



# LESSONS ON FOREST AND WILDLIFE SECTOR INTEGRATION IN ZAMBIA

The ownership of natural resources in Zambia, including forest, wildlife, water, land, and minerals, has been vested to the state from the colonial era through the present. Over the years, there have been calls for transferring management and resource rights of natural resources to local communities. This type of devolution is expected to promote incentives for local conservation as well as reduce the management burden for the government. In the 1990s the National Parks and Wildlife Policy (1998) and the Forest Action Plan (1997) acknowledged a need for community participation in forest and wildlife management. These policy directives called for legislative reforms to forest, wildlife, land, water, and minerals-focused ministries and departments. However, despite substantial advances in the wildlife sector on community based natural resource management (CBNRM), until recently there has been limited progress across other resources. Even in cases where devolution has occurred, coordination in management across resources remains rare. Now as forest and fisheries devolution and community empowerment begin to take hold in Zambia, this lack of integration and coordination across sectors poses risks in terms of achieving both ecological and social goals. This paper documents the lessons learned from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Integrated Land and Resource Governance program (ILRG) efforts to strengthen integration and coordination of CBNRM implementation across wildlife and forest sectors in Zambia. It includes recommendations for the range of implicated stakeholders from government and traditional leaders to NGOs, civil society, cooperating partners (donors) and communities themselves. Movement towards community-based *integrated* natural resource management will require commitments related to political will, technical leadership, as well as financial resources spanning the coming decades.

## BACKGROUND

The government of Zambia first experimented with resource rights devolution with the Administrative Management Design (ADMADE) program in the 1980s. ADMADE attempted to empower communities

with decision-making, benefit-sharing, and conservation responsibilities in the Luangwa Valley, a site of international biodiversity importance. By the 1990s, the model was formalized with the Wildlife Policy of 1998, which recognized the CBNRM model. Subsequently, the Zambia Wildlife Act 12 of 1998 facilitated the formation of Community Resources Boards (CRB) with legal rights to resource management. Since then, 88 CRBs have been established, most of which fall within the 36 Game Management Areas (GMAs) that surround the country's 20 National Parks. These GMAs cover approximately 20 percent of Zambia's land area. Despite an overreliance on hunting to drive benefits, this legislative framework has been the centerpiece of Zambia's resource rights devolution progress to date. While the Wildlife Act references the role of the CRB beyond wildlife management, in practice the management of other resources including, forests, water, minerals and land fall outside of the mandate of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) (Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) – at the time), who oversee the CRBs. The DNPW has played a limited role in the management of these other resources beyond reviewing and signing off on economic activities that occur within the GMA. Following reform in the 1990s, ZAWA operated as a parastatal organization for over fifteen years, but ultimately it was dissolved and integrated into the Ministry of Tourism as the DNPW in 2015. The institutional and operational challenges facing ZAWA/DNPW, which include a lack of adequate funding and indebtedness, have also contributed to challenges facing the rights devolution model described below.

In parallel to wildlife sector reforms, the Forest Action Plan of 1997 recognized the need for community rights devolution in the forest sector. The subsequent Forest Policy of 1998 provided for a Joint Forest Management (JFM) model that allowed private entity participation in forest reserve management. However, the JFM was never implemented beyond a few pilot sites, and the concept of community engagement in forest management was not pursued. Almost 20 years later, recognizing rampant deforestation across Zambia, particularly in non-protected areas, the Forest Act of 2015 and subsequent Regulations of 2018 laid out a process for communities to establish community forest management groups (CFMG) and register for management of forest areas (CFMA) through the community forest management (CFM) model. Under the CFM strategy and since 2018, the Forestry Department (FD) has been devolving user rights and access in communal forest areas to stimulate local community involvement in forest management. CFM is now central to the Zambian government's strategy for managing forests outside of Forest Reserves. In the past five years, CFM has become a mechanism for creating emission reduction credits through reducing deforestation, resulting in millions of dollars from international carbon markets transferred to communities, particularly with the support of two organizations, BioCarbon Partners (BCP) and Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO). As a result, in just five years, over 200 CFMGs have been established and applied for rights covering over five million hectares of land (almost seven percent of Zambia's surface area). This proliferation highlights the demand for communities to assert control over resources, as well as the national and global rush to benefit from forest carbon financing. While communities certainly desire management rights, the extent of community forest management has been largely driven by speculation related to potential carbon benefits. As a result of a seeming rushed process, there are concerns over the efficacy of these diverse groups in achieving forest management objectives and the local and national capacity to support their operations.

CFMGs and CRBs operate almost entirely on customary land, which is administered by 288 formally recognized chiefs from across Zambia's ethnically diverse tribes. Customary land covers the majority of the country (technically 94 percent); however the state has management (and in some cases administrative) responsibilities over large areas (such as National Parks and Forest Reserves). Land under chieftdom direct administration is likely closer to 60 percent of the country. Each chieftdom has its own administrative structure, composed at the lowest level of village headpersons, whose roles are roughly defined in the 1972 Villages Act and include keeping a register of village residents and making recommendations on land allocation to the chief. All other administration at the chieftdom level, from the chief's advisors (often known as *indunas*) to operations of a chief's council and traditional courts are

governed by local customs. The chief is responsible for signing consent for the establishment of CFMGs and is the patron of the CRB. Any land allocation that occurs within the chiefdoms requires consent. The chief must also consent to the establishment of CFMGs within his/her chiefdom and has formal roles in negotiating concession agreements with hunting concessionaires. General management plans for GMAs under the Wildlife Act require the chief's signature to come into force. This places the chief and his/her customary structures at the heart of both formal and *de facto* resource governance, though CFMGs/CRBs have rights and responsibilities delegated to them.

As a result, Zambia now has 88 CRBs and over 200 CFMGs, each with management rights over complementary resources that sit (in many cases) on the same land or at least within the same chiefdom. Yet there are limited formal mechanisms for these groups to collaborate and coordinate, and indeed there are (community and government level) incentives for these groups and sectors to continue to operate in their own silos. The remainder of this brief describes the principal challenges in enhancing coordination between the forest and wildlife sectors through the lens of CRBs and CFMGs. This is followed by experiences from the USAID ILRG program to promote greater coordination and integration around CBNRM in these two sectors.<sup>1</sup> The brief concludes with bottlenecks and recommendations.

## ACHIEVING WILDLIFE AND FOREST BENEFITS THROUGH CRBS AND CFMGs

The following section describes the incentives both in legislation and practice that restrict coordinated responses through CRBs and CFMGs. They reflect tensions: 1) between state and customary institutions; 2) between communities and their customary leaders; 3) between departments within the state structure; 4) between national and local level institutions; and 5) among private sector, NGOs, the state and communities/customary institutions.

**CBNRM AND RIGHTS FRAMEWORK:** The wildlife and forest sector rights framework around CBNRM differs dramatically between the Wildlife and Forest Acts. While the Forest Act provides communities with full rights and responsibilities to manage forests on customary land and to effectively secure community tenure over the areas under community forest management, the Wildlife Act only creates a framework for sharing rights and responsibilities over the management of animals. The Wildlife Act creates a framework for communities to access benefits from wildlife management but places the responsibility for allocating those rights within the DNPW, as evidenced by the government's role in allocating hunting concessions, as well as issuing trophy quotas. Similarly, human-wildlife conflict, or tensions between the community and hunting concessionaires, are usually addressed by the DNPW. In contrast under CFM, communities can apply for full forest management rights and can then allocate rights to harvest through local permits and fines (without the involvement of the FD). In these cases, the Forestry Department largely stays out of the way of the community and its interactions with the private sector or NGOs. The rights framework under CFM does differentiate between minor forest products, which are automatically devolved to communities, and major forest products, which require specific devolution to communities, though this appears to be usually provided. Importantly, the CFMG framework is Zambia's strongest mechanism for recognizing and registering community rights to land, as it provides communities with management, use and exclusion rights. In contrast, CRBs are tasked with

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<sup>1</sup> This brief only considers the challenges of integration related to forest and wildlife sectors and their legal frameworks. Fisheries are an equally important sector for resource management coordination, which deserves consideration. The mineral sector, both small-scale artisanal and industrial, also has lessons to share, however these were outside of the USAID ILRG program experiences and therefore are not considered in this brief. Many of the challenges and lessons however are likely transferable.

enforcing rights allocated by the government. In community dialogue, community forests are commonly considered to “belong” to the community, while GMAs are often perceived as belonging to the DNPW. The narrative within communities around wildlife is that they sign away their use rights to the concessionaires, who often play a forceful management role. Indeed, the process of allocating hunting concessions is managed by the DNPW with limited involvement of communities or the CRB itself. Definition of community benefits in the hunting agreements are often left to the end of the tendering process and are negotiations led by the chiefs. While experiences are still emerging, private sector relationships with CFMGs do not appear to require engagement of the FD, though there are indications that in carbon-focused relationships communities may perceive that they are signing away their rights.

**ROLE OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS:** The past thirty years of CBNRM in Zambia’s wildlife sector has focused on GMAs, large “buffer zones” surrounding the National Parks on customary land. GMAs often include core conservation areas with hunting concessions and multi-use zones, which may be forested areas with limited wildlife, or more recently, rural agricultural areas within the GMA. Government therefore sees itself as being responsible for management of these GMAs, with community involvement limited to patrolling and benefit distribution. Given the DNPW’s focus on specific national parks and their buffer zones, they typically have dedicated human resources, transport capacity, and finance within the GMAs (often with the support of a conservation NGO). A significant portion of the DNPW’s revenues are sourced through hunting concessions in these GMAs, and so management of these resources is central to their financial sustainability. These revenues travel from the concessionaire through treasury, and then ultimately a portion are expected to reach communities through distributions to the CRBs.

In contrast, CFs are dispersed throughout the country with very little relation to other managed forest areas. The FD may have limited historical engagement with these communities or specific forested areas. In this context, the CFMG is responsible for the area’s management, and the FD is largely responsible for auditing and general support functions. The FD’s commercial division has historically operated through forest concessions based on applications from private companies, as well as managed discrete forest reserves. It remains to be seen how forest concessionaire will interact with CFMGs, as in some other countries forestry firms have supported community forest establishment to acquire cheap rights to forests. Though carbon revenues are attracting interest within the FD, the historical economic benefits of the sector have not been tied to CBNRM. This may partially explain the limited attention given to CBNRM at present within the FD.

Where CFMGs exist outside of GMAs and outside of chiefdoms with a historical wildlife focus, CFMGs tend to function independently and with the sole (though infrequent) influence of the FD. However, in the many CFMGs that are established within or bordering GMAs, tensions, or at least ambiguities about roles and responsibilities between community groups and the DNPW, and FD can emerge. Given the current politics that have limited hunting in Zambia, DNPW and CRBs are each looking for new sources of revenue, leading to both government and community institutions to assert their interests in community forest management. Operationally speaking, the FD and DNPW coordinate well at the district level, with District Forest Officers (DFOs) often travelling with DNPW staff. There is some administrative overlap – for example permitting of forest concessions in GMAs requires the sign off by the DNPW. There is scope for increased and improved coordination between the departments. At the national level, there is almost no proactive relationship between the DNPW and FD as it relates to emerging issues around the establishment of CFs.

**STATE AND CUSTOMARY RELATIONSHIPS:** As noted above, because GMAs are generally much larger than CFs, and include non-wildlife areas which the communities actually live in, the DNPW’s presence and influence is significant. As the DNPW carries out law enforcement within the GMAs, often with the support of both community scouts and international NGOs, the presence of the DNPW is very heavily felt. This extends to relationships with the chiefs, as well as the financial management of the

community groups. As the chief acts as the patron of the CRB, and receives a specific percent of the animal fees, the DNPW maintains a strong and direct relationship with the chief. This influence is further strengthened due to DNPW's role in facilitating agreements between hunting operators and the chiefs. The DNPW will often rely on the CRB to identify labor and community scouts, as well as to act as a liaison between the DNPW and communities. This is particularly important in the case of human-wildlife conflict. At the same time, the CRBs develop relationships with the DNPW. Effective CRBs are able to advocate on behalf of their respective communities with DNPW and other government institutions. The DNPW also acts as a signatory on the CRB bank accounts, a role that has been criticized as potentially leading to collusion and corruption in some circumstances.

In contrast, CFMGs have limited need to interact with DFOs to perform their daily functions. The chiefs do not have a legislated role in the management of CFMGs and therefore are largely absent from forest management beyond their role in providing consent for the establishment of the CFMG. CFMGs are required to submit management plans and request the right to manage specific forest resources. At present, it does not seem that DFOs are heavily involved in the process in most cases. However, one would expect that as (and if) forest carbon activities continue to increase, there may be a greater role for the FD to support CFMG management. As described below, these relationships (between state and customary institutions, and between different community groups, and between FD and DNPW) are being tested where there are CFMGs that sit entirely within GMAs.

**MANDATE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS:** CFMGs and CRBs derive their structures for accountability through different processes. GMAs are legally gazetted by the government and typically one CRB is established for each chiefdom within each GMA. The patron of the CRB is the chief and therefore the CRB is responsible for the larger (and entire) chiefdom. Village Action Groups (VAGs) from within the GMA elect members to represent them on the CRB. In contrast, CFMGs can be established by a collection of community members with the consent of the chief to request management rights over specific forest areas. There are no standard practices for elections within CFMGs, though guidance would be expected to emerge in the coming years.

While the CFMG is responsible for management of the forest, their obligations to share benefits with the wider community, beyond the CFMG members and the specific communities (villages) they represent, are not well defined. This has led to the establishment of competing CFMG groups in similar areas. This is particularly a risk when groups have limited spatial mapping capacity or when DFOs verify the boundaries of proposed CFMGs.

The broader accountability structures of CRBs, sitting within a customary framework and representing a clear and (usually) larger interest group are likely preferable to the current CFMG structure. The CFMG structures are at risk of being abused, first by communities (or community members) that wish to assert rights over neighboring forests while excluding legitimate neighboring communities. Secondly, forest carbon project developers and those interested in conservation in general may develop rapid agreements with communities in the vicinity of a forested area without full understanding of the broader resource management dynamics or the full range of community interests in the area.

**MANAGEMENT OF OVERLAPPING RESOURCES:** With almost 20 percent of Zambia covered by GMAs, much of which is forested, there are large numbers of CFMGs being established within areas managed by CRBs. Early efforts led by BCP largely worked through CRBs to establish CFMGs that covered most of the forested areas within GMAs. In these cases, and as is permitted in the Forest Act, the CRB also acts as a CFMG, responsible for community management of both forests and wildlife. These efforts have brought the decades long-relationships and practices of wildlife-focused CBNRM into the forest sector. Efficiencies have been achieved in these cases – for example, with forest guards operating concurrently as wildlife scouts, a much more established law enforcement mechanism.

However, at the same time, conflicts have emerged with respect to management of carbon funds/payments; the CRB/CFMG would like to manage the funds independently (under the exclusive management of the CFMG), while some within government (DNPW) see these funds as part of the broader resource management and recommend that the funds be managed together. DNPW/FD dialogues over recent years have confirmed that the CFM carbon payment should be managed separately, though these tensions remain. The combination of CFMGs and CRBs in some landscapes has led to improved investment in community governance, as described below, though more investment and monitoring is required both in terms of governance and ecological outcomes, particularly as the dynamics of wildlife revenue evolve and incomes from forest carbon expand.

More disconcerting has been the conflicts that have emerged between CRBs and CFMGs in GMAs where the two groups are separate. The CRBs maintain that they have the right to manage all resources in the GMA, while the CFMGs claim that the Forest Act allows CRBs to establish CFMGs but it does not require the two to be linked together. In particular, in some chiefdoms, community members are demonstrating their discontent with their CRBs by establishing independent CFMGs. These actions bring chiefdom tensions to light over long-standing concerns regarding CRB management. With forests and wildlife being two of the main resources for exploitation, the management of CRBs and CFMGs, as well as agricultural cooperatives and their relationships to the chief, reveal larger community power struggles beyond the specific resource.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** DNPW has a robust and large law enforcement wing. In fact, Wildlife Police Officers (WPO) represent the majority of employees under the Ministry of Tourism. WPOs go through a series of multi-month law enforcement trainings. Community Wildlife Scouts (CS) are an integral component of the DNPW's law enforcement unit, and they are recruited from within the chiefdoms and are formally employed by the CRB, often with the support of a conservation NGO. Community scouts are integrated into the DNPW's operations and over time, many of the high performing scouts are elevated into formal government employment.

The forestry laws allow the CRB Community Scouts to enforce the forestry laws. In this way, law enforcement regulations are ahead of other pieces of the law in terms of integrated forest and wildlife management at the community level. Furthermore, forest management plans can be a significant complement to wildlife habitat management. By regulating forest utilization and preventing destructive activities such as fire, CFMAs facilitate better wildlife conservation in communal areas. The model, however, needs to provide a solid relationship with water, land, and mineral resources, as mining remains a threat to CFMAs.

Where there are not overlapping GMAs/CFs, CFMGs rely on Honorary Forest Officers, which are similarly recruited from within the communities. However, formal training for these individuals is limited, and since there are not units of forest officers working patrols nationally, the HFOs have limited ability to professionalize their skills. Zambia currently lacks a robust forest law enforcement training program, and the Zambia Forestry College training curriculum is largely focused on ecology and fire management over operational law enforcement. Nevertheless, there are many opportunities for collaboration between HFOs and WPOs/CS, and this is an area for future investment, both to strengthen the training of pure HFOs, as well as to ensure that WPOs/CS are fully trained and able to respond to habitat encroachment and forest-related crime. The next level of skills required will be to strengthen the ability of CFMG groups to manage law enforcement more effectively and to link their enforcement to police response.

**CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY GROUPS:** The capacity of CRBs and CFMGs varies dramatically and is largely dependent on the degree of outside support that they receive. The CRBs that participated in ADMADe almost 30 years ago are still on a pathway towards professionalism. This group has benefitted from their location next to Zambia's flagship National Park, as well as attention from international

development donors and the DNPW's CBNRM unit. These CRBs, which are beneficiaries of tens of thousands of dollars (and even hundreds of thousands) of hunting revenue per year, often have hired staff, including bookkeepers and an executive. Yet while these groups have professionalized and are vocal in advocacy forums at the national level, they are also prone to be controlled by a small group of community members, given their power and influence. These individuals have benefited from donor and government investment in the groups and have become effective voices for CBNRM. However, these groups/structures have also been criticized for not having enough turnover to ensure broad-based awareness and capacity across the community. CRB leaders, who often have close and direct relationships with the traditional leaders and hunting concessionaires, can be found in CRBs throughout the country. Despite this capacity among a core group of engaged members, there is a clear gap within the broader CRB membership and VAGs, which are often only mobilized to distribute meat from hunting offtake, support election campaigns and occasionally engage in benefit distribution decisions. This governance challenge has historically been related to both a desire to control the agenda and the realities of logistics in the GMAs. Cell phone coverage and transportation networks are often weak, and so convening the full CRB can be costly and logistically difficult, leaving a few individuals close to the chief's palace or CRB office *de facto* in charge.

CRBs represent one of the few economic and governance opportunities in chiefdoms, so the roles are often highly sought after. These positions are dominated by well-connected and relatively wealthy men, usually focused on gaining and maintaining power. These individuals will spend their personal funds throughout the election campaign, hosting events and buying drinks and food to attract support. These practices have often left women and vulnerable groups behind who have less access to the financial resources. Within recent years, bilateral donors and the conservation organizations that fund the election processes (every three years) have become increasingly aware of this exclusion issue and have begun actively seeking the engagement of women and breaking down barriers for participation. At a national level, the capacity of CRBs is left to supporting organizations and some basic and inconsistently applied trainings from the DNPW.

In contrast to the CRBs, CFMG governance has received relatively little attention. There are some requirements associated with CFMG registration – groups must develop a constitution, list of members, and management plan. However, given the lack of an actively facing CBNRM unit within the FD, there is little government support or direction for these groups. Because the CFMGs are more loosely tied to chiefdom leadership and formal structures than CRBs, they operate in a less controlled environment. Indeed, because the barriers to establish CFMGs are quite low, there is not an easily accessible list of CFMGs executives or even groups in the country. CFMG applications for recognition have referenced chiefdoms, community names, or forested areas and on occasion these applications have been somewhat inconsistent, leading to ambiguities over management of areas. Such challenges may be resolved, both through government's new CFMG database, which includes a spatial component, as well as through the role/interest of the Zambia CRB Association (ZCRBA) in supporting the coordination and membership of CFMGs into a broader CBRNM group association.

CFMG capacity tends to be overly reliant on either carbon development supporters (e.g., BCP and COMACO), or regional projects, like the World Bank-supported Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape Program (ZIFL-P), which have so far not shared their capacity tools nationally. While there is scope to increase coordination around capacity tools, tools may be perceived by the carbon proponents as proprietary and thus they may be unwilling to share their engagement and capacity building approaches openly with all CFMGs.

Within the DNPW, there has been a longstanding effort for government to act as the hub for all information and communication, particularly between hunters and CRBs. Historically there has been little exchange between CRBs themselves. This changed in 2017 with the establishment of the ZCRBA, which has held annual meetings on CBNRM and helped to consolidate CRB voices, notably petitioning

government for the release of back-payments of hunting revenue in 2020 and 2021. The Association has also played an important role in addressing the fallout of human-wildlife conflict and in cases where DNPW law enforcement has come into conflict with community members – including cases where community poachers have been wounded or killed in enforcement operations. The ZCRBA actively engages with approximately 40 of Zambia’s 88 CRBs, most of which are the more active CRBs. There is a need to extend their services and engagements more broadly and support management and community awareness across the remainder of the CRBs.

The lack of communication and coordination among CFMGs is driven by their geographic separation and limited broader level national organization. Given the lack of a well-funded CBNRM unit within the FD, and the focus on empowering provincial and district Forest Officers, a coordinated focus on CFMG governance support is not likely to be government driven. There is some scope for the ZCRBA to extend its reach to CFMGs, however they are still broadly perceived as a wildlife-focused organization and tend to advocate for CFMGs fitting into the existing CRB model rather than reforming the functions and operating models of CRBs. The ZCRBA has been advocating on behalf of communities for benefit sharing models around CFMGs in relation to carbon project developers, including that a portion of fees be distributed directly to the ZCRBA as a national organization.

**NGO AND PRIVATE SECTOR BACKSTOPPING:** The wildlife sector in Zambia has long been supported at the site level by national and international NGOs. These groups have raised funds for the management of specific National Parks, including ecological monitoring, community development, human-wildlife conflict, anti-poaching and law enforcement activities in collaboration with the DNPW. Many of these organizations have long supported individual CRBs with operational and governance capacity building. While these NGOs have historically been focused on wildlife management, and much less so on forest management and forest governance, they are increasingly supporting broader resource management in the GMAs, including the establishment of CFMGs. Over the years, the DNPW has built a constructive relationship with these NGOs. In contrast, within the forest sector, there is less of a history of NGO cooperation/relationship in resource management. Organizations like BCP, as well as WeForest, have begun to establish relationships with the FD, but these partnerships are not built on the same level of trust and engagement as NGOs with the DNPW. As the wildlife focused NGOs have moved into forest management activities, they have struggled to adapt to engaging with the FD and have instead relied on their DNPW colleagues to guide activities as they relate to CFMGs.

There is an informal community of CBNRM experts in the wildlife sector, as well as communication among NGOs around key issues facing wildlife governance. This same level of coordination and engagement has not been seen within the forest sector. The organizations supporting CFMGs tend to be isolated from one another; within the carbon development sector, these organizational silos and limited cooperation may be purposeful. In addition to BCP and COMACO, there are a handful of lesser-known organizations that have been working with communities to establish CFMGs, including Kabompo Community Carbon and Dongwe Community Carbon. The motivation, funding and experience behind these groups is not well understood. There is a clear need to build relationships and a common work program across these groups to align expectations and roles between communities, NGOs, and government institutions working on resource management.

While communities have asked for and supported the establishment of CFMGs, more often than not the driving force behind CFMG establishment appears to be project or organization led. This includes international organizations through government managed programs (GEF-5, TRALARD and ZIFL-P), as well as NGOs (COMACO, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Zambia Land Alliance, Kasanka Trust, The Nature Conservancy) and private companies or emergent groups (BCP, Kabompo Community Carbon, and Dongwe Community Carbon). Sometimes CFMG formation is driven by project/organizational goals to establish a certain number (or area) of community forest management groups, with less focus given to capacity development and awareness raising about the purpose of CFMGs at the community level.



Even in well intentioned cases, it is not entirely clear whether these outside groups have long-standing management commitments, and there is a risk that forested land will be managed on paper only. The long-term role of the supporting projects, NGOs or companies should be further strengthened with direct government engagement with these developers and stronger communication/commitments that seek to empower communities and increase their capacity to manage the community forests over time. Some chiefs have begun to express concern over the proliferation of community forest management, wondering whether this represents a plan to assert increased government control over customary land, as well as how it may restrict long-term development plans in the chiefdom.

**DISTRICT LEVEL LEADERSHIP:** This brief has largely highlighted the roles of the FD and DNPW in resource management alongside communities and traditional leaders. However, the role of District Councils is important to note. The District Councils administer state land on behalf of the Ministry of Lands. The Urban and Regional Planning (URP) Act of 2015 designates planning responsibilities to the Local Authority and provides for Integrated Development Plans (IDP) to manage the land within the district. The URP Act also provides for Local Area Plans (LAPs) at the chiefdom level with permission from the Local Authority. Despite these provisions, funding and bureaucracy have played a part in delaying the development and implementation of integrated plans. The district plans have tended to focus on the municipal centers, leaving line ministries to lead outreach and programs in the rural areas of the districts (like community forests and GMAs). This has led to a relatively light engagement of district government in forest and wildlife management. There is some potential for this to change, as since 2022, the government has increased its use of the Constituent Development Fund (CDF) to support community-led development projects. There is discussion (though still early) that government would prefer for all funds from forest and wildlife revenues to flow through this type of CDF model. Such an approach would receive significant pushback from the DNPW and CRBs, as they have become accustomed to directly managing funds (dispersed from the central government based on hunting fees). In contrast, to date the funding for CFMGs has accrued directly into local project bank accounts.

Ideally, coordination and planning across the natural resource sector should come through the district and traditional leaders, who each have some capacity to push for local level coordination and integration of activities. Yet each appears uncomfortable with this approach. The DNPW has embedded operational approaches which are difficult to change and CFMGs often operate outside the influence (and likely awareness) of district governments. As such, efforts should focus on strengthening resource management integration at the local community level, where government and conservation partners can then plug in. Unlike pre-1980, when the government was the sole player in natural resource management space, devolution has allowed communities and supporting partners to take critical roles in the management of natural resources. This devolution demands coordination and integration with government departments to deliver acceptable outcomes.

**NATIONAL LEVEL LEADERSHIP:** The FD at present lacks significant resources to invest in CBNRM. Given that their teams at the district level are small and largely focused on managing commercial operations and supporting Forest Reserves within each district, they do not have the bandwidth or the background to support the hundreds of CFMGs around the country. This is true both at the local and the national level. District offices often only have a single staff member, who frequently lacks transport; since the communities don't have a mechanism to support this individual, they are typically left to their own devices. The situation is not substantially different at the national level. While the Forestry Department is expected to support CFMGs, its ability to track the diverse applications that arrive are limited, and they cannot always verify the locations of the community forests that are being applied for. This risks double allocation of land for community forests. In contrast, the DNPW has robust staffing for CBNRM and they are very engaged at the national and district level in responding to the queries of the CRBs. The CBNRM unit often responds to issues of human-wildlife conflict and other issues that emerge in remote areas of the country. They act as an intermediary with hunting operators as well as

other private businesses. Though opportunities for financing forest conservation increase and hunting revenues decrease, the historic strength of the DNPW continues to dominate the politics of resource management. Despite offers to bring DNPW and FD leadership together to discuss management of forest and wildlife resources, there has been little appetite for discussion at the national director level. For effective resource management, wildlife, forestry and fisheries should sit together under the same ministerial direction. To date, there has been no interest in bringing these workstreams together, and opportunities to share across departments have been avoided. Future support to these sectors should be contingent on collaboration. USAID ILRG found some limited success coordinating rural law enforcement and integrating forest management modules into the intensive DNPW law enforcement training but did not see uptake across other facilitated opportunities for greater collaboration.

The 1998 Wildlife Policy and 1997 Forest Action Plan provided the first guidance for the current devolution of forest and wildlife resources. While consultation between government ministries, stakeholders, and community members took place during policy development process, the same measure of coordination has not occurred during implementation. While stakeholders from government, communities, private sector and civil society may have general knowledge about wildlife and forest policies, their engagement in implementing these policies and finding opportunities for collaboration should be made more explicit. Continued investment is required to nuance both legislative frameworks and promote coordination.

## **EXPERIENCE IN INTEGRATION FROM THE USAID ILRG PROGRAM**

Forest rights devolution legislation in Zambia has been more progressive than in wildlife, with ample space for communities to self-mobilize and self-govern. This has allowed for the transfer of management rights to communities, but also highlighted the need to build up technical skills within communities so they are able to take up decisions previously made by government staff. CFM implementation is being rolled out across the entire Zambian landscape, financed by commitments to fight climate change and apply conservation-based incentives through carbon finance and social enterprises. However, government and supporting organization investment and support for the model has been limited, unlike in the early days of wildlife focused CBNRM through ADMAD. The emerging tensions over boundaries of CFM and CRB management, as well as other investments, underscores the need for a stronger land management system and framework for administering customary land in the context of managing multiple resources.

Since 2018, the ILRG project, funded by the USAID, has supported integration in natural resource management in Zambia. This support aimed to remove barriers to coordination, reduce duplicity and redundancies and promote joint resource management in the communities, as forest and wildlife resources occupy the same spaces. ILRG built management capacity at the grassroots, creating space for government ministries and natural resources management partners to plug into. The support was delivered in coordination with the national-level government and partners. ILRG's efforts consolidated existing resources and created space to invite different stakeholders together to coordinate. ILRG's approach to promote integration hinged on providing training at various levels to build strong resource management capacity at the local and national levels. The primary beneficiaries of this support were chiefs, CRBs, CFMGs, NGOs and government staff. ILRG developed resources to address CFM, CBNRM and enhance leadership and inclusion in community governance groups. The resources were tested in the landscapes to validate the materials before finalization. These approaches are described below. Despite concerted efforts to bridge departments and create incentives for coordination, integration remained elusive particularly at the government level.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT**

The growth of CFMGs from five to 220 over 2018 to 2023 has overwhelmed FD's ability to track performance and support capacity. This growth occurred before FD staff could internalize the process or develop resources to support CFM implementation. Lack of resources coupled with limited coordination between FD and partners during implementation has resulted in inconsistent performance of CFMGs after formation. The most affected CFMGs were those formed with support from local NGOs or through government programs that lacked long-term supporting partners.

In addressing numerous consistency and rollout gaps, ILRG coordinated with FD and partners to develop a Community Forest Management Training Manual for Front Office Staff. The manual provides step-by-step guidance for forming CFMGs and developing management plans. It consolidates several CFM resources used by partners and forest projects. Although this has yet to be adopted, this as a primary guide across stakeholders, it contains the principles of the CFM model practiced by FD and forest partners in the landscapes. This manual was tested in six CFMGs.

## **SITE-LEVEL INTEGRATION IN WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Government officials and conservation partners at the district level interact daily with or without formal support. These engagements are usually ad hoc. As a first step towards building sustainable CFMG backstopping capacity in the eastern boundary of Kafue National Park and to build complementarity with long-standing wildlife interventions, ILRG initiated a combined CFM training for the District Expert Team (DET) in Mumbwa District. The conservation partners, government officers and community representatives were taken through an intensive seven-day training in CFM using the above CFM manual. 23 government officials participated from the FD, DNPW, Mumbwa Town Council, Community Development, Agriculture, Chiefs and Traditional Affairs departments, as well as the Western Region Community Resource Boards Association (WRCRBA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). These officials acquired base-level of knowledge and skills to facilitate CFM training in the villages. This approach aimed to develop sustainable CFM backstopping capacity at the district level and provide space for government, partners and communities to coordinate in natural resource management. The engagement confirmed the tendency for supporting organizations to go through a single government office to receive permissions to operate, which often leaves other relevant departments in the dark. This is understandable, as an organization will rarely have the resources and stamina to engage with multiple uncoordinated government departments and risk receiving contradictory guidance.

At the community level, these partners facilitated awareness raising with all the chiefs in Mumbwa. Because CFM is a relatively new model, there is limited understanding at the community level, easily mistaken for a modern land grab by the state. The chiefs, and senior advisors were invited to a day-long awareness workshop in Mumbwa. The training attracted 32 participants, including the Mumbwa District Commissioner, Chiefs Mulendema, Kaindu, Chibuluma, and their senior advisors. Chiefs Moono, Mumba, Shakumbila and Chieftainess Kabulwebulwe sent members to represent the traditional authorities. After the training, the chiefs invited the DET to engage with headpersons and CFMGs in the chiefdoms. Though Mumba District already had established CFMGs, information gaps at the district and village levels were evident, and this training began to create a sense of common understanding and ownership of forest management in the district.

In Chibuluma Chiefdom, for instance, the community meetings led to reopening the original CFMG establishment process, both in terms of representation as well as boundaries. The interim CFMG executive committee for Chipa had been established through leaders from a farmer cooperative far from the CF, and questions emerged about the extent of community consensus around CF boundaries. The FD subsequently dissolved the committee and called for new elections. This case illustrates how existing NGO relationships, in this case with cooperatives, can be used as convenient mechanism to establish CFMGs. However, when the interim committees are not seen to represent the community's

interest, conflicts can emerge. The FD's absence in the communities during CFMG community mobilization left the process prone to manipulation from outside interests.

Community awareness is paramount to building resilient community conservation and is a useful activity for cooperating partners (donors). With ILRG support, the Mumbwa DET conducted several chiefdom-based trainings in which 495 community members were trained. The three-day training involved village headpersons and members of CFMGs. These sessions were fundamental in clarifying the role of various players in community forest management and promoting participatory decision-making at the village level. The trainings were also attended by the supporting partner COMACO.

Following positive outcomes in the Mumbwa training, the FD office in the Central Province requested ILRG extend the training to all DFOs in the province. In May 2023, ILRG delivered a 10-day CFM training to 32 FD, DNPW, and Fisheries Department staff in Central Province. Four community awareness trainings were also conducted in Chamuka Chiefdom as part of field practice. Like in Mumbwa, the Chamuka communities had heard about CFM through conservation farming but had not received comprehensive awareness raising or engaged in the CFMAs agreement process. Again, FD had not previously been involved in field engagements. Thus, ILRG-supported training helped bridge knowledge gaps at the provincial and community levels about CFMAs in Central Province.

The materials and CFM training are valuable inputs to facilitate CFM in Zambia. However, more effort will be required to champion capacity-building needs within government and communities. NGO capacity-building resources and support will remain essential. While FD is expected to champion these engagements, the department needs to be better staffed and better trained, which requires reforms to allocate structural space for CBNRM. Any intervention to build community capacity should focus on consolidating relationships between government, communities, and partners. Moreover, most external support stops after CFMG formation; more support is needed to ensure community enterprises are linked to forest resources beyond alternative livelihoods support. Efforts of the ZIFL-P program in recent years have demonstrated the benefits of this added management capacity support, however the lessons from the ZIFL-P have not yet percolated across other CFMGs at the district or community level. Building the capacity of all the DFOs alongside other government staff in the landscape can help build bridges for continued collaborations.

## **CBNRM GOVERNANCE CAPACITY BUILDING**

CRBs are formed with government technical assistance to co-manage wildlife resources and conservation partners. CRBs fulfill well established conservation responsibilities within their jurisdictions, including law enforcement, community development and managing human-wildlife conflicts. CRBs also monitor wildlife populations and tourism activities such as photography and hunting safaris. Based on this arrangement, CRBs manage finances, community scouts and community projects with government and partner oversight. Despite these roles and responsibilities, governance materials to support CRBs are not consistent across the country. The DNPW's CBNRM unit has used a range of presentations and pamphlets cobbled together over the years, and different conservation organizations have tools they have also assembled. Yet CRB leaders' terms only last three years (though many stay on for multiple terms) and the background training they receive on their roles and functions is inconsistent across the country.

In 2020, ILRG partnered with ZCRBA to support CRB governance, though ultimately many of the results are equally applicable to CFMGs. A study was commissioned by ILRG to ascertain what type of support ZCRBA could provide to strengthen the capacity of CRBs. ILRG reviewed all the materials used by DNPW and NGOs to train communities and held discussions with experts in CBNRM. The study recommended developing governance tools that CRB could access and reference in their daily work. To

promote coordination and integration in developing governance resources, ILRG and ZCRBA worked with DNPW and conservation partners to draft essential governance resources for CRBs.

The material development process, however, faced several challenges. First, DNPW initially objected to the process, as they wanted to exclude NGOs. Likewise, ZCRBA preferred in-house material development. Second, the NGOs were reluctant to participate, apparently avoiding confrontation with DNPW. Third, the process coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted in-person meetings. Despite these setbacks, the materials were developed and piloted in six CRBs in Lupande, Namwala and Mumbwa GMAs. Furthermore, TNC piloted the materials in Lunga Luswishi GMA. The materials have since been finalized and adopted by DNPW and NGOs in the landscapes. Resources were developed on the following topics, many of which, can and should be developed for CFMGs as well:

- [CRB Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Constitution Making](#)
- [Procurement Guidelines](#)
- [Human Resources Management](#)
- [Annual General Meetings](#)
- [Reporting](#)
- [Gender Integration](#)
- [VAG Management](#)
- [Wildlife Resource Management and Protection](#)
- [Human-Wildlife Co-existence](#)
- [Facilitation Manual](#)

ILRG has shared the materials with conservation partners and DNPW across the landscapes and advocated for their use. The materials are simplified for the community, but their use requires a strategy to ensure that the manuals benefit the CRBs in the long term. Most of these tools have direct relevance for CFMG engagement. However, due to the challenges described above, ILRG was unable to carry out a similar effort to develop CFMG manuals. These materials should arguably be revisited in light of CBNRM harmonization, with an introduction that describes the relevance to multiple CBNRM group objectives.

## **LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING**

The devolution of resource rights to Zambian communities presents opportunities and challenges to community-level decision-making. While the roles and responsibilities described above are important elements of successful CBNRM, a broader commitment to leadership is also required, particularly as community members take on responsibilities that have traditionally been held by government technocrats and private sector players. To ensure that communities can benefit from the rights devolved to them, ILRG developed a leadership manual, Leadership Training Manual for Community Natural Resource Management for ZCRBA. The manual addresses leadership capacity building needs for community leaders in natural resource management through a multi-stage course. It is a compilation of essential leadership skills for community conservation leaders to enable them to discharge their functions efficiently. Using the drafted manual, ILRG trained ZCRBA executive and secretariat members, first in leadership and second in a Trainer-of-Trainer (ToT) course to build the skills to lead similar trainings at the community level. Subsequently, with ILRG support, ZCRBA trained 48 executive members representing seven CRBs from Eastern and Western Regions as part of material testing. The leadership manual is generic and adaptable to all groups in the community, including CRBs, CFMGs, cooperatives and fisheries community management groups.

## **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT TRAININGS**

The ILRG program also identified risks of exclusion of women in the NRM sector. An initial gender analysis revealed that women have been historically marginalized as decision-makers, resource users and resource managers in CBNRM governance, as well as in NRM law enforcement. Recognizing that shifts in these norms must come from those supporting the sector, as well as the community themselves, ILRG developed a Women's Leadership and Empowerment Training of Trainers course, which was carried out with three cohorts of 25 individuals from NGOs and government departments. This group represented 20 different organizations from both wildlife and forest sectors. This provided mid-level staff with the skills and resources to integrate women's empowerment into their extension programs. The uptake was strongest among NGOs, and many have now integrated the tools into their programming. The course also built stronger relationships across CBNRM staff members who continue to actively share their experiences on a WhatsApp platform.

A particularly impactful outcome from this work has been continued support and investment to run inclusive elections for CRBs and CFMGs. Across both CRBs and CFMGs, there is a tendency for supporting organizations to run elections over short time periods, which limits the amount of time women and other marginalized groups have to access information about their eligibility to participate. The application of the ILRG tools has seen a dramatic increase in women's participation in CFMGs and CRBs. Women's participation in VAGs rose from 23 percent in 2018 to 41 percent in 2021, and women's election to CRBs rose from 4 percent to 25 percent over the same period. These Women's Leadership and Empowerment cohorts have also been champions for sharing the broader governance materials described above and have provided their own support for elections and gender norms trainings across the country.

## **ENGAGING TRADITIONAL LEADERS ON GENDER NORMS AROUND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

ILRG found value in using gender equality approaches to bridge the forest and wildlife sectors. ILRG worked with the House of Chiefs to develop [Gender Guidelines for Traditional Leaders in Management of Natural Resources in the Chieftdom](#). Because chiefs interact with all government, NGO and community stakeholders, they have a unique opportunity to encourage cooperation. However, many institutions have tried to avoid working with the chiefs, seeking consent signatures only when necessary. ILRG found value in working with progressive chiefs, who used both a natural resource management and gender framework to bring diverse stakeholders together and ensure coordination. Chief Mphuka and Chieftainess Muwezwa each called on all development stakeholders in their rural chieftdoms to come together to discuss how women are involved in natural resource management. Using this power to convene, they forced harmonization of approaches and collaboration among stakeholder groups and continue to use a common planning framework to ensure that women are represented on all natural resource committees (across land, fisheries, wildlife and forests, for example). Convening stakeholders around a cross-cutting theme like gender was important to bring forest and wildlife stakeholders together on an even playing field.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY TRAINING MATERIAL**

As noted above, DNPW has a long history of wildlife law enforcement training, while the FD relies on the Zambia Forestry College (ZFC) to train its Honorary Forest Officers. This program tends to be shorter and more academic than the DNPW training. ILRG received a request from DNPW to strengthen and accredit the curriculum it uses to train Community Scouts. As with CRB governance materials, the scout training curriculum for DNPW had been cobbled together over years with a range of lessons from various conservation partners. Considering the increase in community forests within the GMAs, ILRG insisted that this program include forest law enforcement modules. The module was developed and there was some initial engagement between the DNPW's training center at Chunga and

the ZFC. This collaboration needs to be further strengthened, particularly considering that in the past five years over 1,000 individuals have been nominated to be Honorary Forest Officers, though training for these individuals has been minimal at best. Strengthened information management of active HFOs and CS across the country is an essential priority moving forward.

## **NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT DIALOGUE**

While integration of forest and wildlife capacities must be felt at the community level and supported by NGOs and the broader ecosystem, government leadership is necessary to drive this agenda. Since 2019, ILRG offered both the DNPW and FD the opportunity to collaborate on issues of joint concern. ILRG specifically did not want to set the agenda but made both departments aware of an open invitation for collaboration. Each department sent through concept notes, without the collaboration of the other department, and forwarded agendas and participant lists that were heavily weighted to a single department. ILRG had hoped for a well-defined agenda but in the end only one dialogue was held, which was called by ZCRBA over the distribution of forest carbon benefits from GMAs. The meeting called for carbon developers to work with both the DNPW and FD, as well as the CFMGs on a revised benefit sharing model. Despite two constructive meetings, there were no agreed upon action points, and the issues continue to be debated without resolution.

In 2022, ILRG changed its approach and offered to support dialogue at the local level within a single landscape. In this case, Chief Mulendema called for all stakeholders in wildlife and forestry to meet in his chiefdom to address encroachment issues. Similar to the previous discussion, despite general agreement on the issues at hand, there has been little follow up action and no evidence of active coordination to move the issue beyond a localized agreement.

Despite these unsuccessful investments, one bright spot for national level coordination has been the annual CBNRM conference organized by ZCRBA and the Zambia Community Based Natural Resource Management Forum. This conference has acted as a platform for CRBs and CFMGs, along with traditional leaders, government institutions and supporting partners, to engage together over three days to discuss key developments in resource management. There have not been many discrete outcomes, but it has built a sense within and across these institutions that there is a broader landscape of partners and individuals facing similar challenges across the country. Recently, the meeting has been mired by politics associated with hunting concessions, but there is scope to rebuild these bridges. In 2022, the CBNRM conference was complemented by a CFM-focused conference that brought almost 400 people together to define priorities for community forests. While there is a demand to further build on the CFM meeting, there has not necessarily been movement on the 2022 action points. This demonstrates the need for more dedicated government technical, financial and political resources to prioritize CFM. Recent commitments by the European Union and other donors suggests that finances will flow towards forest management, and it is crucial that these new investments not lose sight of the need to coordinate with and build upon the historical investments in CBNRM through the wildlife sector.

## **BOTTLENECKS TO INTEGRATED FOREST AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

Achieving sustainable integration in resource management will require deliberate medium to long-term measures implemented at scale to build and enhance a culture of integration, joint planning, and cross-pollination. Some critical areas require attention.

**THERE IS NO NATIONAL LEVEL LEADERSHIP CALLING FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION.** Because the DNPW and FD sit under different ministries and each feels it can operate independently, there is no incentive for coordination. Natural resource management is not at the forefront of the national dialogue and therefore, there is no political pressure to resolve issues

holistically. With the influx of climate change funding to the forest sector, there is a risk that the departments will further diverge, as the forest sector's dependence on wildlife revenues may decline.

**PARTNERS DEFAULT TO THE WILDLIFE SECTOR-BASED APPROACH TO RESOURCE**

**MANAGEMENT.** Because the wildlife sector is more mature and has historically generated revenue for communities and government, there is a tendency to default to these existing structures, rather than examine their relevance for the forestry sector. The community actors in the wildlife sector are attempting to claim forest carbon management rights, and while there is nothing wrong with this approach, it is not necessarily opening up the CBNRM sector to new stakeholders. The FD seems to be somewhat slow in asserting itself in the CBRNM world and risks being sidelined in the process.

**CONSERVATION/FOREST NGOS DO NOT SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Even though natural resource management enjoys broad support across multiple partners at the national and landscape levels, there is a marked reluctance to share resources openly. Conservation challenges are similar across landscapes, therefore sharing resources and creating platforms for in-country learning can help share lessons on which future interventions can build. This need is more urgent within the forestry sector given the emergence of large flows of carbon finance. As groups seek to manage specific areas with community cooperation, they are reluctant to share their governance tools or approaches. ILRG reached out to the government and conservation NGOs to help share best practices and resources, but there was reluctance to share or participate in material development. Partners were focused on their site-specific challenges. Their links to international institutions or frameworks lead to the adaptation of international resources rather than the consolidation of Zambian-specific tools.

**PROJECT-TYPE SUPPORT LACK LONG-TERM STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY.**

The explosion of CFM in the past five years demonstrates the weakness of project-focused support. The pressure to create CFMs to meet project milestones or to assert rights to forest carbon is leading to groups with overlapping jurisdictions, or areas that are only protected on paper. However, these forests are being legally registered, with associated long-term rights and responsibilities. Yet many of the actors supporting CFMGs seem to be acting on a short-term project mentality. The closure of a project (and therefore loss of support to individual CFMGs) creates gaps that either take time to fill or persist, leading to another set of conservation challenges. In some instances, projects end at the pilot phase without follow-through.

**PUBLIC SERVICE IS LINKED TO ALLOWANCES, SO THERE IS ONLY PROGRESS WITH WORKSHOPS.**

Conservation support is linked to coordination with government staff. Demand for allowances by government officers tends to disrupt conservation support activities and can provide perverse incentives. Government staff are typically eligible for Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) when they are away from their base posts, which can incentivize staff to stay out in the field for longer periods, disrupting routine office operations. This poses budget challenges for partners, where continued coordination and engagement efforts lead to increased allowance costs. The introduction of more government departments with forest and wildlife interests creates a challenge for the conservation organizations to justify the cost of additional allowances without clear follow through or results. These costs and limited benefits are resulting in a disincentive for inclusion and integration across sectors.

**POLICY IMPLEMENTATION LACKS ADEQUATE COORDINATION.**

Policies are developed to cover multiple areas of natural resource management. However, implementation mechanisms are often absent. Therefore, there is no central coordination body to assess what issues are being addressed by various partners. As such partners, take work on what they are interested in and fail to coordinate with other actors in their jurisdiction. For instance, despite forest and wildlife resources being closely linked, there is no information at the national level on how complementary resource management benefits the community, government, or partners. As a result, these resources continue to be discussed in isolation.



## TOWARDS INTEGRATED FOREST AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Integrating wildlife and forest resource management in Zambia remains an ambitious milestone across government and conservation partners. This desire for greater coordination and integration is incorporated into the forthcoming CBNRM policy. Integration can reduce interventions' costs and ensure holistic landscape conservation support. It can expand support to more areas, increase impact, and reduce duplicity. Integration can also strengthen relationships between partners, communities, and district government officials. However, there are several other reforms needed for success, including.

**Increase partner cooperation in forest and wildlife activities** at the national and landscape levels to ensure progress in tackling resource management challenges. Sharing resources and undertaking periodic check-ins can help DNPW, FD, communities, and conservation partners reduce costs, achieve greater impacts and avoid pitfalls. This includes permanent platforms for wildlife and forest conservation. This platform can facilitate learning and resource sharing. In the long-term, the consolidation of forest, wildlife and fisheries departments within a single ministry could be beneficial for landscape management.

**Support national coordination of community voices on CBNRM** to improve resource management. While the ZCRBA is attempting to represent CFMG interests, at present it is too strongly associated with the wildlife sector and will require longer-term reform and coordination. Central to this goal is information sharing between communities. These costs are not prohibitively expensive but do require investments in local level CFM also support national level engagement.

**Strengthen the chiefdom's capacity to drive development and planning.** Community governance structures should be empowered by partners, in coordination with government departments, to interact with national-level activities. Since communities host various stakeholders, strengthening their stakeholder engagement skills is critical to coordinated forest and wildlife management approaches. If chiefdom administration can play a stronger active role in leading coordination (and conflict resolution), as well as calling upon government, community and civil society support where needed, resource management can improve.

**Invest in replicable, and frequent training.** Leaders in community institutions are bound to change every three years for CRBs and five years for CFMGs. Thus, capacity building should be linked to these election cycles. While partners will always have specific tools and resources associated with their institutions, a basic set of resources and materials should be available and used across multiple departments and institutions.

With political will and funding, Zambia has the legal framework, institutional experience, and positive will at multiple levels to produce a coordinated approach to effective CBNRM.

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