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USAID PROJECT BRIEF

TENURE & GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

ZAMBIA: ENHANCING CUSTOMARY LAND ADMINISTRATION

Globally, USAID aims to end extreme poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential. In Zambia, USAID’s support follows Zambian government development objectives, particularly around enhancing government service delivery and reducing poverty in rural areas through smallholder agricultural productivity, natural resource management, and increased resilience of vulnerable households. USAID sees secure land and resource rights as an underlying pillar of stability and economic growth. With secure rights, farmers are able to invest in their land to increase productivity and establish livelihoods that are resilient to the effects of climate change. With clear land information and administration systems, Zambia’s rural governance structure of chiefs, their councils, and village headpersons can more effectively communicate and negotiate with the district and national government on the location of rural service needs ranging from schools to clinics to agricultural and wildlife extension services. As a result, and in the context of Zambia’s emergent National Land Policy, USAID is committed to supporting activities that strengthen the rights of local communities to register their household and communal lands under their traditional leaders; and increase access to land information.

The majority of land in Zambia is allocated and administered by traditional authorities. As Zambia’s economy and population grow, new pressures are placed on customary lands and their forest and wildlife resources. Demographic and social pressures bring increased land disputes and pressure to convert customary land to leasehold tenure under government managed land administration. Individual smallholders commonly have no documentation of their land claims, resulting in complex disputes over boundaries, defense of rights in the event of divorce, death of a family member, or reallocation of land.

From 2014 to 2018, USAID’s Tenure and Global Climate Change (TGCC) program supported the Chipata District Land Alliance in using Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST) to pilot tenure strengthening activities in over 130 villages in four chiefdoms in Chipata District. As part of this work,

PHOTO: MATT SOMMERVILLE, TETRA TECH

USAID undertook a randomized control trial impact evaluation to better understand whether customary land documentation increases sustainable land use practices, like agroforestry. Interventions included activities related to:

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

In order to assess the scalability of this approach, TGCC supported the Petauke District Land Alliance to carry out a similar process in Sandwe Chiefdom at the southern-most border of Zambia’s flagship national park, South Luangwa.

In addition to assistance on land documentation, USAID’s TGCC program provided support for government, civil society, and traditional authorities to discuss land policy and legal issues, and feed these discussions into national policy and legislative processes. USAID promoted a Zambian-driven research agenda on land administration and management through research seed funds and an annual research symposium. TGCC’s work in Zambia bridged 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.

RESULTS

- Over 6,000 customary land certificates produced in Chipata District covering 134 villages across four chiefdoms as part of a randomized control impact evaluation. Over 2,700 farms received extension and inputs related to agroforestry within these chiefdoms.
- Over 10,000 farms demarcated and mapped and certificates distributed across Sandwe Chiefdom, bordering South Luangwa National Park.
- Over 30 public consultations on the draft Land Policy held at district, provincial, and national levels.



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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