

JANUARY 2020

# NEWSFLASH 2



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## WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of LACEP 2!

As the New Year is upon us, we find ourselves reflecting on the past year and on those who have helped to shape our project in the most significant way. We value our relationship with you and look forward to working with you in the year to come.

In 2020, we will continue our work with LAs, with a focus on each LA's unique needs, through our LA Support Packages. In addition, our work with ALAs on the implementation of their capacity building plans will continue.

Wishing you a Prosperous, Hopeful and Peaceful 2020!

Happy Reading!

### Keep in touch with the LACEP 2 project:

Email: [lacepzimbabwe@gmail.com](mailto:lacepzimbabwe@gmail.com)

Web: [virtualcampus.mdpafrica.org.zw/lacep](http://virtualcampus.mdpafrica.org.zw/lacep)

Twitter: LACEP ZW

Facebook: Local Authorities Capacity Enhancement Project



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# ROLL OUT OF THE NEW CHARTS OF ACCOUNTS AND PROGRAMME BASED BUDGETING

PROGRAMME BASED BUDGETING AND THE NEW CHARTS OF ACCOUNT TARGETS TO STRENGTHEN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE. THIS WILL CREATE AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT TO AUGMENT BUDGET DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE THAT ENABLES AND ENHANCES THE LA'S OVERALL PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.

The Government of Zimbabwe approved the roll out of the new Charts of Accounts (CoA) and Programme Based Budgeting (PBB), which are included under the ambitious reform process, the Transitional Stabilization Programme (TSP). The motivation for introducing PBB and the CoA is to contain public debt and reduce budget deficits, which constrain the fiscal space, with the ultimate objective of expanding social and developmental spending.

Facilitated by the Ministry of Local Government Public Works National Housing (MoLGPWNH) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), LACEP 2 supported the pilot trainings aimed at assessing the roll out of the CoA and PBB in 2 clusters in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces. LACEP 2's support to this initiative builds upon the direct investment towards the LA's improvement in areas of financial accounting, budgeting and reporting in tandem with the national guidelines.

PBB provides a shift in focus of the budgetary process from an input-based annual activity to a performance-based exercise that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of expenditures and lays the foundation for the modernization of public finance management system. PBB ensures that LAs prioritize performance orientation in the budget; it emphasizes value

for money. PBB safeguards that LAs focus on the activities that have the greatest benefit not only to the institution, but also to the citizens the LA serves.

The new CoA cements the roots for financial credibility, it ensures that LAs uphold the tenets of financial credibility which will ideally translate to transparency, accountability and improved service delivery. Essentially, the new CoA provides guidelines for LA on the preparation, adoption and maintenance of the budget.

LACEP 2's immediate activities after these trainings on PBB ad CoA has been to assist participating LAs with the implementation of the new guidelines, supporting the LAs on their Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) and on-the-job coaching of LA staff, guided by their unique needs on PFM (accounting, budgeting, auditing, reporting, etc)

It is all about making Local Authorities spend their budgets better.

MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST NEWS ON LACEP 2!

OUR DIGITAL SITES ARE REGULARLY UPDATED WITH INFORMATIVE CONTENT THAT AIMS AT UPDATING AND INCREASING INTERACTION WITH ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO ENTER INTO THE DIALOGUE.



# THE 3<sup>RD</sup> COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS INDABA

RURAL LOCAL AUTHORITIES GEARING UP FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF AN UPPER MIDDLE-INCOME SOCIETY BY 2030



Development Partners with the Head of State and Government, His Excellency Pres. Emmerson Mnangagwa

The Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Council Chairperson Indaba on 17-18 July 2019 in Victoria Falls with support from LACEP 2 and other development partners.

The high-level Indaba was officiated by the Head of State and Government, His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa. The main objective of the Indaba was for Rural District Councils (RDCs) to meet and lobby the President of the Nation on various policy and operational issues affecting development and service delivery in rural areas. In addition, the Association invited various Ministries to discuss government direction and policy thrust on the devolution framework, Transitional Stabilization Programme (TSP), Development Control, Road Infrastructure Management, Environmental Management, and Mining activities among others.

In a bid to promote good corporate governance, effective and administration of LAs, RDCs affirmed the following resolutions;

1. To standardize motion forms to facilitate efficient and effective conduct of meetings through the Association.
2. RDCs are encouraged to leverage on the existing natural resources available in their respective districts (this includes harvesting or bailing grass for domestic and export) and engage in income generation activities to improve revenue mobilization.
3. RDCs through Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAP) to take lead in implementing reforestation programmes with relevant government and non-government agencies (among others, Forestry Commission, ARES, Parks and Wildlife)
4. RDCs to actively promote the ease of doing business to promote Local Economic Development and attract investment.
5. LAs to enhance collaboration with relevant stakeholders including Traditional Leaders in promoting development.
6. RDCs are encouraged to coordinate the implementation of projects by NGOs, specifically the identification of areas of intervention, to ensure that donor funds address areas of need and there is value for money.
7. Council Chairpersons affirm to fight all forms of corruption in the governance of RDCs.



# ‘CREATING A ROADMAP FOR EQUAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT’-WILGF CONGRESS 2019

UNPACKING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The Association of Rural District Councils (ARDCZ) in partnership with CLGF, MDP hosted its 4th Women In Local Government Forum (WILGF) Congress from 11-14 June 2019 in Bulawayo.



ARDCZ WILGF Congress 2019 Group Picture

The theme was “**Creating a roadmap for equal participation of women in rural local governance**”. The Congress was officially opened by the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Hon S. Nyoni.



Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Hon S. Nyoni

The conference was attended by Gender Champions and Gender Focal Persons elected

from all the 60 RDCs, female council Chairpersons and CEOs among others. Invited guests included Minister of State for Bulawayo Province, Hon J. Mkwanda and Deputy Minister of Local Government Hon. J. Mhlanga among others.



Former Deputy Minister of Local Government Hon. J. Mhlanga

The main objective of the workshop was to elect the WILGF national executive committee members that will provide leadership and direction to the forum at national level and also appraise the Gender Champions and Gender Focal Persons of their mandate in championing gender mainstreaming in rural LAs.

There was consensus on the need for supporting legislation that will ensure equal participation of women in positions of power as enshrined in Section 17 of the National Constitution. Furthermore, the need to integrate Urban and Rural WILGF as one voice in the lobby and advocacy of gender issues in local government sector was emphasized.

# SERVICE LEVEL BENCHMARKING FOR RURAL LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE

SERVICE LEVEL BENCHMARKING IS A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK WHERE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IDENTIFY, MEASURE, COMPARE AND IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH PEER REVIEW



**Dr. E. Pise Southern Team Leader and Mr. Z. Ndlovu, CEO, during the Pre-testing in Nkayi RDC**

In 2012, the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing with financial and technical support from World Bank, started a Service Level Benchmarking (SLB) in Local Authorities (LAs). SLB is a performance management framework where LAs identify, measure, compare and improve service delivery through peer review.

The SLB process begins with identifying services to be benchmarked and then development of indicators to measure performance of services identified against agreed standards. Data collection tools are developed, leading data collection process. The data is then analysed and the performance/service delivery gaps are identified. The next step will be the development of the Service Delivery Improvement Plans (SDIP), which subsequently lead into the implementation and monitoring of the plans through peer reviews.

It was first implemented in 2012 in all the 32 Urban LAs to monitor and improve the level of service delivery in water supply, wastewater and solid waste management following the Cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe. In the Zimbabwean context, SLB forms an important component in the nation's drive towards prosperity as enunciated in the Government of Zimbabwe's current Vision 2030 of attaining an upper middle-income society by 2030 and the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP).

SLB was introduced to Rural Local Authorities as a performance assessment framework to improve service delivery for both WASH and non-WASH services. The SLB Program in Rural LAs is being coordinated by the Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) in partnership with MoLGPWNH, with financial and technical support from Development Partners such as; Commonwealth on Local Government Forum (CLGF), Municipal Development Partnership (MDP) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The Process began with Chief Executive Officers from all the 60 RDCs identifying critical services to be benchmarked. A total of 17 services were identified and subsequently the identified services were streamlined to 7 clusters namely Social Services, WASH, Corporate Governance, Local Economic Development, Infrastructure Development,

Natural Resources Management and Integrated Development.

Process of SLB in Rural District Councils:

#### 1. SLB National Steering Committee

The CEOs appointed a National SLB Steering Committee to manage and coordinate the SLB program. The Steering Committee is comprised of members of the CEOs Forum, Chairpersons of the Junior Fora and other relevant Stakeholders such as ZINWA, EMA, Ministry of Local Government, among others.

The SLB National Steering Committee agreed that the SLB program should start with a learning phase where a few services will be piloted in all 60 RDCs. The Steering Committee also resolved to exclude the Local Economic Development and Environmental Management Clusters in the meantime and pursue the remaining three clusters. The services identified for piloting were, Governance (Human Resources, Public Finance Management), Health Services, Water Supply and Roads services. The original 7 Clusters were streamlined to 5 services selected for the learning phase.

#### 2. SLB Technical Team

Following the selection of services for piloting, the SLB National Steering Committee selected a Technical Team to develop data collection tools (questionnaires) that will be used to collect data in all the 60 RDCs. The Technical Team is comprised of Chairpersons and Secretaries of all the Professional Fora of the Association, namely; HR, Treasurers, Engineers, Internal Auditors, Social Services among others.

#### 3. Data Collection Questionnaires

Five questionnaires were developed for the five selected services. The Technical Team managed to review the questionnaires with Peer Review Coordinating Committee (PRCC) from UCAZ for quality assurance given the Urban Councils' vast experience in implementing SLB. The next step was to test the questionnaires in selected RDCs to determine whether the questionnaires were clear, user friendly and able to gather the required data.

#### 4. Data Collection Questionnaires Pre-Testing

Testing of SLB questionnaires was done in four RDCs selected in different provinces; Chikomba RDC – Mashonaland East, Mhondoro-Ngezi RDC, Mashonaland West, Tongogara RDC Midlands and Nkayi RDC Matebeleland North province. The Technical team was divided into two groups, Southern and Northern Team each headed by a CEO. Each team visited two RDCs. The teams were comprised of professionals from respective services, Ministry representatives and development partners – CLGF, UNDP and MDP.

In 2020, SLB plans for RDCs are as follows:

- SLB training and awareness of RDCs executives and Policy makers
- Intensive training of CEOs and SLB focal persons
- Roll out of the SLB peer reviews in all RDCs