



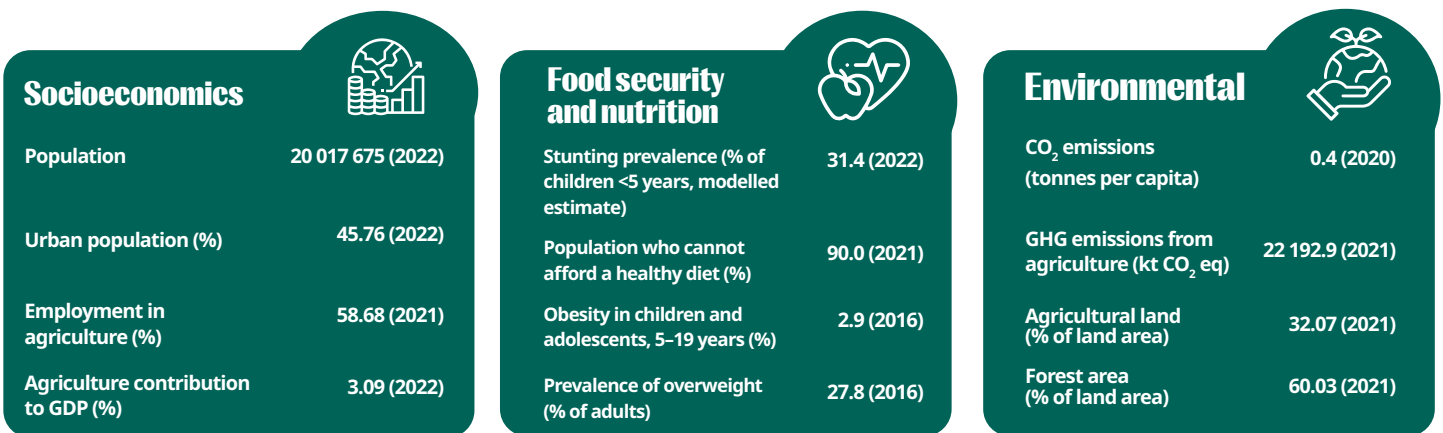
Polycymaking for agrifood systems transformation in Zambia

Zambia’s agrifood systems – An Overview

Zambia is a large, sparsely populated, landlocked country in south-central Africa. Nearly half of the country’s 20 million inhabitants live in cities. The indicators outlined in Figure 1 show that while approximately 58.68 percent of people rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, the sector’s contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) is just over 3 percent. This compares to the Sub-Saharan average of 17 percent and to around [12.9 percent of GDP from copper mining](#), which is the country’s most dominant industry. Food security is over-reliant on maize production and rain-fed agriculture, and is likely to become more vulnerable due to climate change. Beyond the farm-gate, the Zambian manufacturing sector is predominantly agri-based, with the agrifood sector playing an increasingly important role in improving dietary diversification and off-farm job creation.

Zambia is classified as a low-income country with poverty levels at around 54.4 percent, and real GDP growing at 3.4 percent in the first half of 2022. GDP has contracted in recent years, owing in part to the global disruptions of COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and food inflation. However, it is expected to recover to 4.5 percent annually between 2023 and 2025. Diversification away from its reliance on the mining industry is a priority for the country, with the government expecting the agrifood sector to play an important part in this structural shift. Fertile land, ample water resources, favorable weather, political stability and a young population that is expected to double within the next 25 years are all factors that contribute to the country’s vision of becoming a breadbasket for the region.

FIGURE 1: KEY INDICATORS



Realizing the vision to become a regional breadbasket for sustainable transformation

Zambia’s vision for the agrifood system is reflected in its major policies listed in Box 1. In the Zambia Food Systems Transformation Pathways (Transformation Pathways) which emanated from the UN Food System Summit in 2021, the government is deliberate in articulating a *system-wide* vision that goes beyond the domain of the agrifood sector, covering aspects that relate to food security, health, climate and resilience. Integral to the achievement of the priorities set out in the Transformation Pathways is the recently adopted [Comprehensive](#)

[Agriculture Transformation Support Programme](#) (CATSP). The CATSP aligns diverse stakeholders around the design of integrated programmes adapted at the local level. It also advocates reaching out beyond ministries and institutions responsible for the development of the agriculture, fisheries and livestock subsectors to engage stakeholders responsible for areas such as emergency preparedness, environmental and social safeguards, and security of land tenure. The vision and objectives of the CATSP and the Transformation Pathways are complementary, with both contributing to realizing Zambia’s vision of becoming a regional breadbasket.

Key policies governing agrifood systems in Zambia

1. [The Agricultural Policy](#)
2. [National Agricultural Investment Plan \(NAIP\)](#)
3. [The Food and Nutrition Strategic Plan](#)
4. [The National Food and Nutrition Act of 2020](#)
5. [Zambia Food Systems Transformation Pathways](#)

Creating the policy and institutional foundation to realize local-level action and investment

The successful implementation of the CATSP will be integral to the achievement of the priorities laid out in the Transformation Pathways. The Programme’s structure is sophisticated, with policy and technical oversight carefully coordinated with local implementation. A Presidential Delivery Unit governed by the High Council for Agricultural Transformation and the CATSP Steering Committee will monitor delivery performance,

and the Agricultural and Rural Economy Transformation Agency is responsible for day-to-day coordination. The ongoing multistakeholder and multilevel policy dialogues referred to above will also feed into the Programme's annual budgeting plan, which is synchronized to feed into the national annual budget planning cycle.

Activities on the ground are set out in Value-Chain Development Plans developed for each of the country's priority value chains. The implementation of the plans will also be supported by Zambia's Agri-Public Private Partnership Platform, which is a network of organizations and individuals with interest in implementing Public-Private Partnerships along with key commodity chains in the agriculture sector.

The CATSP has also been able to benefit from the lessons of its predecessor, the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) (2014–2018) and has therefore been able to leverage foundational support provided by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme's (CAADP) pan-African framework. The CAADP principles, outlined in Box 2, are complementary to those advocated by the UNFSS process on the [governance of food systems](#), with member countries encouraged to define innovative policy reforms for the agrifood system.

Box 2: CAADP's support to the development of the NAIPs emphasizes:

1. Multistakeholder dialogue and decision making
2. National and regional ownership through structured stakeholder involvement on priorities
3. Matching resources to priority tasks, and collaboration
4. Adding value to existing country processes, as opposed to replacing them with an externally driven process
5. Coherence of existing sector policies, strategies and national planning efforts
6. Defining a common vision to collectively define an African agenda on agriculture
7. Facilitating engagement by ministries, civil society and businesses
8. Translating priorities into realistic objectives and targets, indicating financing gaps
9. Aligning programmes and projects with national priorities.

Source: [Country CAADP Implementation Guidelines under the Malabo Declaration](#).

Advocating multistakeholder engagement at the highest levels of government

In addition to contributing to the higher-level National Development Plan and the Vision 2030, both the CATSP and the Transformation Pathways are overseen at the highest levels of government, recognizing that the goals, governance and implementation of the policies governing the agrifood

system go beyond the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. For instance, the Transformation Pathways is governed by the National Food and Nutrition Act No. 3 of 2020, with the Office of the Vice President playing an oversight role; while responsibility for the CATSP lies with the High Council for Agricultural Transformation, which is chaired by the President of the Republic of Zambia. The institutional and policy processes to develop the Transformation Pathways and the CATSP are pioneering departures from policies and programmes that are designed by individual line ministries. However, they will require clear accountability mechanisms so that action is not diluted across multiple actors.

To connect high-level governance and vision to rural and urban realities, the CATSP also provides multiple platforms within districts, provinces and at national levels in order to inform implementation, and realign actions as needed.

Multistakeholder engagement has also been an integral aspect of Zambia's commitment to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) process. In order to build on the national dialogues held for the UNFSS, and in preparation for UNFSS +2 held in Rome in July 2023, the government, through the Office of the President, the Food Systems Summit National Convenor and the National Food and Nutrition Commission, convened a one-day multistakeholder dialogue in June 2023 on the progress of the priorities identified under the Transformation Pathway. Policy and programme convergence was also discussed; in particular, the alignment between the Transformation Pathway, the CATSP, and the National Development Plan as discussed below.

Towards convergence in the governance of the agrifood system

The indicators in Figure 1 attest to the many challenges facing Zambia's agrifood system. However, the government recognizes the potential of the country's agrifood system to contribute to overcoming these challenges, and in recent years has galvanized political will at the highest echelons in support of the policy and institutional reforms underpinning the CATSP, and the Transformational Pathways. In creating a robust enabling environment designed with multistakeholder inputs supported by the international and regional fora of the UNFSS and CAADP, the government has also made efforts to ensure that policies do not remain rhetoric but have actionable and budgeted activities to take them forward. The envisaged evaluation and feedback loops in the CATSP will play a critical role in monitoring the progress and impact on-the-ground to inform policy and programme reform across the entire agrifood system. Key to the approach will be ensuring that the Transformational Pathways and CATSP, and the institutions charged with their oversight and implementation, are working in unison for the country to address the most pressing challenges and achieve food security and poverty alleviation for all.



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