REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

2025 NATIONAL FORESTRY POLICY

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Foreword

The National Forestry Policy of 2025 aims to facilitate conservation, management and restoration of forests and ensure sustainable forest management practices for continued supply of ecosystem services. Forests provide a variety of ecosystem services which include provision of wood (timber, wood fuel, poles etc.) and non-wood forest products (honey and beeswax, mushrooms, caterpillars, fruits etc.); support biodiversity maintenance and conservation; conserve soil and stabilize stream flows and water runoff; and contribute to regulation of the global carbon cycle and climate change mitigation. In addition, forests provide sites of aesthetic, recreational, and cultural value.

Unless drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are addressed, Zambia may continue to lose forests. The implementation of the National Forestry Policy of 2025 is expected to result in the improvement of forestry research, forest management planning, beekeeping development, plantation regulation and delivery of forestry extension services. Forests under community forest management are expected to increase in area, resulting in improved stewardship of forests and more forests having management plans. In addition to community forest management, private sector participation will be key to forest resource management and value addition to forest products. Value addition to forest products will result into job creation, increased benefits to the livelihoods of especially rural communities and higher contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The forest monitoring and information management system is expected to result in improved forest planning and decision-making. The role of forests in mitigation and adaptation to climate change will be enhanced through the implementation of this policy. Law enforcement and compliance levels are expected to improve once field level officers such as Forest Guards are increased in number. Overall, the forestry sector will benefit from the institutional capacity development and improved structure of the Forestry Department.

Honourable Mike Elton Mposha, M.P
MINISTER OF GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Acknowledgment

The development of the National Forestry Policy and its Implementation Plan involved a consultative process with key stakeholders including Government institutions, the Private sector, Civil Society Organisations, the academia, Traditional Leaders and Cooperating Partners. In this regard, the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment would like to take this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the various stakeholders who contributed to the review of the 2014 National Forestry Policy.

I also wish to acknowledge the guidance and technical support rendered to the Ministry by Cabinet Office. Further, I would like to thank management and staff of the Ministry for their commitment.

I would like to thank Cabinet Office for its technical assistance and advice to the Ministry. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to the Ministry's management and employees for their dedication. Further, special gratitude goes to European Union, Sweden and the Czech Republic through the Sustainable Landscape Integrated Management Project (SLIM), the Transforming Landscapes for Resilience and Development (TRALARD) project, the Germany Development Cooperation (GIZ) Office Zambia through the Sustainable Agriculture for Forest Ecosystems Project and the USAID Integrated Land and Resource Governance II Programme for their technical and financial support.

The Ministry extends its gratitude to, individuals and all institutions for their dedication in coordinating the process to ensure that National Forestry Policy was successfully revised.

Dr. Douty Chibamba
Permanent Secretary
MINISTRY OF GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Working Definitions

Term	Definition
Afforestation	The direct human-induced conversion of land that has not been forested for a period of at least 50 years to forested land through planting, seeding, and/or the human-induced promotion of natural seed sources.
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.
Carbon Credit	Means the saleable verified emissions reduction or removal credit, or any other carbon mitigation measure recognized under the standards of the international carbon market regimes which is equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide or its equivalent which can be counted towards an individual's, organisation's, a company's or country's greenhouse gas mitigation target
Carbon Sequestration	The uptake and storage of carbon.
Carbon Project	An action or activity applied to a defined geographical area, formal or organised scheme, covering an area smaller than a province, for the recognition of activities aimed at the generation of Green House Gas emission reductions or removals for carbon trading

Chitemene System	A shifting cultivation system which includes the use of natural woodland forest as the fallow crop.
Climate Change	A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.
Climate Variability	Variations in the mean state and other statistics of the climate on all temporal and spatial scales beyond that of individual weather events.
Community Forest Management Group	A group of persons recognised by a Chief and local authority, which communally controls, uses and manages a forest in the area of the Chief and the local authority
Conservation	The sustainable management and use of nature and natural resources for their inherent value and for the benefit of society, bearing in mind that future generation have as much a right to these resources as our own.
Deforestation	The conversion of forested lands for non-forest uses

Ecosystem	The complex system of plant, animal, fungal, and microorganism communities and their associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit
Ecosystem Services	End-products or components of nature directly enjoyed, consumed or used to yield human wellbeing which include provision, regulating, supporting and cultural services.
Emissions	The release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.
Environment	The natural or man-made surroundings at any place, comprising air, water, land, natural resources, animals, buildings and other constructions
Ex-situ Conservation	The conservation of components of biological diversity outside their natural habitats, such as in botanical gardens, seed banks, or gene banks. *(Source: Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD)*
Forest Certification	*Forest certification is a voluntary process whereby an independent third party (the "certifier") assesses the quality of forest management and production against a set of requirements ("standards")*

	predetermined by a public or private certification organization.
Forest Health	The condition of a forest ecosystem (planted and natural) that sustains its ecological state while providing ecosystem services for human needs.
Forest Degradation	Changes within the forest, which negatively affect the structure and composition or function of the stand or site, and thereby lower its capacity to supply products and/or services.
Forest Ecosystem	A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit, where trees are a key component of the system.
Forest Management	A system of practices for stewardship and use of forestland aimed at fulfilling relevant ecological (including biological diversity), economic and social functions of the forest in a sustainable manner.
Forest Plantation	Planted trees established by planting or/and seeding in the process of afforestation or reforestation. It consists of introduced species or, in some cases, indigenous species.

Forest Protection	The set of measures intended to preserve a forest and its functions from harmful agents, such as uncontrolled fires, pests, diseases, and illegal activities like encroachment and unauthorized logging.
Forest Reserve	An area of land that is declared to be a Local Forest, National Forest or a Botanical Reserve
Forestry Sector	The sector is defined to include all economic activities and is taken to include activities that are dependent on the production of wood fibre (i.e. forests and related services, production of industrial round wood (logging); wood fuel and charcoal; sawn wood and wood-based panels; pulp and paper; and wooden furniture; commercial production and processing of non-wood forest products and subsistence use of forest products).
Forest Value Chain	Activities involved in bringing of timber or non-timber products to the final consumer. Activities include, harvesting, cleaning, transportation, processing, packaging, marketing and distribution and involves a wide range of actors
Green House Gas	Gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that

	absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere itself, and by clouds.
Gross Domestic Product	The total value of goods produced and services provided in a country during one year.
Growing stock	The living tree component of the standing volume of a forest, comprising all trees, measured by number, volume, or biomass, within a particular area.
Indigenous Tree	Tree species which have evolved in the same area, region or biotype where the forest stand is growing and are adapted to the specific ecological conditions predominant at the time of the establishment of the stand
In-situ Conservation	The conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance and recovery of viable populations of species in their natural surroundings.
Integrated Landscape Management	An approach to managing resources that brings together multiple stakeholders across sectors to jointly plan and implement policies and practices for their landscapes

	to achieve mutual social, economic, and environmental objectives.
Joint Forest Management	The participation of stakeholders in the sustainable management of forest resources and the sharing of benefits derived from the management of the forest resources
Local Knowledge	Collection of facts that relate to the entire system of concepts, beliefs and perceptions that people hold about the world around them. This includes the way people observe and measure their surroundings, how they solve problems and validate new information. It includes the processes whereby knowledge is generated, stored, applied and transmitted to others.
Non-wood Forest Product	Goods of biological origin other than wood derived from forests, other wooded land and trees outside forests.
Natural Forest	A forest composed of indigenous trees and not classified as forest plantation.
Participatory Forest Management	A forestry management strategy, which allows different stakeholders to be involved in management of forest resources with appropriate user, rights as incentives.

Protected Area	A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.
Reforestation	The re-establishment of forest on land through planting and/or deliberate seeding on land classified as forest
Sink	A reservoir that uptakes a pollutant from another part of its cycle. Soil and trees tend to act as natural sinks for carbon.
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation without causing deterioration and without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.
Silviculture	The practice of controlling the growth, composition/structure, as well as quality of forests to meet values and needs, specifically timber production
Traditional leader	A local ruler of a clan or tribe or someone who presides over customary laws in establishing, maintaining and acceptable norms)

Utilization of natural resources	Consumptive and non-consumptive exploitation or use of natural resource products or ecosystem services.
Value added	The contribution of labour and capital to the production process
Woodlots	A forest of introduced or indigenous species, measuring up to ten hectares, established by planting or seeding in the process of afforestation or reforestation

ACRONYMS

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFM	Community Forest Management
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DOF	Department of Forestry
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMA	Environmental Management Act
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Forestry Department
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FRA	Food Reserve Agency / Forest Reserves Area (context-dependent)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MGEE	Ministry of Green Economy and Environment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDG	National Development Goal
NFAP	National Forestry Action Programme
NFM	National Forestry Master Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMT	Non-Motorized Transport (if referenced in crosssectoral policies)
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PPP	Public–Private Partnership
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus
SAFE	Sustainable Agriculture for Forest Ecosystems
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Conventio on Climate Change
ZDA	Zambia Development Agency
ZEMA	Zambia Environmental Management Agency
ZNIC	Zambia National Investment Commission (if cited in policy partnerships)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Forests are one of the most important natural and renewable resources of Zambia, covering over 60 percent of the total land area of the country The forests play vital roles in people's livelihoods as major sources of timber, traditional medicine, wood fuel, food and building materials. The forestry sector presents a huge potential for investment and contribute to the socio-economic development and well-being of people. Furthermore, forests play major roles in both carbon and hydrological cycles. They are key factors in watershed and soil conservation. However, forest resources are under pressure, factors causing forest degradation and deforestation which include encroachment, uncontrolled bush fires, agricultural expansion, mining and infrastructure development. Forest degradation and deforestation is primarily because of inappropriate management regimes and unsustainable harvesting systems.

Since the National Forestry Policy of 2014 was put in place a number of new and emerging issues, including challenges and opportunities have been identified, which have necessitated the need to review the policy. The National Forestry Policy of 2014 enhanced participatory forest management and the overall institutional framework for the forestry sector. Due to lack of an effective National Forestry Monitoring System to facilitate planning and respond to current and emerging issues, the current policy review has addressed issues that include expanded protected area system; climate change; bio-fuels; trans-boundary forest resource management; timber traceability; forest enterprise

development and ecotourism; restoration of degraded landscapes; ex situ conservation of forest diversity; and national forest tree seed and gene bank. Incorporating Nature-Based Solutions in forestry in Zambia can help improve forest health, support biodiversity conservation, and promote sustainable forest management. However, a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach that considers the distinctive ecological, social, and economic settings of the country's forest landscape is necessary to incorporate Nature Based Solutions into forestry in Zambia.

This National Forestry Policy encourages participatory forest management and private sector investment, which is anchored on the active participation of local communities, traditional institutions, and other stakeholders in the sustainable management and utilization of forest resources at all levels of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The policy also encourages the definition of stakeholder roles, resource tenure, costs and benefit sharing mechanisms related to forest resources management, investments and forest industries development. The policy therefore, is aligned within the framework of the National Decentralization Policy of 2023, Zambia's Vision 2030 and the Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP 2022-2026). Further, the Policy recognizes regional and international opportunities and obligations or frameworks such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocols on forestry and other natural resources, Centre for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), The Paris Agreement, Strategic Development Goals (SDGs), and forest related international conventions.

1.1 Outline of the Forest Policy

This Policy is divided into eight chapters, starting with the introduction in Chapter I. Chapter II presents the Situation Analysis highlighting the policy development process and the current situation. Chapter III covers the overall vision of the policy, while Chapter IV presents the rationale. Chapter V outlines guiding principles. Policy objectives are outlined in Chapter VI while measures are presented in Chapter VII. Lastly, Chapter VIII presents the Implementation Framework.

2.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 Sustainable Forest Resources and Ecosystem Management

The following are some of the key issues affecting sustainable forest resources and ecosystem management:

2.1.1 Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Deforestation and forest degradation are the biggest threats to Zambia's forests, putting the economy and environment at risk. As at 2021, the forest cover was estimated at 45.4 million hectares, accounting for 60 percent of the country's total land area, with an average deforestation rate of 172,000 ha/year and a forest degradation rate of 38,400 ha/year. The rate of deforestation and forest degradation continues to be mainly attributed to land use change driven by increased population and human settlements, encroachments, agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, mining and wood extraction for fuel-wood. This has been exacerbated by uncontrolled forest fires and unregulated charcoal production and thereby, resulting in loss of biodiversity, forest

productivity and ecosystem services which include loss of cultural and aesthetic values; and drying of water bodies. Other negative impacts include soil erosion, flooding, high evapotranspiration, water and food insecurity, displacement of people and reduced hydropower generation.

Despite the interventions put in place to address deforestation and forest degradation such as Participatory Forest Management initiatives, the rate at which the forest resource is being lost is still a serious source of concern.

2.1.2 Ecosystem Services and Forest Carbon Stock Management

Ecosystems support plant and animal life by maintaining the overall balance in nature. When functioning well, ecosystems also bring multiple benefits to people. These benefits are derived from provision of basic wood and non-wood commodities such as timber, poles, honey, food, fuel, cultural, aesthetic landscapes and carbon sequestration.. Resource use by individuals and communities affect the type, quality, and quantity of services provided by an ecosystem.

In addition, ecosystem services are derived from trees outside forests, which have an important role in mitigating against climate change. These trees are in woodlots, plantations, trees along linear features like roads and boundaries, scattered trees on cropland (agroforestry), homesteads and urban areas.

Efforts have been made to incentivize sustainable management of forests for provision of ecosystem services. However, challenges associated with the incentive mechanisms are mainly related to methodology, socio-economic benefits and implementation. Methodological challenges include carbon credit accounting methods, which are not well understood by the majority of stakeholders. Socio-economic challenges include unclear benefit sharing mechanisms, which are considered not equitably designed with limited transparency and participation of local communities. Furthermore, Implementation challenges include inadequate Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems, limited skills in MRV, inadequate equipment and technological limitations.

2.1.3 Forest Law Enforcement

To ensure compliance to the provisions of forest law and in line with sustainable forest management practices, various licenses and permits are issued to clients to access forest products and services. Over the years, the enforcement of the forest laws and regulations had been undertaken with the aid of other stakeholders such as the Zambia Police Service (ZPS), Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW), Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA), as well as local and traditional authorities.

However, despite these arrangements in place, the ability to enforce forest laws and regulations has continued to be affected by limited staffing levels, lack of a dedicated law enforcement unit, inadequate resources such as transport and access to modern technology as well as

other instruments to detect and curb forest crimes. The inability to conduct regular and comprehensive forest patrols has also weakened the enforcement of existing laws and regulations in areas where wood and non-wood forest products are harvested. In addition, the traditional leaders are only engaged when acquiring licenses but not throughout the operationalization of the licenses and this further weakens capacity for monitoring compliance of timber harvesting.

As at December 2022, the Forestry Department had 1,402 staff as per the staff establishment. A total of 754 technical forest officers, representing 54 percent are mandated to manage 45 million hectares of forests across all the 116 districts in the country. In addition, there are very few forest range guards under sub-district level throughout the country. In a bid to supplement staffing levels, at the close of 2024 there were a total of 2028 gazetted Honorary Forestry Officers whose operations are limited to Community Forest Management Areas. The inadequacy in enforcement has further been affected by a growing tendency of people impersonating forest officers, especially since forestry staff are not uniformed and have not undergone any specialized law enforcement training. This therefore makes it difficult to enforce and account for the harvested forest products.

2.1.4 Forestry Capacity Development

The provision of both technical and professional skills, knowledge and appropriate mindset plays a critical role for sustainable management of forest resources. In the recent past, the country and the world at large has witnessed emerging issues with regards to the environment such as

valuation of ecosystem services and forest carbon stock as well as utilization of modern technologies in the management of forests.

The investment in forestry management has also been low thereby, relegating the development of the sector as the technical staff and the local communities involved in forest management have continued to use conventional approaches. The inadequate provision of specialized and in-service trainings, lack of diversified curricula have posed significant challenges for the development of the sector. Further, there has been low uptake and integration of emerging issues in forest management due to inadequate skills, knowledge and access to appropriate technologies.

Furthermore, it is evident that the development of forestry infrastructure is very basic, lacks the appropriate facilities and technological capacity to deal with modern environmental challenges. In addition, there is an inadequate forest monitoring and information management system, which is limited in terms of functionality, accessibility and localisation.

2.3 Participatory Forest Management

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) plays a critical role in the attainment of sustainable forest management. It has the potential to mitigate destructive land use practices, create carbon sinks through forest regeneration, afforestation and reforestation. Furthermore, PFM also has the potential to enhance the resilience of local communities to climate change through adaptation of the productive systems.

In Zambia, forests support about 1.8 million people through the community forestry initiatives and creates about 1 million direct and indirect jobs, of which 60 percent are rural based. The approaches of participatory forest management used include community, joint and private forest management. From the year 2018, community forest management approach has been the mostly promoted participatory forest management model. Furthermore, other approaches to enhance participation of stakeholders in forest management include integrated landscapes management. As at December 2024, 351 Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs) were in place covering 9 million hectares under community-based management across the country.

In an effort to motivate stakeholders in the conservation and management of forests, there have been innovative initiatives such as payment for ecosystem services and sale of carbon credits as incentives towards keeping forests standing and hence increased provision of ecosystems services.

However, the implementation of PFM in Zambia has faced some challenges, which include dependence by community groups on third party support, poor governance, weak community structures, low adoption of alternative livelihoods and inadequate incentives, which does not trickle down to households, thereby, frustrating most efforts. Further, most CFMGs have limited capacity to manage finances and there has been lack of transparency in benefit sharing with third party organizations.

2.4 Forest Enterprises Development

Forests provide the raw material base for forest-based enterprises, which are usually sub divided into wood and non-wood. Forest enterprises aim to add value to these products. The development of forest enterprises, therefore play a pivotal role in sustaining livelihoods and economies of both rural and urban communities. However, the development of the forest enterprise has been insignificant and only limited to primary production, with inefficient technology leading to low recovery.

The integration of wood-based industries in the forest value chain has been very limited with a bias to export of semi-processed wood products especially from indigenous tree species of economic value. Over the past decade, the country has been experiencing dwindling stocks of merchantable exotic species impacting negatively on sawmillers who rely on exotic species as feedstock. On the other hand, there is limited information on existing stocking levels of high value indigenous tree timber species, which could equally be exploited to meet the needs of the wood-based forest enterprises. Further, processing of timber from indigenous tree species requires specialized machinery and skills both of which are inadequate. Additionally, establishment of timber exchange platforms in strategic areas to reduce smuggling of timber is lacking.

The utilization of non-wood forest products involves the collection and use of bee products, fauna, wild vegetables, mushrooms, fruits and medicinal plants among others. The sale of non-wood forest products has been very common among rural and urban households and has contributed to the development of forest-based enterprises. At the district level, the

contribution of non-wood forest products to rural income and livelihoods is estimated at US$135.8 million per annum. However, seasonality of the products coupled with insufficient preservation and storage facilities pose challenges to the development of non-wood forest-based enterprises. There has also been insufficient support to key NWFP value chains due to the absence of dedicated Government extension service units, which has limited the performance of the beekeeping sector and other value chains. Other challenges include inadequate value addition and limited market access, with inadequate research contributing to low participation of micro, small and medium enterprises in the harvesting across all non-wood forest product value chains.

Among all the wood and non-wood forest product value chains, unsustainable harvesting practices and a lack of proper management have led to the degradation of forests due to overexploitation. One of the primary drivers of overexploitation is the increasing demand from both domestic and international markets. The lack of clear regulations and enforcement mechanisms exacerbates this problem, allowing for unchecked extraction.

2.5 Forest Management Planning and Extension Services

Forest management planning is an important component of sustainable forest management and it is provided for in the Forests Act No. 4 of 2015 under part IV section 40 (1). A forest management plan is a tool for auditing, conserving and regulating forest resources and operations. Apart from Eastern Province with updated forest management plans, most of the forest reserves in the country are dependent on outdated

forest management plans. This has impacted negatively on forest management planning to provide management prescriptions for optimal utilisation of forest resources, leading to deforestation, forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and other ecosystem services. There is a trend of clearing indigenous and intact forests for establishment of exotic plantations resulting in further loss of biodiversity.

Forest Extension services is a tool for raising awareness and building capacities for the public to promote forest conservation and management. This is conducted through various media, which include print, electronic, and practical field demonstrations. The major hindrances to forest extension are inadequate financial resources and equipment. Provision of forestry extension services are absent at the sub district level.

Further, the forestry sector lacks formalized institutions and partnerships for coordination of state and non-state actors. There are gaps among academia, research and professional institutions such as the Forestry Institute of Zambia to support or guide government policy development and implementation.

2.6 Forestry Research and Development

Forest Research has been conducted across the country contributing to sustainable forest management with the first species trials conducted in Southern province in the 1930s. As at December 2022, 50,000 plant specimens, 600 mycological specimens and 800 insect specimens had been collected and documented as biodiversity reference materials.

Further, plantation establishment and management techniques were developed as standard silvicultural practices for growing exotic tree species. In addition, Miombo woodland harvesting, regeneration and response to fire management trials were conducted to determine growth, survival and productivity of the woodland. These studies are important for determining utilization of natural and exotic wood and non-wood resources, domestic and industrial consumption.

Furthermore, the phenological cycles of all woody species in the country were catalogued to know when trees flower and disperse seed. As one of the responses to the effects of deforestation and forest degradation, collection and conservation of 600 seed-lots of rare, endemic and over-exploited plant species was also undertaken. In order to study the growth and yield of trees, over 4,000 hectares of regeneration and geo-referenced plots were established.

Despite these achievements, investment in forest research and dissemination of information remains inadequate. Further, there is inadequate institutional, financial and human resource capacity coupled with obsolete equipment on timber and non-wood testing laboratories, technology as well as infrastructure (soil and seed laboratories, office space) to support improvement in forest management, protection, utilization and *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation.

2.7 Plantation Establishment and Management in Zambia

Forest Plantations were introduced in the country to meet the growing demand for quality timber and poles especially for mining purposes.

These forest plantations are characterized as single species or monoculture, even aged, and fast-growing tree stands to meet district, provincial, commercial and industrial demand for timber and poles as well as creation of employment. Currently, the Zambia Forestry and Forest Industries Corporation (ZAFFICO) owns the largest forest plantations in the country. Management of forest plantations is important in dealing with pests and diseases and the quality of trees and products with superior characteristics. Further, plantation management requires the effective application of silvicultural practices.

However, over the last two decades the country witnessed inconsistent annual planting of trees in plantations while exploitation of available stocks kept increasing. Ultimately, this led to depletion of the harvestable stock and the deficit of exotic timber as well as loss of income along the value chain. Other challenges include insufficient genetically improved tree seeds and other planting materials, low investment levels, lack of modern technologies, lack of out grower schemes, lack of regulations on plantation establishment, limited participation of the private sector, limited extension services as well as management and movement of propagation materials across geographic regions.

2.8 Cross Cutting Issues

A number of crosscutting issues affects sustainable management and utilization of forest resources. These include climate change, environmental protection and conservation, gender and high exposure to pandemics such as HIV/TB/COVID 19 among others.

3.0 VISION

Sustainably managed forests of all types.

4.0 RATIONALE

The review of the National Forestry Policy of 2014 was necessitated by unresolved challenges and emerging issues in the forestry sector such as technological advancement in forestry and monitoring systems. Zambia continues to experience high rates of deforestation and forest degradation, encroachments in protected forest areas, unsustainable production and trade in forest products. If left unchecked, these challenges may exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change in the country. This policy will provide measures for increased forest cover and enhanced forest carbon stock management through enhanced participatory forest management; improved law enforcement, forest research and development; and regulation of plantation establishment and management. The policy will therefore help transform the forestry sector into a viable economic sector for improved livelihoods of local communities, enhanced biodiversity conservation, strengthened human and institutional capacity.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following will be the guiding principles in the implementation of this policy:

a. **Broad based participation;** the policy will endeavour to ensure that stakeholders participate in the management of forest resources.

b. **Human dignity, equity, social justice, equality and non-discrimination;** the policy will ensure fairness in accessing forest resources and services.

c. **Sustainable Development**: The policy will apply an integrated landscape management approach into Sustainable Forest management. The policy will strive to ensure that benefits from forest resources are utilized to meet the needs of present and future generations.

d. **Holistic and ecosystem based**; the policy will ensure that there is an integrated approach to the management of forest and other natural resources.

e. **Abatement of climate change**; the policy shall ensure that deforestation, forest degradation and emissions from forests are reduced to minimum levels.

f. **Precautionary principle;** the policy will ensure that its implementation does not cause harm to the public or the environment.

g. **Free, prior informed consent;** the policy will endeavour to ensure that its implementation does not withhold the consent of people's rights in forest development and management.

6.0 OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

6. 1 Sustainable Forest Resources and Ecosystem Management

Objective

To improve the conservation, restoration and management of forest resources in order to increase forest cover.

Measures

i. Promote sustainable management of all types of forests;
ii. Strengthen multi-sectoral coordination on forest land-use management;
iii. Strengthen mechanisms for forest monitoring; and
iv. Promote the development and adoption of improved charcoal production and utilization technologies.
v. promote forest restoration through assisted natural regeneration

6.2 Participatory Forest Management

Objective

To increase stakeholder participation in sustainable forest management.

Measures

i. Promote collaborative and innovative forest management and enhance incentives;
ii. Promote climate-smart agriculture, scale up agroforestry practices;

iii. Strengthen participatory forest management governance structures and enhance transparency in the benefit sharing mechanisms for forest resources.

6.3 Forest Enterprises Development

Objective

To increase production and value addition for wood and non-wood forest products.

Measures

i. Strengthen the capacity and facilitate access to modern value addition technologies for production and processing of wood and non-wood forest products;
ii. Promote forests and forest product certification;
iii. Promote ecotourism and nature tourism; and
iv. Promote private investments in value addition for wood and non-wood forest products
v. Promote market research and market linkages for wood and non-wood forest products
vi. Promote beekeeping development in all types of forests and woodlands

6.4 Plantation Establishment and Management

Objective

To increase hectarage under plantation management for improved supply of forest-based raw materials.

Measures

i. Promote investment and participation of the private sector in plantation establishment and management;
ii. Expand area under local and regional supply plantations for improved supply of forest-based raw materials without depleting the indigenous forests;
iii. Promotion of out-grower schemes; and
iv. Promote the establishment of fast-growing Indigenous tree plantations

6.5 Forestry Research and Development

Objective

Strengthen capacity in forestry research

Measures

i. Enhance collaboration and partnerships with training and research institutions,
ii. Strengthen protection of intellectual property rights of research findings;
iii. Develop and enforce Phyto-sanitary standards for forest trees, wood and non-wood products and services and promote seed certification for both indigenous and exotic species;
iv. Develop capacity for insitu-and exsitu conservation of endangered endemic and range limited forest genetic resources; and
v. Decentralize research centers for enhanced research activities.

6.6 Forest Management Planning and Extension Services

Objective

To improve extension service delivery in order to ensure sustainable supply of forest goods and services.

Measures

i. Strengthen capacity in forest management planning
ii. Enhance provision of forestry extension services
iii. Promote adoption and utilisation of ICT platforms
iv. Enhance provision of forestry extension services and establish a dedicated forest extension unit;
v. Strengthen the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) and other technological innovations such as Drones
vi. Promote multisectoral collaboration in Planning and Extension Services

6.7 Forestry Capacity Development

Objective

To improve institutional capacity for forestry development.

Measures

i. Strengthen formal and informal forestry training programs;
ii. Enhance collaboration and partnerships in capacity development;
iii. Enhance forestry infrastructure;

iv. Facilitate the integration of forestry in school curriculum from Early Childhood up to tertiary level; and

v. Strengthen planning at all levels (national, provincial, district and sub-districts level)

6.8 Cross Cutting Issues

Objective

Mainstream gender, persons with disability and other marginalised groups in all aspects of forest management and utilization of forest resources

Measures

i. Promote the inclusion and participation of women, youths and persons with disabilities in forest management

ii. Promote the inclusion and participation of women, youths and persons with disabilities in forest product value chains

6.9 Domestication of International Environmental Agreements

Objective

To ensure that relevant provisions of international agreements are domesticated and integrated into the national policy and legal framework.

Measures

i. Implement programmes and projects aimed at addressing desertification, land degradation, deforestation, biodiversity management and conservation and climate change.

ii. Implement regional and international protocols on forests and natural resources that support sustainable forest management.

iii. Create awareness on relevant regional and international agreements that Zambia is a Party to.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The successful implementation of the National Forest Policy of 2025 shall crucially depend on the following Implementation Framework:

7.1 Institutional Arrangement

The smooth implementation of the National Forest Policy of 2025 shall depend on the following implementation framework in line with decentralisation objectives, legal reforms, institutional structure and prevailing socio- economic environment in the country to be affected at National, Provincial and District levels to create a strong integrated frame work for cross-sector linkages in the Management of Forest Resources.

7.1.1 Role of Central Government

Currently, the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment has overall responsibility for both policy development and coordination and forest resources management. The Government in 2002 adopted the Decentralization Policy whose objective is to devolve decision-making authority, functions and resources from central government to the Local Authorities. The Decentralization Policy Implementation Plan was adopted by Government in February 2013 in preparation for full

implementation of the policy. Central Government therefore will retain policy and legal formulation responsibilities, regulation and monitoring and evaluation. In clearly stipulating the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the forestry sector, the impending implementation of the Decentralisation Policy has been considered.

The Ministry of Green Economy and Environment through the Forestry Department will have an overall responsibility for policy formulation and coordination, development of standards and guidelines; law enforcement; conduct forests inventories; research and development. In this regard, the Ministry will be responsible for monitoring and reporting; promotion of plantation establishment; issue concession licenses; devise methodologies for cost benefit sharing mechanisms; investment promotion.

Amongst key Government institutions that the Ministry will collaborate with include the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock; Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry; Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development; Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Transport and Logistics, Ministry of Lands and Natural resources, Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Community Development and Social Development.

7.1.2 Local Government

The role of Local Government institutions shall include the following: formulation and enforcement of by-laws; plantation establishment and management; issuance of pitsaw and saw milling licenses; fire management; tree nursery establishment and management, tree planting; registration of private forest plantation; declaration of local forests; revenue collection; provision of extension services , conduct local level inventory; develop and implement of management plans; data collection; regulate harvesting, promote participatory forest management.

7.1.3 Traditional Rulers

The tradition rulers shall be involved in the administration and management of forest estates within the area of their jurisdiction. They shall provide land for plantation establishment, local community woodlots and set aside forest for different purposes in collaboration with the local authority.

7.1.4 Local Communities

They shall be the key actors in planning and management of forests and investment in forestry at local levels. They shall also be the implementers and the determinants of tree species and technologies to be used in community-based forestry plantation establishment and management, and play a key role in participatory forest management. Therefore, local communities and Community Based Organizations will also be required to put in place participatory forest management systems to promote sustainable forest management in open areas.

7.1.5 The Private Sector

The role of the private sector will include: manage the forest resources conferred to them through concession agreements in accordance with management plans; investment in equipment to reduce wastage; investment in value addition of forest resources and advise government on the sector policy private sector.

7.1.6 Civil Society

The Civil Society shall: work with local authorities and local communities in the management of local forest resources; create awareness; lobby for resources for forests resource management; provide extension services; promote gender mainstreaming, equity in benefit sharing, and equitable participation of stakeholders in the management and decentralisation of forest resources; Shall promote advocacy on the developmental role of forests; and capacity building of local communities/CBOs in organisational development i.e. Governance, leadership, financial management

7.1.7 Education and Research Institutions.

Education and Research institutions shall provide academic and skills training required to foster the development of the sector; advice government in policy matters related to the sector; develop appropriate technologies and management systems and practices for the development of the sector.

7.1.8 Cooperating Partners

Cooperating partners shall collaborate with the Ministry and other key stakeholders in development and shall be facilitators in building capacity

and complimenting government efforts with technical and financial support.

7.2 Legal and Regulatory framework

ENABLING ACT	PURPOSE	REMARK
Agriculture Act	The Act provides for agricultural practices, development, investment and management	Forest loss through deforestation is one of the challenges for sustainable forest management. In order to reduce deforestation Agricultural practices, need to be appropriate
Energy Regulations Act No. 16 of 1995	The Act among other issues regulates energy use	Most people use charcoal and firewood as a source of energy. Therefore, appropriate provisions in the Act will facilitate sustainable fore management. For example, rural electrification. The regulations of the growing of bio-fuels are important for biodiversity conservation and management.
Environmental Management Act No. 12 of 2011	The Act provides for the management of environment and natural resources	Appropriate regulations in the environment and natural resources for example in terms of controlling pollution, emissions, need of environmental impact

		assessments will help in ensuring sustainable forest management
Forests Act No. 4 of 2015	The Act provides for the conservation and protection of forests and trees	The Act sets the standards for forest resources management
Lands Act Cap 184	The act is responsible for the management and administration of land in Zambia on which forests grow	Forests grow on land and therefore regulations associated with land management may affect forest resource management. For example, giving tittle deeds in protected forest areas
Local Government (Amendment) Act No. 9 of 2004	The Act among others provides for decentralisation	The promotion of decentralization is on line with participatory forest management. Therefore, appropriate local government Act will support sustainable forest management
Mines and Minerals Act of 1995	The Act provides for mineral and mimes development	All mines are initiated in forests and therefore appropriate technologies and practices in the mining sector are required to ensure sustainable forest management. If mining operations takes precedence over forests,

		sustainable forest management will be a challenge.
National Heritage Conservation Commission Act, Cap 173	The Act provides for heritage conservation and management	Forests provide support to some natural heritage areas and therefore promotion of heritage sites may also enhance sustainable forest management
Urban and Regional planning act No. 3 of 2015	The Act provides for development planning and administration principals, standards and requirements for urban and regional planning processes and systems	The Act sets standards for land use and settlement planning
Water Act Cap 198	The Act provides for the regulation and management of water resources	Forests protect water catchment areas, which ensure continued flow of water.
Zambia Development Agency Act No. 11 of 2006	The Act provides for the trade, investment and industrial development in Zambia	Sustainable forest management can be achieved if appropriate trade, investment and industry development measure are put in place to protect the forests.
The Zambia Wildlife Act No. 14 of 2015	The Act is largely responsible for the management of wildlife but it is also responsible for the management of	In order for wildlife to thrive in their habitats, the forest resources need to be well managed and therefore

	forests as habitats for animals	linked to forest resource management

For effective implementation of the objectives and measures outlined in the Policy, the following will be undertaken:

a. The Forests Act No. 4 of 2015 will be repealed in order to put in place legislation that will effectively respond to the vision set under this policy;

b. Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management shall be developed in order to provide a baseline for monitoring effective management;
c. An effective national forest monitoring system will be developed to ensure that changes to forests are regularly monitored to facilitate planning. The monitoring system will include guidelines on forest and land-use carbon monitoring;
d. In order to enhance effective prosecution of forest offences prosecutors will be introduced with support from the office of the Attorney General;
e. The Protected Area system will be expanded from the current national and local forests in order to facilitate more stakeholders in the protection of forests. The new system will include Joint Forest Management Areas, Botanical Reserves, Nature Parks, Community Forests and Private Forests to suit different needs and hence increase the forests under protection;

f. Re-introduce field staff responsible for supervision and monitoring of forest field operations;
g. Restructure the Forestry Department in order to effectively respond to current challenges and emerging issues like climate change and trans-boundary forest resource management.
h. Remove all squatters in protected forestry reserves in order to enhance the integrity of the forest

7.3 Resource Mobilisation

Inadequate contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy and livelihoods, and forest management ineffectiveness are both largely due to inadequate public financing of the forest sector.

The necessary support for developing, testing and transferring sustainable forest natural resources management practices and technologies will require sufficient time and considerable resources for research and development activities and for intensive implementation processes involving participation of researchers, extension agents, communities and other stakeholders like locally based NGOs and CBOs. It is for this reason that the support and commitment of both the public and private sectors are required for the urgent implementation of this policy.

To this end, political will and viable sources of funds shall be vigorously pursued so that the benefits of the various programmes undertaken in the forestry sector can be realised and accessed to ensure a flourishing

economy and a sound environment. The following sources of funding have been identified:

i. Adequate budgetary provision from Parliament for indigenous forest management, forest plantation establishment, extension and support for local level forest management units;
ii. Revolving fund to be established from licensing of forest products and services;
iii. Investments arising from public private partnerships between key actors and the private sector, private commercial forestry, the national carbon programme and other commercially-oriented options;
iv. Revenue generated from research activities;
v. Donations and endowments from private organizations; and
vi. Government assistance and support from Cooperating Partners.
vii. Leasing of potions of protected forest areas for mining development as opposed to excision.
viii. Forest Development Fund to the sources of Funding list.

The following sources of funding to be considered

i. Committing Local Forests under Community Forest Management so as to gain carbon credits
ii. Designated areas for sustainable charcoal production
iii. Aggressively negotiate for representative benefit-sharing mechanism with the private sector in the management of forest resources

7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure that the implementation of this policy is systematic, a detailed Plan of Action has been worked out in the Zambia Forest Action Plan (ZFAP) and whose planning phase concluded in 1997 shall be followed. The Ministry shall develop and implement a rigorous results-oriented, transparent and participatory monitoring and evaluation framework to which the Forestry Department and stakeholders engaged in forestry shall respond. The M&E plan shall be implemented at the summit of the forestry management system, the province, district, forest concession, and any other lower level of forest management, protection or utilisation.

7.4.1 The National Forestry Master Plan

The Forestry Department shall formulate a National Forestry Master Plan, which will provide a strategic framework with clear targets, which will be informed by the stipulations of the Zambia Forest Action Plan. In order to implement the provisions of the National Forestry Master Plan, the Forestry Department shall ensure that Forest Management Plans are formulated for each type of forest. The Forest Management Plans will then be implemented by the Annual Forestry Plan of Action. The Forestry Management Plans will have clearly defined and measurable indicators and a monitoring and evaluation framework, which will also include the roles of stakeholders in this process.

7.4.2 Development of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management

The Forestry Department in consultation with stakeholders, shall establish universally accepted criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Criteria and indicators will benefit the forestry sector, as

they will be used to assess its performance and improve its economic standing and contribution to GDP. Criteria and indicators will increase the value of forest products, which will provide rural economies with high returns.