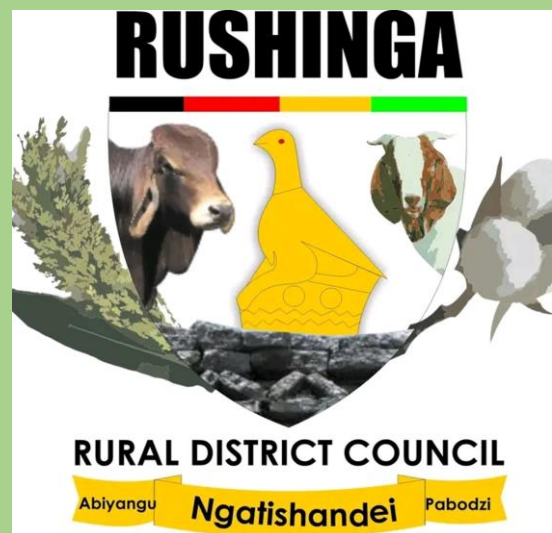


Executive Summary

Rushinga Rural District Master Plan



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1.0 Introduction

Rushinga district is geographically positioned in the North Eastern corner of Mashonaland Central Province in Zimbabwe, bordering with Mozambique. The district is characterised by a mountainous terrain, with existing low lying areas coupled with cascading valleys, and abundant natural beauty consisting of bushes and grasslands. In terms of regional context, Rushinga Rural District is situated in the northeastern part of Zimbabwe. The District is made of 25 administrative wards, of which one ward is urban. The district is wholly communal. Rushinga Rural District Master Plan is a blue print that consists of a report of study and written statement accompanied by land use proposal maps. This master plan provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable development in the district. Despite the requirement under the Regional Town and Country Planning Act Chapter 29:12, Rushinga Rural District Council lacked an existing Master Plan for the district. The Council relied on basic statutory plans such as layout plans covering areas like Rushinga and Chimhanda. These plans were supplemented by strategic, annual and sector plans to steer development in the district. However, given the districts various socioeconomic and environmental challenges, these plans were inadequate hence a special government directive and existing piecemeal planning frameworks which have spurred the formulation of this Master Plan. The Preparation of this Master Plan has been guided by the dictates of the Regional, Town and Country Act (Chapter 29:12) as read together Master and Local Plan Regulations (RGN 248 of 1977). Supporting regulations in the preparation of the Master Plan include but not limited to, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), Rural Districts Councils Act (Chapter 29:13), Communal Land Act (Chapter 20:04), Environmental Management Act (Chapter 20:27), Parks and Wildlife Act (Chapter 20:14), Rural District Councils Act, Forest Act (Chapter 19:05), Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17), Museum and Monuments Act of Zimbabwe Act (Chapter 25:11), Mines and Minerals Act (Chapter 21:05). The provisions of the Master Plan is also in line with Vision 2030 which seeks to position Zimbabwe to an Upper Middle Income by 2030. The methodology involved various research techniques including data collection, stakeholder consultations, focus group discussions and spatial analysis while also addressing ethical considerations and study limitations. The executive summary provides an overview of key issues identified, goals, objectives and proposals for the Rushinga District.

2.0 Summary of Issues

The following is a summary of issues based on the findings of the Report of study and they are categorised into major areas as below.

2.1 Population

Rushinga population is progressing in a linear fashion considering the last three censuses, currently reached about 76000. Its population is dominantly young population, pointing to need for future youth planning and interventions. Out of a total of 25 enumerated wards in the 2022 Census women outnumbered males in majority of the wards. Generally, population densities in the district are low by national standards but the carrying capacity of the land is also low.

2.2 Natural Resources and the Environment

Rushinga has a wide variety of natural resources ranging from minerals and soils, sun energy to wildlife. These include dolomite, gold, iron, tantalite and magnesium. The District boast of the Nyatana wilderness which has migratory elephants and other wildlife. The vegetation is adapted to the region's climate and includes species such as miombo woodland and mopane trees. The District is affected by adverse climate change which results in increasingly erratic rainfall patterns leading to reduced production of crops. Rivers in the district are seasonal, hence the availability of water is a major challenge to sustainable arable and livestock agriculture during the dry periods thus necessity for dams to facilitate crop and livestock irrigation.

2.3 Environmental problems in Rushinga

Deforestation – this is because the district is wholly communal and a large number of people continue to use wood fuel and due to a lack of electricity or solar power in these areas where people use wood fuel as their main source of energy. Soils erosion is also a major environmental concern in the district. The District is characterised by high soil instability which results in high levels of soil erosion. Eighty percent of the water bodies are severely silted over, which is extremely dangerous for both animal and human life.

2.4 Economy and Employment

Communal agriculture despite it having very little returns is still the dominant agricultural activity. Industrial development in Rushinga is virtually non-existent including the service industries. The district also experience alluvial mining activities along major rivers such as the river banks of Mazowe River. An enabling environment for the informal sector has to be created in an effort to support the sector. An increasing number of families are now dependant on the informal sector for income and any future economic strategy for the district must recognise this fact. The District has a high unemployment rate which calls for more opportunities for economically active have to be sought in different sectors. There is need to address the RDCs direct involvement in wildlife and tourism as this is an area where the council could generate revenue.

2.5 Social Infrastructure

The District has 48 registered primary schools and 26 registered secondary schools. Rushinga is a rural district characterised by long distances and poor road infrastructure. Students often travel long distances to reach schools which can be challenging given their ages. The lack of reliable transportation options makes it difficult for students to attend school regularly and punctually. The absence of a tertiary institution is a serious drawback, which impacts negatively on the employment sector. The district has limited sporting facilities in terms of both range and scope. Apart from soccer there are a few other facilities that exist in the district.

Health facilities appear to be adequate but people have problems of access to the facilities and service. Piped water schemes, boreholes as well as non-protected water supplies such as dams and rivers constitute the main water sources that sustain the district. A substantial number of boreholes have mechanically broken down and dried up in communal areas, these need to be rehabilitated and in some part of the district additional boreholes are needed to replace those that have dried and for supplementary efforts.

2.6 Agriculture

Crop and livestock production are the dominant livelihood activities within the District. The district has one functional irrigation scheme which is the Chimhandanda irrigation scheme. And there need for yields to be increased on the irrigation scheme by

encouraging growth of cash crops. Lack of widespread irrigation, particularly in the communal lands and high frequency of droughts and semi drought agricultural production has resulted in low productivity.

2.6 Economic Infrastructure

In terms of road and transportation network, the district does not have any formal public transport system that is locally servicing the whole planning area. There is no air or rail transport in the district and the majority of the road network system is still gravelled and in a deplorable state. Telecommunication in the district is very poor. However, efforts are being made to improve the service through the construction of cell service tower that house all the major telecommunication service providers. Rushinga lacks growth despite that it's a border district. The growth points and rural service centres in the district have not grown as would have been expected.

3.0 Rushinga Rural District Master Plan Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives constitute the framework for addressing issues highlighted in the report of study. The overall goal is to create a development frame work for Rushinga Rural District that is characterized by sustainable livelihoods, polices and strategies that are responsive to the needs of time and space and that align with the government's policies and objectives. The goals and objectives for Rushinga District are explained as follows;

- **Sustainable development** – The Master Plan aim at preparing a planning framework within which growth and development as well as detailed planning of the district take place through integration spatial development and the management of resources. The strategy sees the achievement of a good quality of life as an outcome of the harmony between the economy, society and the environment. It also aims at achieving an urban and rural renaissance through creating the quality of life that makes urban and rural living desirable.
- **Public participation** – Focus to be directed on ensuring that adequate and timely information is provided to the people of the district and other stakeholders and that they are given sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions and views.

- **The environment-** focus to be directed towards the effective protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources in the district by planning positively for the care and management of the environment.

- **Agriculture-** Agriculture is the primary economic activity in Rushinga and is primarily characterized by subsistence farming. Priority to be given to the optimum exploitation of the district's agricultural potential for the benefit of the district and the nation. Rushinga has untapped potential for agricultural development. Expanding irrigation infrastructure and improving water management systems can help mitigate the effects of rainfall variability and enhance agricultural productivity.

- **Settlements-** The main aim of this goal is to raise the quality of life in both urban and rural settlements into viable entities and develop district and rural service centres as foci of retail, industrial, residential and institutional development. Both Rushinga and Chimhanda have significantly expanded. This expansion has been accommodated despite pressures on infrastructure, in particular water supplies. Intensifying the use of urban-type settlements has brought with it advantages as well in that existing infrastructure use is maximised and the benefits of agglomeration have brought advantages, in particular to Chimhanda which is located in the communal lands. To gain maximum advantage from agglomeration economics careful planning and design of the form and shape of these centres is necessary. This includes the need to strive for a greater mix of building types, land uses and tenure, and the optimisation of the development density to achieve economies in infrastructure provision.

- **Physical infrastructure-** Delivery of supporting infrastructure and services is a basic requirement for local economic growth, sustainable livelihoods, and will determine the overall pattern of growth. For this reason, it is necessary for the Plan to address and provide for infrastructure development, such as the road network, provision of water and sanitation services. The main aim of the goal is to direct focus on the provision of adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a sustainable manner to meet the growing needs of the district.

- **Land**– Development in Rushinga District was only based on layout plans which are not even statutory instrument. The district development has been charted through piecemeal planning of layouts. The layout failed to act as instrument of development control. Access to land is a strategic prerequisite for the orderly and balanced growth of Rushinga and its people. It is a precondition for the expansion of all sectors of the districts economy. Effective land management is crucial to ensure the needs of the people are met, while recognizing the finite nature of this valuable resource. This goal therefore aims at providing a focused planning framework within which reasonably balanced physical growth, detailed planning, and development of the district will take place during the planning period.
- **Social infrastructure** – the aim is to provide adequate and appropriate social and economic infrastructure, giving priority to the disadvantaged peripheral areas of the district, to meet the needs of the people. This goal address housing, education, health and community service. This master plan has to make provision to meet these social and economic needs of the district population. In doing so the master plan has to take cognisance of the ability of the districts people to meet the cost of proving the required social infrastructure.
- **District economy** - Crop and livestock production anchor local economy. They rely on natural rainfall, and thus vulnerable to drought, the incidence which is continually threatening food security in the district. Diversification of the local economy, for example through development of the tourism industry, and promotion and beneficiation of the mining value chain provides an important means to enhance economic activity, jobs and output, and in a manner that is more resilient to climate shocks in that it is not necessarily directly dependent on rainfall. Therefore, ensuring a strong and varied economic base which promotes employment creation for the district and its people is the main goal.
- **Management** - There will be need for capacity development of Ward and Village structures on the land-use plan, as well as for elected councillors and appointed staff. Coordination efforts will need to be strengthened and effective

monitoring and evaluation systems established. Focus to be directed towards fostering the development of an efficient, effective and transparent management with adequate resources to meet the development challenges of the district.

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4.0 Summary of Rushinga Master Plan Proposals

The policies and proposals in the Written Statement aims at addressing the issues raised in the Report of Study. Below is a summary of the policies and the proposals.

4.1 Sustainable development

The policy is mainly inclined towards the achievement of good quality life as an outcome of harmony between the economy, society and the environment. Also aim at achieving an urban and rural renaissance through creating the quality of life that makes urban and rural living desirable. Future urban development to be directed to the existing urban nodes such as Rushinga, Chomutukutu, Mazowe Bridge, Chimhanda, Bungwe, Nyamatikiti and Mary Mount. The quality and character of the rural environment should be maintained and special attention to be given to deprived communal areas like Bopoma, Mukosa and Kamanika. Access to social services, renewable energy services and recreational facilities should be a priority investment in rural service centres and selected villages should be encouraged to provide and maintain a range of social service and employment opportunities. Encourage the adoption of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies to reduce the district's carbon footprint. Develop and enforce environmental regulations to minimize pollution and ensure responsible natural resource management.

4.2 Public participation

The Council must therefore ensure that continuous consultation focusing on the strategic elements of this plan, issues such as land development, health and education, natural resources, employment, housing, transport and communication as well as general council affairs, administration and management is carried out in a transparent manner for public outlook and overview. This can be achieved through early involvement through public informative meeting aimed at explaining the main strategic elements of the plan, inclusion of all main community groups, key

stakeholders, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups and clubs in the district, continuous consultation with reference to key strategic elements of the plan, openness to ensure transparency and involvement of the local people and the periodic feedback to appraise the stakeholders of progress being made or obstacles that are hindering smooth implementation of the plan.

4.3 Environment

The district environment is fragile and subject to soil erosion and deforestation caused people clearing land for cultivation and over reliance on wood fuel as a source of energy. There is need to undertake reforestation and afforestation projects to restore degraded forest areas and promote sustainable timber production, promote sustainable water use practices, water conservation, and the protection of water sources and implement sustainable land management practices to prevent soil erosion and promote conservation. There is also the need to promote renewable energy sources and energy efficiency initiatives, develop and enforce environmental regulations to protect natural resources, raise awareness and promote community participation in environmental conservation and the mapping of the Nyatana wilderness, wildlife corridor, and the forest under chief Rusambo.

4.4 Settlements

The Rushinga District Master Plan proposes that urban centres, the district and rural service centres shall be the prime focus for all new, investment and development. Within the financial capacity of the Rural District Council, investment in industry, commerce and housing shall be directed to these centres. The criteria for directing investment to a centre shall be determined by the existing and potential infrastructure and resources. There is need encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land and responsive to the needs and tastes of the local communities. Give priority to rural service centres in deprived areas such as Chomutukutu, Mukosa and Kamanika.

4.5 Physical Infrastructure

There is need to provide adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a sustainable manner to meet the Growing needs of the district through, Optimisation of the use of and services of the Devolution and Rural Road Fund to open up new areas and

upgrade existing roads, sourcing of funds for the construction of the main and access roads in communal areas, upgrading of most roads, in particular those utilised by the transport to all weather standards so that they are usable throughout the year, locate, design and construct water infrastructure such as dams, boreholes and irrigation schemes so that they are easily accessible to the people and livestock's, ensure that detailed environmental and social impact studies are carried out before the construction of dams and irrigation schemes in the district and the installation of solar energy system in communal lands in particular where the majority of residents cannot afford to pay for conventional Zesa supplied energy.

4.6 Land

There is need to prepare a local plan for Rushinga Rural Service Centre paying particular attention to solid waste management, sewer reticulation and to guide the urban expansion. Prepare a local subject plan for Chomutukutu rural service centre focusing on housing, social and physical infrastructure. Consider the preparation of local plans for Mazowe Bridge, Marry Mount and other areas. Provide land for distribution warehouses, wholesale outlets in Rushinga and Chomutukutu. Ensure the proclamation of all growth point in the district. Promote alternative sources of energy in the communal areas to reduce the use of wood fuel so as to reduce dependency on vegetation as a source of energy. Drafting standard operating procedures for local leaders in terms of land management.

4.7 Social and Economic Infrastructure

This goal address housing, education, health and community service. Rushinga District shall provide adequate and appropriate educational facilities to meet the district needs for pre- schooling, primary, secondary and tertiary education to end of the plan period through providing primary and secondary education facilities in accordance with the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Culture, decongesting Rushinga Primary and establish another primary school that will cater for new development and future growth till the end of the plan period. Improve the teacher/ pupil ratio from the present 1:40 / 1: 35 to improve teacher attention. Provide conducive and sufficient accommodation in all the rural schools. Electrification of all rural schools. Encourage the improvement of district network coverage. Ensure that adequate furniture, books and other materials are provided in all primary school. Establish an A level block at

Kamanika, Nyamanyanya and upgrade the existing schools in the district. The Master Plan recognises the need to create a healthy Rushinga District through the provision of adequate health facilities and services that are accessible through, upgrading Rushinga Clinic to a health centre status so as to serve a larger community and provide a wider range of health services, provision of land in Mutsvaire Communal Land for a clinic to reduce the long distances that are currently travelled by people from this communal land to Rushinga and Chimhanda for health services and increasing the number of beds at Chimhanda District Hospital.

4.8 Agriculture

The master plan proposes to widen and strengthen the agricultural base in the communal and irrigation areas so as to establish strong sustainable agriculture in the district through the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, such as agroforestry, organic farming, and soil conservation techniques. Promoting land-use planning approaches that ensure the protection of ecologically sensitive areas, such as riparian zones. Introducing improved small grains seed varieties together with inputs to improve yields from agricultural land. Ensure that research and extension services transfer to farmers result in increased productivity and enhance innovations needed for crops and livestock rearing in the district. Ensure that relevant education and training for various groups of farmers is available and easily accessible to all farmers in the district. Promote and support agricultural development through training, access to inputs, and market linkages. Implement sustainable land management practices to prevent soil erosion and promote conservation. Facilitate the establishment of agricultural cooperatives to enhance economies of scale and improve market access. Encourage and creation of value addition and agro-processing activities to increase the value of agricultural products and create employment opportunities.

4.9 District Economy

The local economy is the key element in the planning of the district future and such council must create an enabling environment including providing support activities such as the required infrastructure, land and other services in order to attract investors. Rushinga Rural District Council must be concerned with creating favourable conditions for investment as well as gearing up to build and strengthen linkages with adjoining districts, national economy and Mozambique across the border. To do this, it must

exploit its competitive advantage in tourism, mining and agriculture to maximum potential. There is also need to provide land for industrial, commercial and business purposes to meet the needs of a growing district economy during the plan period and provide sites for informal sector activities in residential, commercial and industrial areas of Rushinga rural service centre and other rural service centres and growth points to foster economic activity.

4.10 Management

This master planning **is** the starting point for continuous process of planning and management both of which are critical to implementation. To Create and promote a democratic, people-oriented council that operates in a strategic, transparent and accountable manner, the council must use this Master Plan as the basis for a long-term strategic plan for the district, assume responsibility for policies, decisions and actions and create a mechanism for the public to participate on the implementation of the master plan.

5.0 Conclusion

The policies and proposal if approved are to be operationalized by the proposed developments covering land, district economy, agriculture, physical infrastructure amongst others. Rushinga Rural District Council should oversee the preparation of supporting plans such as; the preparation of local plans, subject plans and local priority plans in the District. Additionally, Rushinga RDC should come up with innovative ways of revenue generation such as private public partnerships, property taxation, seeking donor funds from NGOs. Importantly, key sectors such as tourism, mining and Agriculture needs subject plans.