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## USAID PROJECT BRIEF

# TENURE & GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

## ZAMBIA: ENHANCING CUSTOMARY LAND ADMINISTRATION

The majority of land in Zambia is allocated and administered by traditional authorities, led by a chief and based on the application of customary practices. As Zambia's economy and population grow, new pressures are placed on customary lands and its forest and wildlife resources. Demographic and social pressures bring increased land disputes and pressure to convert customary land to state administered leasehold land. Individual smallholders commonly have no documentation of their land claims, resulting in complex land disputes over boundaries, defense of rights in the event of divorce, death of a family member, or reallocation of land. Such boundary disputes are reportedly becoming more common. Both traditional leaders and village members are increasingly attuned to a need for some form of documentation to assist in long-term land management. Additionally, Zambian law places forest and wildlife resources under state control, and with limited mechanisms for devolving rights and benefits to local stakeholders.

As the Government of Zambia develops a new land policy, and launches a land audit, national land titling program, and new forest and wildlife acts, it is important to demonstrate cost-effective models for customary land documentation, administration and management that promote and strengthen the role of local institutions and result in sustainable land and resource management. Since 2014, USAID's Tenure and Global Climate Change (TGCC) project has supported the Chipata District Land Alliance (CDLA) in using Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST) to pilot tenure strengthening activities in over 130 villages in four chiefdoms in the Chipata District. USAID's work focuses on the role of traditional leaders as custodians of customary land. As part of this work, USAID is undertaking a randomized-control trial impact evaluation to better understand whether customary land documentation increases sustainable land use practices, like agroforestry.

The local level USAID-supported interventions include activities related to:

- Chiefdom-level mapping of resources, particularly communal resources, as well as documenting customary rules around land administration and management;
- Village-level mapping and resolution of village boundary disputes, and supporting headpersons in local land administration through village committees; and
- Supporting Chiefs to deliver and administer customary land certificates.

Early results from Chipata, with over 6,000 customary land certificates distributed, demonstrate a keen interest in documenting village and household lands as well as shared resources. In order to assess the scalability of this approach, TGCC is supporting the Petauke District Land Alliance to carry out a similar process in Sandwe Chiefdom on 180,000 hectares at the southern-most border of Zambia’s wildlife flagship, South Luangwa National Park.

USAID’s support is bringing international good practices on systematic land documentation to Zambia through collaboration with government, civil society organizations, and other cooperating partners. This has involved communication at the national level of lessons learned and training to a range of actors.

In addition to assistance on land documentation, USAID’s TGCC program is providing support for government, civil society, and traditional authorities to discuss the range of policy and legal issues around customary and state land administration, and feed these discussions into national policy and legislative processes. This involves supporting consultation between government and the chiefs, as well as promoting public comment on land legislation. USAID is promoting a Zambian-driven research agenda on land administration and management through research seed funds and an annual research symposium.

TGCC’s work in Zambia bridges policy, pilot implementation, multi-stakeholder consultations and empirical research to promote land policy and rural land administration that achieves sustainable livelihoods, climate change mitigation and increased communication between government, rural leaders and local communities.



Pauline Tembo of Maguya Chiefdom designs a field for planting during an agroforestry training.

PHOTO: JAMES KALALUKA, COMACO



Reviewing maps of village boundaries produced through a participatory exercise in Mkanda Chiefdom.

PHOTO: CHIPATA DISTRICT LAND ALLIANCE



Chieftainess Mkanda distributes a customary land certificate to a community member from Mgamphula Village, with District Commissioner looking on.

PHOTO: STEPHEN BROOKS, USAID

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