



Preparing Local Governments for Inclusive Economic Development along Zambia's Lobito Corridor

Context

The Lobito corridor is a major transport and economic route linking the Port of Lobito in Angola with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia. It is being supported by the European Union through the Global Gateway, alongside other international partners and donors. The corridor is expected to improve transport and trade links and bring new investment into areas such as mining, agriculture, logistics, and related sectors.

In Zambia, the corridor will have an impact on several councils in the Copperbelt and North-Western Provinces, including Chingola, Kitwe, Ndola, Kalumbila, Solwezi and Kapiri Mposhi alongside nearby district that are expected to benefit from the increased trade and economic activity.

For local communities, while this investment could mean new jobs, businesses and opportunities, it will also bring changes as growing towns and increased business activities means creation of more demand for land, housing, roads, water, sanitation, waste collection and other council services. Local councils will therefore have an important role to play in managing growth, planning infrastructure, supporting local businesses, protecting the environment, and ensuring that local communities benefit.

Contracting authority: The European Union

Lead executing agency: Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Implementing partners: Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ)

Regions: Zambia – Copperbelt and Northwestern Province

Budget: €40,000

Duration: 6 months

However, discussions between CLGF and LGAZ have highlighted that local authorities have so far very limited involvement in the Lobito corridor planning and consultation. The period following the Zambia's 2026 elections provides an important opportunity to address this. New councils will be considering their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and setting priorities for the coming years, creating a timely entry point to ensure that the opportunities and risks linked to the Lobito Corridor are integrated in local planning.



Objectives

The project aims to strengthen local governments along Zambia's Lobito Corridor to manage growth and maximise long-term local economic and social benefits. It has four specific objectives:

- **Capacity building:** Equip newly elected councils in Copperbelt and North-Western provinces to plan for corridor impacts.
- **Multistakeholder coordination:** Enhance policy engagement and dialogue among local authorities, national government, the EU and key partners.
- **Technical support for IDP:** Assist IDPs reviews, focusing on inclusive urban growth, local economic development (LED), climate resilience, gender equality.
- **Enhanced advocacy:** Support LGAZ and corridor councils to engage in relevant national, EU and other consultations and decision-making processes.

This project will encourage councils to make sure that the opportunities created by the corridor are opened to women, young people and persons with disabilities, while also considering Local economic development, climate resilience, environmental protection and community development.

Strategic approach and expected results

A targeted pilot aligned with local government elections and incoming council planning cycles. Rather than establishing parallel structures, CLGF and LGAZ will leverage existing local and national government mechanisms and build upon ongoing initiatives across the corridor.

1 Council readiness and corridor briefings

Analyse corridor plans, partner initiatives, and investment forecasts to develop practical briefing materials for incoming political and administrative leadership.

Key expected results: Newly elected councils in Copperbelt and North-Western provinces receive evidence-based briefing materials to guide early-term decisions on land use, infrastructure, service delivery and LED.

2 Mayors and town clerks dialogue

Convene a dedicated Lobito Corridor Mayors and Town Clerks Roundtable alongside the LGAZ Annual General Meeting to bring together mayors, town clerks and council secretaries and establish shared regional priorities and commitments.

Key expected results: Political and administrative leadership commit to a unified local government position, formalised in a joint statement or communiqué to strengthen dialogue with national government and development partners.

3 Targeted support for IDP reviews

Deliver hands-on technical assistance via advisory missions, workshops and drafting IDPs reviews for councils undergoing statutory planning.

Key expected results: At least 03 priority councils formally integrate corridor opportunities, LED, climate resilience and gender equality directly into their statutory Integrated Development Plan (IDP) reviews.

4 Advocacy, coordination and local government voice

Map national, EU, and partner consultation mechanisms to facilitate direct local government's direct participation through existing meetings and consultation platforms.

Key expected results: LGAZ and corridor councils establish an active presence in key national, EU, and corridor-level decision-making platforms, ensuring local benefits (SMEs, job creation, and municipal services) are prioritised early in the planning process.

Contracting authority

The European Union

Lead executing agency

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

Key implementing partners

Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ)

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