



MBERENGWA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
(RDC) MASTER PLAN



Executive Summary

The Mberengwa Rural District Council Master plan is a result of the ‘Call to Action’ by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. This call to action was after realising that local authorities throughout the country were falling short in the delivery of quality service. The President then made a call to action for all local authorities to make a no compromise to service delivery. The call to action is in line with the nation vision of achieving an upper middle-class economy by 2030. This target cannot be achieved by the government alone, but through the active contribution of all local authorities in Zimbabwe. Local authorities were therefore identified as key actors in achieving Vision 2030, hence the call to action. The starting point of this call to action is the production of a master plan by all local authorities. This master plan is a document that spell outs the development needs of local authorities. These development interventions should drive economies towards achieving an upper middle-class economy in the next 10-15 years.

The master plan was a product of massive consultations from various groups in the whole district, aimed at collecting development information that was used to shape development in Mberengwa District. The consultations involved field experts, development partners, community leaders, heads of government departments and the generality of people in the district. The master plan strived to include all stakeholders in the development plan, where all stakeholders were allowed to make inputs in the development plan of the district.

Mberengwa district was seen to be entangled in a web of various issues that stunts development in the district. Chief among them was the poor rainfall pattern that has been affecting agricultural activities. Mberengwa as a district is largely a rural district, where communal and resettlement areas are the major land uses. This land use pattern has made the district a largely an agricultural area, but the agricultural activities are affected by poor rainfall. The district is in agro-ecological region 4 and 5, which receives an annual rainfall averaging between 300mm- 600mm. This poor rainfall regime coupled with frequent droughts, which are a result of crippling effects of climate change, has made agriculture activities a poor livelihood strategy.

Mberengwa District is however richly endowed with a lot of minerals that has seen proliferation of mining activities in the district. The range of minerals found in the district include, gold, lithium, chrome, limestone and other various precious minerals. The abundance of minerals has seen a lot of artisanal mining activities happening throughout the district, which has resulted in negative ramifications on the environment. The development potential of the district lies in irrigation farming, tourism, mining, commercial developments at Mberengwa Centre, Malaga Growth Point, several rural service centres and business centres.

Key Findings for the Master Plan

Key Challenges

Environment

The district has several environmental issues that affect development of the district. These problems include:

Deforestation: where people are cutting down trees for fire wood, and fencing their garden. The forest can best be classified as shrubs

Wetland degradation: where people are cultivation on-stream banks and cutting down trees,

Soil erosion: mainly caused by poor agricultural practices and deforestation

Over grazing: where grazing areas are dwindling due to take-up of grazing areas for farming in an ever-growing livestock population

Siltation: this is mainly caused by poor agricultural practices and mining activities that are happening along rivers and streams

Evasive species: where Lantana Camara is invading forests and grazing areas.

Agriculture

The district is heavily affected by poor rainfall regime, which had made agricultural activities impossible. The production of major crops in the district is averaging between

0.5t/ha -0.7t/ha, which is very low production that keeps the district in severe food insecurity. The district is still heavily reliant on maize, which is not drought resilient hence agriculture is a big failure. Grazing land is continuously being turned into mining areas as claim owners fence-off their claims, thereby diminishing grazing areas. The cattle breed is very small, which does not fetch a lot of income on the market. The breed needs to be improved to make cattle rearing more profitable agricultural venture.

Infrastructure

There are a lot of challenges relating to provision of infrastructure for development. This challenge is most felt in:

Education: where there is need for classroom blocks, staff houses and ablution facilities. There is also wide spread lack of ICT infrastructure in schools

Health: There is need for more clinics in the district, more staff houses.

Sanitation the district needs to up scale the building of ablution facilities and increase access to water at household level

Housing: The district needs to provide institutional housing for government workers in health, education, police and other government departments. There is also need to upscale housing services like water, sewer and waste management at Mberengwa Centre and Mataga Growth point.

Roads: there is need to surface roads that lead to major economic activities and also resurface the Zvishavane, Mataga road. Several bridges need upgrading, *Dams and irrigation:* To boost agricultural activities there is need to build more dams because Mberengwa district receives a low rainfall regime. These dams should be used to irrigate land for increased agricultural productivity.

Major economic Projects in the district

The major economic projects driving the development of Mberengwa District include:

Agriculture: through rearing of animals and growing of crops. This can be effectively done through irrigation

Mining activities: there are a lot of mineral deposits in Mberengwa, which include gold, chrome, lithium and other precious minerals. The extraction of mineral can be complimented by mineral beneficiation programmes that will create industries that add value to our minerals

Tourism: A lot of sites can be used for tourist attraction and these include Buchwa Mountains, Belingwe Mountains, Manyuchi dam, and Mundi-Mataga Dams

Culture and Heritage: A lot of cultural activities can be used to provide incomes to communities in Mberengwa and these include Buchwa mountain pools, sports and music, heritage facilities such as Manjirimwe caves.

Infrastructure for Economic development.

Roads: needs to be improved by re-gravelling and tarring major roads. There is also need to build bridges and improve on road signage

Railway: The current rail network does not service Mberengwa district as it passing through the margins of the district. There is need to construct railway line that connects all the economic activities of the district.

Dam and irrigation: More dams and more irrigation schemes need to be opened for sustainable agriculture.

Air Strips There are several air strips in the district, which can be used to transport precious metals mined in the district.

Communication More communication infrastructure needs to be installed as some places are in the shadow of communication. More service providers need to be brought into play to give people a wider variety of telecommunication services. The fibre Optic line needs to have more penetration so that the district can enjoy faster internet services. Schools need to be connected to the ICT infrastructure.

Energy: Grid power supply has penetrated throughout the district as it is providing energy to more than 97% secondary schools, but there are very few communities that are connected to the power. There is need to provide alternative sources of energy in the rural areas such as solar, wind, mini hydro power grids to improve power delivery to communities in Mberengwa.

Master Plan Recommendation

Environment.

There is need to scale up environmental stewardship in the district to control rampant cutting of tree, degradation of wetlands, gully erosion, siltation of rivers and dams, control evasive species (Lantana Camara).

Agriculture

Build more dams for water harvesting to climate proof agriculture.

More farmers to be trained into conservation farming to improve agricultural production.

Major rivers such as Ingezi, Mwanezi, and Mwele needs dams for irrigation.

The Buchwa Mountain Pond can also provide water for irrigation.

Introduce agro-processing industries at Mataga Growth Point to take advantage of agricultural activities around the growth point.

Introduce hay making schemes to produce stock feeds to supplement the dwindling grazing areas

Introduce artificial insemination to improve cattle breeds

Make effective use of irrigation schemes to produce more

All farmers outside irrigation programmes to practice conservation farming for improved farm production

Framers to grow climate resilient crops for improved production and food security

Introduce small livestock that are resilient to climate change (goats, pigs, sheep, rabbits, and chicken)

Mining

Value addition to minerals mined in the district

Introduce industries related mining so that we can support beneficiation of minerals

All mining activities to adhere to environmental requirement before and after their operations

Mining companies to contribute to the development of the district through community ownership schemes

Artisanal to be organised into groups so that they can be easily managed.

Tourism

Take advantage of tourist facilities in the district (water facilities mountains and cultural centres)

Rehabilitate roads to promote tourism

Promote craft centres to sell traditional crafts in tourist centres

Manyuchi and Mataga dams to provide tourist facilities

Mberengwa mountains have the potential to develop tourist facilities

Recommendations for Infrastructure development

Roads

Tarring of major road arteries in the district

Re-gravelling of all the roads in the district to improve the conditions of the roads

Reconstruction of bridges to create connectivity in the district

Railway system to be connected in the economic activities of the district

Water

Provide access to water facilities to all people for good hygiene

Construct more dams to put more land under irrigation

All major rivers that are perennial should have a dam for water harvesting

Rehabilitation of silted dams to maintain their water holding capacities

Protect the water bodies from degradation through well managed economic activities

Solar powered boreholes need to be expanded so that piped water schemes can be extended throughout the district

Mberengwa Centre require water and sewer augmentation programmes

Energy

Promote the use of renewable energy through upscaling use of solar power, and construction of mini hydro-power stations

All schools and health facilities to be electrified to improve the services provided by these sectors

All business Centres to be electrified for effective service delivery

Every household to have some form of power (Lighting, appliances and cooking)

Use of agro-wastes to generate power for cooking and heating homes

All new developments to incorporate infrastructure for renewable energy

Communication

Create internet connectivity to all part of the district for easy business

Promote industrialisation and innovation

Promote sustainable development

Promote developments that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive

Increase access to information communication technologies

Foster innovation and technological progress

To have the generality of population in the district to have infrastructure access, store, transmit and manipulate information

Improve the digital inclusion in the district by spreading ICT infrastructure

All social services to be connected to ICTs for better functionality

Mobile penetration should be 100%, where no pockets of communities are in the shadow of communication

Internet should be accessible at village level and all villages including the bordering villages should be covered
All schools to have ICT infrastructure so that learners can effectively participate in learning systems
Improve ICT literacy, by mainstreaming ICTs into the national curriculum as well as rolling out of ICT capacity development programmes.
All business (including government) to be done on electronic platforms in line with the global trends
Expand ICT provision to include regularisation of ICT vendors, which should make ICT availability to everyone.
Wi-Fi should be everywhere in the district so that everyone participates in the digital world.
Mberengwa is largely a rural district with the majority being communal areas, hence there is need for cheap network technologies such as WIMAXI

Recommendations for Social Provision

Education

Provide infrastructure for effective delivery of education
Improve intake and teaching of stem subjects,
Good accessibility will allow effective delivery and management of schools.
Provide vocational training centres for skills development especially in mineral extraction and processing
Build and equip infrastructure for STEM subjects
Provide for ICT infrastructure in all schools to scale up science and innovation
Promote rural industrialisation for income generation
Provide safe water to all schools. (Each school to have a solar powered borehole
All schools to have renewable energy infrastructure

Health

Provide specialist services in our health institutions (dentist, gynaecologist, neurologist, midwifery, pharmacists)
Health services to be offered starting at village level
Provide ambulance services to rural clinics
Circuit doctors to be introduced for rural clinics
Scale up programmes to eradicate diseases such as TB, Malaria, reduce Child Mortality

Provide primary health facilities at Mberengwa Centre

Adopt planning that incorporates health living in urban and semi-urban centres

Provide health posts at disease hot spots (Vanguard and other mining areas)

All rural service centres to provide mini hospital services.

Mataga Growth Point to have hospital. It's the pole of growth in the district so it should have such facility

Sanitation and Hygiene

Eliminate open defecation

Provide water and sewer reticulations at Mataga Growth Point and Mberengwa Centre.

Culture and Heritage

Culture and heritage in Mberengwa district to drive poverty alleviation through tourism related activities

The district needs to stimulate tourism activities for income generating activities in the district

Promote traditional artefacts in corridors leading to tourist centres

Provision of infrastructure for performing arts and sports

Promote cultural hubs in the district where cultural activities are displayed and performed for income generation.

Recommendations for Urbanisation of Mberengwa District Settlements

Mberengwa centre to develop towards gaining town status.

All services to therefore develop with this in mind (water, sewer. Waste management, informal activities,

All developments to assume compact developments to avoid sprawl

The developments to promote urban tourism (exhibition centres, conference centres, restraints, modern and unique architecture, venues for performing arts and live performances)

Settlements to promote night life (night clubs, bars, restaurants)

Developments for town to include Mberengwa turn-off and Vanguard settlements

Developments to reflect climate change resilience (energy and water efficiency, green buildings, etc)

Developments to incorporate safety issues in the city security, lighting, surveillance cameras)

Recommendations for Cross-Cutting issues

Youth

- There is need to mainstream youths in all development areas such as mining, agriculture, tourism and environmental management.
- Involvement and appropriate decision-taking of youth at all levels,
- Increasing the number of youths who accessed empowerment opportunities
- Enhancing leadership development training;
- Reconfiguring of technical vocational education

Gender Issues

- Prioritise women empowerment through allocation of resources
- Programmes for financial inclusion for women
- Women involvement in mining, politics, and development
- Monitoring and evaluation of gender sensitive programmes

Conclusions

The Mberengwa Rural District Master Plan provides a comprehensive framework to unlock the development potential of the district, which should allow an improved quality of life in an attempt to achieve an upper middle-class economy. The focus on mining, agriculture, tourism, culture and heritage, the master plan is poised for improved quality of lives in the district. Proper coordination, partnerships, and synergies, the plan envisions substantial development in mining and mineral beneficiation, irrigation projects, improved and diversified livestock rearing, which should greatly improve people's lives

In order to effectively address the policy issues identified in the Report of Study and Written Statement, it is imperative for the Mberengwa Rural District Council to actively engage and foster strong working relationships with all relevant stakeholders associated with the various sectors of development I the district. This can be achieved through

establishment of Public-Private –Partnerships, which can be used to attract investments in all sectors of development. The response to call for action by the President therefore is a golden opportunity to drive development to greater heights. This will drive the district towards Vision 2030 of achieving an upper middle-class economy.

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