Strategic Plan
2017 - 2021
From administrative to developmental local government
Structure of the Association

CONGRESS
60 RDCs

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
President & 2 Vice Presidents
8 Provincial Representatives

Committes of The National Executive

8 Provincial Chapters
(Chairpersons)

8 Provincial Chapters
(Women In Local Government Forum)

Secretary General

Professional Forums
(Employees of RDCs)
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Foreword

The Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) is a membership, not for profit representative body for all the sixty (60) Rural District Councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe. The ARDCZ’s core mandated is to advocate, lobby, promote and protect the interests of the Rural Local Authorities.

The Association acts as a platform for the sharing of good local governance practices through communities of practice within the RDCs.

This strategic plan for the period 2017 - 2021 is a deliberate effort by the RDCs to pursue developmental local governance by addressing pertinent issues around the operational and legislative frameworks impeding sustainable and developmental Local Government.

The key focus areas, among others, in the stated period are; Lobbying & Advocating for the implementation of constitutional provisions on local government taking advantage of the current on-going policy re-alignment exercise to the new Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20 of 2013.

The overarching objective is to empower rural local authorities to govern on their own initiative the local affairs of their people in their areas of jurisdiction and have all the powers necessary to so as enshrined in the National Constitution.

The Association will also promote investment in Rural Areas to spearhead integrated rural development through the facilitation of Local Economic Development resulting in rural industrialization and improved living standards of the rural folk.

Lucy Furamera (Mrs.)
Secretary General
1. Introduction

The Association of Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe is a strategic actor in Zimbabwe Local Government. As the collective body of all sixty Rural District Councils, the ARDCZ has an onerous task of coalescing all its members around the emerging local government paradigm; the changing local government logic towards developmental local government.

The new order demands a local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives. This is also cognisant of the fact that members of ARDCZ are in charge of approximately 75% of the Country’s population who look up to their councils for leadership, development and services.

The ARDCZ is obliged to prepare, lead and respond adequately to these increasing needs of local government. A renewed vision, strategies and tactical approach is needed. This strategic plan is an articulation of ARDCZ analysis of the obtaining situation, key result areas, strategic intent and the action plan.

2. Purpose and Strategic Direction of 2017-2021 Strategic Plan

ARDCZ in compliance with its founding principles, intends to fully develop into the voice of the RDCs focusing on the overall development of local and national development and cooperation strategies for the enhancement of Zimbabwe local government. There are key factors that have made the development of this invasive strategy imperative.

There are policy, economic, political and capacity issues affecting local authorities that need strategic interventions. The current economic environment has had serious implication in the capacity of local authorities to deliver on their mandate. Local authorities revenue streams are limited given the current economic challenges that Zimbabwe is currently facing. Ratepayers are struggling to pay rates and taxes and businesses have closed down. Local authorities have not received any grant funding from central government to fund capital development programmes in many years. Lack of adequate funding has negatively impacted on the local authorities’ capacity to deliver quality services.

The Association thus has to lead local authorities in developing sustainable revenue sources and mobilisation strategies. ARDCZ will be advocating for a more sustainable and equitable funding of RDCs policy on revenue sharing between central government and local authorities, redefining central government's oversight role in tariff controls and new revenue streams, mobilisation and management systems.

Constitutionalisation of local government has redefined local governance. The establishment of
local authorities in the Constitution as a definite tier of government and the delineation of roles and responsibilities presents obligations that have to be implemented and managed strategically.

While the Constitution of Zimbabwe resonates with the core ideals of devolution, the implementation of constitutional provisions on local government require clear implementation framework, planning and informed citizenry. However, the trend has seen, continued many unfunded mandates and responsibilities being pushed to RDCs from the Centre without the necessary funding.

ARDCZ has an obligation to lead members in the process. There are changing trends in local government that RDCs have to respond to adequately and effectively. The informed citizens that RDCs superintend over are demanding more strategic leadership and development.

This strategic plan represents a commitment by ARDCZ members and Secretariat to manage the association according to the vision, mission and strategic issues outlined in the plan. The strategic plan is a collation and synthesis of intensive participatory technical and experiential planning processes involving membership and key stakeholders.

This Plan shall therefore be the basis of all key activities to be undertaken by ARDCZ during the period 2017 – 2021. Members of ARDCZ have a firm conviction that the pursuit of the identified strategic issues are going to set a trajectory for improved rural local governance and national development at large to improve people’s lives.

3. ARDCZ Institutional Configuration and Analysis

The Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ) was founded on 01 July 1993 following the amalgamation of the formerly racially segregated white Rural Councils and the native District Councils. The ARDCZ is the representative body of the 60 Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe. There are 1,564 elected rural Councillors in Zimbabwe and of those 251 are women which translate to 16%. There are five lady Council Chairperson and six lady Chief Executive Officers of council translating to 8% and 10% respectively.

The ARDCZ was established to advocate, lobby and safeguard the interests of and represent the Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe. This includes creating and maintaining a conducive environment for sustainability, promotion of principles of local governance based on respect for democratic values and strengthening cooperation between and among members and sharing of Good Practices for the benefit of the communities they serve.

The ARDCZ organization structure compose of the Congress (all the 60 RDC’s), National Executive which is the policy making body, headed by an elected President while the day to day operations of the Association is the responsibility of the Secretary General. All the 60 RDC’s are members of the Association. Everything being equal, the Association should be funded by its members through membership subscriptions.
The Association is recognised by all government departments and as a result it is always requested to provide necessary input on behalf of its member councils, thus, demanding high intellectual and professional personnel to undertake necessary research, management, monitoring and evaluation of the input proffered by the Local Government Sector.

The Association is currently manned by a skeleton staff complement with only one Senior Manager to cover the whole country. This situation has exerted immense pressure and strain on the Secretariat to ensure adequate attention to expansive and demanding business of the Association.

As a result, the Secretariat has had to rely on professionals within Councils in terms of representation at various forums, often times the majority of them turn down the requests citing lack of funds as the ARDCZ would not be able to pay for the travel and subsistence allowances needed.

Despite these internal capacity constraints, the ARDCZ has significantly raised its profile within the local government sphere and has managed to undertake a number of activities that significantly contributed to development of local government in the country. ARDCZ has scored remarkable successes in the immediate past and still ongoing these include; creation of Communities of Practice at policy level and within the various professional forums with a view of creating internal capacity within the rural local governance Sector.

The Association has also invested in its capacity to research, lobby and advocate on policy issues affecting the operations of RDCs. This has been very helpful in creating understanding as well as the articulation of issues in a coordinated manner.

Furthermore, the ARDCZ has established itself as a focal point for strategic reform and development relating to RDCs. It should however, be noted that the majority of the lobby and advocacy issues are legal in nature and involve scrutinising many pieces of legislation.

Unfortunately the ARDCZ and its member councils do not have legal minds as none of its members has a legal mind in its ranks. The Association has continued to seek friendly funding partners, however this has not been easy in the current harsh economic environment but the efforts will continue in earnest.

4. **ARDCZ Strategic Intent**

**Vision**
To lead RDCs in sustainable developmental local governance.

**Mission**
To advance and safeguard the rights, powers and duties enjoyed by the Rural District Councils and to promote local government and its role in development and sustainable service provision to improve people's lives.
4.1 Core Functions and Priority Areas

Advocacy and Lobbying
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Bridge between Central Government and Local Government

Information and Knowledge Management
- Innovations
- Brand management and marketing of RDCs
- Exchange of best practices
- Research and knowledge management

Governance and Capacity Building
- Peer review
- Unite all 60 RDCs
- Capacity building Management

Representative Role
- Conflict management among member RDCs
- Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA) matters
- Brand management and marketing of RDCs
- Employers organisation
- Linkages with regional and international Local Government bodies and issues

5. Strategic Considerations

Factors Influencing the Strategic Plan Development
- Managing changing Citizen's dynamics
- Decline in Revenue
- Garnishing of RDC bank accounts by Government institutions such as the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) and National Social Security Authority (NSSA).
- An increasing appetite by the centre to compete for resources with the 3rd tier of government, thus eroding the revenue base of RDCs.
- High poverty levels within the rural communities and the over dependence on handouts
- Increase in demand for quality and quantity of services
- Polarization
- Recentralization of revenue and unfunded mandates
- Changing logic (economic, social, political, technology)
- Constitutionalisation of Local Government
- Aligning Government Policy (ZIMASSET, Command Agriculture, IPRP)
• Climate Change
• Increase of knowledge institutions and dynamics in the labour market
• Need for organisational development (Organisational Structures)
• Increased demand for Local Economic Development (LED)
• Members failing to pay membership subscriptions – of the 60 members only 13 members are paid up (December 2016), while others are at various levels with some who last paid 5 plus years ago.

Strengths
• Power of numbers – 60 RDCs approximately ±75% of the population
• Constitutional provisions empowering RDCs as third tier of Government
• Existing and functional Association
• Existing infrastructure- Council Offices, roads, clinics and schools.
• Abundant expertise resident in the RDCs
• Existing local government development structures- Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs)
• Vast natural resources in RDCs
• Retired skills, institutional memory resident in the RDCs.
• Vast human capital
• Taxing and planning authority
• Power to enact By-laws
• Powers to allocate budgets and expenditure
• Powers to govern Councillors areas of jurisdiction- 13 functions
• Lowest government tier closest to the people to respond to demand based service delivery
• Powers to coordinate other stakeholders in Councillors area of jurisdictions.

6. Strategy Design and Implementation

6.1 ARDCZ Key Strategic Issues

Advocacy and Lobbying
• Constitutionalisation of local Government
• Policy Development.
Information and Knowledge Management

- Branding and marketing of RDCs
- Research and Knowledge management

Governance and Capacity Building

- Promote integrated Rural Development
- Sustainable Revenue Sources for RDCs
- Capacity Building and organisational development of RDCs
- Local Economic Development promotion
- Institutional growth and development of ARDCZ

Representation Role

- Strategic collaboration and networking

6.2 ARDCZ Strategic Thrust

The identified strategic issues will be achieved through the following strategies:

- Ensure local government has an influential role, at all levels of government policy and long term development planning
- Robustly represent RDCs within high level national forums
- Enhance whole of government recognition of the role of local government in the development and implementation of national policies.
- Pursue implementation of constitutional provisions on local government
- Secure a fair share of national revenue for local government as per the Constitutional provisions (at least not less than 5%) and other development needs.
- Advocate for Increased amount of local government transfers consistent with mandates transferred to RDCs and increasing community service delivery expectations.
- Maintain influential participation in national infrastructure development programmes and projects
- Facilitate implementation of sustainable development principles in local government.
- Secure adequate financial and technical support for RDCs capacity development.
- Disseminate best practice models of sustainable participatory local governance
- Research and collate information and data on the local government sector
- Conduct national forums and other major events to support collective engagement
of local government stakeholders.

- Build and maintain partnerships with other national, regional and international bodies relevant to local government.

The required supporting success factors will be:

- Credible, researched, persuasive and authoritative advocacy and lobbying
- Development and presentation of realistic, practical and implementable policy proposals and alternatives
- Development of robust local government information databases and knowledge management
- Effective public relations, branding, marketing and communications strategies
- Development and maintenance of partnerships and other relationships, government, regional and international local government institutions
- Generating the required political will and support
- Aggressive resource mobilisation
- Building a strong capacitated Secretariat
7. **Summary of Targets and Key Performance Indicators**

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<th>Strategic Issue</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Result Area 1: Advocacy and Lobbying</strong></td>
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</table>
| 1. Constitutionalisation Local Government | 1. To advocate for the implementation of constitutional provisions on local government | 1. develop documentation on constitutional provisions on Local Government  
2. Conduct Awareness Campaigns.  
4. Develop model laws and present to Government. | 1. Documents  
2. Model laws  
3. No. of Meetings/workshops  
4. No. of laws reviewed  
5. No. of laws developed  
6. Partnerships generated | 1. ARDCZ National Executive Committee  
2. CEOs Forum  
3. ARDCZ Secretariat |
| 2. Policy Development | 1. To lobby for enabling local government policies | 1. Identify and analyse policies influencing local government.  
2. Hold a Local Government Symposium/Conference  
3. Develop a local government framework.  
4. Lobby for the implementation of existing policies.  
2. Local Government Framework handbook  
3. No. of model policies | 1. ARDCZ National Executive Committee  
2. RDCs  
3. ARDCZ Professional Forums  
4. ARDCZ Secretariat |
### Strategic Issue: Information and Knowledge Management

#### Summary of Targets and Key Performance Indicators (cont'd)

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<tr>
<th>Strategic Issue</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Result Area 2: Information and Knowledge Management</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KRA 3 : Governance and Capacity Building</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Integrated Rural Development</td>
<td>1. to promote integrated developmental local government</td>
<td>1. identify development needs.</td>
<td>1. Development needs Report</td>
<td>RDCs</td>
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<td>2. promote citizen participation in local governance</td>
<td>2. disaggregated Attendance Registers</td>
<td>ARDCZ Provincial Chapters</td>
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<td>3. Coordinate developmental agencies within RDCs</td>
<td>3. Number of complaints/Comments</td>
<td>ARDCZ Secretariat</td>
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<td>4. revitalise and capacitate local development structures</td>
<td>4. Number of Development Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Capacity building and Organisational Development</td>
<td>1. To improve organisational performance of RDCs &amp; the Association</td>
<td>1. Conduct a capacity building needs analysis.</td>
<td>1. capacity needs analysis report</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2. Develop a training framework.</td>
<td>2. No. of peer reviews</td>
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<td>3. Coordinate Local Government capacity building programmes.</td>
<td>3. No. of Workshops</td>
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<td>4. Facilitate and coordinate peer reviews</td>
<td>4. Attendance Registers</td>
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<td>5. Conduct periodic capacity development workshops for policy makers and stakeholders.</td>
<td>5. Minutes and Reports</td>
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<td>6. Coordinate organisational reviews.</td>
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<td>7. Conduct organisational development reviews.</td>
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### Strategic Issue Objectives Activities Key Performance Indicator Responsibility

#### KRA 3: Governance and Capacity Building

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</table>
| 3. Sustainable Revenue sources for RDCs | To improve revenue inflow in RDCs for sustainable development | 1. Develop revenue sources databases  
2. Promote use of financial management ICTs  
3. Promote internal financial management policies and systems  
4. Engage government, politicians and stakeholders on sustainable financing of local authorities  
5. Protecting and safeguarding council sources of revenue  
6. Lobby for constitutional fiscal transfers  
7. Lobby for management of Community Share ownership trusts by Council  
8. Lobby for management of CDF by Council | 1. Revenue databases  
2. Number and minutes of engagements  
3. Number of fully computerized RDCs  
4. % Revenue increase | 1. Treasurers Forum  
2. CEOs Forum  
1. ARDCZ National Executive Committee  
3. ARDCZ Secretariat |
## 7. Summary of Targets and Key Performance Indicators cont’d

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<tr>
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<tr>
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| 4. Local Economic Development Promotion | 1. To increase local economic development activities in RDCs | 1. facilitate investment in RDCs  
2. Engage investment promotion agencies  
3. develop a national LED framework  
4. Hold LED multi-stakeholder forums  
5. lobby for supportive investment policies.  
6. lobby and facilitate Partnerships, Joint Ventures and Cooperatives.  
7. To promote organised informal sector | 1. Number of Investments  
2. Number of engagements and minutes  
3. revenue inflows  
4. National LED Framework  
5. Number of workshops  
6. Number of Partnerships and Joint Ventures  
7. Number of organised groups | 1. ARDCZ National Executive Committee  
2. ARDCZ Secretariat |
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<td>2. ARDCZ organogram</td>
<td>2. Filling of vacant key posts</td>
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<td>3. Funded projects</td>
<td>3. Engagement with development partners for programmes</td>
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<td>4. Number of engagements with members</td>
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<td>5. Number of training and development for secretariat</td>
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<td>6. Conduct training and development for structures and secretariat</td>
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**Summary of Targets and Key Performance Indicators cont'd**
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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| **KRA 4: Representative Role** | 1. to improve strategic collaboration and networking of the ARDCZ | 1. Participate and represent RDCs in Local, Regional and International Forums.  
2. Represent its membership at National Employment Council and UCPF.  
3. Twinning arrangements  
4. Enhance relationship with Parliament  
5. Represent members in class action.  
6. Provide Legal Advice.  
7. manage conflict among members and other stakeholders | 1. Number of Meetings Attended  
2. number of Collaborations  
3. Number of twinning arrangements initiated  
4. Court Applications | 1. ARDCZ National Executive  
2. ARDCZ Secretariat  
3. Professional Forums | 18 |
Capacity Building Workshop for Personal Assistants, Front Office Personnel from Rural District Councils, District Administrators and Provincial Administrators Offices in Bulawayo under the Ease of Doing Business Rapid Results Initiative (RRI)

National Roads Condition Survey and Inventory Project - Assessors Training at ZIPAM, Darwendale

Councillors, Council Officials & District Administrators At the Launch of the Peace Building Campaign under the Promotion of Peace and Good Local Governance Project

For the Cause of Good Governance and Rural Development in Zimbabwe