



2025 2029

STRATEGIC PLAN



Foreword



Ms. Mwaka C. Mukubesa

Board Chairperson

**ZAMBIA INSTITUTE FOR POLICY
ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH**

It is with great pride that I present the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan for the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR). Over the years, ZIPAR has positioned itself as a premier think tank, delivering evidence-based policy insights and fostering informed decision-making to shape Zambia’s socio-economic development trajectory.

This plan marks a significant milestone in ZIPAR’s journey, defining our roadmap for the next five years. Anchored on the four strategic pillars—Policy Analysis and Research Services Excellence, Operational Excellence, Financial Sustainability, and Institutional Accountability Excellence—the plan reflects our commitment to addressing Zambia’s pressing development challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities.

The strategic orientation set forth in this plan responds to Zambia’s dynamic policy landscape, the aspirations outlined in Vision 2030, and our regional and global commitments, including Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. With the sharpening of the vision to consolidate ourselves as “a think tank of international repute, influencing public policy” and the mission “to champion evidence-based policies for sustainable economic development,” we affirm our commitment to continuous improvement of our service standard, reinforced by our core values.

We have taken a forward-looking approach by prioritizing data-driven research, strengthening institutional resilience, and fostering partnerships that will position ZIPAR as a globally recognised brand. The plan underscores our commitment to sustainability, transparency, and high-quality service delivery in supporting national development objectives.

On behalf of the Board of ZIPAR, I extend my deepest gratitude to our all stakeholders, including the Government of Zambia, development partners, private sector collaborators, and the dedicated ZIPAR Management and Staff. Your unwavering support and collaboration remain instrumental in our success.

As we embark on this new phase, we reaffirm our dedication to working tirelessly to enhance ZIPAR’s impact on Zambia’s policy environment. Together, based on informed decision-making, we can build a resilient and prosperous future.

Acknowledgement



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zali B. Chikuba'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Mr. Zali B. Chikuba
Executive Director

**ZAMBIA INSTITUTE FOR POLICY
ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH**

The development of the 2025–2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan is a testament to the collective commitment and dedication of numerous individuals and institutions that have supported our journey toward shaping a better future for the Institute and indeed, the Nation. On behalf of ZIPAR, I extend my sincere gratitude to all who contributed to this important milestone.

First, I wish to express profound appreciation to the Board of Trustees for their visionary leadership, strategic oversight, and unwavering support in guiding this process, ensuring that the strategic direction articulated in this plan aligns with Zambia’s development aspirations and ZIPAR’s mandate.

We are also deeply indebted to all our stakeholders—the Government of Zambia, development partners, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and regional and international collaborators – for the support during the strategic plan development process.

To the Consultant, Management, Environment and Governance (MEG) Associates who coordinated and documented this plan up to the first draft, your expertise and facilitation skills have been instrumental in shaping this forward-looking strategy.

I also wish to thank Cabinet Office—Management Development Division (MDD) for their steadfast commitment and collaboration. Your technical input and dedication to fostering collaboration have significantly enriched this plan.

Special thanks go to Management and Staff of ZIPAR, for their hard work, innovative ideas, and relentless dedication throughout this process. Your resolve to embrace change is at the heart of our ambition to elevate ZIPAR’s role in policy analysis and research, dialogue and advocacy, and capacity building training.

Executive Summary

The 2025–2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan builds on the achievements of the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan, extended to 2024, to advance its mandate of evidence-based policy research and analysis. This blueprint addresses emerging challenges, defines key objectives, and sets a framework for stakeholder-focused outcomes. It prioritises policy impact, capacity building, strategic partnerships, and institutional resilience, positioning ZIPAR to enhance Zambia’s policy landscape sustainably and effectively.

The development of the 2025–2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan followed a robust, inclusive methodology grounded in accountability and participation. Combining stakeholder insights, analytical tools like PESTEL and McKinsey 7S, and structured engagements, the process ensured a comprehensive evaluation of ZIPAR’s internal and external dynamics. Iterative validation was used to refine the strategic priorities, resulting in a strategic plan that is evidence-based, actionable, and aligned with ZIPAR’s and mandate.

Chapter 3 of ZIPAR’s 2025–2029 Strategic Plan provides an external context analysis highlighting Zambia’s development framework, international and regional commitments, and key political, economic, social, and environmental factors. The analysis underscores Zambia’s alignment with Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and the Paris Agreement, as well as national priorities like Vision 2030 and the 8th National Development Plan. ZIPAR is strategically positioned to provide evidence-based research, advocate for policy continuity amidst political shifts, and support adaptive strategies in energy, industrialization, and regional integration. This approach ensures ZIPAR remains integral to driving Zambia’s sustainable development goals.

The economic environment analysis underscores Zambia’s persistent economic challenges and resilience. Despite notable GDP growth recovery, significant fluctuations driven by external shocks like COVID-19 and climate variability reveal vulnerabilities across key sectors. Inflationary pressures, fiscal deficits, and a heavy reliance on external debt necessitate robust policy interventions. With sustained deficits in trade and balance of payments, coupled with currency volatility, addressing structural bottlenecks through innovation, diversification, and reforms in agriculture, mining, and energy becomes imperative. ZIPAR’s role in advocating data-driven policy solutions is central to fostering economic resilience and sustainable growth during the 2025–2029 period.

Chapter 4 of ZIPAR’s 2025–2029 Strategic Plan assesses the organization’s governance, operational structure, and human resources. It highlights critical challenges, including misaligned functions, staff retention issues, and capacity gaps in research and support roles. Strategic enhancements are proposed to address financial sustainability, infrastructure needs, and ICT modernization. Recommendations include introducing new technical units, reinforcing organizational culture, enhancing communication strategies, and aligning processes with strategic goals, ensuring ZIPAR’s continued leadership in evidence-based policymaking.

ZIPAR’s 2025–2029 Strategic Plan identifies critical issues and defines a robust framework for achieving its mission of championing evidence-based public policies for sustainable economic development. Anchored on four pillars—Policy Analysis and Research Services Excellence, Operational Excellence, Financial Sustainability, and Institutional Accountability Excellence—the plan addresses Zambia’s key development challenges, such as policy continuity, economic resilience, climate change, and governance.

By leveraging the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach, ZIPAR has aligned its goals with national priorities, will enhance its operational capacity, and promote financial and institutional sustainability. Guided by its values of excellence, integrity, objectivity, independence, diversity, accountability, professionalism, ZIPAR aims to consolidate its role as a globally recognised policy research think tank. Figure 1 provides a visual representation

of the how the four strategic pillars will support ZIPAR to achieve its Vision by focusing on its mission and demonstrating its core values in all its operations.

ZIPAR’s vision and mission are articulated as follows:



Vision

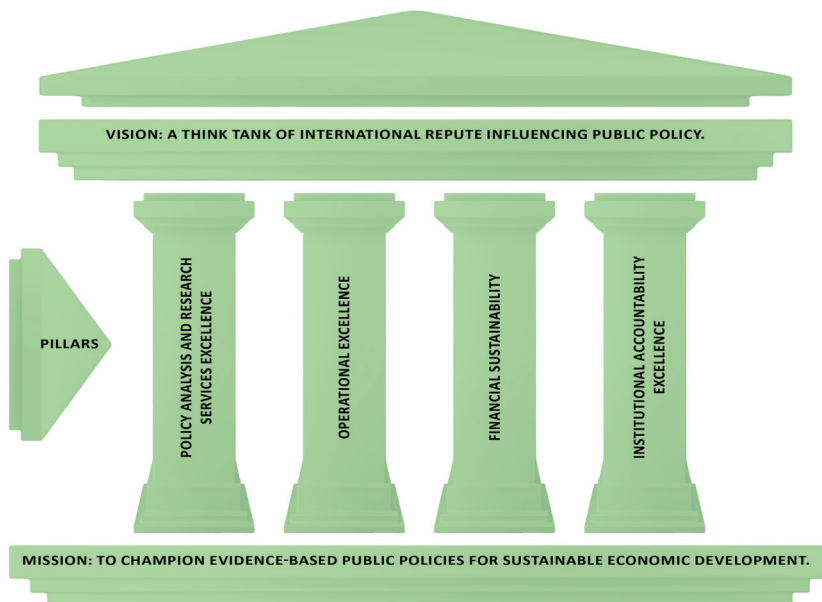
A think tank of international repute influencing public policy.



Mission

“To champion evidence-based public policies for sustainable economic development.”

Figure 1: ZIPAR Strategy House



The 2025-2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan will be implemented across the Institute by aligning annual work plans with the Strategic Plan to ensure the effective delivery of strategic objectives. The implementation will include a robust bi-annual performance appraisal system to achieve these objectives.

An implementation framework has been developed as an integral part of the strategic plan to monitor progress during execution. Throughout the 2025-2029 period, ZIPAR will maintain a strong focus and disciplined approach

to execution, ensuring effective strategies, efficient change management, and the achievement of desired outcomes, as illustrated in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Strategy Implementation Flow

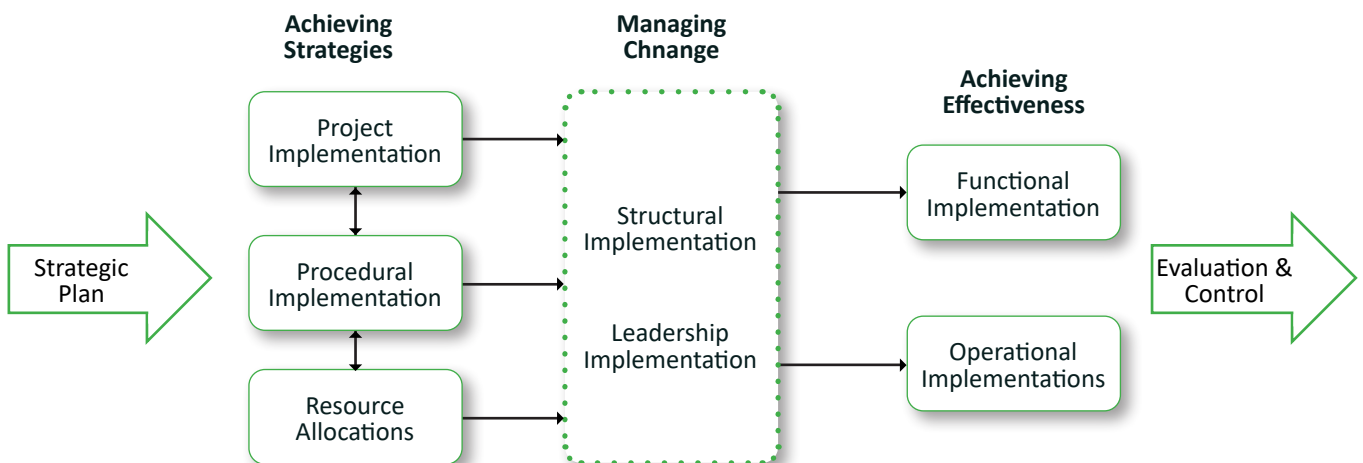


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Acronyms/Abbreviations

8NDP	Eighth National Development Plan
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BDU	Business Development Unit
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ZAMSTATS	Zambia Statistical Agency
ED	Executive Director
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KII	Key Informant Interview
MNDP	Ministry of National Development Planning
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAC	National Economic Advisory Council
NSTC	National Science and Technology Council
PACRA	Patents and Companies Registration Agency
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal
PMRC	The Policy Monitoring and Research Centre
R&D	Research and Development
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNU-WIDER	United Nations University – World Institute for Development Economics Research

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background

Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) is a think tank whose mandate is to conduct research and policy analysis to inform public policy. It was established under the Societies Act, Chapter 119 of the Laws of Zambia in 2006 and became operational in 2009. ZIPAR was established by a joint agreement between the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

In accordance with the Government Gazette Notice No. 1123 of 2021, administratively, ZIPAR falls under the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. The Institute supports the Government of Zambia, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders through evidence-based policy advice and research. The specific functions of ZIPAR are to undertake:

- a) Policy analysis and research;
- b) Policy dialogue and advocacy; and
- c) Policy capacity building and training.

1.2 Rationale of the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

The development of the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan was driven by the need to address the Institution in a new strategic direction. This initiative aims to address emerging opportunities and challenges, ultimately enhancing the service provided to stakeholders and fulfilling the Institution’s mandate.

The Strategic Plan outlines ZIPAR’s objectives and strategies for the period 2025-2029. It builds on the achievements and lessons learned from the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, extended to 2024. Furthermore, it reflects the key priorities of the Board of ZIPAR and Management, along with a commitment to the expressed interests of key stakeholders. These elements will guide the implementation of the Institution’s mandate.

This Plan will serve as a blueprint for the realization of ZIPAR’s vision and mission over the strategic plan period. It provides a basis for the derivation of annual work plans and budgets, monitoring, and evaluation framework for ZIPAR.

1.3 Performance Analysis of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

A performance review of the 2018-2021 ZIPAR Strategic Plan, extended to 2024, was undertaken, and the results show progress on at least six key result areas as follows:

d) Stakeholder Satisfaction

ZIPAR successfully retained over 90 percent of its local and international partners since 2018, demonstrating strong stakeholder satisfaction. These enduring partnerships have been instrumental in advancing policy dialogue and advocacy while contributing to the Institute’s financial sustainability.

e) Policy and Research Training

The Institute organised eight policy and research training programmes, enhancing stakeholders’ capacity in evidence-based policymaking, data analysis, and research methodologies. Notable achievements include:

- Economic Literacy: Over 63 media houses trained, leading to increased demand from the media on ZIPAR's analysis and gradual reduction of the misrepresentation of quoted ZIPAR outputs in the media to below 5 per year between 2021 and 2023;
- Budget Analysis: Trained over 300 persons – 150 Members of Parliament, 59 Permanent Secretaries, and 50 Journalists – since 2020. There is enhanced understanding of the national planning and budgeting system and budget debates have become more objective; and
- MicroZAMOD: Over 30 civil servants from relevant ministries and agencies of the Government have been trained in micro simulation of tax-benefit policies resulting in improved understanding the impact of welfare programmes and subsequently the adoption of the recommendations of ZIPAR for Cash Plus reforms.

f) Research Collaborations

ZIPAR strengthened partnerships by formalizing eight Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and four contractual agreements. These collaborations bolstered revenue, enhanced research outputs, expanded policy engagement, and deepened capacity-building initiatives.

g) Contributions to Targeted Government Policies

During the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, extended to 2024, ZIPAR produced 298 policy analysis and research outputs which is, over 70 percent of the targeted number. Since initiating impact tracking in 2021, 18 outputs have directly informed key Government decisions, including:

- Implementation of the Minimum Wages Policy (2022);
- Advancement of the MSMEs Policy (2022);
- Reinstatement of investment incentives to spur industrialisation in Special Economic Zones as pronounced in the 2022 National Budget;
- Approval of partial withdrawal of pension benefits for NAPSA members (2023);
- Mapping of service providers for MSMEs (2023);
- Development of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) Policy (2024);
- Enhancements in Public Investment Management (2024); and
- Development of the Green Growth Strategy (2024).

h) Skills Upgrading

ZIPAR remained committed to enhancing staff capacity by facilitating training for 58 personnel across a variety of disciplines, reflecting ZIPAR's ongoing commitment to fostering a skilled and motivated workforce, to drive its mission.

Key initiatives included:

- Economic Modeling and Forecasting Training (2018): A two-week programme that engaged 12 researchers, equipping them with advanced tools for economic analysis and projections;
- Data Visualization Training (2019): A programme involving three researchers, which significantly enhanced the Institute's ability to present research insights through impactful visuals;

- Leadership Training (2019): A two-day workshop for senior and middle management, benefiting 15 participants by strengthening leadership and decision-making skills;
- Advanced STATA Training (2022, 2023): Comprehensive training sessions for 15 staff and interns, improving data analysis and statistical modeling capabilities; and
- Public Finance Management Training (2023–2024): A nine-month programme conducted by the African Development Bank Academy, benefiting five staff members and bolstering expertise in public finance management.

In summary, over 70 percent of the outputs were delivered during the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, extended to 2024, period. However, the following opportunities for improvement were identified:

- a) The need to align partnerships and activities with ZIPAR’s core mandate and thematic focus;
- b) Lack of clarity in certain strategic themes, such as policy advisory proficiency;
- c) Inadequate mainstreaming of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the strategic plan to track and assess both outputs and impacts;
- d) Insufficient operational flexibility to mitigate disruptions from shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and water or energy shortages;
- e) High turnover among senior staff, critical to achieving strategic objectives, created uncertainty;
- f) Importance of maintaining a pool of part-time staff and consultants to meet demand for additional services through the Business Development Unit (BDU) while keeping the core team lean;
- g) A holistic approach to staff motivation, including long- and short-term capacity-building initiatives, is essential for retention;
- h) Adequate funding from stakeholders is crucial for ZIPAR to fulfil its mandate; and
- i) Limited focus on resource mobilization left the Business Development function underdeveloped.

1.4 Strategic Plan Scope

The ZIPAR Strategic Plan covers the period from 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2029. This strategic plan has been structured to respond to the following strategic questions:

- a) What is ZIPAR’s identity and purpose?
- b) What is the strategic position of ZIPAR within Zambia’s policy space?
- c) Where does ZIPAR want to be?
- d) How will success by ZIPAR look like?

Chapter 2 - Methodology

The process of developing the 2025-2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan and the associated logical framework adhered to the principles of ownership, inclusiveness and participatory approach:

- a) Accountability and transparency** - The process ensured open and meaningful engagement with all key stakeholders, and
- b) Inclusiveness and participation** - Data was gathered from diverse stakeholder groups, both internal and external, including the Board and Staff, as well as Government agencies, civil society, private sector, and corporate partners.

The approach combined structured engagements, analytical rigour, and iterative validation to ensure a robust, evidence-based strategic plan. The specific methods are summarised below:

a) Data Collection;

- Engagement Tools: Data was gathered through a mix of meetings, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), allowing for both depth and breadth in stakeholder input; and
- Stakeholder Scope: Internal and external stakeholders contributed insights, enriching the planning process with diverse perspectives.

b) Analytical Frameworks;

- PESTEL Analysis: Identified external factors influencing ZIPAR, including Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal dynamics.
- McKinsey 7S Framework: Assessed internal organisational dynamics, focusing on strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, staff, and leadership style.
- Data Interpretation: As illustrated in Figure 4, these tools enabled a comprehensive evaluation of external opportunities and challenges alongside internal strengths and weaknesses.
- The approach employed a phased implementation of processes beginning with the inception phase, stakeholder engagements, strategic planning workshops, validation and review and then the finalisation phase, as follows:

c) Inception;

- An inception meeting with senior management outlined the timeline, clarified expectations, and assigned responsibilities.
- A comprehensive review of key documents informed the strategic framework and culminated in an inception report detailing the agreed methodology and roadmap.

d) Stakeholder Engagement;

- FGDs and KIIs engaged senior management, Board members, and external stakeholders, ensuring inclusivity and alignment with ZIPAR's vision.
- These engagements provided critical insights on emerging issues and priorities for the strategic plan.

e) Strategic Planning Workshop;

A consultative workshop brought together ZIPAR’s management and staff to synthesise findings, identify strategic priorities, and establish the foundation for the strategic plan draft.

f) Validation and Review; and

The draft strategic plan underwent;

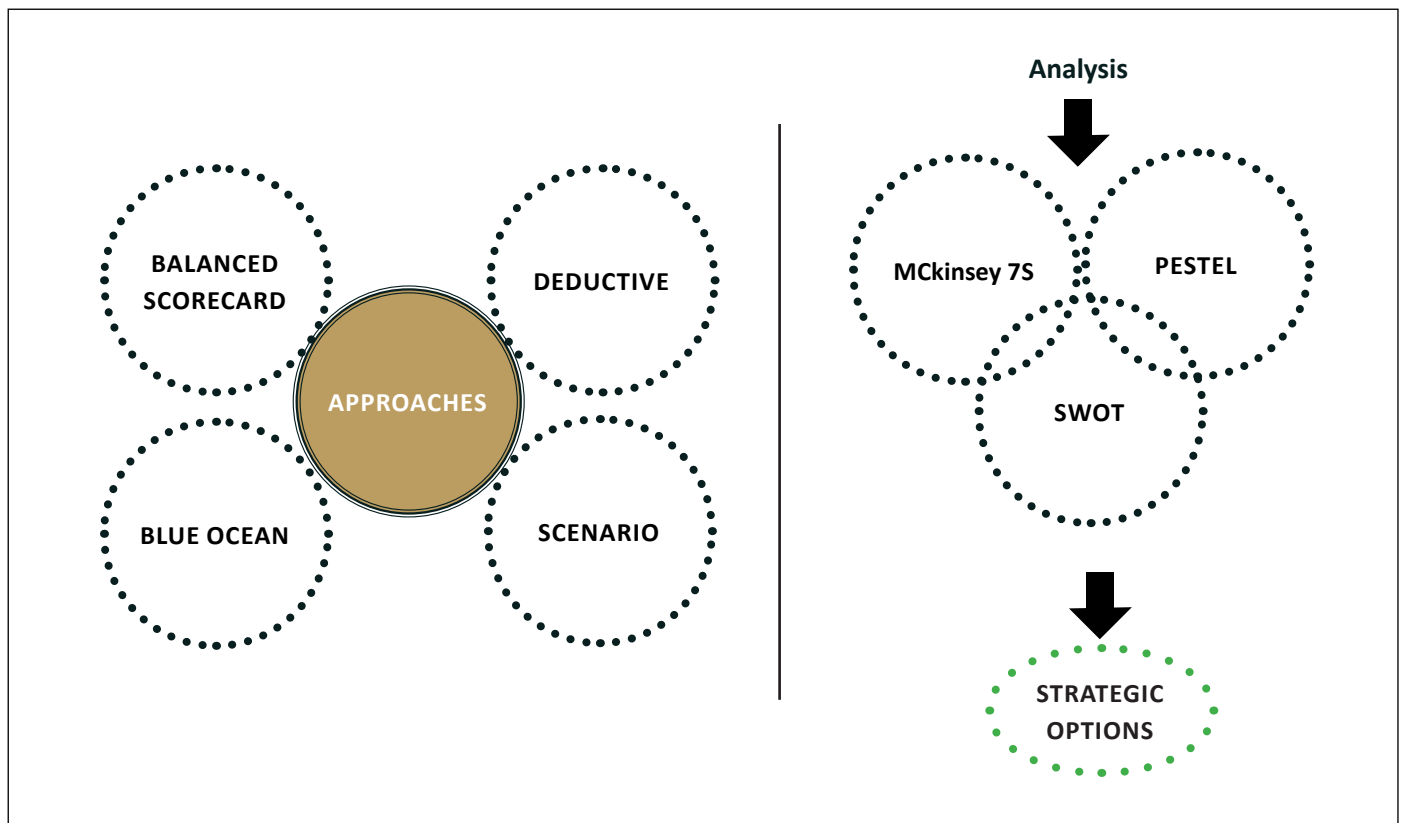
- Internal Validation: Reviewed by the senior management team to ensure alignment with organisational goals,
- Committee Reviews: Assessed by the Technical and the Finance and Administration Committees for technical accuracy and resource alignment, and
- Board Review: Finalised with input and approval from the Board of ZIPAR.

g) Finalisation.

Feedback from all stakeholders was incorporated to produce the finalised 2025–2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan, ensuring it was comprehensive, actionable, and aligned with ZIPAR’s mandate.

Recognizing the diversity of strategic planning approaches and methods, ZIPAR adopted the most effective and simple methods, as illustrated in **Figure 3**. This approach integrated analytical frameworks like SWOT, PESTEL, and McKinsey 7S to comprehensively address external and internal challenges and opportunities. This approach ensured that the strategic plan provided a clear and actionable roadmap for ZIPAR’s future direction.

Figure 3: Tools used for data analysis



Chapter 3 – External Environment Analysis

Introduction

Zambia's development agenda is shaped by international and domestic development frameworks, including Agenda 2030, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and commitments, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and various other regional commitments under SADC and COMESA. Locally, it is anchored in Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, and various sector-specific strategies. These frameworks, commitments and policies establish the foundation for Zambia's development priorities and strategic alignments, and they shape the way ZIPAR will position itself to remain relevant as a think tank of international repute.

3.1 International Development Frameworks

3.1.1 Agenda 2030

Zambia's development priorities align closely with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasising poverty reduction, sustainable economic development, human development, sound governance systems and environmental sustainability. Zambia has prioritised 10 SDGs to align with the country's development agenda, reflecting national goals such as climate change adaptation, sustainable development, poverty eradication and economic growth. ZIPAR's work can be pivotal in tracking and driving progress towards achieving the SDGs by providing evidence-based research, policy analysis, and advocacy across key sectors.

3.1.2 The African Union's Agenda 2063

As a member of the African Union, Zambia's Vision 2030 and subsequent national development plans reflect alignment with Agenda 2063's long-term aspirations, such as fostering inclusive economic growth, enhancing infrastructure, and achieving a united and sustainable Africa. ZIPAR can be crucial in advancing Zambia's Agenda 2063 commitments by conducting policy research, providing evidence-based recommendations, and advocating for actionable strategies. In particular, ZIPAR's work on cross-cutting issues like regional integration, trade facilitation, and sustainable development can help drive progress toward realising the goals of Agenda 2063. By bridging national priorities with regional aspirations, ZIPAR is a key partner in shaping Zambia's contributions to Africa's shared vision.

3.2 International Development Commitments

3.2.1 Global Climate Change Agreements

Zambia's commitment to global climate change agreements and, in particular, the Paris Agreement underscores its dedication to addressing climate change. The Paris Agreement forms the basis for Zambia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) policy and the Green Growth Strategy, fostering renewable energy investments, adaptive agriculture, and disaster management. This alignment ensures sustainable growth while mitigating climate risks critical to the country's socioeconomic development.

Since 2017, ZIPAR has strategically aligned with this agenda, becoming a key provider of policy research on sustainable development and low-carbon growth, especially in agriculture, transport, and energy. With Zambia's emissions rising by 17 percent between 2010 and 2020, ZIPAR's specialised Emerging Themes Unit supports the Government's adaptation and mitigation efforts, contributing to climate resilience and the transition to a green economy.

3.2.2 Regional Commitments – SADC and COMESA

As a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Zambia must align its development priorities with the strategic frameworks of these regional economic communities. These frameworks emphasise priorities such as trade facilitation, infrastructure development and economic integration, which closely align with Zambia's national development objectives. Through its research, ZIPAR can support Zambia in leveraging these regional agreements and frameworks to maximise their benefits and drive sustainable development.

3.3 Domestic Development Frameworks

3.3.1 Vision 2030

Vision 2030 provides Zambia's long-term development roadmap, aiming to transform the country into a prosperous middle-income nation by 2030. The Vision emphasises economic diversification, job creation, industrialization, infrastructure development, poverty reduction, and all areas where ZIPAR can play a critical role by providing evidence-based policy solutions.

3.3.2 National Development Plans – Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP)

The Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP) (2022–2026) serves as the current medium-term planning framework, underpinned by the theme "Social and Economic Transformation to Improve Livelihoods". The 8NDP identifies four strategic development areas: 1) economic transformation and job creation; 2) human and social development; 3) environmental sustainability; and 4) good governance environment. ZIPAR's thematic areas align with these priorities, making the Institute well-positioned to support the Government's efforts in meeting these broad objectives.

3.4 Domestic Development Policies and Strategies

Several policies and strategies across key sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture, mining, tourism, and energy, heavily influence Zambia's development agenda. Commitments to regional economic communities like SADC and COMESA shape these strategies, particularly in fostering regional trade and economic integration. Multi-Facility Economic Zones (MFEZs) are pivotal in advancing industrialization by promoting manufacturing and enhancing value-added exports in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, aligning with regional objectives to boost intra-regional trade and competitiveness. This alignment underscores Zambia's commitment to leveraging regional frameworks for sustainable economic growth.

Global shifts toward clean energy and reduced reliance on non-renewable resources are reshaping economic priorities. With Zambia's abundant renewable energy potential and critical minerals like copper, nickel, and cobalt, the country is strategically positioned to support the global energy transition. The mining sector

remains central, targeting an ambitious annual copper production of 3 million metric tons by 2031 and the development of critical minerals by 2028. These initiatives align with Zambia's Vision 2030 goal of becoming an industrialised middle-income nation and are crucial for fostering economic resilience.

Climate change and technological advancements further underscore the need for adaptive policies in energy and industrialization. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, Zambia's development agenda includes the implementation of the National Adaptation, a critical policy framework aimed at reducing emissions and building resilience across sectors. This evolving landscape has heightened the demand for ZIPAR's policy research and analysis expertise. By contributing to mining and energy policy discourses, ZIPAR supports evidence-based strategies to maximise economic benefits from resource wealth while advancing Zambia's commitments to sustainability and global climate goals, thereby solidifying its role in Zambia's development narrative.

3.5 PESTEL Analysis

3.5.1 Political Environment

a) Local political context

Zambia is a stable multi-party democracy with a long-standing tradition of peaceful elections and smooth transitions of power. Elections occur every five years under universal suffrage, reflecting strong democratic values. However, the frequent shifts in policy direction when new administrations take office challenge policy continuity, complicating ZIPAR's medium-term programming. This dynamic underscores the need for ZIPAR's role in fostering evidence-based research to promote sustained development agendas across political cycles

b) Geopolitical dynamics and international trade

Zambia's economy, like any other, is highly susceptible to global geopolitical tensions. Conflicts such as the ongoing Israel-Palestine and Russia-Ukraine crises have disrupted global trade routes and commodity supply chains, intensifying worldwide economic uncertainties.

The 2023 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report underscores a troubling trend of increasing global polarization and inward-looking policies, which could hinder Zambia's integration into international markets.

The report highlights a stark concentration in global trade, with nearly 40 percent of goods trade dominated by three countries. In 2021, the market capitalization of the three largest tech firms surpassed the GDP of over 90 percent of nations, illustrating the growing influence of a few players in shaping global economic trends. Such concentration exacerbates inequality, limits equitable development, and deepens geopolitical divides.

For ZIPAR, these trends impact institutional partnerships and limit financing options amidst the rising costs of sustaining the Institute's operations. At the programming level, the trends emphasise the urgent need to enhance research and policy guidance on international trade and finance. By addressing Zambia's vulnerabilities to external shocks and trade imbalances, ZIPAR can support the development of resilient, evidence-based policies. This will strengthen Zambia's economic stability and competitiveness amid shifting global dynamics, ensuring sustainable growth and equitable participation in global trade.

3.5.2 Economic Environment

Zambia's economic performance from 2018 to 2024 fell short of projections. While GDP growth was initially expected to exceed 5% (2018–2021) and 3.7% (2021–2024), actual growth was weaker due to external shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, cholera outbreaks, and unfavourable weather. Inflation consistently exceeded the target range of 6–8%, peaking at 22.1% in 2022 before easing to 13.1% in 2023 but beginning to rise again by 2024.

Public spending rose from 12.7% of GDP in 2018 to 14.7% in 2020, focusing on infrastructure and social services. However, fiscal deficits expanded as expenditures outpaced steady tax revenues of 16.6–16.8% of GDP, leading to significant borrowing. This culminated in Zambia defaulting on a Eurobond in 2020. By 2024, 75% of the external debt had been restructured through bilateral agreements with countries like France and Saudi Arabia, though private commercial debt remains unresolved.

Zambia's trade performance from 2018 to 2023 underscores its heavy dependence on mining, particularly copper, and its susceptibility to global commodity price fluctuations. In 2020, copper exports surged by 17.5 percent due to favourable prices but declined in subsequent years. Merchandise exports dropped sharply by 29 percent in 2022, with total exports falling from \$12.9 billion in 2021 to \$9.2 billion in 2022. Meanwhile, imports increased by 27.4 percent in 2022, driven by growing demand for essential inputs such as fuel, fertilizers, and machinery, contributing to widening trade deficits.

Gross international reserves (GIR) declined from \$1.4 billion in 2019 (2.5 months of import cover) to \$1.2 billion in 2020 before rebounding to \$3.3 billion in 2023. Nonetheless, the Kwacha depreciated significantly, from ZK12.92/US\$ in 2018 to ZK27.33/US\$ by November 2024.

These economic challenges strain financing for ZIPAR, a grant-aided institution reliant on public funding. Rising inflation and the Kwacha depreciation affect operational and capital expenditure planning. On the other hand, these challenges have increased demand for ZIPAR's policy analysis and research solutions, underscoring the urgent need for evidence-based economic reforms.

3.5.3 Social and Cultural Environment

Zambia, with nearly 20 million people (2022 census), faces significant social challenges, including rising poverty and inequality. Poverty increased from 54.4% in 2015 to 60% in 2022, driven by income losses, job cuts from COVID-19, and high living costs. At 78.8%, rural poverty far exceeds urban poverty (31.9%) and is exacerbated by climate shocks such as the 2023/24 drought, which severely impacted agriculture—key for 60% of the population's livelihood.

In response, the government has expanded social protection. Programs like the Emergency Social Cash Transfer supported over 726,516 drought-affected households in 2024, while Social Cash Transfers reached 1.3 million households. Initiatives such as the Cash Plus Agenda and Cash for Work align with national development goals to improve livelihoods and expand social security.

The Free Education Policy launched in 2022 has driven a 7.2% increase in enrolment (2022–2023), broadening access to education. However, this success highlights challenges like teacher shortages and inadequate infrastructure, which need urgent attention to sustain progress.

These socio-cultural realities highlight the need for ZIPAR to core equity in its operations. By providing evidence-based policy advice, ZIPAR can contribute to transformative policies that enhance resilience, reduce poverty, and promote equitable access to essential social services for all Zambians.

3.5.4 Technological Environment

ICT advancements, including improved internet connectivity and mobile communication, have enhanced research, innovation, and collaboration. However, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence present opportunities for economic transformation and challenges such as potential job displacement. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can potentially enhance staff productivity at ZIPAR. Leveraging technology for development at both institutional and national levels requires targeted policies and capacity-building efforts, areas where ZIPAR can play a vital role through research and strategic guidance.

3.5.5 Legal Environment

ZIPAR operates under the Societies Act (Chapter 119) and became a statutory body through Gazette Notice No. 836 of 2016. In 2021, it was realigned under the Ministry of Finance and National Planning via Gazette Notice No. 1123. While ZIPAR benefits from its statutory status, the discretionary powers of the Minister of Home Affairs or the Registrar to cancel a society's registration under the Act pose risks to institutional stability. This highlights the importance of advocating for a predictable legal framework to support ZIPAR's independence and sustainability.

3.5.6 Environmental Considerations

Climate change continues to impact Zambia, with increased frequency of droughts, floods, and extreme temperatures disrupting key sectors such as agriculture, energy, and water. Unsustainable resource exploitation and poor environmental management exacerbate vulnerabilities, undermining economic stability.

Mitigation and adaptation measures are crucial for promoting green growth and environmental sustainability. ZIPAR's research supports these efforts by informing sustainable practices, disaster preparedness, and low-carbon development strategies. A stable regulatory environment is needed to encourage the transition to a green economy, where ZIPAR's evidence-based policy guidance can play a pivotal role in enhancing Zambia's climate resilience and long-term economic stability.

The PESTEL analysis underscores the dynamic external context shaping Zambia's development landscape. Annex 4 comprehensively summarizes ZIPAR's external factors that underpin its operations. ZIPAR's ability to adapt and address these multifaceted challenges and support policy processes through rigorous, evidence-based research is central to driving sustainable economic transformation and resilience.

3.6 Stakeholder Analysis

This section outlines ZIPAR's stakeholder categories and their key needs, ensuring the Institute aligns its systems and services accordingly. A detailed stakeholder analysis is provided in Annex 2. ZIPAR's key stakeholders include line ministries that use research for policy decisions, the National Assembly for legislative processes, the Cabinet Office for policy coordination, and cooperating partners who support government policy priorities. These stakeholders are both consumers and potential supporters of ZIPAR's services, reinforcing the importance of strong relationships. Table 1, highlights the core policy-related needs and priorities of these

stakeholders, which ZIPAR will address in its 2025–2029 Strategic Plan to enhance its impact on evidence-based policymaking and national development.

Table 1: ZIPAR's stakeholder and their needs

#	Activity output	Output indicator
1	Government ministries/ agencies	a) Evidenced-based policy support, b) Technical input into decision-making processes, including Technical Working Groups (TWG) and high-level meetings
2	Parliament/ National Assembly of Zambia	a) Documented and oral evidence-based reports to inform debate b) Evaluation of the impact of laws, Inform budget alignment c) Capacity building and training programmes
3	Statutory bodies and parastatals	a) Performance reviews b) Industrial analysis c) Situation analyses d) Benchmarking e) Technical input into decision-making processes, including TWGs and high-level meeting
4	United Nations Systems	a) Collaborative research and dissemination b) Programme and policy evaluation c) Joint programme development and implementation d) Host annual flagship programme – the Budget Analysis e) Subcontracting/sub granting partnerships f) Consultancies
5	Civil society	a) Policy dialogue and advocacy partnership b) Capacity building training c) Programme reviews d) Joint programme development and implementation e) Subcontracting/sub-granting partnerships f) Consultancies
6	Academic institutions	a) Staff exchange b) Capacity building and training programmes c) Research fellow attachments d) Off-take of academic research into policy analyses e) Student internship and mentorship programme
7	Private sector	a) Policy advisory services b) Microeconomic analysis c) Market and investment environment analyses, d) Capacity building e) Consultancies

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 8 | Think tanks | a) Domestic and regional network building
b) Regional collaboration
c) Subcontracting and sub granting partnerships |
| 9 | Cooperating partners | a) Collaborative research and disseminations
b) Programme and policy evaluation
c) Joint programme development and implementation
d) Host annual flagship programme – the Budget Analysis
e) Subcontracting/sub granting partnerships
f) Consultancies |
| 10 | Defence wings | a) Conduct and produce research and policy analysis outputs
b) Capacity building and training programme |
| 11 | Media | a) Policy advisory services
b) Capacity building |

Chapter 4 – Organisational Analysis

4.1 Institutional Capability Assessment

A comprehensive evaluation of ZIPAR’s internal capacity is fundamental to the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan. This assessment, grounded in McKinsey’s 7S framework, examines the Institute’s strengths, weaknesses, key enablers, and potential challenges across strategy, structure, systems, staff, skills, shared values, and leadership style. Annex 3 provides a detailed breakdown of these factors, ensuring that ZIPAR’s strategic objectives remain both ambitious and achievable within the planning period.

4.2 Governance and Management

ZIPAR operates under a structured governance framework that ensures strategic oversight and accountability. The Board of ZIPAR provides leadership, sets the vision and objectives, and upholds corporate governance principles. Its oversight responsibilities are discharged through three specialized committees:

- Technical Committee – Guides research and policy analysis initiatives.
- Finance and Administration Committee – Oversees financial planning and reporting, staff matters, and institutional operations.
- Audit and Risk Committee – Strengthens internal controls, risk management, and compliance.

Management, led by the Executive Director (ED), an ex-officio member of the Board, oversees the Institute’s day-to-day operations. The ED is supported by executive and senior management, which ensures the effective execution of ZIPAR’s mandate in policy analysis and research, policy dialogue and dissemination, and policy capacity-building training. However, operational inefficiencies persist due to gaps in critical functions such as procurement, monitoring and evaluation, legal, and records management. Unconventional reporting lines further hinder operational effectiveness and compliance.

4.3 Organisation of ZIPAR

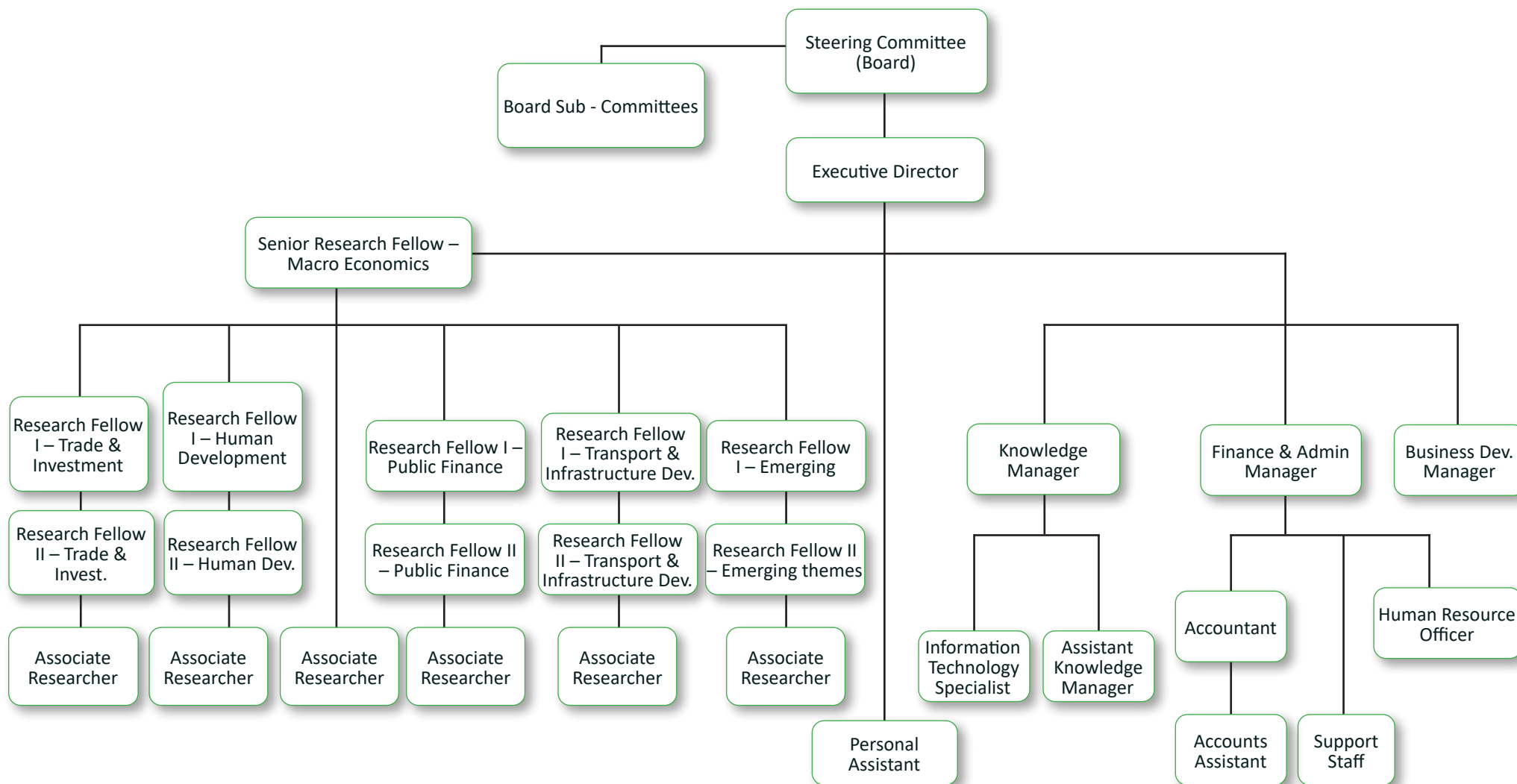
ZIPAR’s structure is primarily a combination of departmentalisation, work specialisation, chain of command, and span of control, shaped by its mandate. This structure allows for operational efficiency but can be limiting in harnessing individual talent and promoting career progression. The structure provides for two departments focussed on Research and Finance and Administration. The Research Department is organized around six core thematic areas:

- Macroeconomics;
- Public Finance;
- Trade and Investment;
- Human Development;
- Transport and Infrastructure Development; and
- Emerging Themes

The traditional chain of command makes decision-making more complex and does not allow for much flexibility. On the contrary, modern approaches strive to enhance employee autonomy and avoid micromanagement.

Despite this well-defined thematic approach, ZIPAR faces limitations in addressing emerging and cross-cutting policy areas such as mining and ICTs. The absence of these themes within the research structure reduces the Institute’s ability to respond to evolving policy demands. Addressing these gaps and strengthening institutional capacity will be critical for ZIPAR’s continued impact and adaptability.

ZIPAR Organisation Structure – 2017



Chapter 5 – Shaping the Strategic Focus of ZIPAR

ZIPAR’s strategic focus for 2025–2029 is built on four key strategic pillars shaped by internal and external environment analyses. These pillars were developed and refined using the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework (see Annex 1), ensuring a structured and comprehensive approach to addressing the Institute’s strategic priorities. These four pillars guiding ZIPAR’s 2025–2029 Strategic Plan:

- a) **Policy Analysis and Research Service Excellence**, i.e., effective, efficient, and provision of research services that meet or exceed stakeholders’ expectations;
- b) **Operational Excellence**, i.e., ensuring that ZIPAR operational capacity is of exceptional standard;
- c) **Financial Sustainability**, i.e., broadened financial sources or multiple streams of funding; and
- d) **Institutional Accountability Excellence**, i.e., upholding the highest ethical responsibility standards and delivering results.

Through these pillars, ZIPAR is well-positioned to address identified strategic issues and align with Zambia’s national development priorities, including:

5.1 External Strategic Issues

Policy Continuity and Governance Stability: Sustainable economic progress requires policy consistency, stakeholder buy-in, and an effective governance framework. This is only tenable when policy processes are consultative and evidence-based but essential to minimise disruptive policy shifts associated with changes in political administration. ZIPAR will reinforce its role in advocating for evidence-based policymaking to ensure continuity across political cycles and alignment with Zambia’s long-term development agenda.

Economic Diversification and Resilience: Zambia’s heavy reliance on the mining sector necessitates comprehensive policy reforms and targeted investments in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and energy. ZIPAR will prioritize research that supports industrialization, value chain development, SME growth, and economic diversification.

Macroeconomic stability: Persistent macroeconomic challenges – including exchange rate volatility, high public debt, inflationary pressures, and fiscal imbalances – threaten Zambia’s long-term economic prospects. ZIPAR will provide rigorous policy advice to enhance economic management, fiscal prudence, and sustainable growth.

Global and Regional Integration: Zambia’s commitments under the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and various regional trade agreements (SADC, COMESA, AfCFTA) necessitate well-structured policies to maximise national benefits. ZIPAR will undertake research that supports regional integration, trade facilitation, and investment promotion and regional competitiveness.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability: Climate change presents significant threats to Zambia’s economy, particularly in agriculture, energy, and infrastructure. ZIPAR will advance policy research on green growth, climate adaptation, and resource sustainability, aligning with the Paris Agreement and Zambia’s low-carbon development strategies.

Social and Human Development: Despite improvements in health, education, and social protection, challenges such as poverty, inequality, and unemployment persist. ZIPAR will generate evidence-based research to inform inclusive growth policies and address disparities between urban and rural populations.

Technological Advancement and Innovation: The rise of artificial intelligence, digital finance, and other emerging technologies presents both opportunities and challenges. ZIPAR will support the development of policies that harness technology for innovation-driven economic transformation while addressing regulatory and labour market concerns.

Institutional Independence and Sustainability: ZIPAR's legal status under the Societies Act creates operational uncertainties. Strengthening the institution's statutory foundation will be crucial in safeguarding its credibility, autonomy, and long-term sustainability.

Infrastructure Development and Other Strategic Issues: Zambia faces significant infrastructure deficits but has emerging opportunities in renewable energy, transport and critical minerals. ZIPAR must influence policies that drive sustainable investment, infrastructure modernisation, and resource efficiency.

5.2 Internal Strategic Issues:

HRM and Capacity: ZIPAR continues to face challenges in attracting and retaining skilled professionals. Addressing these issues requires fostering a supportive work environment, competitive compensation structures, and continuous professional development;

Financial Sustainability: Although the disbursement of the Government grant, which constitutes over 50 percent of the annual budgets, its amount cannot be easily adjusted upward to meeting the growing needs of the Institute. To ensure long-term financial sustainability, ZIPAR must continue to diversify its revenue streams;

Technology and Digital Transformation: Despite Zambia's growing ICT infrastructure, ZIPAR has not fully embraced digital tools for research dissemination and public engagement. Modernising its ICT systems, enhancing digital skills among staff, and expanding its online presence is necessary to maximise impact and ensure effective communication with stakeholders;

Research Processes and Quality: Although ZIPAR has research quality assurance frameworks in place, inadequate staffing and resource limitations could potentially impact its efficiency. Optimizing workflows, ensuring adequate staffing, and aligning research with emerging national priorities, such as mining and ICT, are essential for maintaining ZIPAR's premiership in policy analysis and research;

Stakeholder Engagement and Communications: ZIPAR's strong relationship with stakeholders is critical to ensuring maximum impact of its operations. Strengthening its communications strategy, enhancing stakeholder relationships, and utilizing both digital and traditional platforms will enhance access to and utilisation of ZIPAR's outputs;

Chapter 6 – Strategic Direction

ZIPAR’s 2025-2029 Strategic Plan outlines a clear pathway to achieving ZIPAR’s desired outcomes by identifying key growth areas and operational linkages. The strategic objectives are framed within a BSC approach, which provides a comprehensive perspective on organisational capacity. This approach elaborates the institution’s performance across four key dimensions: customer, business processes, financial, and organisational capacity. The following sections provide a detailed outline of ZIPAR’s strategic orientation, focusing on its vision, mission, and goals for the period of the Strategic Plan.

6.1 Vision and Mission Statement of ZIPAR

ZIPAR’s vision, which has evolved from the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, extended to 2024, remains focused on enhancing its influence on public policy. The Vision for period 2025-2029 is.

“ A think tank of international repute, influencing public policy. ”

This vision reflects ZIPAR’s aspiration to be a globally recognised institution that plays a significant role in shaping public policy through high-quality and evidence-based policy analysis and research.

Supporting this vision is ZIPAR’s mission statement, which outlines its purpose and mandate. The mission has been refined from the previous plan to reflect a clearer focus on sustainable economic development:

“ To champion evidence-based public policies for sustainable economic development. ”

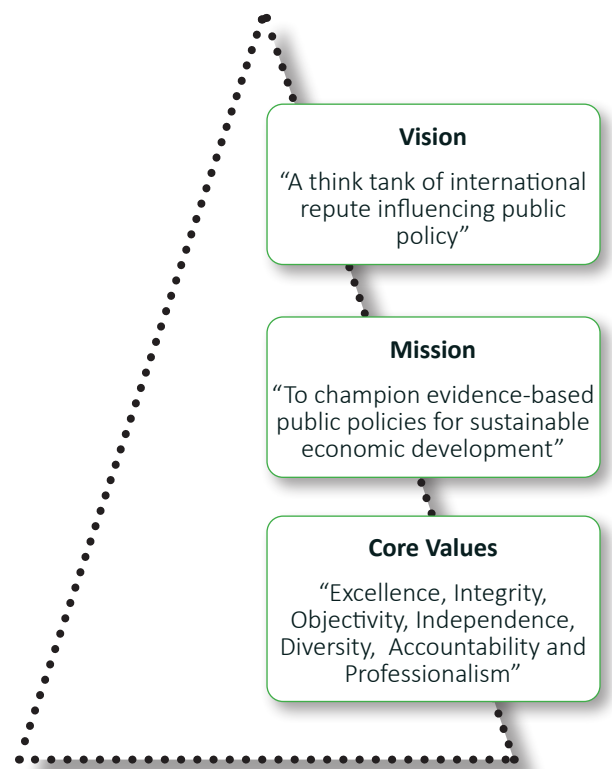
This mission emphasises the imperative for ZIPAR’s to produce rigorous, policy-relevant research that contributes to the long-term economic development of Zambia.

6.2 Core Values of ZIPAR

In alignment with its vision and mission, ZIPAR commits to uphold the principles of sound governance and excellence. The following seven core values, fundamental to all operations, will guide ZIPAR’s organizational culture, behaviour, and conduct:

- a) **Excellence-** ZIPAR is dedicated to innovation and continuous improvement, prioritizing the delivery of best value to stakeholders through superior research and analysis;

Figure 4: ZIPAR Vision Pyramid



- b) Integrity-** ZIPAR operates with honesty, ethics, and transparency, managing resources and conducting its business in a manner that fosters trust and is beyond reproach;
- c) Objectivity-** ZIPAR remains impartial, open-minded, and guided by unbiased, evidence-based analysis in the formulation of its advice and decisions;
- d) Independence-** ZIPAR ensures its research, analysis, and opinions are free from undue influence and bias, upholding its role as a trusted and credible think tank;
- e) Diversity-** ZIPAR embraces inclusivity and values differing perspectives, ensuring non-discrimination in its operations while leveraging the richness of divergent views to drive impactful outcomes;
- f) Accountability-** ZIPAR commits to taking responsibility for its decisions and actions, fostering confidence through openness to scrutiny and alignment with governance standards; and
- g) Professionalism-** ZIPAR demonstrates a high level of competence, ethical behaviour, and dedication to meeting its governance responsibilities with rigor and respect.

These values underscore ZIPAR's commitment to governance excellence, stakeholder trust, and the fulfilment of its mandate.

6.3 Strategic Pillars and Objectives

ZIPAR's Strategic Plan is anchored on four pillars that emerged from an inclusive and rigorous strategic planning process. These pillars will drive the Institute's mission and deliver enhanced value to stakeholders. The pillars are elaborated as follows:

6.3.1 Strategic Pillar One - Policy Analysis and Research Services Excellence;

ZIPAR reaffirms its commitment to delivering relevant, data-driven, theoretically sound, and practical policy analysis and research for improved public policy decision-making. Through this pillar, ZIPAR aims to be a thought leader in national and regional public policy discourse.

To achieve this, ZIPAR will conduct credible, evidence-based research that builds trust, strengthens stakeholder satisfaction, and enhances its corporate image. To ensure its outputs effectively inform public policy, ZIPAR will enhance the relevance of its research and accessibility of its dissemination strategies, catering to all stakeholders.

6.3.2 Strategic Pillar Two – Operational Excellence;

ZIPAR values operational efficiency, professionalism, and excellence in service delivery. To this end, the Institute will:

- Enhance business processes for greater efficiency;
- Strengthen its Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks; and
- Improve its procurement systems.

ZIPAR aspires to be an employer of choice, fostering an innovative workforce committed to driving sustainable economic development. It will focus on creating a conducive work environment, attracting and upskilling talent, and building a high-performing team aligned with its mission and values.

6.3.3 Strategic Pillar Three - Financial Sustainability;

Securing sustainable financing is a critical enabler for ZIPAR's long-term impact and growth. To achieve financial sustainability, ZIPAR will:

- Foster long-term collaborations and partnerships to diversify revenue streams; and
- Strengthen financial accountability systems to enhance resource management and resilience.

These measures will position ZIPAR as a financially robust and agile institution capable of adapting to changing circumstances while maintaining operational efficiency and effectiveness.

6.3.4 Strategic Pillar Four – Institutional Accountability Excellence.

Accountability and governance excellence underpin ZIPAR's operations. This pillar focuses on:

- Strengthening internal audit and risk management functions for robust oversight;
- Enhancing risk identification, assessment, and mitigation processes to minimise vulnerabilities; and
- Ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks while adhering to best practices in governance.

By embracing transparency, ZIPAR aims to serve as a model institution for accountability and operational efficiency.

The four strategic pillars, further elaborated below, reflect intentional, results-oriented strategies that will propel ZIPAR toward achieving its vision.

STRATEGIC PILLAR ONE – POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH SERVICES EXCELLENCE

Strategic Objective 1.1: To enhance ZIPAR's capacity to conduct evidence-based and policy-relevant analysis and research

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Increased demand for ZIPAR's research services and outputs	Number of research working papers produced	4 research working papers	36 working papers produced by 2029	Develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme Review the consultants and visiting research fellow programme
	Percentage of client-driven research agreed on milestones delivered on time	95 percent of client-driven research agreed on milestones delivered on time	100 percent of client-driven research agreed on milestones delivered on time annually	Strengthen ZIPAR's research policy and guidelines Review thematic coverage of ZIPAR's policy analysis and research Develop collaborative research forums for think tanks. Scale up flagship projects in priority areas
Satisfied Clients	Percentage client satisfaction level attained	83 percent client satisfaction attained ¹	85 percent client satisfaction levels attained annually	Enhance product and service design innovation Strengthen ZIPAR's policy dialogue and advocacy Strengthen Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation of policy analysis and research output
	Percentage of returning stakeholders	100 percent client retention	100 percent client retention annually	

¹ Based on the 2017 stakeholder survey

Strategic Objective 1.2: To improve the reach and accessibility of ZIPAR's research outputs

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Increased awareness of the ZIPAR outputs by relevant stakeholder²	Percentage of key stakeholder awareness levels attained	Not established	100 percent of relevant stakeholders are aware of ZIPAR research outputs, annually	Develop and implement the ZIPAR brand manual
Increased accessibility of ZIPAR outputs to stakeholder³	Percentage of stakeholders reporting to have accessed relevant research outputs of ZIPAR	Not established	100 percent of stakeholders reporting to have accessed relevant research outputs of ZIPAR, annually	Develop and operationalise a stakeholder engagement strategy Enhance platforms for accessing research outputs.
Widened ZIPAR stakeholder network	Number of MoUs signed with new stakeholders	3 MoUs signed with new stakeholder	9 MoUs signed with new stakeholders	

STRATEGIC PILLAR TWO – OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Strategic Objective 2.1: To enhance ZIPAR's internal operation systems

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Increased efficiency	Percentage of services conducted according to service charter standards	Not established	100 percent of services are conducted according to the service charter annually	Develop and implement client service charter: Upgrade and fully integrate the internal operating systems; Review and operationalise ZIPAR's standard operating procedures (SOPs); Review and develop requisite internal policies
Improved implementations of programmes and activities	Percentage implementation of planned programmes and activities	Not established	100 percent implementation of planned programmes and activities annually	Review and operationalise the Management Information System, including the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework;
Improved implementation of procurement plans	Percentage of procurement plans implemented	Not established	95 percent of procurement plans are implemented annually	Strengthen the implementation of procurement plans

Strategic Objective 2.2 To strengthen ZIPAR's human capital position

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Improved staff performance	Percentage of staff scoring "on target"	Not established	95 percent staff scoring "on target," annually	Strengthen human capital performance management systems Develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme
Optimal staffing levels	Percentage of staffing levels	74 percent staffing level	95 percent staffing attained by 2026	Review and fully operationalise the organisational structure Develop and implement the remote working policy
Motivated workforce	Percentage of staff satisfaction levels	Not established	100 percent of staff satisfaction attained by 2029	Develop and implement an employee engagement strategy
A professional, disciplined and efficient staff	Percentage of staff adhering to the Code of Ethics	Not established	100 percent of staff adhering to the Code of Ethics annually.	Develop and implement a staff sensitisation programme on the code of ethics

² Relevant stakeholders are identified in Table 1.

³ Same as above

Strategic Objective 2.3 To improve work environment and equipment

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Conducive work environment	Percentage of staff appropriately equipped with required tools	Not established	100 percent of staff appropriately equipped with required tools, annually	Develop and implement an Infrastructure development and maintenance plan Strengthen fleet management system
	Number of motor vehicles procured	2 motor vehicles	5 motor vehicles procured by 2029	
	Number of additional workspaces	Not established	15 additional workspaces established by 2028	
	Number of meeting rooms established	1 meeting room established	1 meeting room established by 2027	

STRATEGIC PILLAR THREE – FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**Strategic objective 3:** To enhance financial management and resource mobilization

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Improved accountability	Percentage of audit recommendations implemented annually	90 percent	100 percent of audit recommendations are implemented annually	Strengthen internal financial controls Develop and implement guidelines for the management of reserve funds
	Percentage adherence to financial regulations	80 percent	100 percent adherence to financial regulations annually	
	Percentage of budget adherence	80 percent	100 percent adherence to budget implementation annually	
Enhanced Financial sustainability	Percentage increase in cooperating partner support	ZMK1,000,000 support from cooperating partners	15 percent increase in support from cooperating partners annually	Develop and operationalise resource mobilization strategy Develop and implement a Business Development Strategy
	Percentage growth in UCD income generated	ZMK7,200,000.	45 percent growth in the income generated annually	

Strategic Pillar Four – Institutional Accountability Excellence**Strategic Objective 4:** To enhance institutional accountability

Intended results	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Baseline (2023)	Target	Strategies
Improved compliance with governance frameworks	Percentage compliance with internal policies	Not established	100 percent compliance with internal policies, annually	Strengthen risk management framework Develop and implement a Board orientation programme Strengthen the reporting system of the Board committees
	Percentage compliance with national regulatory and policy frameworks	Not established	100 percent compliance with national regulatory and policy frameworks, annually	

Chapter 7 – ENABLING FACTORS

The successful implementation of the 2025-2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan is anchored on several preconditions and assumptions. The Pre-conditions and Assumptions are elaborated below:

7.1 Preconditions

Preconditions are critical success factors within ZIPAR's control that will be necessary to ensure the Strategic Plan's success. The following are the preconditions that underlie the implementation of the 2025-2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan:

- i) The Board of ZIPAR shall provide leadership;
- ii) ZIPAR's leadership shall take ownership of the institution's strategic direction and lead staff members toward attaining its mandate;
- iii) ZIPAR shall recruit and maintain enough competent and committed staff;
- iv) ZIPAR shall review its organisation structure to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and align it with emerging issues;
- v) ZIPAR shall promote a positive organisational culture and adherence to institutional values;
- vi) The Institute shall maintain a conducive working environment;
- vii) The Institute shall ensure desirable and acceptable administrative policies are in place to guide the provision and management of resources and ensure on-point use for achieving overall organizational goals; and
- viii) ZIPAR shall ensure adequate, automated, and integrated operational systems.

7.2 Assumptions

Assumptions are critical success factors outside the control of ZIPAR but essential for successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. The following are the assumptions that underline the successful implementation of the 2025-2029 ZIPAR Strategic Plan:

- i) Continued political goodwill towards ZIPAR;
- ii) The Institute shall continue to receive adequate and timely funding;
- iii) Continued availability of adequate and uninterrupted power and internet connectivity;
- iv) Enhanced stakeholder relationships;
- v) Conducive socio-economic environment; and
- vi) No major pandemic causing social gathering restrictions.

Chapter 8 – Implementation Monitoring

To operationalise the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive Implementation Plan has been developed to include strategic activities, financial resource requirements, and annual and overall targets. The plan, detailed in a separate document, specifies the means of verification for each activity and ensures that progress reports are prepared and reviewed following the approved activity and resource schedules. As a foundation for M&E, the Implementation Plan will guide ZIPAR in tracking performance and making data-driven adjustments where necessary.

8.1 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

The success of ZIPAR's Strategic Plan hinges on robust MEL mechanisms. These mechanisms will operate at both Board and Management levels, ensuring a continuous improvement loop through every implementation phase. MEL will play a crucial role in:

- Tracking activities, results, and impacts;
- Informing organizational adjustments to achieve desired outcomes; and
- Managing inputs, activities, and outputs for sustained impact.

Key KPIs for the MEL process are embedded within the Implementation Plan and will be monitored regularly through an M&E dashboard. Management will prepare periodic performance evaluation reports to support decision-making and Board consideration. These reviews will include monthly, quarterly, annual, mid-term, and end-term evaluations to assess progress toward annual targets and overall strategic objectives.

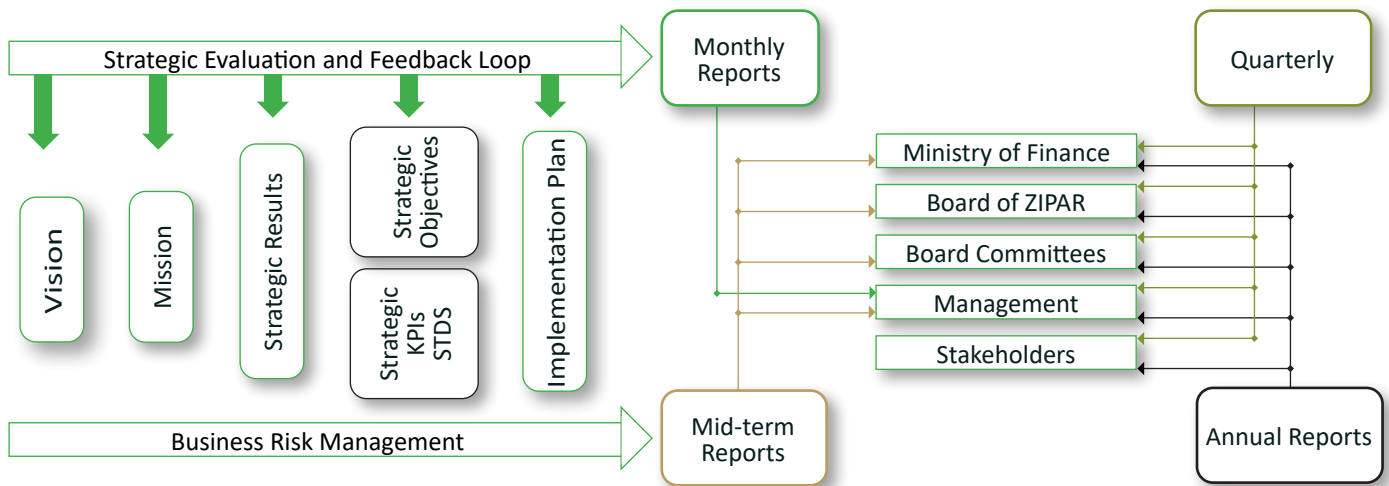
Performance assessments, grounded in the BSC methodology, will link strategic objectives to departmental and individual targets as follows:

- Heads of Departments (HoDs) will set performance targets aligned with the Strategic Plan;
- HoDs will agree on specific individual performance targets with their teams; and
- Departmental targets will cascade down from annual work plans, ensuring alignment with strategic goals.

Performance appraisal will occur bi-annually, supported by:

- Weekly unit meetings and monthly departmental meetings to assess progress;
- Monthly management meetings and quarterly board meetings to evaluate operational and strategic implementation; and
- Annual Strategic Plan review workshops with the Board and Management to evaluate outcomes.

Mid-term and end-term reviews will ensure the Strategic Plan remains relevant and achievable, with HoDs or designated M&E Officers monitoring departmental activities. Regular progress reports, prepared by operational units and reviewed by HoDs, will feed into quarterly and annual performance reports submitted to the Board, see Figure 5 depicting an overview of the M&E framework for ZIPAR.

Figure 5: Overview of M&E Framework of ZIPAR

The M&E of the departmental activities shall be carried out by the HoDs themselves or an assigned M&E Officer, resources permitting

8.2 Financing Plan

Effective financial planning and resource management are fundamental to ZIPAR's ability to deliver on its Strategic Plan and core mandate. To maximise the impact of the Institute's research outputs, a structured resource mobilization strategy will complement government grants, encompassing:

- Enhancing the role of the BDU to spearhead resource mobilization;
- Building strategic partnerships and collaborations to secure diversified funding sources; and
- Strengthening financial management processes to ensure accountability and efficiency.

Key financial sustainability metrics will be regularly tracked to measure progress. Prudent utilization of limited resources, including pooling resources where applicable, will ensure the Institute maximises its financial potential.

Financial forecasting will be pivotal in aligning resource management with institutional planning. ZIPAR will build upon existing and prospective networks to secure long-term project financing while diversifying its resource base. This includes reinvesting surplus funds to generate additional income streams and strengthen financial sustainability.

ZIPAR's approach to financial planning aims to ensure stability, resilience, and efficiency, enabling the Institute to achieve its strategic objectives while maintaining operational excellence.

Chapter 9 – Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Effective risk management is an ongoing process central to good governance and successful strategic plan implementation. This process involves the systematic identification, assessment, prioritization, and response to risks that could affect the strategy's outcomes.

To mitigate the risks, the Institute has undertaken a strategic risk assessment to identify potential risks that may impact the strategy's success. These risks have been catalogued in the Institute's comprehensive risk register, which is a dynamic tool for risk management.

Regular reviews of the risk register will be conducted at all levels to:

- Monitor changes in the severity or likelihood of identified risks; and
- Identify and address emerging risks promptly.

During the implementation of this Plan, the Board and Management will also develop a corporate risk map. This map will align closely with the mitigation strategies outlined in the accompanying risk mitigation matrix, ensuring appropriate measures are in place to respond effectively to identified and unforeseen risks.

By embedding risk management practices into its operations, ZIPAR will enhance its resilience, adaptability, and ability to achieve its strategic objectives in a constantly evolving environment.

Table 2: Risk Management Framework

Category of Risk	Type of risk	Assessment			Mitigation
		Impact	Likelihood	Timeframe	
External	Reputational	High	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the peer review mechanism • Implement talent retention initiatives
	Relevance	High	High	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensify professional dev. • Regular environmental scans
	Funding diversity	High	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensify private sector engagement • Pursues multi-year contracts • Use interest-bearing accounts
	Intellectual property	High	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing copyright • Sign confidentiality agreements
	Technological	High	High	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce cyber security measures • Adopt best practices
	Contractual	Low	High	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review contract terms • Seek legal advice • Ensure professionalism (ethics)
	Stakeholder	High	Moderate	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement strategy
	Policy shifts	High	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure objective analysis and inclusive processes
Internal	Change management	High	High	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change management strategy • Staff development • Incentives
	Research duplication	Moderate	High	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance academic and practical research • Collaborations • Ensure process transparency
	Human capital	High	High	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent attraction and retention strategy • Ensure competitive compensation • Leverage partnerships

Annexes

Annex 1: ZIPAR 2025-2029 Balanced Scorecard

Vision	A think tank of international repute influencing public policy			
Core Values	Excellence, Integrity, Objectivity, Independence, Diversity, Accountability and Professionalism			
Mission	To champion evidence-based public policies for sustainable economic development			
Strategic Pillars	Policy Analysis and Research Services Excellence	Operational Excellence	Financial Sustainability	Institutional Accountability Excellence
Intended Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for ZIPAR's outputs Increased utilization of ZIPAR's outputs Satisfied clients Increased accessibility Increased awareness Increased reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased efficiency Improved staff performance Improved implementation of procurement plans Conductive work environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved accountability Enhanced Financial sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved compliance with governance frameworks

	Strategic Objectives	KPIs	Targets	Strategies
Customer/ Stakeholder		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of audit recommendations implemented annually Percentage adherence to financial regulations Percentage of budget adherence Percentage increase in cooperating partner support Percentage growth in income generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 102 working papers produced by 2029 85% completion rate of core research 99% completion rate of UCD research 85% client satisfaction levels attained 50% of research outputs cited by 2029 85% client satisfaction levels attained annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen internal financial controls Develop and implement guidelines for the management of reserve funds Develop and operationalise resource mobilization strategy Develop and implement Business Development Strategy, Develop and operationalise resource mobilization strategy Develop and implement Business Development Strategy, Strengthen the BDU
Finance/ Stewardship		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of audit recommendations implemented annually Percentage adherence to financial regulations Percentage of budget adherence Percentage increase in cooperating partner support Percentage growth in income generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of audit recommendations are implemented 100% adherence to financial regulations & budget 15% increase in support from cooperating partners 35% growth in income generated annually 100% adherence to budget implementation annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen internal financial controls Develop and implement guidelines for the management of reserve funds Develop and operationalise resource mobilization strategy Develop and implement Business Development Strategy, Develop and operationalise resource mobilization strategy Develop and implement Business Development Strategy, Strengthen the BDU
Internal Processes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of services conducted according to service charter standards Percentage of programmes implementation progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of services conducted according to the service charter 80% implementation of planned programmes and activities 95% of procurement plan implemented annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement client service charter & capacity-building programme & staff feedback mechanisms Review and operationalise the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework Review and develop requisite internal policies Upgrade and fully integrate the internal operating systems
Organization Capacity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of staff scoring "on target" Percentage of staffing levels Percentage of staff satisfaction levels Percentage of staff adhering to the Code of Ethics Percentage of required tools that have been procured Number of motor vehicles procured Number of additional work spaces Number of meeting rooms established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95% of staff scoring "on target" annually 95% staffing attained by 2026 95% of staff satisfaction on work environment attained annually 100% of staff adhering to the Code of Ethics annually 5 motor vehicles procured by 2029 15 additional work spaces established by 2028 1 meeting room established by 2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen human capital performance management systems Develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme Review and fully operationalise the organization structure Develop and implement an employee engagement strategy Develop and implement a staff sensitization programme on code of ethics plan Develop and implement an Infrastructure development and maintenance plan Develop and implement the remote working policy Strengthen fleet management system

Annex 2: Organisational Assessment - Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean executive management, which facilitates effective decision-making, Clearly identified functions in most key functional areas providing appropriate scope of focus 	<p>Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure does not provide for a procurement function, which is a legal requirement, compromising internal controls Staff are forced to exceed the functions of their job description (due to the lean structure) to support the functions of the Institute, thereby reducing efficiency. Inadequate representation of critical functions in top management. Lean structure presents high vulnerability in times of high staff turnover. Inadequate numbers of technical senior staff. The functions of the BDU, Internal Auditors, M&E, and HR still remain weak. M&E is not mainstreamed in managerial roles
<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to attract and hire qualified and competent staff. Qualified staff capable of continuing business operations and meeting minimum performance expectations. Highly motivated staff willing to make extra efforts to complete tasks without additional compensation 	<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understaffing leads to an overload of work and fatigue; hence, staff do not meet their targets in time. Limited office space to accommodate all staff numbers and this disturbs workflow and creates a non-conducive work environment,
<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad-base of skills (technical, soft) enhances ZIPAR's effectiveness in performing its functions. Staff members taking personal development initiatives seriously (are engaged in self-development processes) 	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities for skills development/ (CPD) Unclear CPD policy. Inadequate diverse ICT skills to support research, Employees' condition of service is perceived as uncompetitive and inadequate. Employees do not receive adequate orientation on organizational policies and procedures, including values
<p>Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tentative procurement and internal audit systems in place to respond to the needs and functions of ZIPAR. The recruitment system can now respond to the needs of ZIPAR's core work. Organisational policies in place, e.g., financial, HR, and ICT. Timely delivery of results (90 percent efficiency), Prudent management of financial resources, 	<p>Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out-dated organisation documents, policies, and procedures, Lack of register of policies Lack of central data repository and backup Poor access to online libraries Performance management system not adequately implemented, thus weakening personnel decision-making, Delays in delivery of internal services (slow operational processes and workflows), Dysfunctional website – no research documents uploaded, Bureaucracy in the systems delaying decision-making, Weak policy and procedures for stakeholder engagement.
<p>Shared Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZIPAR values are well articulated in the Constitution and the Strategic Plan, High-level awareness of values at the executive level, Demonstrated values such as objectivity in carrying out research 	<p>Shared Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional values not adhered to, thus, an unclear organizational culture, Inadequate accountability arising from non-internalization of values.

Style (Management)

- Open door policy allows for reduced bureaucracy,
- • Deliberate space for all levels of staff to voice their opinions towards informing management decisions,
- No barrier (physical, operational) between staff and management, thus enhanced communication,
- Democratic leadership style, transformational leadership

Style (Management)

- No barrier leads to lack of confidentiality,
- Inadequate transparency in decision-making in some instances,
- Limited inclusion of staff in some decision-making processes e.g. the Emoluments Commission Report,
- Poor execution of leadership or supervisory function affecting institutionalisation of values.


Annex 3: The Actor Analysis – Opportunities and Threats



Stakeholder	Focus	Opportunities	
The National Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enacting legislation and development of policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand to inform evidence-based policy decision-making. • Receptive to calls for policy and legislative reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to comprehend the research results or the policy analysis, • Biased perspectives of research results and policy analysis.
The Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposing legislation and development of policies, • Ensure the implementation of policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of ensuring that progressive policies are introduced and adopted. • Monitoring of policy implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited uptake of results from research and policy analysis.
Ministry of National Development Planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZIPAR operates under the auspices of the Ministry of National Development Planning, in accordance with the Government Gazette Notice No. 836 of 2016, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Finance could play a crucial role in resolving these challenges by lobbying for adequate government support. • The Desk Officer is a link with ZIPAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without being a statutory body, ZIPAR does not have sufficient legal backing to work under the Ministry,
Other Government Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodian of sector development policies, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand for research and policy analysis. • Demand in policy formulation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funds for research and policy analysis.
Other research and policy analysis institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to influence policy decisions and public debate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibilities for collaboration and complementarity with research and policy analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These institutions present significant competition to ZIPAR in the realm of policy research and analysis
Private-sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the business of making profit and thus need information to make their businesses viable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for evidence-based information to support their business decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the private sector could divert ZIPAR from its core mandate.
Electronic and print media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information, entertainment and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to a wider population, which includes persons in remote locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media is polarised leading to misinformation of research results and policy analysis.
Cooperating partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical and financial support to social and economic research in Zambia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in supporting quality research and policy analysis. • Interest in supporting evidence-based programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in financial support and shifting priorities • Promoting research self-interest

Annex 4: The Factor Analysis – Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Political factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to access key policymakers • A democratic political landscape that allows objective views • Freely engage with government entities, • Strong political will which supports policy design and implementation, • Increasing demand for research in the policy space, especially by the National Assembly. 	<p>Political factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of government affects our resources and work • A change of Government and policy position could affect the policy focus of the Institute, • Faced with immense pressure to improve health, education, etc., politicians may not view research as a priority,
<p>Economic environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The present economic conditions enable more resources (ZIPAR being a grant-aided institution) • Steady flow of financial resources despite a challenging landscape because of the nature of the work that is impactful • Demand for economic solutions demands for more evidence-based research, 	<p>Economic environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluctuations of economic indicators (fuel costs, depreciation of currency, lack of resources to attract and retain skill set, rising cost of living) negatively affect operations of the institutions • Poor economic conditions may lead to fewer opportunities for research • Business operations are sometimes affected by unfavourable economic fundamentals (exchange rates, inflation)
<p>Social context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A growing literate population who can access ZIPAR's outputs, • Larger pool of qualified graduates for ZIPAR to access, • Increased population and high poverty levels require interventions through evidence-based research, 	<p>Social context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High illiteracy levels threaten the proper dissemination and implementation of policy • The target audience might not fully understand or appreciate the technical report disseminated • Disease breakouts (pandemics) such as COVID.
<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better technology enables for easy dissemination and access to information • Rise of digital platforms to showcase outputs, use of AI for research 	<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to ICT infrastructure limits access to ZIPAR's online output • Other institutions like PMRC remain more efficient because they have invested in the right tools and software • AI – This could provide policy analysis alternatives. • Data breach in cyberspace,.
<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Z• A conducive environment allows for the continuity of research processes • The impact of climate change and other developmental needs provides opportunities for problem-solving • stakeholder seek answers to both economic and social issues • Demand for research in energy transitions e.g. Electric Vehicles, renewable energy, adaptive agriculture methods 	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of adverse weather conditions affect ZIPAR's ability to carry out research and dissemination, • Load shedding affects the efficiency of work outputs (out of station),
<p>Legal/Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No laws that inhibit ZIPAR from carrying out objective research, • Demand for policy advisory services on the increase from Parliament, • The Access to Information law will address access to data challenges, 	<p>Legal/Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift in policy pronouncements can inhibit ZIPAR from carrying out research (e.g. COVID lockdown) • ZIPAR is not established by statute; this would enhance the uptake of its research results, • The restrictive laws on survey processes prove to be a constraint in the timely execution of studies



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