates that the risk of Fraud (90/100) was the highest, followed by Extortion (91/100) and Embezzlement (93/100), while Nepotism and Patronage had the least corruption perceptions at 97/100. Unfortunately, there was no score for Bribery in the Unit, as none of the respondents scored the Unit concerning perceptions of Bribery.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall CPI score for the Rural Electrification Authority (REA) in 2024 was 90/100, with 0 representing the highest perceptions of institutional corruption and 100 representing the lowest. The CPI score of 90/100, therefore, suggests that the Authority has put in place considerable measures to mitigate the risks of corruption. However, it is important to note that the institutional-based CPI score is not directly comparable to the country CPI score for Zambia, which was 39/100 in 2024, as the underlying data sources or corruption types are different. Nonetheless, the Institutional-based CPI score for REA is comparable to future CPI scores as well as other Institutional-Based CPI scores of other public and private sector entities.

In terms of corruption types, the highest perceptions of corruption were with respect to bribery (88/100), Extortion (89/100) and Fraud (89/100). The REA functions with the highest risk of corruption were the Procurement Unit (82/100) and the Engineering Services Department (86/100). It is also notable that the departments with the highest corruption risks were those with the highest interaction with external stakeholders such as contractors and suppliers, suggesting that corruption tends to increase with the frequency of interactions.

In light of these findings, Transparency International Zambia makes the following recommendations:

1. REA should develop a corruption risk register for the Procurement Unit and the Engineering Services department, drawing on the risks identified in this study. The Authority should then develop activities to mitigate the identified risks and review progress on a quarterly basis.
2. REA should upscale capacity building trainings targeting staff and integrate corruption elements into the training manuals as well as the good practices identified in this study. This will ensure that corruption is better understood and facilitate for the development of more effective anti-corruption programs
3. REA should upscale the use of the Electronic Government Procurement (EGP) system. In addition, REA should guide the members of the Evaluation Committees on how to effectively declare interest on the EGP system, after downloading tender opening reports
4. Given the technical nature of engineering, the staff from the Audit and Risk Unit should undergo technical trainings in engineering-based project management in order to better anticipate and identify corruption risks

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