



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT



Senga Hill Town Council Citizen Engagement Strategy

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

Zambia Devolution support program

2025

Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Background	3
1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Senga Hill Town Council	3
2. Vision, Aim and Objectives	5
3. Approaches and Methods of Engagement	5
4. Implementation Plan	6
5. Communication Plan	8
6. Budget (for the Implementation of the CE Process)	11
7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	12
8. Conclusion	12

1. Introduction

Senga Hill District was established on 3rd June 2016 under statutory instrument No. 39 of 2016. The Administrative Centre is located approximately 5Km from Mambwe Mission. Before its establishment the district was under Mbala District.

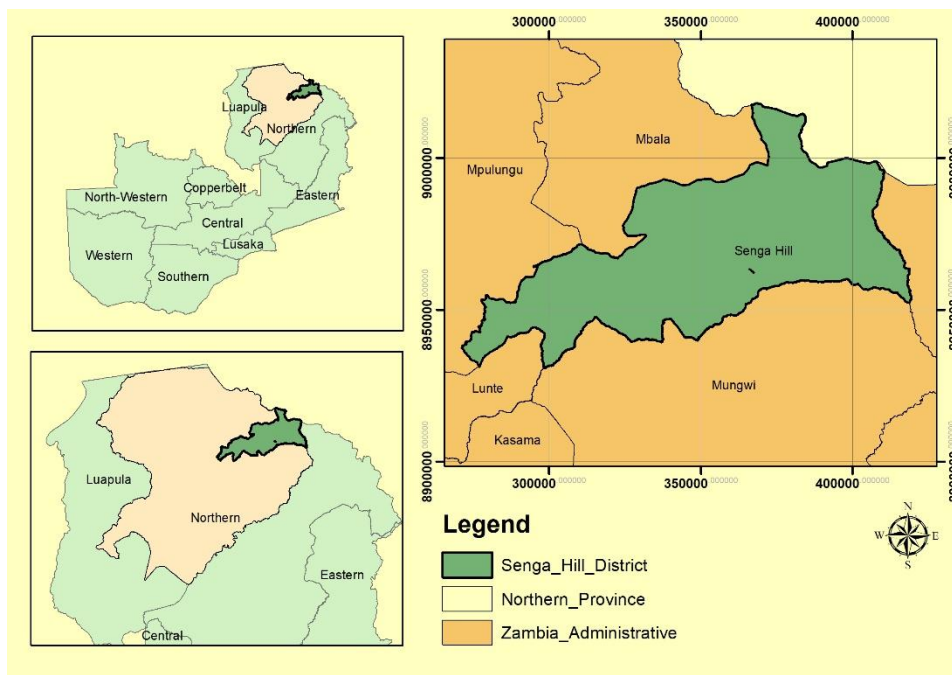
Senga Hill is located between 30° 53' – 32° 15' East of the prime meridian and the latitude of between 8° 23' – 9° 39' South of the equator. The total land area of the District stands at 5,338.35 Square Kilometers (533,834.71 ha). The District Administrative Centre is 1067Km from Lusaka the capital city of Zambia and 201 Km from Kasama the provincial capital of Northern Province.

Senga Hill district shares boundaries with Mbala in the North, Nakonde in the East, Mungwi to the South, Kasama in the South, Lunte in the Southwest and Mpulungu in the Northwest and shares International boundary with the Republic of Tanzania in the north east of the district.

Senga Hill District has one constituency namely Senga Hill, Ten (10) wards and three (3) Chiefs.

The area is mostly covered by the Southern tropics sphere with an average height of 1500m above sea level. The plateau climate is almost Mediterranean in nature. The area receives an annual rainfall of approximately 1,240mm. The rain season normally lasts from November-April. The district has huge tracks of undeveloped land with potential for farm block development.

According to 2022 census of population and housing, Senga district has a population of 126,308.



1.1 Background

Sound democratic governance hinges on robust citizen engagement, especially in local-level budgeting. By actively involving citizens in decision-making, local authorities can ensure that public resources are allocated equitably and in alignment with community priorities. Senga Hill Town Council is poised to transform the budgeting process into a collaborative effort, underscoring accountability and transparency.

Adhering to legal mandates outlined and enshrined in the Local Government Act and the National Budgeting and Financial Management Act, Senga Hill Town Council has established this Citizen Engagement Strategy. This line of thought is designed to empower citizens by enabling their unwavering participation in budgetary decisions while fostering a culture of accountability and responsiveness from local government.

This document details a strategic plan aimed at amplifying citizen engagement, improving decision-making, and building trust between the Local Authority and the public. By prioritizing citizen involvement in the budgeting and project identification process, Senga Hill Town Council strives to cultivate an inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance framework that truly reflects the interests of its community member

1.2 Current C.E. Efforts by Senga Hill Town Council

Senga Hill Town Council has made excellent strides in including citizen engagement (CE) into its budgeting and project cycle processes. Some notable efforts include:

Public Consultations: The council has radio programmes and forums where citizens can voice their opinions on budget priorities and proposed projects.

Feedback Mechanisms: A fully functional platform for citizens to provide feedback on past budget implementations and suggest improvements has been established.

Collaboration with Community Leaders: Engaging traditional and community leaders has been instrumental in reaching a broader audience and gaining insights into the specific needs of various demographics, including marginalized groups.

Advantages/Benefits of Current Citizen Engagement Efforts

Enhanced Inclusivity: The council's efforts to involve multi and diverse stakeholders, including women, people living with disabilities, and youth, have led to more robust and strengthened feedback and innovative ideas for local development.

Increased Transparency: Wide ranging discussions and availability of information

regarding budget allocations have improved trust in government actions, reducing instances of misinterpretation or misinformation among citizens.

Empowered Community Participation: Citizens feeling empowered to participate actively in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership over local projects and initiatives.

Disadvantages/Gaps in Current Citizen Engagement Efforts

Limited Outreach: Despite efforts, some community members remain unaware of engagement opportunities. This indicates a gap in proactive outreach strategies.

Underrepresentation of Vulnerable Groups: While there have been attempts to involve marginalized communities, challenges still persist in ensuring effective participation from all sections of society.

Feedback Implementation: There have been instances where citizen feedback has not been adequately integrated into final decisions, leading to disillusionment among participants.

Contribution of the Citizen Engagement Strategy (CES)

The newly developed Citizen Engagement Strategy will build upon the existing efforts of the Senga Hill Town Council by:

Deliberately Expanding Target Groups: The CES will focus on reaching out to a wider audience, particularly vulnerable populations such as people living with disabilities, women, and marginalized youth, ensuring their voices are included in the budgeting process.

Improved Information Dissemination: By establishing more robust communication channels, the council will provide timely updates and information on budget developments, thereby keeping citizens well-informed.

Structured Feedback Mechanisms: The CES will emphasize integrating citizen input into decision-making processes, committing to transparency about how feedback has influenced budget allocations and project developments.

2. Vision, Aim and Objectives

Section Content Notes:

This section may be presented as the example given below:

2.1 Vision

Creating an inclusive, transparent and participatory environment that empowers citizens to contribute to development and decision-making processes of Senga Hill Town council 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 3rd year of the CES implementation period.

2.2. Aim

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

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 Senga Hill Town council team will use the below stated initiatives for inclusive engagement taking into consideration that citizens are drawn from varying contexts. Consideration will be taken about how citizens will engage with civic leaders as well, to ensure that the process is not one sided. The citizen engagement process is on-going, hence the Councils intention to use different avenues and mechanisms to communicate with various stakeholders. 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

[Comprehensive list of Stakeholders the council collaborates with]

1. Citizens – come to Council offices and get services offered to them
2. WDCs – voluntarily help in CDF related activities.
3. Government agencies at various levels
4. Community organisations
5. Traditional and community leaders
6. Businesses
7. Academic institutions
8. Media outlets

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 SEP giving proposed dates for consultation	All stakeholders	Quarterly
	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.	WDCs	Second quarter
	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	WDCs	Second quarter

	based on their priorities		
	iv. LAs produce a summarized stakeholder report from all Wards and submit report to MLGRD.	Senga Hill Town Council	Semi-annually
	v. Conduct budget hearings & Town Hall meetings.	WDCs, CWASs, Business Owners, NGOs, FBOs and other Government Institutions.	Third quarter
	vi. The Town Clerk/Council Secretary shall present the reports to the full council.	WDCs, CWASs, Business Owners, NGOs, FBOs and other Government Institutions.	Second quarter
	vii. Feedback meetings to WDCs on what projects and activities have been included in the budget	Senga Hill Town Council	Fourth quarter
	iii. Reports including minutes must be submitted to the PLGOs office for review and consolidation for onward submission to MLGRD.	Senga Hill Town Council	Fourth quarter
	ix. MLGRD will submit the consolidated reports to MoFNP.	MLGRD	Fourth quarter
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 and MoFNP	Fourth quarter
	ii. Feedback to WDCs and other stakeholders of the final approved budget	Senga Hill Town Council	Fourth quarter
Budget execution and monitoring (for transparency in budget implementation)	i. Track the effective utilisation of funds in line with planned activities.	Director Planning, Director Finance and Social Economic Planners	First quarter following year
	ii. Report back on a regular basis to WDCs on implementation of activities and projects	Social Economic Planner	First quarter following

			year
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.	Senga Hill Town Council	First quarter following year

5. Communication Plan

Section Content Comments:

- Describes information dissemination by the council to create awareness over the CES and its contents.
- It outlines details of different avenues to announce meeting details such as timing.
- Should also include Grievance Redress Mechanism component to capture feedback from citizens.

Table 2: Proposed Communication Plan Summary

DELIVERABLE/ ACTIVITY	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	FREQUENCY	PROPOSED TIMELINE/ DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMUNICATION METHOD	COMMENTS
Public Meeting	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	Twice a year	August	Public Relations Officer	Invitation Letters	
Budget Hearings	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	Once	September	Public Relations Officer, Director Finance, Director Planning	Meeting	
Surveys and Questionnaires	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	Once	September	Public Relations Officer, Social Economic Planner, IT	Interaction Link	
Social media	Whole	Yearly	August	Public	Facebook	

and Radio Programme	District			Relations Officer	Page, WhatsApp, Radio Station	
Citizen Budget Committees	WDCs, Business owners, NGOs, FBOs, other Government Institutions	Once	September	Social Economic Planner	Invitation Letter, Meeting	

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM (GRM)

1. Introduction

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for Senga Hill Town Council provides a comprehensive and clear path process for receiving, assessing and handling grievances from community members, stakeholders and CDF beneficiaries affected by council operations or development initiatives. The GRM ensures that concerns are addressed swiftly, fairly and in a culturally appropriate manner to enhance accountability, social togetherness and community trust.

2. Objectives

- To provide a smooth and accessible platform for airing out complaints.
- To ensure update and equitable resolution of grievances at the lowest level possible.
- To combat escalation of conflicts and promote inclusive engagement
- To amplify transparency and accountability in service delivery and development interventions.

3. Guiding Principles

- **Accessibility:** Open to all, with multiple channels for submitting grievances
- **Transparency:** Processes and timelines are communicated crystal clear
- **Fairness:** All grievances are treated unbiased and professionally
- **Confidentiality:** Identities and personal information are strictly protected
- **Timeliness:** Grievances are dealt with swiftly in line with set timelines
- **Feedback:** Complainants are informed of the outcomes as quickly as possible

4. Scope

This mechanism applies to:

- Complaints related to service delivery (e.g. infrastructure, waste management)
- Grievances related to community development projects (e.g CDF Projects)
- Labour-related complaints within council supported initiatives.
- Environment and social concerns from council regulated activities

5. GRM Structure and Channels

Level	Responsible Party	Description
Level 1: Community	Ward Development Committees (WDCs)	First point of contact; receive and attempt to resolve complaints locally
Level 2: Council	GRM Focal Point (e.g Social Economic Planner or Environmental Planner)	Reviews unresolved complaints from WDCs, logs into GRM register and probes.
Level 3: Management	Principle Officers Office	Final review and decision-making body for unresolved or escalated complaints.

6. Grievance Submission Channels

- Suggestion boxes at Civic Centre
- SMS Line or Whatsapp – on several platforms e.g stakeholders platform, head of departments
- In-person dialogue or written complaints submitted at Zone, Ward or Council Offices
- Community engagement meetings and feedback sessions

7. Grievance Handling Process

Step	Action	Responsible	Timeline
1	Complaint is received (verbal, written and digital)	WDCs/Focal Person	Immediately
2	Complaint is recorded in the Grievance register	Focal Person/ Admin Officer	Within 24 hours
3	Preliminary assessment and classification (minor, urgent and sensitive)	GRM Focal Person	Within 2 working days
4	Investigation and stakeholder consultation (if	GRM Focal Person	Within 5 working days

	needed)		
5	Feedback provided to complaint with decision and resolution action	GRM Focal Person	Within 7-10 days
6	Complainant accepts or rejects the resolution; escalated if unresolved	Complainant/Council	Within 2 days
7	Final decision by Principal Officers Office	Principal Officer	Within 5 working days
8	Complaint closed and feedback recorded in register	Focal Person	Continuous

8. Monitoring and Reporting

- A Grievance Register shall be maintained and updated regularly.
- Quarterly reports shall be prepared by the GRM focal person and submitted to management.
- Trends in grievances shall be analysed to inform service delivery improvements.

9. Awareness and Capacity Building

- The council shall:
- Raise awareness through community meetings, radio programs and noticeboards
- Train WDCs and Council staff in GRM procedures.
- Ensure materials are available in local languages (e. g., Mambwe)

10. Review and Update

This mechanism shall be reviewed annually or as needed to incorporate lessons learned and improve efficiency. Updates will be made with stakeholders input.

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

The implementation of the Citizen engagement process for Senga Hill District will be funded under the 2025 approved budget as well as with the support from the World bank

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring and evaluating the Citizen Engagement implementation will be very important. Senga Hill Town will therefore introduce the following mechanisms to evaluate the progress of the CE achievements; Participation Rates: Track participation rates in public meetings, budget hearings, and surveys. Citizen Feedback: Collect and analyse citizen feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of engagement strategies. Budget Outcomes: Monitor budget outcomes to ensure that citizen input is reflected in budget allocations. The Council is committed to give feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of the Community Engagement Strategy (CES) emphasizes the Council's utmost dedication to fostering citizen engagement within the framework of democratic governance. This initiative not only speaks to an appreciation for public participation but also targets to facilitate a smooth process that has often been non-functional, leading to discrepancies and irregularities in public spending. By formalizing citizen involvement, the CES paves an ironclad approach that enhances collaboration between government entities and the community, ultimately paving the way for people-centered development. Moreover, this strategy anchors a firm commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and accountability in the budgeting and project implementation processes. By ensuring that innumerable voices are factored in and valued, the council demonstrates its stance to create a governance model that truly represents the interests of all citizens. Transparency in decision-making will foster trust and encourage community members to engage wholeheartedly, while accountability mechanisms will ensure that resources are managed prudently and effectively. As we move forward with the CES, it is paramount to recognize that empowered citizens are key to the success of any democratic system. Through this strategy, the council is not only enhancing public service delivery but also cultivating a more informed and engaged populace, ready to contribute to the collective well-being of our community.

Socio-Economic Planner, Senga Hill Town Council

Approved by Council Resolution under Minute Number:

SHTC/OC/61/09/2025

