



ZELO

ZIMBABWE ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW ORGANISATION

An aerial photograph showing a red tractor in a field of young corn plants on the left, and a yellow excavator loading a yellow dump truck with soil on the right. The background shows a large, open-pit mine.

Sustaining Organisational Growth

in a Changing and
Unpredictable World

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029

Contents

Where We Work	4
National Geographic Coverage - Zimbabwe	5
Our Achievements:	6
Operating Context and Challenges to be confronted	10
Country Context	11
Organisational SWOT	16
Our Approaches and Strategies	19
Theory Of Change (2025-2029)	21
Strategic Framework	22
Strategy Implementation Priorities	32
Cross Cutting Themes	33

About ZELO

Our 25-year journey so far, has been one of resilience, influence, adaptive learning, innovation and impact. It has always been locally rooted, regionally respected, and globally recognized. We take lessons from engagements with various stakeholders in our country and influence environmental justice and improved natural resources governance for the benefit of targeted marginalised communities and the national economy.

As part of growth management and compliance with regulatory requirements, as the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) we have rebranded to Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation (ZELO). This change follows the registration of the organisation as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) in November 2024. The registration provided us as ZELO, with an opportunity to focus on strategic programmatic, institutional growth factors and interventions that allow the organisation to grow and continue operating long into the future under the theme “Sustaining Organisational Growth in a Changing and Unpredictable World”.

Based on the learning from the past 25 years, we have established ourselves locally, regionally and globally as a leading and premier natural resources’ governance organisation in Zimbabwe. Our work and spaces of influence evolved from purely promotion of environmental rights to a broader natural resource governance and economic development agenda that includes climate change and energy, land, water, wildlife, mineral resources governance, investments and trade and business and human rights. Our organisational capacity to conduct legal, policy and practice relevant research has firmly established us as a critical voice, convenor and knowledge broker on natural resources and environmental governance. An important niche for us is that we have strived to promote good natural resource governance through a legal lens. The law is our window to the world.

The world is facing intractable challenges ranging from climate change, investment induced displacements, unplanned urbanisation leading to inadequate social and environmental services, loss of biodiversity and ecosystems and a repeat of unsustainable mining practices as the world is racing towards net-zero ambitions and a smart technology driven energy transition. The poor and most vulnerable communities are facing challenges in accessing good and sound legal advice and support to help them assert their rights. Civic space is shrinking and funding opportunities are dwindling as development

partners are suspending or scaling down on the nature of projects that they support. Most developed countries are now inward looking and focussing on investments and trade. Further, reliance on international aid for communities and African states is also increasingly being questioned. In this context, the continued existence and sustainability of organisations with a proven track record of working to address the plight of marginalised communities in the environmental and natural resources space become critical.

Therefore, as ZELO we have decided to focus on further building and sustaining our growth through refining our programmes, recalibrating our approaches and sharpening our interventions and accountability to our stakeholders, partners and donors in the next five years and beyond. Our work at ZELO is mainly anchored on a core group of rights which are reflective of natural resources governance namely Environmental, Economic, Social and Cultural (EESC) rights. As such, a large component of our work involves influencing legal, policy and institutional reforms and implementation. We do this through research, legal education and training, partnerships and advocacy. As an organisation we believe that having adequate laws in place and monitoring implementation, transparency and accountability, are the first steps towards good governance of the environment and natural resources.

We have achieved tremendous progress over the past 25 years in contributing to legal, policy and institutional reforms in Zimbabwe and the world through our active participation in processes that include the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), Environmental Management Act, Climate Change Bill, Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill and leading the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (KPCSC) as the first African group to coordinate the global diamond watchdog. We have empowered and inspired community activists and champions, parliamentarians, students, private sector, government officials and many other stakeholders.

Therefore, this Strategic Plan will guide us as we seek to achieve positive and lasting change in the way natural resources are governed, regulated and managed. The objective is to achieve sustainable organisational and programmatic growth and respond to Zimbabwe’s and the world’s most challenging trends and problems in the natural resources and environmental sector. Most importantly, it lays out how our work will respond to inequality and climate change, the twin crises of our time.

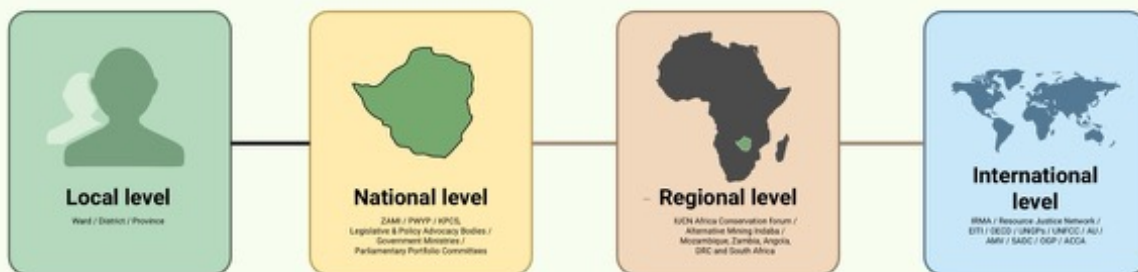
Where We Work

ZELO primarily operates in Zimbabwe, and actively draws inspiration, and shares ideas and best practices with other countries and international forums at regional and global levels. In this regard, we will implement programmes that link the local and global natural resources related processes. We will continue to work at the local community and national level, with local authorities, civil society, government authorities, academic institutions, private sector and international organisations and processes.

Our work has increasingly found resonance at the Southern Africa sub-region through partnerships and platforms such as the Alternative Mining Indaba where we have been one of the active coordinators. We also participate in engagements with the private sector and investors at the Mining Indaba in Cape Town. Our regional programming footprint is in countries such as

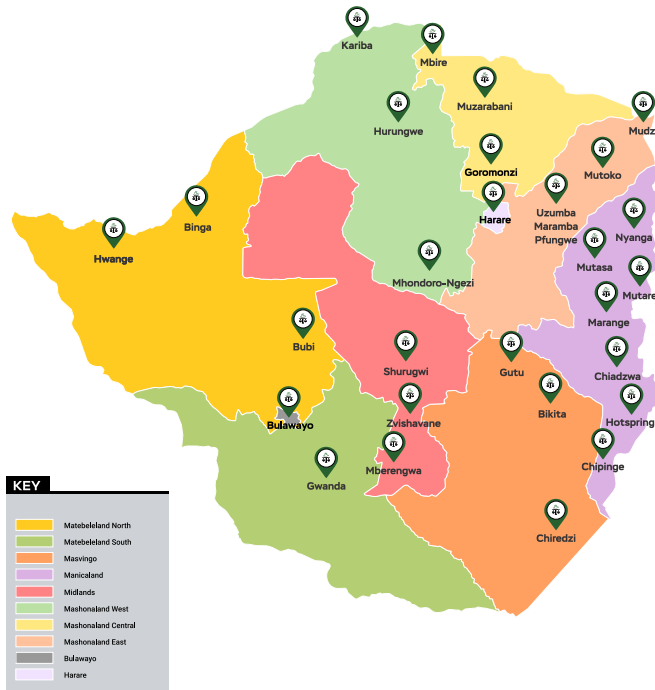
Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, DRC, Namibia and South Africa, mainly through partnerships..

At the international level, we will continue to engage with international initiatives and processes on extractives and natural resources including the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), Resource Justice Network (formerly Publish What You Pay), Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs), UN Panel of Experts on Critical Minerals, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), African Union (AU), Africa Mining Vision (AMV), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Open Government Partnership (OGP), Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) and African Coalition on Corporate Accountability (ACCA) among others.



National Geographic Coverage - Zimbabwe

National Geographic zoning of ZELO Projects - 2025



Extractives	Land and Natural resources	Climate change and Energy	Responsible Investment and Business	Urban Environment
1) Bikita	1) Bikita	1) Bikita	1) Mutare	1) Bulawayo
2) Bubi	2) Binga	2) Bubi	2) Mutoko	2) Harare
3) Buhera	3) Chipinge	3) Buhera	3) Mutare	
4) Bulawayo	4) Chiredzi	4) Chipinge	4) Kamativi	
5) Chimanimani	5) Gutu	5) Chimanimani	5) Gwanda	
6) Goromonzi	6) Gwanda	6) Goromonzi	6) Insiza	
7) Gwanda	7) Harare	7) Gutu	7) Buhera	
8) Harare	8) Hurungwe	8) Gwanda	8) Bikita	
9) Mutare	9) Hwange	9) Harare	9) Goromonzi	
10) Hurungwe	10) Kariba (Nyaminyami)	10) Hwange		
11) Hwange	11) Mbire	11) Mutare		
12) Mudzi	12) Chiredzi	12) Mutoko		
13) Mberengwa		13) Nyanga		
14) Mhondoro-Ngezi		14) Zvishavane		
15) Mutoko				
16) Mutasa				
17) Shurugwi				
18) Zvishavane				
19) Mutasa				

As ZELO we actively engage local communities, authorities, civil society, and other national and international stakeholders, ensuring that their voices are represented and heard in discussions on natural resource governance. Below is a list of some of our target groups, beneficiaries and stakeholders over the next 5 years (2025-2029) :

- Local communities and citizens
- Decision makers: Parliament, councillors and Government departments
- Judiciary and lawyers
- Community based organisations
- The Media
- Academic and Research Institutions
- Regional and international forums and bodies (KPCS, UNFCCC, AU, OECD, UN, EITI, PWYP, etc)

Our Achievements:

Advancing Environmental and Natural Resource Governance

Since inception in 2000, we evolved into a premier institution and thought leader on natural resource and environmental governance in Zimbabwe, across Africa and globally. Our work has shaped laws, strengthened community agency, driven accountability in the extractive sector, and positioned us as a national, regional and international influencer. Below are our key categorised achievements, that reflect our transformative impact:

1. Legal and Policy Reform Leadership

- ✓ Influenced the inclusion of environmental rights in the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe which is the highest law of the Country, which can now be enjoyed by anyone within the country's population of 15 million people, based on the 2022 National Census report.
- ✓ Contributed to the drafting of the Environmental Management Act (2002) which regulates the management and governance of natural resources in Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Contributed to over 30 national legal and policy reforms on mining, wildlife, forestry, environment and climate change thereby reinforcing citizen rights, responsible investments and environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.
- ✓ Empowered 16 Rural Districts Councils to develop/ review and implement natural resources and climate responsive progressive by-laws that promote participation of communities including young people and women, in decision making.

2. Community empowerment and capacity building

- ✓ Established and/or capacitated 151 community-based groups and networks nationally, amplifying grassroots voices in environmental governance and public decision-making.
- ✓ Enabled 132 community groups to initiate income-generating projects, access their own funding/grants, engage local authorities, and/or conduct independent community based monitoring.
- ✓ Supported community-led participation in governance processes, including public hearings and budget tracking in 16 Districts.

- ✓ Created a community of practice network for 10 communities in areas where critical energy transition minerals are mined

3. Influencing and Transforming Civil Society's Role in Governance

- ✓ Mainstreamed environmental and natural resources governance into at least 20 CSOs' programs, catalysing a sector-wide shift towards natural resource justice or economic governance.
- ✓ Influenced the approach of CSOs to adopt or apply engagement strategies with government and the private sector to influence policies, laws and practices instead of a confrontational approach.
- ✓ Led the environment and natural resources cluster under the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO)
- ✓ Hosted and led the Resource Justice Network Zimbabwe Chapter, leading to:
 - Increased discourse on financial transparency by state-owned enterprises.
 - Public disclosure of mining revenues, use and management by local authorities.
 - Increased Parliamentary oversight and public accountability through citizen participation in parliamentary programmes on natural resources.

4. Convening Power and Stakeholder Engagement

- ✓ Lead convener and/or co-organizer of key natural resources platforms such as the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) and the regional Alternative Mining Indaba (AMI), drawing national and global actors from civil society, government, private sector, and international institutions.



AMI has evolved into a multi-stakeholder forum for inclusive policy dialogue, attracting representatives from Sweden, China, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and more.

- ✓ Providing technical and financial hosting support and consortium leadership to government entities, other civil society groups and communities based on donor preferences to provide financial support to other institutions through ZELO. ZELO has strong programmatic and financial systems that attract and build stakeholder interest.

5. Advocacy for Responsible Mining, Trade and Investments for ESG Compliance

- ✓ Led an advocacy group for responsible mining, trade and investments in line with ESG standards, frameworks and good practices in Zimbabwe, culminating in the Government's launch of a national Responsible Mining Audit in 2023 and 2024. Achievement 5 Bullet point 2: Established engagement platforms or forums on ESG or Business and Human Rights for the private sector, including Chamber of Mines, Zimbabwe Miners Federation, MineEntra, and the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, among others.
- ✓ Established engagement platforms or forums on ESG or Business and Human Rights for the private sector, including Chamber of Mines, Zimbabwe Miners Federation, MineEntra, and the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, among others.
- ✓ Engaged with the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA) and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), promoting due diligence and transparency across the mining and natural resources value chain
- ✓ Engaged with IRMA, OECD, ACCA and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), promoting due diligence and transparency across the mining and natural resources value chain.
- ✓ Influenced the adoption of Zimbabwe's Domestic Transparency Initiative (ZMRTI), inspired by EITI principles.
- ✓ Reviewed, analysed and domesticated concepts drawn from the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, the UN Guiding Principles on Critical Energy Minerals, OECD

Responsible Sourcing Guidance and Kimberly Process Principles on Responsible Diamond Sourcing among others.

6. Regional and Global Recognition, Accreditation and Influence

Our work contributed towards shaping dialogue and discourse on key regional instruments that underpin Africa's development including:

- ✓ Africa Minerals Governance Frameworks (AMGF) and Africa Mining Vision
- ✓ Africa Green Minerals Strategy (AMDS)
- ✓ African Union Policy on BHR and other regional frameworks or instruments
- ✓ African Union's Agenda 2063,
- ✓ Granted Observer Status by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in 2019; signed an MoU with its Extractives Working Group for joint programming. This is a stride that allows ZELO to advise the Commission on environmental rights on behalf of communities
- ✓ SADC Mining Vision

The following are some of the key highlights of our regional impact, merged with international influence;

- ✓ Served as coordinator of the global Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition (2018–2021), the first African-based lead, resulting in measurable reductions in human rights abuses linked to diamonds and removal of trade embargo on Marange diamonds.
- ✓ Active in UNFCCC expert groups, particularly on Article 6.4, promoting equitable carbon markets and climate justice.
- ✓ Contributed to the global discourse on Business and Human Rights (BHR) through submissions to the UN Forum, OECD, and African Commission, including a model National Action Plan and input on treaty texts.
- ✓ Accredited by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which enabled ZELO to contribute to global plastic treaty negotiations.
- ✓ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) & UN Decade

on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) advocate, with extensive biodiversity contextual knowledge, especially the policy environment in Zimbabwe with evidence of supported conservancies, and legal frameworks for community-based conservation aligned with CBD targets and global restoration efforts.

- ✓ Established an Environmental, Sustainability and Governance (ESG) unit, that promotes several good practice standards including the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), European Union Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD), OECD Guidelines, Global
- ✓ Reporting Initiative (GRI), and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).
- ✓ Influenced the adoption of Zimbabwe's Domestic Transparency Initiative (ZMRTI), inspired by EITI principles.
- ✓ Chaired the Publish What you Pay (PWYP) Africa Steering Committee and hosted the PWYP Office for East and Southern Africa.





7. Strategic National level Partnerships for Institutional Strengthening

a. With a commitment to remaining independent and to advance the needs and interests of the ordinary people, we provided technical assistance and/or secured MOUs with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to advocate for policy, legal and practice reforms including the following;

- Environmental Management Agency
- Ministry of Mines
- Ministry of Environment
- Forestry Commission
- Zimbabwe Investment Development Agency among others.

b. Supported the institutional work of the following key national bodies to advance proper resource governance:

- Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority (ZIDA)
- Parliament of Zimbabwe
- Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC)
- Attorney General's Office
- Auditor General's Office
- Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC)
- Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC)
- Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC)

We have been promoting gender-responsive and inclusive governance models, grounded in Rights-Based Approaches and Social Inclusion in relation to natural resources governance. We have been strengthening environmental governance in Zimbabwe, which is key to the country's ability to contribute effectively to multiple SDGs, for instance SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 5 on gender equality, and SDG 17 on partnerships. We remain committed to defending environmental justice, advancing community agency, and building systems where natural resources are governed in the public interest.

Operating Context and Challenges to be confronted



Regional and International Context

Extractive resources account for almost a quarter of Africa's gross domestic product with about 3.5 billion people living in countries rich in oil, gas, wildlife, land or minerals. Rather than serving as engines of economic growth and prosperity, these resources have often been a source of conflict, corruption, and environmental degradation, particularly in the SADC region. Weak governance frameworks, lack of transparency, volatile global commodity prices and changing consumer and market demands in the mining sector also affect African economies and further exacerbate economic vulnerabilities.

At the SADC and African Union level, mineral governance policies that are aimed at promoting economic growth, value addition and beneficiation of minerals, ASM formalisation, local participation, industrialisation and poverty reduction are not adequately implemented and closely monitored by CSO and government oversight institutions.

Sadly, many African countries that are part of global mineral value chains are exposed to several risks and vulnerabilities with limited capacity to effectively implement natural resource governance frameworks, in line with regional good or best practices or standards. The political will to implement policies and harmonise national regulations is limited. ZELO will actively participate in African Union and SADC level discussions on mineral governance and responsible mining practices in the coming five years.

The next five years in SADC are likely to be shaped by discussions on responsible sourcing, mineral beneficiation and value addition, impacts of critical minerals/energy transition minerals on national economies and communities, resource nationalism and domestic resource mobilisation. The global freeze on development aid and developed countries' new approach of focusing on national security and trade needs is a key development shaping the new order. Civic space is shrinking, and funding for natural resources governance initiatives is declining, as many traditional donors scale down or redirect resources.

In the context of the rush for critical minerals, consumer demands for responsibly sourced and traceable minerals are also on the rise. The global markets now demand responsibly sourced minerals and products as part of just energy transition and ambitions towards net zero targets. There is increasing demand for sourcing minerals from regions that are not affected by conflicts, human rights violations, environmental harm and unsustainable mining practices. ZELO will carry out legal and policy research and advocacy to address issues relating to equity, transparency, investment, trade, ESG, and sustainability, influencing regional and national debates at SADC level.

The global push for energy transition and low-carbon economies has placed critical energy transition minerals found in the SADC region such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and graphite, at the centre of economic and geopolitical discussions. SADC countries are seeing increased investment in these resources, yet local communities have not fully realized the benefits of this new extractive industry. Key developments include:

- The EU, US, and China forging partnerships with SADC countries on critical mineral projects, such as the Lobito Corridor and China's Belt and Road Initiative in Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, and Tanzania.
- Zimbabwe, despite its mineral wealth, being left behind in key partnerships due to governance and policy challenges, highlighting the urgent need for reforms to attract responsible investment and trade.

- A rising global demand for responsibly sourced and traceable minerals, with international standards and regulatory frameworks shaping supply chains.

At the global level, several international initiatives now dictate responsible mineral sourcing and supply chain transparency, including:

- UN Panel on Critical Minerals
- USA Mineral Security Partnership
- EU Critical Raw Materials Act
- UK Critical Minerals Strategy
- OECD Responsible Sourcing Guidelines
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)
- Kimberley Process Certification Scheme
- UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights
- Africa Green Minerals Strategy

These frameworks are increasingly influencing regional and national policies within SADC and Zimbabwe. The coming years will likely see intensified debates on the human rights, economic, environmental, and social impacts of critical minerals and the impacts of geopolitics and resource access and trade. ZELO must position itself to drive policy research, advocacy, and regional collaboration to ensure Zimbabwe and the SADC region benefit equitably from the energy transition.



Country Context

Extractive industries and Responsible Business, Trade and Investments

Our country programming is shaped by ongoing local, national and international economic, social, political and environmental developments and trends. We monitor these religiously. At a local and national level, our view is that the natural resources sector and in particular mining and energy infrastructure projects will continue as key economic sectors likely to drive growth in the country. This is achievable if the Zimbabwean Government remains committed to its mantra to promote ease of doing business, economic growth, infrastructure development and attracting investments. The extractives sector, particularly mining underpins Zimbabwe's economy and immensely contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment, foreign earnings and socio-economic development as described in the National Development Strategy (NDS1 2021- 2025) and Vision 2030. The NDS2 adopted in 2026 includes mining as the anchor economic sector to achieve Vision 2030. For ZELO, this means mining will continue to shape economic policies and will require close monitoring and actions to influence policy by CSOs for improved mineral resource governance.

In the mining sector, the global demand for energy transition minerals and other strategic/critical minerals has put Zimbabwe on the mining investors' map. Exploration investments in oil and gas have also been recorded. Zimbabwe Investment Development Agency (ZIDA) Investment reports indicate increasing investor interest in lithium, nickel, graphite, tin, tantalite, copper, platinum, chrome, iron ore, coal, oil and gas, and coal bed methane. Government has been awarding contracts for infrastructural and mining development projects in the critical minerals sector. According to ZIDA reports, the Chinese have more investment projects in Zimbabwe's lithium sector. There is limited competition in the sector as the Chinese are operating or control more than 10 lithium mines and have been setting up lithium, iron ore and chrome processing centres as part of value addition and beneficiation. This is despite the many environmental, social and governance challenges associated with their mining investments. Therefore, continuous monitoring of the impacts of Chinese and other foreign investments including those from the USA, UK, Australia and Canada become crucial in the coming five years. Engaging, profiling and monitoring how investors promote responsible mining and sourcing standards in the critical minerals sector will be crucial.





The 2024 World Bank and IMF IV consultations confirmed that corruption and weak environmental governance in the mining Zimbabwe's potential to achieve economic growth, stability and development. Increasing conflicts between communities and companies due to environmental damage, displacements, limited benefits and marginalisation in decision making processes have been witnessed and documented by ZELO. These factors inhibit the achievement of good development outcomes, democracy and good governance in the natural resources sector. A focus on these problematic areas in the coming five years will be vital.

Legislative and policy instruments being proposed or adopted by Government in recent years are important to mention as they are likely to influence long term mining sector developments in the country. These include the ZIDA (General Investments) Regulations, 2023, ZIDA (Special Economic Zones) Regulations, 2023, Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) (Investment Laws Amendment) Regulations, 2023, Finance Act of 2023, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) Act, Mineral Development policy, Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Policy, the proposed Critical Minerals Strategy and the long-awaited Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill among others. These legislative and policy developments have long term implications on the ease of doing business, responsible investments, human rights, environmental aspects, community development and fiscal transparency and accountability. These developments require continuous monitoring by CSOs in the coming few years to help address governance risks in the mining sector. The country has the potential to address the negative perception of Zimbabwe's status on corruption, lack of transparency and accountability in the extractive sector, if it adopts the Extractive Industry

Transparency Initiative (EITI) as promised in various Government policy statements and reports.

To address some of the environmental, social and governance problems in the extractives sector, the Government with ZELO's input conducted Responsible Mining Audits in 2023 and 2024 to assess mining company compliance with legal requirements. The Audit revealed limited compliance with social, environmental, tax, labour and community development concerns and other statutory requirements amongst small-scale and large-scale miners. By August 2025 ZELO plans to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Mines to assess the impact of the Responsible Mining Audit and map a way forward. In the diamond mining sector, the Kimberley Process adopted Principles on Responsible Diamond Sourcing and the Government jointly organised a Responsible Diamond Sourcing Special Forum with ZELO in 2023. The forum resulted in a KP-wide decision to conduct country level assessments on responsible diamond sourcing standards and practices in diamond producing and trading countries.

The Chamber of Mines, private and state-owned companies are increasingly embracing ESG and responsible mining and sourcing standards (responsible business standards) while the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange and Victoria Falls Stock Exchange are developing Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) disclosure metrics for adoption by companies. There is also a new wave of requests from private and state-owned mining companies for ZELO to provide ESG and responsible mining standards training as well as assistance in developing related procedures. These developments will define and shape the mining and extractive sector in the coming few years.

Climate Change and Energy Sector

Recurrent droughts, heat waves, floods and other weather changes due to climate change are increasing poverty, climate induced displacements, food insecurity and destroying sources of livelihoods and lives. In response to the climate change challenge, Government developed several climate change policies and strategies namely the Climate Change Response Strategy, National Climate Policy, Climate Change Adaptation Plan, Green Resilient Recovery Strategy, Low Emission Development Strategy and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Investment Plan. By February 2025 Zimbabwe became the first African state amongst the first 13 countries in the world to submit its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) statement to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) following technical support from ZELO.

Government is also working on legal reforms including the Climate Change Management Bill and other reforms on Carbon Credits Trading. ZELO has been involved in the consultative process and reviewing the draft legislation. Therefore, Zimbabwe is not short of policies and is taking leadership steps on climate change. The country seeks to scale up adaptation efforts, reduce emissions and increase investments in climate actions and attract climate financing to achieve net zero goals and build resilience across all sectors and systems. However, currently, most of the policies are not supported by legislative frameworks at national and local authority level and this should be a priority for Government in the coming five years. ZELO will technically support the Government to reform legislative frameworks and other national documents. Once the Government adopts the Climate Change Management Act, and local authorities pass climate responsive legislation, ZELO will support their enforcement and implementation through building state and stakeholder capacity to implement the laws and policies.

Carbon credits are an emerging issue for Zimbabwe under which community benefits, community safeguards and sustainability issues, land and resource tenure rights and transparency and accountability must be regulated and protected. The Carbon Credit Trading Regulations passed in 2025 are meant to Regulate carbon trading markets to ensure Registration of carbon credit projects, benefit sharing, and international transfer of mitigation outcomes. This is an area of programming for ZELO over the next five years as policy and legal changes and inconsistencies affect the climate financing and investment sector, making it difficult for Zimbabwe to attract adequate climate finance. In the coming five years ZELO intends to facilitate and lead on research and policies about climate financing through carbon markets, nature-based solutions and biodiversity credits and markets.



Promoting carbon Rights and carbon justice principles will be key in this sector through research and advocacy work to protect community rights and benefits at national and international levels. Further, building state institutions and stakeholder technical capacity on Monitoring, Verification and Reporting on carbon credits will be crucial.

At the international level, state institutions often lack access to adequate technical support and continuous capacity building to effectively participate in international negotiations on climate change. ZELO has the legal capacity to help and therefore has often been invited to participate in Conference of Parties Meetings and is serving in Expert groups at UNFCCC. This is therefore likely to continue in the next five years with a special focus on Climate Finance, Adaptation, Carbon credits, Loss and damage; youth participation, inclusion of people living with disabilities, gender mainstreaming, etc.

In the energy sector, droughts have affected access to energy. For example, hydroelectricity generation at Kariba Dam is susceptible to climate change impacts such as the EL-Nino induced drought experienced in the 2023-2024 season which led to energy insecurity in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Despite the potential for solar, hydro and other renewable energy sources, Zimbabwe continues to rely heavily on fossil fuel (coal) and forests for energy. Investments in coal mining projects are on the rise as Zimbabwe battles power shortages, while mining companies are also establishing independent thermal power stations. Government is also working on energy efficiency policies, as well as renewable energy projects and policies. However, most of the policies do not have legal backing. As the world is gripped by the energy transition mode, renewable energy and energy efficiency issues will become more critical in the coming five years. ZELO will position itself to work with communities, government and the private sector on these.

Land and natural resources sector

In the Land and natural resources sector, Government is implementing programmes and initiatives that cover land, wildlife, forestry, water and agriculture. These require policy and legal support, including the protection of community benefits and rights. In 2024 and 2025, the Government announced its intentions to provide security of tenure and title deeds for those who benefitted from the Land Reform programme making land related property rights a hot topic. The land question remains critical and will continue to be a challenge in the coming years. Farmers rights, access to markets and promotion and adoption of climate smart technologies are crucial for farmers that are affected by climate change, hence building resilience is crucial. Certification of agricultural products for foreign and local markets is a major challenge for farmers, including compliance with food safety standards.

Inadequate land use planning and management, including encroachment into wildlife buffer zones, mining in protected areas and Illegal international Wildlife Trade and Wildlife Crimes/corruption are some of the challenges in the natural

resources sector. In wildlife rich areas, human-wildlife conflicts are increasing, and affected communities often struggle to get redress and remedy for injury, death or loss of crops. At the same time, loss of biodiversity and ecosystems due to mining in protected areas is a problem. Other issues of interest in the coming five years will include advancing a biodiversity economy, biodiversity credits and Nature Based Solutions, sustainable forest harvesting, forest crimes (illegal timber logging and trafficking) and access to water for farmers and communities which remain a challenge due to recurring droughts. Water related conflicts are common. Groundwater management is also emerging as a challenge in both rural and urban areas where most people now rely on boreholes. Government passed water permits regulations that are not being complied with. At the international level, Zimbabwe acceded to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses in 2024. Zimbabwe also signed several agreements on shared-watercourses and transboundary natural resources management programmes in the wildlife and water sector. Therefore, monitoring implementation of international conventions will be key.





The Urban Environment

Zimbabwe is witnessing significant growth in the urban population due to rural to urban migration and natural increase. Ideally, rapid urban population growth rates should be proportionate to urban infrastructure, facilities and social services. However, this is not the case in Zimbabwean cities where the development of informal settlements, rising urban poverty, dilapidated urban infrastructure, densification of previously sparsely populated areas and other urban developmental challenges are rampant. The massive growth of the urban population exerts strain on urban resources resulting in the failure of local authorities to meet service delivery obligations. The current urban conditions affect the rights of citizens to a healthy environment, right to health, right to adequate food, housing and water. While urban agriculture is being practiced in urban and peri-urban areas, it is not being viewed as food security and poverty reduction activity in policy planning.

Pollution of urban and peri-urban water bodies from industrial and domestic sources is leading to water borne disease outbreaks. Harare and Bulawayo among others do not have access to safe and adequate environmental and social services such as water, waste collection services, electricity, health services, housing, road and transport systems. Poor waste management practices are also rampant thereby compromising the right to a clean, safe,

and healthy environment. This has been coupled by corruption in land allocation and lack of accountability by the local authorities on the management of resources and budgets that are allocated to service delivery in water, housing, health, planning and solid waste management projects. The opportunities to address the challenges include policy and legislative reforms around adoption of Open Government Partnership (OGP) principles on Open contracting and procurement.

The loss of wetlands and other ecologically sensitive areas have been a topical environmental issue in Zimbabwe as people are settling on wetlands in urban areas. This is happening despite Zimbabwe being a signatory to the Ramsar convention, which provides the legal framework for national action and international cooperation towards the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Further, while urban planning and policy implementation is crucial in urban areas, most urban municipalities are struggling to develop environmental and climate change related By-laws including by-laws for monitoring Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions as part of climate change mitigation. As it stands, urban authorities require assistance in incorporating environmental and climate change aspects when developing and implementing Master Plans and Local Environmental Action Plans. Land-barons are also a menace in urban areas and this calls for improved land management and enhanced fight against corruption in the coming years.

Organisational SWOT

Strengths

- Passionate and self-driven staff and senior management team
- **Technical expertise:** Skilled in environmental law, policy reviews/modelling, technical support provision and governance, providing a strong foundation for effective natural resources governance work.
- **Research-driven approach:** ZELO conducts evidence based research to inform and guide work, ensuring that initiatives are grounded in data and best practices.
- **Effective stakeholder engagement:** Successfully engages with local, national, regional, and international stakeholders involved in natural resources in an effort to grow collaboration and drive impact.
- **Robust governance and operations:** Maintains effective financial and programmatic control mechanisms, policies, and operational standards, ensuring resilience, effectiveness, and transparency in all operations.
- **Strong partnerships and talent development:** Manages a network of partnerships and consortiums across various sectors and invests in talent development, resulting in a capable and dedicated staff complement.
- **Financial hosting and fiscal sponsorship capacity:** ZELO's strong financial and programme management capabilities has attracted donors and partners to channel funding to other organisations and state institutions through ZELO.
- **Positioning for the Localisation Agenda:** ZELO is well aligned and positioned to provide support to international organisations and partners to implement their localisation agenda and aspirations through ZELO. Efforts are underway to recalibrate ZELO's existing systems and approaches on promoting localisation to enable local communities and institutions to manage and implement programmes.

Weaknesses

- **Growth management limitations:** Difficulty managing programmatic overlaps due to insufficient integration and layering of project activities.
- **Low staff retention:** Loss of skilled workforce driven by contextual dynamics affecting NGOs thereby affecting organisational consistency, motivation and morale.
- **Funding limitations:** Good project-based funding but limited or inadequate institutional support or unrestricted funding due to a shrinking donor space.
- **Communication and creation of narratives:** Challenges in harvesting results and creating narratives based on our high level achievements. Documenting stories of change is crucial
- **MEAL challenges:** Limited participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) that allows for comprehensive identification, collection and packaging of impact, to meet various stakeholder needs and robustly support fundraising efforts.
- **Team overwhelmed:** Staff stretched across the huge portfolio or projects, leading to potential burnout and reduced effectiveness.
- **Limited capacity** to pitch social enterprise initiatives that can bring unrestricted funding.





Opportunities

- **Reliance on natural resources:** Opportunity to play a key role in mediating the competing reliance on natural resources among communities, government, and the private sector. The government views natural resources as central to economic development and attracting investments.
- **Legislative reforms:** Space to contribute to the review of environmental laws and legislation scheduled or prioritised for review by the Parliament of Zimbabwe.
- **Strategic growth:** Potential to reassess and refine growth strategies to enhance ZELO's impact and operational efficiency.
- **Shifting donor interests to trade and investments:** ZELO is well positioned through its projects on responsible investments and trade to pitch good proposals on investments and trade for increased funding.

Threats

- **Development projects:** High value and sensitive investment projects with adverse environmental, social and cultural impacts threaten sustainable natural resource governance.
- **Reluctance to reform:** Limited political will to update mining legislation laws and policies.
- **Challenging socio-economic environment:** Operating in a shrinking civic space, especially with the PVO Act.
- **Legal work:** Legal actions taken by the organisation to support communities that have their EESCRs violated, can strain relationships with key stakeholders.
- **Implementation challenges:** Difficulty in enforcing court judgments after litigation reduces our effectiveness.
- **Perception issues:** Viewed as monopolising the natural resources and environmental space or perceived as too close to government or being anti-development which may affect partnerships and public support.

Our Values

- **People centred and inclusive** – We focus on the needs, interests, and well-being of individuals and communities we work with. Our collective effort is to leave no one behind.
- **Responsive** – We react timeously to matters that pertain to natural resources governance.
- **Accountability** – We are answerable to actions we take, and we are bound to our commitments.
- **Bold** – We enhance a culture of telling the truth, courageous decision-making, and open debate.
- **Transparency** – We are transparent in the work we do, in line with our partnership policies and agreements.
- **Innovation** – We continuously improve and adapt, through creative and fresh ideas. We value transformative solutions and technology.

Value Proposition

As ZELO, we champion sustainable natural resources and environmental governance through cutting-edge evidence-based research, capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, multi-stakeholder engagement and provision of legal and technical support. As leading experts in environmental justice and natural resources governance, we empower communities and citizens, influence regulatory frameworks and drive urgent action for a resilient and equitable future.

Problem Statement

There are gaps in environmental and Natural Resources Governance, characterised by limited citizen benefits and limited multi-stakeholder awareness of the interconnectedness of environmental issues, opportunities and challenges. There are gaps in our policy, legal and institutional frameworks that need to be addressed by making key stakeholders aware of the policy or regulatory environment, since most of the frameworks do not fully fulfil EESCRs of citizens or benefit resource rich communities in Zimbabwe.

ZELO responds to the problem by strengthening laws, policies and institutions, as well as responding legally to environmental issues, promoting fair benefit-sharing, while addressing public knowledge gaps, ineffective implementation, enforcement and accountability of all stakeholders to legal and regulatory frameworks on natural resources governance.

Vision

A just and sustainable Zimbabwe where communities and citizens benefit equitably from improved natural resources governance, supported by strong institutions that uphold a culture of shared transparency and prosperity.

Mission

To use the law to promote equitable, just and sustainable environmental and natural resources management, social and economic benefits and protection of the rights of marginalised communities and citizens in Zimbabwe.

As ZELO, we champion sustainable natural resources and environmental governance through cutting-edge evidence-based research, capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, multi-stakeholder engagement and provision of legal and technical support.

Our Approaches and Strategies



In the coming five years we will implement programmes using various strategies and approaches that are all aimed at delivering results and positive outcomes for our target beneficiaries. Our niche is using laws and policies to promote justice across the various programmes and themes. We use the laws and policies to promote justice and protect rights in natural resource governance. Legal support and access to remedy, including litigation and alternative dispute resolution is facilitated for marginalised communities.

Through the community empowerment model, registration and legal recognition of community groups and informal economic actors (e.g. artisanal miners), ZELO will place them at a strategic position of contributing to local and national development. Adaptive learning and Knowledge Management (KM) will help to address interlinked environmental and natural resources issues through community monitoring models that innovate the use of science and technology, for instance, in water testing and broad environmental impact monitoring as well as digital awareness to promote transparency and accountability in natural resources governance.

Broadly, the following are the key approaches of ZELO (PRACALL)

- Partnerships
- Research/Evidence generation
- Advocacy
- Communication for impact
- Awareness raising
- Legal and Technical support provision
- Leadership

Partnerships with key Government ministries, departments and agencies, Parliament, civil society organisations, the private sector and community-based organisations and other partners or stakeholders facilitate mutually beneficial relationships that are anchored on strategic priorities and values aligned to ZELO. ZELO believes in the power of coalition building and partnerships that link communities to national, regional, and international policy and advocacy spaces on global standards such as KP, IRMA, OECD, UNFCCC, UNGPs, EITI and GRI. This places ZELO in a position of continuous learning to remain relevant, as a key and strategic partner on natural resources governance.

Research and Evidence generation enhances evidence-based advocacy and promotes context relevant natural resources governance advocacy for the benefit of marginalised communities. Monitoring of contracts, strategies and investments in the extractive and natural resources sectors is a key approach we use for evidence generation. This informs ZELO's actions and strategies.

Advocacy informed by evidence shapes the efforts undertaken to influence policies, legislation and practice, empowering marginalised communities, citizens and other stakeholders to meaningfully play a role in natural resources governance. This guides ZELO's advocacy for the reform of policies, laws and other binding frameworks at national, regional, and international levels.

Communication for Impact enables ZELO to report on the significant results, and positive changes in the environment, and among citizens and stakeholders, because of ZELO and its partners. This demonstrates the relevance of ZELO.

Awareness raising on natural resources governance, for the benefit of marginalised communities, merges locally relevant experiences with regional and international good practices that lead to major policy and legal reforms. This facilitates behaviour and mindset change among citizens and stakeholders.

Providing legal and technical assistance enables ZELO to provide expert support and capacity strengthening that influences policies, laws and institutional frameworks to make them more transparent, accountable, and equitable on natural resources

governance. Support to private sector actors on ESG standards and responsible sourcing makes them compliant to laws and national, regional or international good practices or standards. ZELO can leverage on this to distinguish itself, provide cutting edge insights and technical expertise to its constituency of stakeholders!

Assuming leadership on environmental and Natural Resources Governance has positioned ZELO as a thought leader, environmental advocate, knowledge broker, collaborator, high level platforms convenor, and a think tank that uses the law to protect marginalised communities. Thus, ZELO is a catalyst for change towards equitable, inclusive, and accountable governance of natural resources. This positions ZELO to be a credible and trusted voice on natural resource justice that is available to support stakeholders across Africa and beyond.

ZELO has financial hosting and fiscal sponsorship capacity supported by strong financial and programme management capabilities. This will enable the organisation to receive and manage funding from donors and partners providing support to other organisations and state institutions.

By implementing its localisation agenda, ZELO will provide support to international organisations and partners to implement their organisational localisation agendas through the recalibration, adoption and implementation of its existing systems and approaches on promoting localisation to enable local communities and institutions to directly benefit from, manage and implement development programmes.

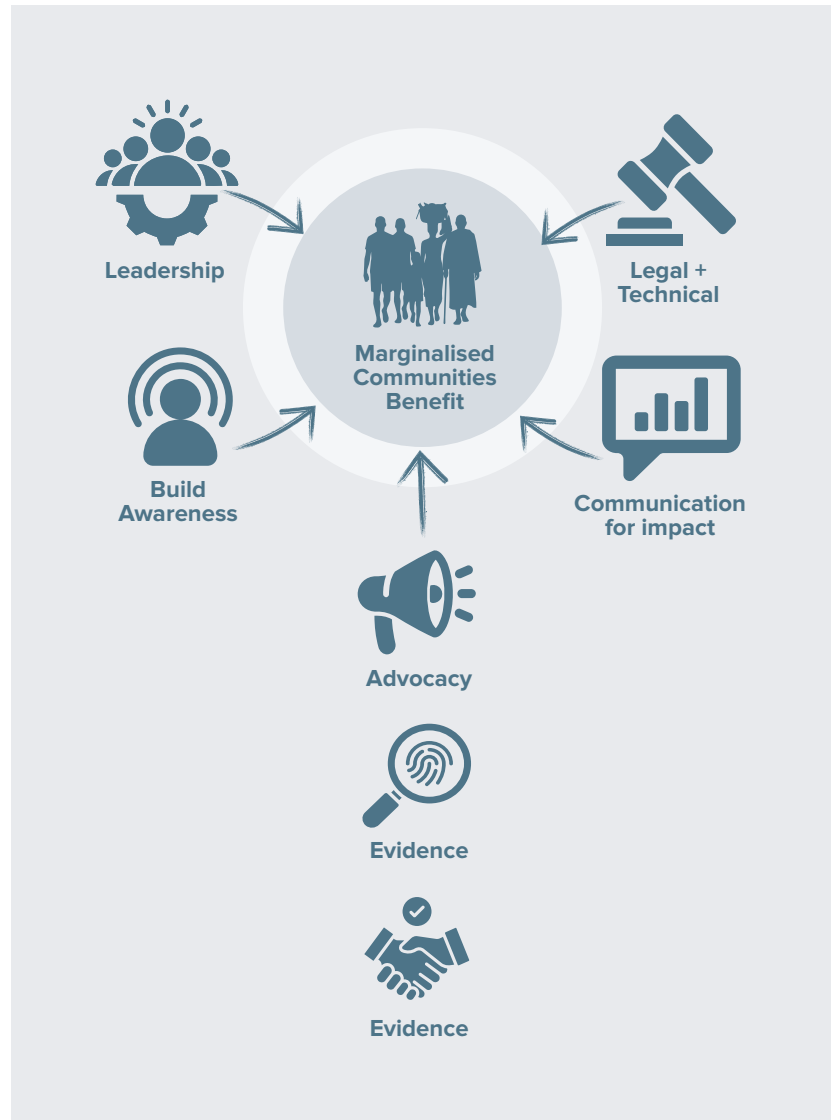


Theory Of Change (2025-2029)

If ZELO establishes strategic partnerships, generates or facilitates generation of context relevant evidence, and integrates legal, technical, and innovative approaches tested locally, nationally, regionally or internationally, in its Natural Resources Governance (NRG) focused work guided by five programmatic pillars anchored on land and natural resources management, extractives, responsible investments, climate change and energy, and urban governance,

THEN it will be successful in its advocacy and public education efforts on the environment and NRG including community and national benefits from resources.

This in turn drives transparent and accountable governance that empowers marginalized communities and citizens, by including them in planning, implementation and decision-making processes on policies, laws and institutional frameworks on NRG, resulting in respect of Environmental, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (EESCRs), improved access to justice and sustainable natural resource management across Zimbabwe. Through the integration of innovation across all levels of operation, ZELO's work is positioned to ensure that both resource-rich or marginalized communities and citizens, equitably benefit from natural resources, with duty bearers and other institutions upholding the principles of good NRG, that facilitate meaningful participation, transparency, accountability, and justice.



Through the integration of innovation across all levels of operation, ZELO's work is positioned to ensure that both resource-rich or marginalized communities and citizens, equitably benefit from natural resources...

Strategic Framework

PROGRAMME AREAS

Our work in the coming five years will be underpinned by the following five programme areas, guided by our strategic objectives.

1. Extractives Industries and Mining
2. Climate Change and Energy
3. Urban Environment
4. Land and Natural Resources
5. Responsible Business, Trade & Investments

Over the next 5 years, ZELO will also provide training on ESG and (or) responsible mining standards, as well as assistance in developing procedures, to private and state-owned mining companies.



PROGRAMME 1:

Extractive Industries and Mining

The Extractive Industries and Mining programme covers the mining, oil and gas sectors and their impacts on the economy, the environment and communities. With the emergency of critical or energy transition minerals a lot of effort and work will be targeted at influencing policies and laws, protecting community rights and promoting equitable distribution of benefits from the extractive sector and fighting against environmental damage whilst advocating for inclusive decision-making processes. In light of environmental, social and governance challenges associated with the mining sector, continuous monitoring of the impacts of foreign investments and profiling how investors promote responsible mining and sourcing standards in the critical minerals sector will be crucial. Over the next 5 years, ZELO will also look at providing ESG or responsible mining standards training or assistance in developing procedures from private and state-owned mining companies. These developments will define and shape mining and extractive sector developments in the coming few years. The following are the Goals and Objectives of the Extractive Industries and Mining Programme.

Goal 1

By 2029, improve local communities' and citizens' participation in the mining, oil and gas sector and access to opportunities for realisation of EESCRs targeting 5000 people.

Objectives

1. To improve the EESCRs of 10 resource rich targeted districts in Zimbabwe for the benefit of 5000 community members by 2029.

- ZELO will improve EESCRs by promoting awareness of EESCRs and strengthening civic participation to ensure that community members can effectively engage in the management and governance of their natural resources.

2. To enhance the adoption or formulation of mining oil and gas legal and policy reform processes, implementation and enforcement of 5 policies for improved responsiveness by state and non-state actors in Zimbabwe by 2029.

- Legal and policy research will be conducted by ZELO to identify gaps, inconsistencies and outdated provisions within the extractives sector. Over the next five years

this will extend to facilitating legal review processes that are inclusive of various stakeholders. ZELO will monitor implementation and enforcement of policies on mining, oil and gas in Zimbabwe to enhance and improve responsiveness by state and non-state actors.

3. To strengthen 15 existing and 5 new organisations, networks and associations in the extractives sector in order to actively participate in natural resources governance and hold duty bearers accountable on EESCRs by 2029.

- Effective natural resource governance is reliant on a well-coordinated and empowered civil society. However, in our context, many community-based organisations, networks, and non-profits in the extractives space have limited capacity, resources, or platforms to influence policy, monitor compliance, or encourage accountability. Over the next five years, our focus will be on strengthening these actors, participating in natural resource governance and holding duty bearers accountable.

4. To improve Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) practices among 100 Artisanal and Small-scale miners (ASMers) and 5 mining companies in extractives operations in Zimbabwe by 2029.

- Zimbabwe's extractive sector, particularly ASM, is a significant contributor to rural livelihoods and local development. However, ASM remains predominantly informal and underregulated, which results in low safety standards and poor working conditions. Ultimately, ZELO aims to enhance responsible mining standards that safeguard workers' rights, community health, and the environment by improving SHE practices amongst ASMers and mining companies.

Key Thematic Issues

Under the Extractive Industries and Mining Programmes, ZELO's work, and projects will be tailored around the following thematic issues among others.

- Mining, oil and gas sectors
- Critical Energy transition minerals (lithium, nickel, graphite, tin, tungsten, copper and tantalite) including coal, iron, oil, chrome and platinum)

- Artisanal and small-scale mining; mineral leakages, marketing, environment, safe mining practices and responsible mining-including mineral traceability.
- Mining rights and cadastre system - strengthening state capacity and anti-corruption efforts
- Large-Scale mining projects and investments - ESG and responsible sourcing standards
- Workers' rights and Child rights
- Providing technical support to state oversight bodies and state commercial entities on ESG
- Legal and policy reforms including Minerals Policy, Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, ASM Policy amongst other legal and policy developments
- Link national processes with international best practices in the extractive sector



Over the next 5 years, ZELO will also look at providing ESG or responsible mining standards training or assistance in developing procedures to private and state-owned mining companies.

PROGRAMME 2:

Climate change and Energy

Climate change is increasing poverty, climate induced displacements, food insecurity and destroying sources of livelihoods and lives in Zimbabwe. Government is working on legal reforms in response to the climate change challenge including innovations around carbon markets and carbon justice. ZELO will prioritise developing legislative frameworks at national and local authority levels over the next five years and stay heavily involved in the legal reform consultation processes. Once climate responsive legislation is adopted, ZELO will focus on building state and stakeholder capacities to implement and enforce the laws and policies. Research and advocacy work to protect community rights and benefits at national and international level on carbon will be of focus over the next few years. Further, building state institutions and stakeholder technical capacity on Monitoring, Verification and Reporting on carbon credits will be crucial.

ZELO has the legal and technical capacity to participate in international negotiations on climate change and will aid Government with capacity building in the arena, as they continue participating in Conference of Parties Meetings and is serving in Expert groups at UNFCCC. This will continue during the next five years with a special focus on Climate Finance, Adaptation, Carbon credits, Loss and damage; youth participation, inclusion of people living with disabilities and gender mainstreaming.

In the energy sector, droughts have affected sources of energy. For example, hydroelectricity generation at Kariba Dam is susceptible to climate change impacts such as the EL-Nino induced drought experienced in 2023-2024 season which lead to energy insecurity in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Despite the potential for solar, hydro and other renewable energy sources, Zimbabwe continues to rely heavily on fossil fuel (coal) and forests for energy. Investments in coal mining projects are on the rise as Zimbabwe battles power shortages, while mining companies are also establishing independent thermal power stations.

In the energy sector, Government is working on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects and policies. ZELO will focus on advancing the development of legal frameworks to support the policies. ZELO will position itself to work with communities, government and the private sector on energy transition, renewable energy and energy efficiency issues over the next five years.

Goal 2

By 2029, advocate for climate justice and just energy transition for the benefit of 1500 vulnerable communities.

Objectives

- 1. To influence at least 40% of legal and policy frameworks on climate change and energy governance in Zimbabwe in line with regional and international standards and practices by 2029.**

Climate change and energy governance are critical areas of concern for Zimbabwe. Although Government has commenced several processes for legal, policy and institutional reform in these sectors it is pertinent that any reforms are in accordance with regional and international standards and practices. As ZELO, we will rely on our technical expertise to ensure a just and inclusive climate change and energy transition that is based on rights-based governance.

- 2. To improve public awareness and action on climate change impacts, mitigation, adaptation and resilience targeting 1500 people by 2029.**

ZELO will work on supporting access to knowledge, tools and platforms for citizens to understand, adapt to and mitigate climate change as we work towards building resilience.

- 3. To generate 5 systematic and participatory research on climate change, climate finance, mitigation, adaptation, just energy transition and other emerging climate change and energy trends by 2029.**

Research informs our work, and we believe that evidence-based advocacy through participatory research on emerging innovations on climate change, climate finance, mitigation, adaptation, just energy transition will be a significant component of our work over the next 5 years. The just energy transition work will include a focus on ensuring that the link between climate change and critical energy transition minerals is understood by stakeholders at local, national and international levels.

Key thematic Issues

The key thematic issues and aspects that underpin our Climate Change and Energy programming in the coming years include;

- Monitoring and helping in shaping and implementing national climate change policies including NDCs, NDC Investment Plan, LEDS, Article 6.4 Framework, Climate Change Response Strategy, National Climate Policy, etc.
- Climate change legal reforms and implementation modalities including Climate Change Bill.
- Climate Finance; including carbon credits markets and engagements with private project developers, banks, Government and communities.
- Carbon markets and carbon rights: Advocate for the rights of communities and benefit sharing in carbon credit projects such as FPIC, Environmental safeguards and Sustainability Plans.
- Assessing impacts of Compliance markets, Voluntary markets.
- Loss and damage, Carbon tax.
- Climate Justice and Security.
- Climate Change and Health.
- Displacements arising from climate change impacts.
- Establishing the link between climate change and critical energy transition minerals at local, national and international level.
- Energy Efficiency policies and strategies; Renewable Energy Governance, Energy Security and Just Energy Transition.
- International negotiations, expert meetings and events (UNFCCC, Paris Agreement and CBD and Convention on Desertification).
- Mitigation.
- Adaptation –farmers rights, (enhancing resilience, food security and livelihoods).



ZELO will focus on advancing the development of legal frameworks to support the policies. ZELO will position itself to work with communities, government and the private sector on energy transition mode, renewable energy and energy efficiency issues over the next five years.”

PROGRAMME 3:

Urban Environment

Rapid urban population growth rates in Zimbabwe, pollution of urban and peri-urban water bodies, and poor waste management practices are a major cause of concern in Zimbabwe. These challenges affect the rights of citizens to a clean, safe and healthy environment, right to health, right to adequate food, housing and water and lead to water borne disease outbreaks. This is exacerbated by corruption in land allocation and lack of accountability by the local authorities on the management of resources and budgets that are allocated to service delivery. ZELO seeks to focus on policy and legislative reforms around adoption of Open Government Partnership (OGP) principles on Open contracting and procurement to address some of these challenges.

Zimbabwe is signatory to the Ramsar convention, however loss of wetlands and other ecologically sensitive areas is a major challenge, as people increasingly settle on wetlands in urban areas. It has become increasingly evident that most urban municipalities are struggling to develop environmental and climate change related By-laws including by-laws for monitoring GHG emissions as part of climate change mitigation. ZELO will support urban authorities with incorporating environmental and climate change aspects when developing and implementing Master Plans and Local Environmental Action Plans, in the quest to improve land management and curb corruption.

Goal 3

By 2029, promote sustainable management of social and environmental service delivery in urban environments that benefit 500 citizens.

Objectives

- 1. To influence and strengthen 3 policy, legal frameworks and planning processes on urban environments, including climate change, for sustainable and resilient cities by 2029.**

Urban areas are facing several environmental challenges in Zimbabwe that are worsened by weak governance, lack of transparency and corruption. ZELO will focus on influencing and strengthening policy, legal frameworks and planning processes in urban environments with climate change and sustainable and resilient cities in mind.

- 2. To empower 500 community members and 20 CSOs and resident associations to actively participate in policy, legal and planning processes that hold duty bearers to account on environment issues including service delivery and climate change by 2029**

ZELO will enhance accountability in urban sector governance by implementing programmes that strengthen public participation in policy, legal and planning processes, with the ultimate goal of holding duty bearers to account for environmental issues.

- 3. To enhance the legal and technical capacity of 7 urban local authorities on environmental and climate change management by 2029.**

ZELO will work on supporting the legal and technical capacity of urban local authorities on environmental and climate change management, which in turn will allow local authorities to fulfil their obligations to deliver a clean, healthy and sustainable urban environment.

Key Thematic Issues

The following thematic issues and aspects will underpin the Urban Environment Programme, although these may be adjusted with time as the context changes.

1. Legal reforms and assisting urban authorities in reviewing by-laws and developing Master Plans and Local Environmental Action Plans
2. Enhancing transparency and accountability in urban social service delivery and budgeting processes
3. Help address poor service delivery in water, health, waste management, housing, roads and transport systems
4. Waste management policies
5. Wetlands management
6. Urban agriculture and poverty issues-food security
7. Climate change mitigation in urban areas and adoption of climate smart practices
8. Public-Private Partnerships-Infrastructure development and service delivery
9. Open Contracting in public procurement

PROGRAMME 4:

Land and Natural Resources

The land and natural resources sector covers land, wildlife, forestry, water and agriculture. These require policy and legal support, including protection of community benefits such as farmers rights. Zimbabwe's land redistribution continues to influence legal and policy developments that ZELO will monitor over the next five years. Advancing farmers rights, access to markets and adoption of climate smart technologies for farmers affected by climate change and building their resilience will be key, including promoting certification of agricultural products for foreign and local markets, promoting green growth strategies and compliance with food safety standards.

There will also be a focus on supporting the advancement of land use planning and management to address encroachment into buffer zones and mining in protected areas. Zimbabwe has a solid biodiversity economy, which provides opportunity in terms of biodiversity credits and Nature Based Solutions and sustainable forest harvesting. However, challenges arise when it comes to compensation for communities affected by human wildlife conflict and curbing wildlife crimes. ZELO will focus on supporting the development of legal frameworks to promote land and natural resources governance, with community benefits at the core, whilst also reviewing and supporting the advancement of laws and policies where gaps exist.

Water related conflicts are increasing in Zimbabwe, with groundwater management being of increasing importance as we experience an increase in drought due to climate change. This has several implications for access to water for farmers and communities in both rural and urban areas where most people now rely on boreholes. Zimbabwe has acceded to international water conventions and passed water permit regulations, but compliance with these regulations remains low. Therefore, over the next five years, ZELO will prioritize monitoring the implementation of international conventions.

ZELO will focus on supporting the development of legal frameworks to promote land and natural resources governance, with community benefits at the core

Goal 4

By 2029, improve 5 regulatory and institutional frameworks to respond to sustainable management of land and natural resources that include forestry, water, wildlife, other ecosystems and smart agricultural systems for the benefit of 1500 communities and citizens.

Objectives

1. To influence reform or effective implementation of 5 natural resources policies and legislation through evidence-based decision making on natural resources governance by 2029.

Zimbabwe's natural resources are increasingly under pressure. ZELO is clear that legal and policy frameworks can be effective tools for protecting natural resources and ensuring sustainable and equitable benefit sharing for communities. Over the next five years, we will work on influencing reform and implementation of natural resources policies and legislation, whilst relying on research to inform governance and decision making in this sector.

2. To improve the capacity of 1000 citizens and communities to actively participate in land, climate-smart agriculture and natural resources governance by 2029.

ZELO will strengthen community capacity and participation to allow for more inclusion and rights based approaches to natural resources and agriculture governance in Zimbabwe.

3. To improve access to benefit sharing mechanisms of 7 communities and 500 citizens in the natural resources sector by 2029.

Zimbabwe is endowed with natural resources, however communities living closest to these resources are predominately excluded and disconnected from benefits from these natural resources. ZELO will identify and analyse existing benefit sharing mechanisms and facilitate inclusive dialogue as we work to support communities to improve their access to benefit sharing mechanisms in the natural resources sector.

Key thematic issues

The Land and Natural Resources Programme will be implemented guided by the following thematic issues and aspects among others;

1. Land tenure rights and security – communal land, customary land, forest land, commercial farming.
2. Advancing farmers rights, access to markets and adoption of climate smart technologies for farmers affected by climate change and building their resilience
3. Promoting certification of agricultural products for foreign and local markets
4. Promoting green growth strategies and compliance with food safety standards.
5. Natural resources related access and benefit sharing mechanisms including ownership, use rights and free prior informed consent in the land, forestry, wildlife and water sector
6. Illegal Wildlife Trade and Wildlife Crime (Wildlife Trafficking)
7. Community investments and partnerships with private sector in natural resources sector -wildlife, forestry and fisheries
8. Human-Wildlife Conflict
9. Biodiversity and ecosystems conservation and protection -mining in protected area
10. Water rights and governance
11. Adoption or implementation of international treaties on biodiversity, water, forest and wildlife.
12. Forestry governance
13. Transboundary natural resources management in the water, wildlife and forest sector



Programme 5:

Responsible Business, Trade and Investments

The responsible business, trade and investments pillar will be focused on ensuring that businesses and investors adopt and implement ESG and business and human rights programmes. At the country level, there is increasing interest by private and public enterprises in adopting responsible investment and environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards in the mining, agriculture and other natural resources sector. Therefore, ZELO will promote the concept of Responsible sourcing and responsible mining, business and human rights and ESG across different sectors. The intention is to collaborate with the private sector or influence national policies and investor policies to respect and promote the rights of communities. ZELO will actively seek to promote and facilitate responsible investments in Zimbabwe in collaboration with state institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders.

On business and human rights, Zimbabwe has not yet developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to operationalize the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). However, the Ministry of Justice and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission have expressed significant interest in starting this process. ZELO will advocate for the development of these NAPs to promote responsible business standards and practices, such as due diligence policies by companies in Zimbabwe. In addition, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights provides a continental human rights framework with clear obligations and responsibilities. Through its membership in the Working Group on Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights, ZELO will work to ensure that the Zimbabwean context reflects African policy and addresses the impacts of business on human rights. Furthermore, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has urged states to ensure that the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) prioritizes human rights to achieve sustainable development. Zimbabwe is already a signatory to the AfCFTA and other existing trade arrangements that affect the environment and other fundamental human rights.

Goal 5

By 2029, contribute to responsible business, sustainable trade and investment practices that respect EESCRs of 500 citizens in target communities through implementation of ESG practices and standards among 10 companies and Government.

Objectives

1. **To improve the capacity of 400 people in target communities to influence development, adoption or reform of national, regional and international processes, best practices or standards on trade or responsible business conduct by 2029.**

Zimbabwe is open for business, and at ZELO we will support communities and citizens to be engaged and have the capacity to contribute towards the development and improvement of processes, best practices and standards on responsible business or trade over the next five years.

2. **To improve the capacity of 20 CSOs, 50 parliamentarians, 250 community members and the commissions, to hold government, companies and investors accountable on EESCRs by 2029.**

An inclusive and sustainable future for Zimbabwe should be built on human rights, equity, transparency and accountability. ZELO will work to promote knowledge sharing for parliamentarians, community members and the Human Rights Commission, to improve accountability and EESCRs in Zimbabwe.

3. **To promote sustainable trade and investments by providing technical and legal support to 10 business and 5 government institutions for adoption of ESG policies, human rights diligence and supply chain standards by 2029.**

Foreign and direct investments in Zimbabwe can contribute to sustainable development. ZELO will offer legal and technical support for the adoption of ESG policies and human rights due diligence and supply chain standards to both businesses and government institutions on standards over the next few years.

4. **To enhance corporate accountability and access to remedies for 50 community members through judicial and non-judicial support mechanisms by 2029.**

Communities are vulnerable to business related human rights violations. This is why ZELO will provide judicial and non-judicial support mechanisms to community members

over the next five years to enhance corporate accountability and access to remedies.

Key Thematic Issues

Our work on Responsible Investments and Business will be organised around the following thematic issues and aspects;

- Protection of rights of communities, children and vulnerable groups against harmful business and investor conduct
- Promote and facilitate responsible investments in Zimbabwe in collaboration with state institutions, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- Championing corporate accountability across various sectors with a special focus on mining, energy, agriculture and infrastructure development projects
- Adoption of responsible business standards including ESG policies and human rights and environmental due diligence by corporates
- Adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on BHR
- Compliance monitoring of investors with national and international laws and standards
- Building the capacity of private companies and state-owned companies and entities to pilot Responsible Sourcing and ESG standards
- Participation in international forums and processes on Business and human rights including responsible sourcing and mining forums; African Forum on Business and Human Rights, IRMA, OECD, UNGPs, KP, among others
- Advocate for formulation of responsible sourcing and ESG standards at national level including responsible sourcing standards.



Strategy Implementation Priorities



At ZELO we aim to enhance our financial management practices and diversify revenue streams by increasing unrestricted funding income by 25% and establishing additional unrestricted revenue sources over the next five years. To “Sustain Growth in a Changing World”, at ZELO we will also focus on implementing institutional capacity strengthening and sustainability growth actions that can allow the organisation to grow and continue operating by 2029 and beyond. We will strive to maintain an organisational culture that is transparent, accountable, inclusive, and collaborative, that motivates staff to be at their best. The rebranding exercise will be crucial as we are transitioning from ZELA to ZELO. Our focus will also be on enhanced staff development, social impact investments, improved financial management and project monitoring and accountability by 2029. Below are the Specific Objectives on Institutional capacity strengthening and sustainability.

1. To strengthen the human capital base for environmental justice advocacy, prioritising critical skill gaps and competency development for enhanced organisational

management, governance, and leadership, through a comprehensive professional development program that fosters continuous learning, encourages career advancement, and improves overall organizational performance by Dec 2029.

- 2. To increase unrestricted revenue sources by 25%** supported by an established ESG unit and social investments by Dec 2029.
- 3. To strengthen financial management, media visibility and MEAL** through upgrading policies and systems, that enhance accountability, learning, adaptability and impact packaging and messaging, tailoring messages in line with stakeholder needs.
- 4. To construct and establish a Conference and Office Facility** by Dec 2029

Cross Cutting Themes

Gender Equality, Diversity and and Social Inclusion

Safeguarding efforts are at the centre of ZELO's work and programming. The idea is to promote diversity, equity, non-discrimination, and inclusion at the organisational, project and community level. Diversity related policies and strategies will be reviewed on a yearly basis to enhance responsiveness to safeguarding issues. Some of the policies include Safeguarding Policy, Gender Policy, Disability Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Human Resources Manual, HIV/AIDS Policy, Grievance Handling Policy, Sexual Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy. The policies require staff to respect, promote and protect the rights of project beneficiaries particularly women, youths, children, people with disabilities or minority groups. Staff members are prohibited from discriminating against any person or to be involved in any sexual relationship with beneficiaries or to abuse any child. Inter-staff discrimination, victimisation or sexual harassment is prohibited.

ZELO has established safeguarding suggestion/tip off boxes that are provided during community meetings for feedback on Safeguarding issues. A Safeguarding Committee is in place to deal with all safeguarding cases, led by a Safeguarding focal person. A Gender Committee is in place, guided by a Gender policy. Most job adverts include a non-discrimination and safeguarding requirement. All community and staff workshops and meetings commence with a Safeguarding session, while staff members undergo gender and safeguarding training by consultants.

ZELO is an equal opportunity employer-with a fair representation of women and the youths. The organisation will continue to ensure equal opportunities for men and women at all levels of the organisation and at community monitor's level.

Social inclusion and gender actions

In the Natural Resources sector, Women, children and youth are disproportionately affected by challenges such as involuntary relocations, loss of land, and exposure to hazardous chemicals among others. ZELO will contribute to solving this problem by conducting research into under-examined issues of gender equality, child rights, businesses' potential and actual adverse impacts on human rights related to sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, with particular emphasis on the experiences of women, youth and girls. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are among excluded groups in the mining sector, and face challenges in accessing mining related information. ZELO will also focus on Advocating for the inclusion of PWDs in mining associations and other governance structures; Promoting access to information related to constitutional and environmental rights for PWDs.

Children and youth

ZELO will focus on Campaigning for Environmental Child Rights and amplifying children's voices in decision-making; reduction and mitigation of child labour especially in the ASM sector, Advocating for youth inclusion and decent jobs for the youth in the natural resources sector; Promoting corporate and youth engagement platforms for support for safe and environmentally safe activities for the youth; Legal empowerment for the youth to understand the law and participate in policy reforms in the natural resources sector.

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