



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

SHAPING IDEAS. INFORMING CHANGE



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



AfDB	African Development Bank
AfricanLII	African Legal Information Institute
AJRN	Access to Justice Research Network
ASM	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CCG	Climate Compatible Growth
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
IAPRI	Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
INESOR	Institute of Economic and Social Research
IRLI	Irish Rule of Law International
JFI	Jain Family Institute
LAZ	Law Association of Zambia
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
MFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MFNP	Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAZ	National Assembly of Zambia
NPA	National Prosecution Authority
SAIPAR	Southern African Institute for Policy and Research
SID	Small Industries Development
SIDO	Small Industries Development Organisation
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UNILUS	University of Lusaka
UNZA	University of Zambia
ZCID	Zambia Centre of Interparty Dialogue
ZDA	Zambia Development Agency
ZDG	Zambia Democratic Governance
ZEPARU	Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit
ZIPAR	Zambia Institute for Policy and Research
ZSSJ	Zambia Social Science Journal

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To our valued partners and stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to present SAIPAR's 2025 Annual Report. The collective effort captured in these pages would not be possible without the dedication of our researchers, staff, and the trust of our partners, and everyone who continues to invest their time, insight, and confidence in our work.

At SAIPAR, we remain guided by a simple conviction: evidence-based research should matter. It should speak to real challenges, inform practical decisions, and contribute to shaping real outcomes.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to rigorous evidence, inclusive dialogue, and policy solutions that serve the public good. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

**Manenga Ndulo,
Executive Director.**

2. WHO WE ARE

We are an independent, non-profit, educational, research, and development-oriented centre, founded in 2006 by Muna Ndulo, William Nelson Cromwell Professor of International and Comparative Law at Cornell University, who is originally from Zambia. The Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) was formed in response to a void in interdisciplinary research in law, economics, and development, as well as politics and social change, that could underpin evidence-based policymaking in Zambia and the wider Southern African region.

We aim to be a catalyst for new ideas and concepts on good governance and development in Zambia and Southern Africa. We are also a capacity-building and documentation centre that serves to enrich research and policy analysis in Zambia and the region. Over the years, we have grown to serve as a bastion for scholarly discourse and operate as an advisory entity to governmental bodies and various stakeholders. We have gained a solid reputation for our credible, independent, and objective research outputs, which are referenced by a broad set of actors within and outside the research arena. The quality of our research is underpinned by a group of expert researchers that we work with. Furthermore, we operate as a capacity-building organisation, nurturing expertise and fostering intellectual growth within our spheres of influence.

Our vision is a developed, sustainable, and well-informed Zambia and Southern African Region. Our mission is to contribute to strengthening policymaking in Zambia and Southern Africa through policy research, research-based publications, interdisciplinary training, and citizen discourse.



3. Our Core Values

At SAIPAR, we are guided by the following guiding principles:

01 Integrity



A commitment to good governance, participatory democracy, and the protection of human rights, and a belief in the dignity and worth of all human beings.

02 Excellence



A commitment to pursue the highest quality in all outputs and endeavours.

03 Collaboration



The conviction that all individuals are entitled to equal rights, free from discrimination based on gender, nationality, religious beliefs, or physical capacity.

04 Accountability



The prioritisation of transparency, ethics, and accountability is paramount in matters of public policy.

05 Innovation



A belief that human rights are integral to peace and sustainable development.

This annual report provides an overview of our achievements and activities in 2025 based on our 2024–2028 strategy document.

4. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



01 Milestone:

In 2025, we marked 20 years of advancing evidence-based research and policy analysis in Zambia and the region. We celebrated this milestone by investing in people and systems to scale up our capacity to deliver high-quality, credible, and consistent research outputs. We made a decision to put in place a centralized digital management information system for improved knowledge and project management.

02 Strengthening:

In line with our strategy document, we made a decision to invest in visibility and public engagement through the recruitment of a Head of Communication who plays a key role in making our work visible, credible, and influential. To sustain our growing influence, we have significantly reinforced our institutional core through the recruitment of a dedicated Institute Administrator and a Finance and Administration Officer. These strategic appointments are designed to professionalize our internal operations, tighten financial controls, and ensure the institutional consistency and long-term continuity required to support our expanding research portfolio and strengthen donor confidence.

03 Knowledge:

We also strengthened our knowledge dissemination and public engagement through the launch of our inaugural newsletter, providing the public with regular insights into our research, policy work, and institutional developments. In the same period, we published *The Supreme Court of Zambia at Fifty: Looking Back and Going Forward*, a landmark volume reflecting on the Court's jurisprudential evolution and future trajectory, reinforcing our role as a leading source of rigorous legal and policy analysis in Zambia.

04 Innovation:

We were particularly excited to introduce the SAIPAR Podcast as an innovative and engaging platform that brings policy conversations to life in a fun, accessible way. We are looking forward to connecting with you all through this new medium, while expanding our reach and creating fresh opportunities for dialogue and learning

05 Collaboration:

We advanced our research and capacity-building agenda by convening flagship conferences that brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to interrogate evidence, share expertise, and build institutional capacity, while strengthening linkages between research, policy, and practice. The 2025 Annual Judiciary Conference was well-attended and reflected our continued relevance and influence.

06 Dialogue:

SAIPAR also convened targeted symposiums on global geopolitical shifts driven by developments in the United States and their implications for Zambia, and the Global South Retreat on Financing for Development held in preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development that was held in Spain. These engagements deepened policy-relevant analysis, supported strategic positioning, and contributed to informed national, regional, and international discourse on global economic and geopolitical dynamics

07 Support:

Through the Ford Foundation-supported ZDG project, we delivered strategic policy support to key ministries, strengthened public economic institutions, supported the 2023/2024 drought response, and advanced our mandate for evidence-based governance and economic transformation.

08 Reach:

The Zambia Legal and information Institute (ZambiaLII) newsletter launched and surged to over one hundred thousand (100,000) website visits and user actions in August marked a major milestone, cementing its role as a trusted legal information platform as SAIPAR strengthened pathways for sustainable, free public access to legal information.

09 Partnerships:

We worked with fifteen (15) partners to accomplish our strategic objectives under our three (3) thematic areas in the areas of law and justice, social and political change, and economics and development. The partners included Cornell University, Cooperation Africa, Ch. Michelsen Institute (CMI) and the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Ford Foundation, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Institute of Development Studies (IDS), York University (Canada), Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI), Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI), the Jain Family Institute (JFI), Nordic African Institute, Warwick University, the University of Chicago, the Irish Aid, the Irish Science Foundation, Sussex University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Johannesburg, University of Zambia (UNZA) Zambeef (Plc), and the Zambia Centre of Interparty Dialogue (ZCID). Zambia Institute for Policy and Research (ZIPAR). In addition, we established new partnerships with University College London and became part of the Climate Compatible Growth (CCG) Network.

10 Agreements:

We signed four Memoranda of Understanding MOUs with key stakeholders aimed at building and strengthening partnerships to address national challenges. We signed MOUs with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MFNP); Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), Irish Rule of Law International, and the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA).

11 Outreach:

Our public engagement deepened through expanded collaboration with over thirty 30 media houses and a growing stakeholder mailing list of over one hundred and twenty (120) subscribers receiving our publications, thereby strengthening our reach to the public and policymakers on key national issues.

5. STRATEGIC FOCUS 1: RESEARCH

SAIPAR's core strength is the production of rigorous, credible, interdisciplinary research on development and governance. This section outlines SAIPAR's 2025 research projects across the legal, economic, social, and political change thematic areas.

5.1 Legal Division

The Legal Division implemented targeted projects and activities to advance policy-relevant research, facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue, and support the effective dissemination and use of evidence in policy processes.

5.1.1 Zambia Legal Information Institute

This year, ZambiaLII advanced free access to legal information, strengthening transparency and access to justice while laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term legal empowerment in Zambia by undertaking the following activities:

a. Bill Tracking Platform

The Bill Tracking Platform strengthened citizen engagement with Zambia's legislative process by keeping users informed about Bills before Parliament. The platform posted thirty five (35) Bills and produced Sixteen (16) plain-language summaries, providing direct links to the National Assembly portal to enable public comments on proposed legislation. Supported by the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Assembly of Zambia (NAZ), the platform enhanced timely access to legislative information, empowering citizens to participate meaningfully in ongoing debates and reinforcing SAIPAR's mandate to promote transparency and inclusive governance.

b. Social Media Outreach

ZambiaLII continued to significantly expand its social media presence on Facebook and X, reaching ordinary citizens seeking accessible legal information and opportunities for engagement. Throughout the year, the platform shared judgment highlights, Bill summaries, and legal insights, ensuring timely and accurate updates on key legal developments. These efforts boosted public awareness and made legal information more understandable and accessible. Over the reporting period, ZambiaLII published seventy eight (78) posts on Facebook, generating one hundred and fifty eight thousand three hundred and thirty (158,330) views, one hundred and six thousand three hundred and sixty six (106,366) impressions, two thousand eight hundred and sixteen (2,816) interactions, two thousand four hundred and thirty one (2,431) reactions, hundred and three (203) saves, and three hundred (300) shares. The page's reach grew to ninety-three thousand seven hundred and twenty eight (93,728), with an increase of seven hundred and fifty (759) followers, marking a notable milestone in broadening engagement and strengthening citizen access to legal knowledge.

c. Newsletter Creation and Publications

In 2025, ZambiaLII launched its inaugural newsletter to deepen engagement with the legal community and the wider public. Designed to provide quarterly updates, the newsletter shares key legal developments in Zambia, including new legislation, case summaries, and expert commentary, while keeping readers informed about ZambiaLII's work and collaborations. The first issue was published in March, followed by editions in July, September, and December. Highlights included summaries of the Cyber Security Act No. 3 of 2025 and the Cyber Crimes Act No. 4 of 2025, as well as special features such as an interview with the Co-Founder of African Legal Information Institute (AfricanLII), impact stories from law students and practicing lawyers, and reflective articles by

judges engaged with ZambiaLII’s work. The newsletter has become an important platform for sharing knowledge, inspiring dialogue, and connecting the legal community to accessible, reliable legal information. (Images below)

NEWSLETTER INSIGHT: SPECIAL INTERVIEW
SEGMENT-AFRICAN LEGAL INFORMATION
INSTITUTE (AFRICANLII)

Championing Free Access to Legal Information using modern technology: In conversation with AfricanLII Co-Founder: [Mariya Badeva]



In this edition, ZambiaLII sat down with Ms Mariya Badeva Co-Founder of AfricanLII and Laws.Africa to explore the advancement of access to law/ legal information in Africa, the role of technology, and what lies ahead for the many African National LIIs that receive technical support from AfricanLII and Laws.Africa.

1. Access to law (legal information) is now globally considered a fundamental human right. Why do you think advancing access to law in Africa is important?

Access to the letter of the law is fundamental – an absolute precondition for a functional, modern state, that works towards the prosperity and well-being of its citizens. Accessible and up-to-date laws – legislation and case law for common law systems – mean that citizens can read and understand their rights and obligations, businesses can make investment decisions, and the state can administer all sectors of society with confidence, clarity, and fairness. Clear and accessible legal frameworks are essential for compliance and the dispensation of justice.

SETTING THE SCENE: In September 2024 and May 2025, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, hosted two important conferences: the Sustainability of Free Access to Law Conference in 2024 and the Strengthening Access to Legal Information in Africa and Enhancing Cooperation between Bar Associations in May 2025. The conferences were jointly organised by the GIZ, Judiciary of Tanzania, Laws.Africa and AfricanLII. The conferences brought together bar associations, national legal information institutes, judiciary representatives, academics, and civil society organisations. The conferences discussed strategies for enhancing sustainable and equitable free access to law, including the digitisation and consolidation of legal information using modern digital technology. They also addressed the need to strengthen access to legal information through strategic advocacy and partnerships with key stakeholders.



3. Lusekelo Kamfwa is a Third Year Law Student at the University of Zambia and Vice President of The Legal Scholars’ Guild of Zambia. He also regularly writes legal articles.

He shares his experience with ZambiaLII :

“As a third-year law student and article writer, ZambiaLII is not just a luxury but a tool for my excellence in the legal space.

The search mechanism on ZambiaLII has been very useful in helping me find cases that explain, in detail, particular topics of law. I remember last year, when I wrote an article on what consent means in the context of sexual harassment, ZambiaLII’s search engine made research easy.

ZambiaLII is a blessing to the legal fraternity and I encourage all lawyers and law students to utilise it”.

d. Digitising and Publishing Law

ZambiaLII made significant strides in expanding access to Zambia's legal information. The platform digitised and published one thousand one hundred and fourteen (1,114) court judgments and rulings, including both current 2025 cases and backdated judgments not previously available online, strengthening authoritative legal resources for professionals, researchers, and the public. To broaden its collection, ZambiaLII invited the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) membership to share judgments for free public access. This initiative led to the creation of a Lawyers WhatsApp Group, now with fifty six (56) members, through which over one thousand (1,000) judgments have been submitted and published, streamlining contributions and enhancing collaboration.

As part of dissemination efforts, one hundred and eighty-one (181) Government Gazettes were collected, digitised, and shared with Laws. Africa for online publication, while one hundred and seventy-two (172) pieces of legislation were uploaded to ensure users have access to the latest legal developments. ZambiaLII also conducted a comprehensive audit comparing its legislative collection with all laws ever promulgated in Zambia, guiding its ongoing mission to build a complete, authoritative, and publicly accessible legal database.

e. Sustainability and Strategic Partnerships

In 2025, ZambiaLII advanced concrete steps toward long-term financial and institutional sustainability while widening access to legal information. A proposal submitted to LAZ in July 2025 outlined a model for providing Premium Membership access to all practising lawyers, with fees reinvested into core operations, digitisation, and platform improvements. The proposal also encourages LAZ to lead advocacy for the routine release of court judgments in structured formats and improved access to electronic Government Gazette publications. Although a formal response from LAZ is still pending, ZambiaLII has continued to move forward with its sustainability agenda and maintain engagement with the Bar.

In order to strengthen access to legal information and enhance the long-term viability of ZambiaLII operations, the team increased the frequency of uploading historical and current Judgments, legislation, and government gazettes on the ZambiaLII website. Notably, the site has witnessed a rise in the number of visits and actions on the site, from sixty-eight thousand, four hundred and twenty-two (68,422) in July 2025 to approximately one hundred and twenty-two thousand, six hundred and twenty-seven (122,627) as of October 31, 2025.

To further drive sustainability efforts, ZambiaLII submitted a proposal to AfricanLII; the proposal has resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with AfricanLII/Laws Africa. The MoA aims to expand access to digital legal information and enhance ZambiaLII's sustainability by rolling out a premium **MyZambiaLII service** on the ZambiaLII website. The MoA outlines the terms under which AfricanLII will support SAIPAR in implementing the project titled 'Strengthening Collaboration between ZambiaLII and LAZ for the roll-out of the MyZambiaLII service' for the period November 2025 - October 2026, further strengthening ZambiaLII's financial and technical resilience

5.1.2 Children's Rights Legal Clinic

In June 2025, with the support of the Irish government, SAIPAR strengthened its work on children's rights by conducting research and producing a comprehensive report on child protection in Zambia. Building on this, we carried out a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify key actors in the field of children's rights, and held collaborative discussions with the Undikumbukire Project (UP) Zambia, an organisation supporting children in conflict with the law. These initiatives reflect SAIPAR's commitment to fostering partnerships and working closely with like-minded organisations to enhance legal protections for children, generate evidence-based solutions, and amplify impact in the child protection sector.

5.1.3 Support to IRLI in the Justice Sector



Signing of the SAIPAR–IRLI MOU, formalising partnership on justice sector reform.

As part of strengthening justice sector collaboration, SAIPAR formalized its partnership with Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI) through the signing of the SAIPAR–IRLI MOU on 18 November 2025. This milestone was followed by the finalisation of a joint workplan, laying a strong foundation for coordinated, long-term engagement in justice sector reform. The partnership strengthened institutional collaboration by embedding an IRLI Programme Coordinator at SAIPAR. This embedded role will enhance day-to-day coordination, strengthen information sharing, and support joint planning on access to justice initiatives.

The partnership also advanced efforts to strengthen professional capacity within Zambia’s justice sector. SAIPAR initiated preparatory work for specialised postgraduate legal training for prosecutors and investigators, engaging closely with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the National Prosecution Authority (NPA). These discussions resulted in agreement on the parameters of a pilot course and a commitment by the NPA to enter into a MOU with SAIPAR.

A joint SAIPAR–NPA–IRLI working group has since been established to steer programme development, supported by a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework to assess feasibility and inform future accreditation.

In addition, SAIPAR and IRLI commenced groundwork for evidence-based research to inform justice sector reform, focusing on the impact of the IRLI Mobile Court Programme on access to justice. Engagements with implementing partners, including Undikumbukire Project Zambia and Prison Future Foundation, have laid the foundation for data-driven analysis, with preparatory steps underway to launch the research in the next reporting period.

Overall, progress in 2025 marked a strong step forward in consolidating SAIPAR’s partnership with IRLI, reinforcing SAIPAR’s role as a trusted convenor, research partner, and driver of evidence-based justice sector reform in Zambia.

5.1.4 Legal Needs Study

SAIPAR conducted Zambia’s first-ever pilot study on legal needs, supported through the ongoing and strategic partnership with Irish Aid. The study will inform a comprehensive national legal needs assessment by testing tools, questions, and sampling methods to ensure they are fully adapted to Zambia’s context.

Legal needs surveys are a global best-practice method for understanding how communities interact with the justice system and for tailoring interventions to real-world challenges. While such studies have been conducted in over one hundred (100) jurisdictions worldwide, Zambia has never had population-level data on how people experience legal problems or access legal services. This pilot marks a critical first step in filling that gap, providing evidence to guide justice reforms and strengthen interventions that respond directly to the needs of Zambian communities.

Through this initiative, Irish Aid’s continued support ensures that SAIPAR can lead rigorous, locally relevant research that bridges policy, practice, and justice system reform.

6. Economics Division



Dale Mudenda at Kilkenny

In 2025, the Economics Division advanced SAIPAR’s mandate by delivering practical, policy-relevant research in support of Zambia’s economic transformation agenda under Vision 2030. This work was made possible through sustained and strategic support from Irish Aid, whose partnership continues to strengthen SAIPAR’s ability to generate timely evidence for reform.

SAIPAR also deepened its long-standing relationship with Ireland through participation in the Kilkenomics in Kilkenny, delivered in collaboration with the Embassy of Ireland in Zambia. The festival’s innovative mix of economics and comedy fosters inclusive public conversation and reflects the shared commitment between SAIPAR and its Irish partners to making economic policy more accessible, relatable, and impactful.

6.1 The SAIPAR Economics Research Working Group (ERWG)

Through sustained leadership and intellectual engagement, the ERWG brings together senior policymakers, practitioners, and academics, with current members drawn from State House, the Zambia Revenue Authority, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the MFNP, the Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM), Copperbelt University (CBU), UNZA, and ZIPAR, demonstrating SAIPAR's convening power across policy, practice, and research as champions of knowledge sharing and debate. The group provides a platform for experts and stakeholders to initiate evidence and shape policy. This year, the groups work resulted in the following;

- Strengthened academic partnerships: Engaged with the University of Pretoria's Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) faculty under a Memorandum of Understanding, including reviewing a survey report of EMS members' research interests and preparing SAIPAR's expression of interest to participate.
- Policy-relevant research uptake: Circulated and discussed international studies relevant for Zambia's development, such as the EU-Africa RISE (Reform for Investment and Sustainable Economies) study on opportunities in the copper value chain.
- Regional and continental policy engagement: Endorsed Zambia's candidate, Dr. Samuel M. Maimbo, for the Presidency of AfDB, reflecting SAIPAR ERWG's involvement in regional economic diplomacy through the common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

SAIPAR also facilitated high-level policy dialogue and the sharing of expert perspectives on African financial governance. This included contributions by Dr. Caleb Fundanga, former Minister of Finance and Governor of the Bank of Zambia (BOZ), whose insights were featured in The Banker Magazine, reinforcing SAIPAR's role as a trusted source of credible policy analysis.

6.2 Zambia Democratic Governance (ZDG) Project

The ZDG Project, supported through a one-off grant from the Ford Foundation, reinforced SAIPAR's position as a trusted partner to the government in advancing institutional reform and economic transformation. The project combined high-level policy support with practical technical delivery across ministries, while also enabling rapid response to the 2023/2024 national drought emergency declared in February 2024.

Through this mechanism, SAIPAR provided embedded expertise, analytical tools, and implementation support to strengthen foreign policy and economic diplomacy, upgrade macroeconomic modelling systems, expand youth participation in local development financing, advance investment planning for strategic agricultural growth areas, and improve water security in climate-vulnerable communities. Together, these interventions demonstrate SAIPAR's capacity to operate simultaneously at national and sub-national levels, linking long-term structural reform with immediate resilience needs.

One key area of engagement saw SAIPAR supporting the MFAIC in updating Zambia's foreign policy frameworks, strengthening institutional planning, and enhancing economic diplomacy functions. At the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, SAIPAR contributed to upgrading macroeconomic modelling tools, particularly the Zambia Macroeconomic Model (ZAMMOD), thereby improving the government's capacity to simulate policy choices related to growth, investment, and employment. Complementing these national-level reforms, SAIPAR also provided embedded expertise, analytical tools, and implementation support to expand youth participation in local development financing, advance investment planning for strategic agricultural growth areas, and strengthen water security in climate-vulnerable communities. Together, these interventions demonstrate SAIPAR's ability to operate simultaneously at national and sub-national levels, linking long-term structural reforms with immediate resilience needs.



ZDG MFAIC Capacity Building Training on Political and Public Diplomacy, Livingstone



ZDG MFAIC Validation of the SADC Resource Mobilization Strategy Plan (Chilanga) (Livingstone and Chilanga)

At local level, collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) strengthened youth access to the Constituency Development Fund(CDF) in drought-affected and historically low-utilisation areas, promoting participation, accountability, and inclusive development.



(Pictures:Choma Boot Camp)

The project also supported investment preparation for the Mushindamo (formerly Solwezi) Farm Block, working with ZDA and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to explore pre-feasibility options, public-private partnership models, and the potential positioning of the area as a special economic zone.

Responding to the escalating water crisis, SAIPAR partnered with local authorities and sector stakeholders to assess innovative and traditional approaches to groundwater identification and emergency supply solutions, contributing evidence for more reliable climate adaptation strategies.

Implementation across these diverse workstreams was coordinated through a dedicated Project Implementation Unit housed at SAIPAR, ensuring fiduciary oversight, performance monitoring, inter-agency coordination, and timely delivery.

By bridging policy design, institutional strengthening, and on-the-ground application, the ZDG Project highlights SAIPAR's growing reputation as a delivery-oriented think tank capable of supporting government reform, managing complex partnerships, and responding effectively during national emergencies.

6.3 African Extractivism and the Green Transition in Southern Africa

Guided by our mission, we continued to contribute to regional policy debates through the African Extractivism and the Green Transition in Southern Africa project, led by York University in collaboration with research institutions in Canada, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. The project seeks to surface new evidence and perspectives often excluded from domestic policy discussions. SAIPAR's engagement focuses on identifying policy challenges and emerging opportunities, with active participation in thematic working groups on Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM), fiscal regimes, and productive linkages.

This work aligns with SAIPAR's commitment to evidence-based resource governance and inclusive economic development.

6.4 Promoting Inclusive Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

SAIPAR, in partnership with the Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU), continued to advance a cross-border study on inclusive innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The project examines the impact of innovation support programs in Zambia and Zimbabwe through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens, providing evidence to improve SME interventions in fiscally constrained environments with competing social and economic priorities.

The study draws on administrative data from Zambia's Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) and ZDA, as well as Zimbabwe's Small and Medium Enterprises Development Corporation (SMEDCO), supplemented by surveys of SMEs to compare program participants with control groups. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enables the project to measure impact, generate actionable policy recommendations, and inform academic and policy debates.

In Zambia, findings indicate that Zambia's SME ecosystem has evolved over decades. The first policy and legal framework emerged at independence with the Small Industries Development (SID) Act, establishing the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) in 1981 to promote entrepreneurship, employment, and economic growth. Subsequent initiatives, including the creation of the ZDA in 2006 and the MSMEs in 2021, have sought to enhance industrial linkages, technology adoption, entrepreneurship education, and business development services. Gender and youth inclusion are embedded in procurement policies and agency-level support programs, ensuring targeted benefits for women and youth-owned enterprises.

Despite these advances, stakeholders note that gaps in policy implementation have limited the full potential of government programs. This study provides critical evidence to guide more effective SME support, strengthen industrial development linkages, and enhance inclusive innovation in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Through this initiative, IDRC's continued support enables SAIPAR and ZEPARU to generate robust, contextually grounded evidence that informs policy, enhances SME capacity, and advances equitable economic development in both countries. This work reinforces SAIPAR's mandate to bridge research and policy by producing actionable insights that support inclusive growth, innovation, and economic transformation.



Sylvia Mwamba, SAIPAR Research Fellow, presenting findings on SME innovation support in Zambia and Zimbabwe. (<https://idrc-crdd.ca/en/initiative/evidence-innovation>)

6.5 REHEATZ: Advancing Climate-Smart Industrial Innovation

REHEATZ, a Research Ireland-funded initiative (January 2023 – July 2026), supports Zambia's climate and development priorities by moving wastewater heat recovery from research into real industrial use. Implemented under SAIPAR's Economics Division, the project generates evidence-based solutions that promote energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and support green industrial transformation in the agri-food sector.



At Zambeef Huntley Farm in Chisamba

In April 2025, REHEATZ achieved a major milestone with the installation of a full-scale wastewater heat recovery system at Zambeef Huntley Farm in Chisamba. Building on pilot results, the system is expected to improve boiler efficiency, reduce coal consumption, lower operating costs, and cut carbon and thermal pollution. The installation demonstrates that low-carbon technologies are both feasible and practical within Zambia's industrial context.

Beyond infrastructure, REHEATZ invested in people and knowledge. Baseline and midline surveys conducted in 2025 assessed how the innovation is affecting workers and young professionals involved in implementation, helping to shape skills development and future scale-up.

The project will continue performance monitoring through data collection on system efficiency, emissions reductions, and cost savings. Engagement with industry will widen through outreach and site assessments, including exploration of heat recovery opportunities in mining operations in the Copperbelt and North-Western Province.

In 2026, the team will finalise with the planned heat pump installation at Huntley Farm which will further improve efficiency and deepen learning. Together, these steps position REHEATZ as a flagship example of SAIPAR translating research partnerships into practical climate action, workforce development, and sustainable economic transformation.

7. Social and Political Change

This year, the division advanced SAIPAR's core mandate by producing timely, evidence-based research and convening dialogue to strengthen democratic governance, civic participation, and accountable institutions, particularly in the lead-up to Zambia's 2026 general elections. With support from Irish Aid, the Division delivered a robust portfolio of research outputs, including studies on **youth democratic engagement; youth voter behaviour and civic apathy; social media and youth participation; the state of civil society in Zambia; and women's political participation ahead of the 2026 elections**. Additional analyses examined new and amended legislative reforms shaping Zambia's governance landscape. Collectively, these outputs reinforced SAIPAR's role as a trusted source of policy-relevant research informing democratic reform and inclusive participation.

8. Research and Policy Briefs

Our work this year resulted in the production of seven (7) policy briefs, including briefs on youth, women, governance, health, and inclusion.

- The Social and Political Change Division strengthened SAIPAR's contributions to electoral reform by initiating a Zambia Electoral Research Network (ZERN) paper on inclusive electoral systems, with a specific focus on advancing gender-responsive electoral design in Zambia which will be launched in 2026. In addition, the Division edited and completed the November 2024 edition of the SAIPAR Case Review, which was published in November 2025. Together, these outputs reinforce SAIPAR's role in generating rigorous legal and policy outputs that inform inclusive governance and democratic accountability

- **Youth Democratic Engagement Research and Policy Briefs (May 2025):** SAIPAR updated its Youth Democratic Engagement Report by incorporating new data from ZERN. This collaboration strengthened the analytical depth of the report, ensuring that findings on **youth participation, voter behaviour, and civic engagement** are grounded in nationally coordinated electoral research and contribute meaningfully to policy dialogue ahead of the 2026 general elections.
- **Youth Voter Behaviour and Civic Apathy Ahead of the 2026 Elections:** Consistent with SAIPAR's mandate to inform democratic governance through rigorous policy research, these briefs analyze evolving patterns of youth political participation in Zambia and identify structural barriers and key constraints on youth participation beyond electoral moments. Drawing on these findings, the brief provides evidence-based policy recommendations for civil society and policymakers, emphasizing the need to expand democratic space, reform restrictive legal frameworks, and invest in inclusive civic education and youth-led engagement platforms to sustain participation ahead of the 2026 general elections.
- **Social media and Youth Democratic Engagement:** In line with SAIPAR's mandate to generate evidence that informs democratic governance and public policy, this policy brief analyses how digital platforms are reshaping youth political engagement in Zambia. It documents the growing influence of social media in shaping political discourse, with a particular focus on the 2021 general elections. The brief demonstrates how digital tools have enabled youth to organise collectively, disseminate information, and demand accountability outside traditional political spaces. At the same time, the analysis highlights emerging risks, including misinformation, performative engagement, and the constraining effects of cyber legislation on freedom of expression.

Looking ahead to the 2026 elections, the brief underscores the centrality of digital platforms in Zambia's democratic landscape and advances policy recommendations for balanced regulation that protects constitutional freedoms while promoting responsible digital participation. Together these outputs provide timely, evidence-based insights that strengthen advocacy, inform civil society strategies, and contribute to policy dialogue at a critical juncture in Zambia's democratic cycle.

- This year reaffirmed the importance of positioning ourselves at the forefront of emerging issues, including the production of a policy brief on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Governance, and Digital Inclusion: Lessons from AI-Assisted TB Detection in Zambia. The brief highlights how AI-assisted tuberculosis (TB) detection in Zambia offers transformative potential for healthcare and digital inclusion, especially in underserved areas, and examines the legal grey areas in the current Data Protection Act.
- The division commenced work on a pilot study on legal needs in Zambia that will inform a more comprehensive national legal needs assessment and ensure tools, questions, and sampling methods are contextually appropriate. This will help tailor justice interventions to real community challenges and support evidence-based legal reform. This pilot study will be the first of its kind to gather important population-level data about how people experience legal problems and interface with the legal system
- The Social and Political Change division produced a policy brief on Cyber Crimes and Cyber Security Acts following the assent by President Hakainde Hichilema on 8th April 2025. The brief highlighted how the Cyber Security Act No 3 of 2025 and the Cyber Crimes Act No 4 of 2025 balance the need to criminalise harmful conduct and the need to safeguard the rights of individuals. It also provided recommendations to the government to improve legislation to align with international human rights standards.

- A Study on the State of Civil Society in Zambia focused on advancing the study on the state of civil society in Zambia. The study also explored thematic areas of engagement, legitimacy, capacity building, alliances, etc. The approach and scope were agreed upon with the Embassy of Ireland to ensure the study is evidence-based and practice-oriented.

The review found that civil society in Zambia plays a vital role in promoting democratic governance, human rights, and accountability, but its effectiveness has been increasingly constrained by political repression, restrictive legal frameworks, and declining donor support.

- During the period under review, the Economics division published two policy briefs: Zambia's Transport Corridors and Logistics, and leveraging General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to promote competitiveness. The brief on Zambia's Corridor highlights key findings and recommendations of how Zambia could assert its position as a regional trading hub, such as by establishing a robust complementary infrastructure in logistics, warehousing, trucking, and similar services to take advantage of its regional position, but this will require state-supported skills development. The brief on leveraging GATS provisions looks at building National capital markets. It examines how Zambia can make it mandatory for natural resource-based firms to list on the local stock markets to enable Zambians to own shares and participate in the economy. It also looks at accrediting local training facilities in education and health with qualification requirements to export skilled labour to potential export markets such as the European Union (EU) and Canada. The brief also examines how Zambia can accelerate the implementation of local content requirements in sectors such as insurance, where rules are already explicitly defined.

Research Papers

Against a rapidly evolving political and economic landscape, we produced major research outputs in collaboration with international partners. **These included Corruption and the Critical Mining Sector in Zambia, developed with Chr. Michelsen Institute / U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, and Political Economy of Industrialization in the Context of Regional Integration: Zambia and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), prepared with the Centre for Global Development.**

9. Special Initiatives and Conferences

- The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), in partnership with Laws. Africa/ AfricanLII invited ZambiaLII attended two (2)-day conference on Strengthening Access to Legal Information and Enhancing Cooperation between Bar Associations (26-27 May 2025). The conference discussed strategies for sustaining free access to law, including the digitisation and consolidation of legal information using modern digital technology. It also addressed the need to strengthen access to legal information through strategic advocacy and partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Africa by Bus 2025 Journey, a transnational academic expedition organised by the University of Johannesburg, which promotes intercultural dialogue, academic collaboration, and African unity.



At SAIPAR

- We were part of a consortium of research institutions such as IAPRI and the University of Zambia's Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) that participated in the Lusaka Conference on Poverty Reduction and Climate Resilience. The conference brought together researchers, senior policymakers, technocrats, and practitioners to share insights and strategies for tackling poverty and building climate resilience across Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

• Law workshop on International Trade and Commercial Transactions:

The Legal Division held a two-day law workshop on International Trade and Commercial Transactions on 10th – 11th July, 2025, at the Muna Ndulo Campus and was officially opened by the Honourable Chief Justice of Zambia. The workshop brought together legal practitioners, judges, consultants, and academics to discuss emerging legal and regulatory issues. As part of its capacity-building initiatives, SAIPAR offered five scholarships to the judiciary, enabling the nomination of five judges to attend the workshop.



Hon. Chief Justice Dr. Mumba Malila delivering opening remarks at the official opening of the Law workshop on International Trade and Commercial Transactions.

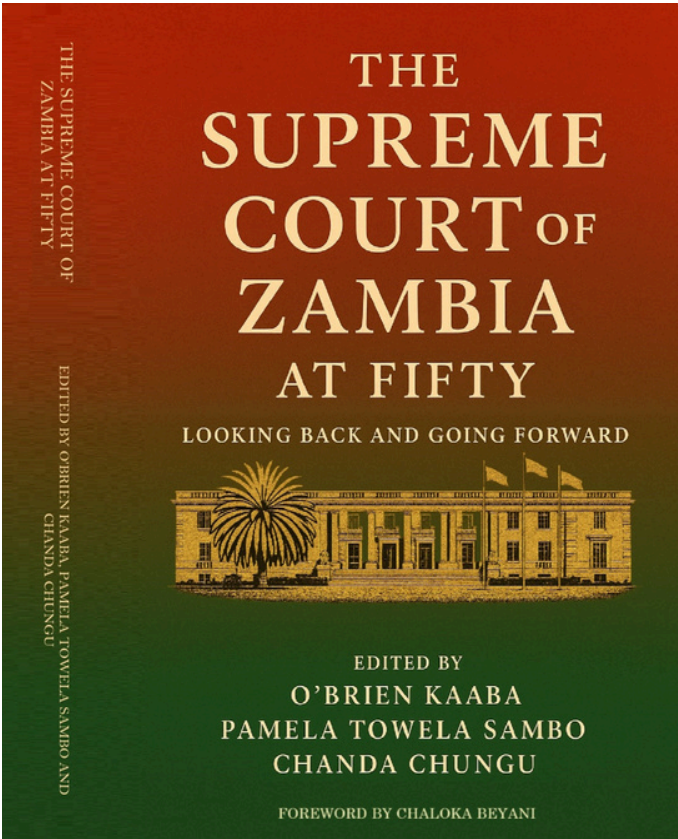


Group Photo (Workshop Participants with the Hon. Chief Justice Dr. Mumba Malila)

●● **Judiciary and Democracy in Africa conference**

In October 2025, SAIPAR held a Judicial and Democracy Conference aimed at advancing discourse on access to justice and the rule of law, and was co-hosted with the Access to Justice Research Network (AJRN). The conference brought together practitioners, researchers, and jurists from across Africa to explore the critical role of the judiciary in strengthening democracy, and it enabled robust dialogue on judicial independence, electoral justice, human rights, environmental litigation, and the integration of emerging technologies into legal systems. It will result in a special Zambia Social Science Journal (ZSSJ) issue.

The conference also featured the launch of a SAIPAR publication, **The Supreme Court of Zambia at Fifty: Looking Back and Going Forward, edited by O'Brien Kaaba, Pamela Towela Sambo, and Chanda Chungu**. The Supreme Court of Zambia clocked fifty (50) years of existence in 2023, having been established in its current form in 1973. From an initial establishment of five judges, the Supreme Court currently has thirteen (13) judges. For good or ill, over the last 50 years of its existence, the Supreme Court has significantly shaped the country's life by determining high-profile cases from a cross-section of branches and disciplines of the law. These include high treason, homicides, presidential election disputes, nerve-wracking political disputes, human rights cases, employment and industrial relations, corporate and commercial transactions, as well as personal law disputes.



Book Cover: The Supreme court of Zambia At Fifty



Group Photo (Conference Participants at the Judiciary and Democracy in Africa conference) October 2025

- The Conference on Economics was held in honour of Manenga Ndulo to celebrate his enduring legacy in economics, policy reform, and academic excellence. The Conference brought together leading voices in the field of economics to honour his contributions and chart the future of African economic development which will result in a special ZSSJ issue.

10. Dissemination to stakeholders

With a renewed commitment to our stakeholders, 2025 saw our dissemination efforts revamp our social media presence and actively build a network of partners, highlighting our work.

- The Cyber Crimes press release was published in the Daily Nation Newspaper dated 19 May 2025 and was covered by eight (8) online media houses, including Zambia Today, Ubuntu Channel, Oblate Radio, Smart Eagles, Zongwe FM Radio, Zambia Confirmed News, Sinazongwe Community Radio, and Chikuni Community Radio. Dissemination through these platforms contributed to enhancing public visibility and promoting wider dissemination of SAIPAR's work. The digital copies were uploaded to the SAIPAR website and social media pages such as X, Facebook, and LinkedIn. The Cyber Crimes and Cyber Security Acts policy brief was also disseminated to stakeholders by email and hard copy.
- Our November 2024 SAIPAR Case Review Vol. 7 Issue 2 has seven (7) articles and was uploaded at SAIPAR Case Review | Journals | Cornell University Law School.
- In November 2025, we launched the SAIPAR Podcast, an innovative digital platform designed to communicate research findings and policy insights to a broader audience.

10.2 Journals

10.2.1 Southern African Journal of Policy and Development (SAJPD)

The SAJPD is an online journal of short articles, commentaries, and reviews across a wide range of theoretical and practical legal, political, economic, social, and development policy issues.

Open Access: <https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/sajpd/>

- The current publication is **Volume 8, Number 2, December 2025**, which features the following:

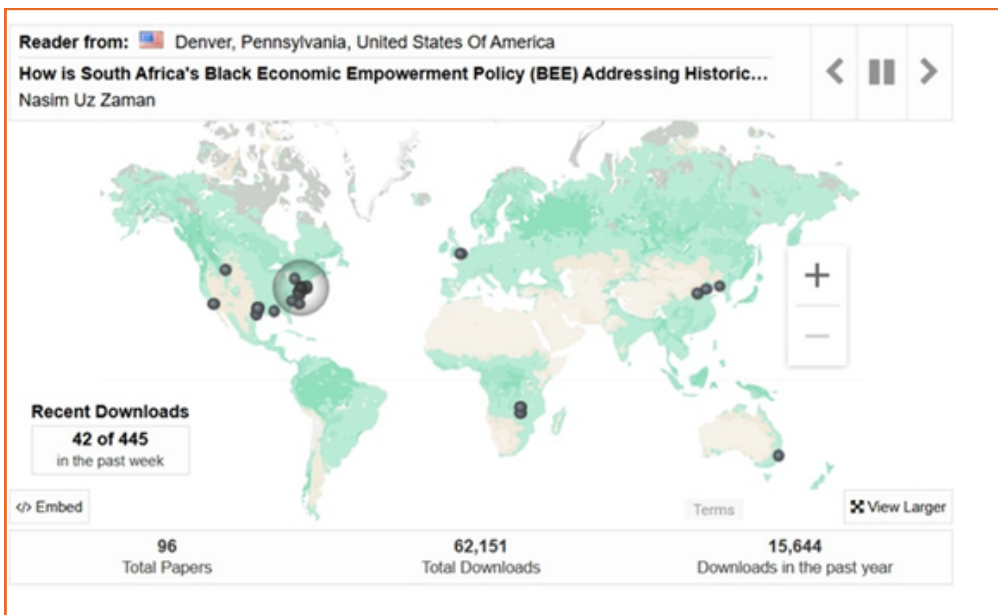
Beyond the Aid Paradigm: Neocolonialism, Recolonisation and the Future for Africa's Development

(John Ringson and Manamela Johannes David Matshabaphala)

- **How is South Africa's Black Economic Empowerment Policy (BEE) Addressing Historical Inequalities and Promoting Inclusive Development as of 2024?**

(Nasim Uz Zaman)

Readership:



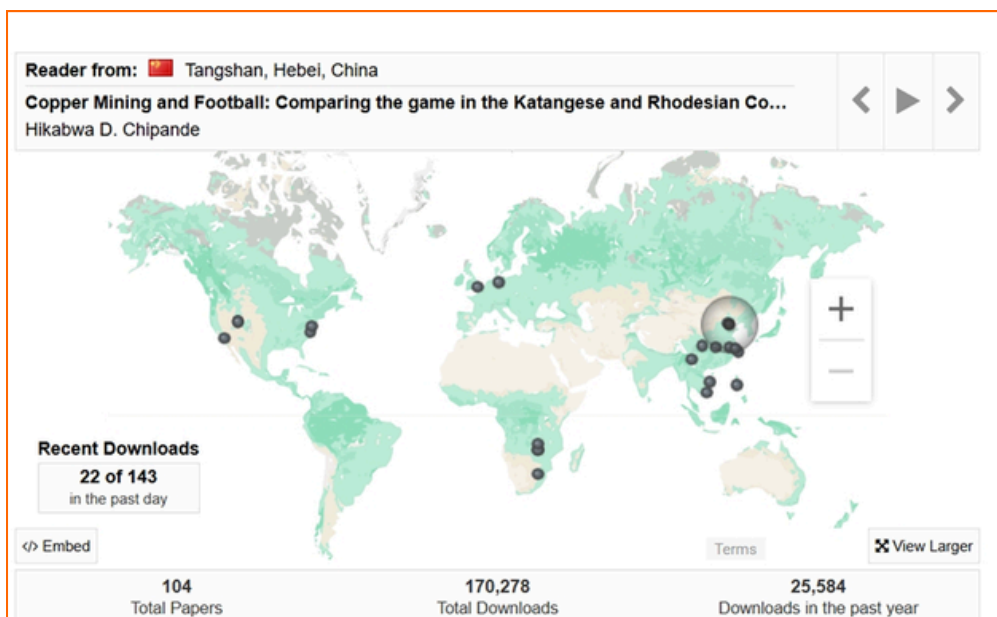
10.2.2 The Zambia Social Science Journal (ZSSJ)

The ZSSJ is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal focused on scholarly work in the social sciences and development. Serving as a forum for argument, debate, review, reflection, and discussion, the Journal is informed by the results of relevant and rigorous research.

Open Access: <https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/zssj>

The Current Issue: Volume 10, Number 1 (2025) 2024/2025

Readership:

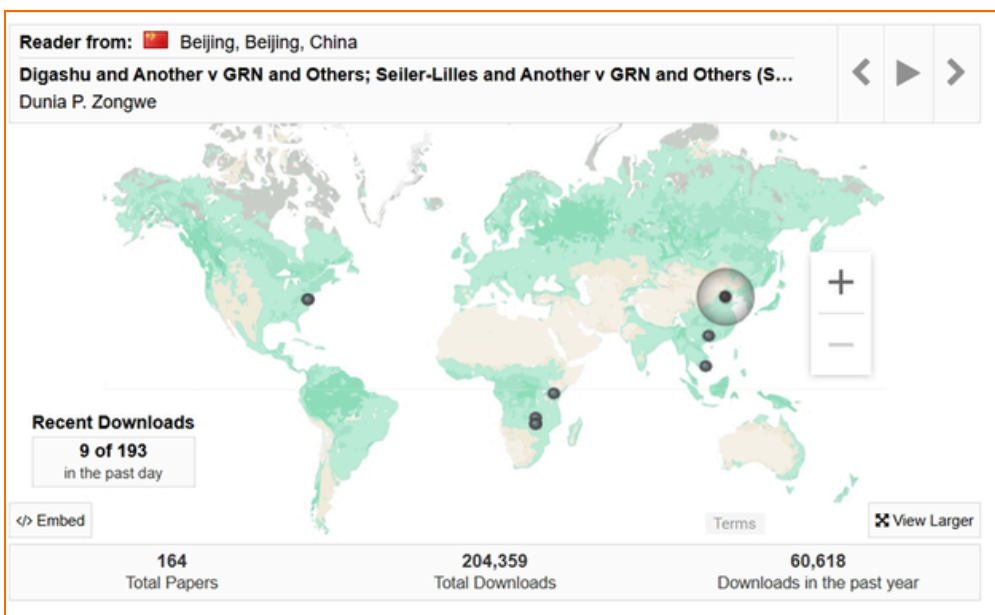


10.3 SAIPAR Case Review

The SAIPAR Case Review provides commentaries on select judgments of terminal courts (and in exceptional cases, non-terminal courts) in the Southern African Region. The purpose of the unit is to raise the discourse around the jurisprudence of these important courts and, in so doing, stimulate debate on topics of legal significance and relevance.

Open Access: <https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/scr/>
Current Issue: Volume 7, Issue 2 (2025) November 2024

Readership:



II. STRATEGIC FOCUS 2: POLICY MAKERS

One of SAIPAR's central aims is to influence policy-making so that it is evidence-based and responsive to the rights and needs of citizens. This year has been marked by a series of activities to enhance stakeholder engagement with policymakers, including cooperating partners, diplomats, government, civil society, and academia.

We delivered eight (8) roundtable discussions that provided an open platform for constructive dialogue. These sessions surfaced both the risks posed by the current legal framework and opportunities for reform, while reinforcing SAIPAR's role as a trusted convener of evidence-based dialogue on governance, accountability, and democratic reform.

For example, we convened high-level roundtable discussions on the implications of Zambia's Cyber Crimes and Cyber Security Act; African Extractivism & Green Transition, and Zambia in A Shifting World Order: Strategic Responses to a Global Geopolitical Reconfiguration. We also held Political Economy Analysis (PEA) roundtable discussions with cooperating partners, focusing on the social, political, and economic context in Zambia, with presentations.

12. STRATEGIC FOCUS 3: EMERGING RESEARCHERS

SAIPAR is dedicated to cultivating a robust culture of critical, evidence-based research within Zambia. By bridging the gap between local expertise and global scholarship, we empower the next generation of researchers to drive impactful policy and academic excellence across the region and beyond.

12.2 SAIPAR Internship Programme

In 2025, we welcomed seven (7) interns from UNZA and one (1) from the University of Lusaka (UNILUS). The interns were mentored and supervised by our Associate Directors. They worked on several projects, including the Irish Aid and IDRC.

We also welcomed one (1) research affiliate from the University of Edinburgh and seven (7) students from our Cornell Summer and Intern Programme and the University of Chicago.

13. STRATEGIC FOCUS 4: THE PUBLIC

This past year, SAIPAR accelerated the bridge-building between duty bearers and rights holders. By transforming public discourse into actionable policy dialogue, we have moved beyond simple engagement toward a model of collaborative governance that ensures national policy is both inclusive and evidence-led.

13.1 SAIPAR Podcast

Guided by our mission, we launched the SAIPAR Podcast, a new platform for sharing research-driven conversations on national and regional policy issues. The podcast is designed to foster informed public dialogue by bringing together diverse voices and evidence-based perspectives. Our dedicated podcast now serves as a continuous engine for dissemination, providing a deep-dive space for listeners to explore the nuances of our research projects. A good example is the episode on “Constitution-Making, Strange Provisions, and the Cost of Consulting the Wrong People,” recorded twelve thousand six hundred and seventy eight (12,678) views



Kevin Kabunda discusses insights into the farm block diagnostic portion of the ZDG project in an episode of the SAIPAR podcast.



Gugulethu Resha, a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh discusses the role of political consultants in shaping electoral politics, with a focus on recent elections in Zambia and Kenya.

13.2 Amplifying Impact: SAIPAR's 2025 Media & Outreach Success

In the final quarter of 2025, SAIPAR leveraged a multi-channel approach to ensure rigorous research informed both the public and the policymakers.

1. High-Stakes Dialogue: The Public Discussion Forum

SAIPAR moved research from the page to the public stage with our forum, "From Pilot to Policy: What Does It Take for Youth-Focused CDF Support to Actually Work?" The Impact: By live-streaming the event to our social media audience, we democratized access to policy debate, allowing citizens to engage directly with experts on the transition from pilot projects to sustainable national policy.



Gabriel Pollen, Permanent Secretary at MLGRD, addressing the SAIPAR Public Discussion Forum on youth-focused CDF support.

2. Influencing Policy: The Constituency Development Fund (CDF)

Complementing the forum, SAIPAR published a targeted analysis in News Diggers titled "**Youth are Ready for CDF as Systems Play Catch Up.**" **The Findings:** This article packaged critical research into actionable recommendations, highlighting that while youth's desire for development is strong, institutional systems must evolve to bridge the "uptake gap." It served as a clarion call for systemic reform to match youth readiness.

3. Economic Diagnostics: The Mushindamo Farm Block

Our outreach extended into Zambia's industrial future with the publication of "***Mushindamo Farm Block: Zambia's Next Agro-Industrial Engine Awaits Unblocking.***" ***The Insight:*** Based on a diagnostic study conducted by SAIPAR, this piece identified the specific bottlenecks preventing the farm block from becoming a premier investment hub and provided recommendations for turning agricultural potential into industrial reality.

4. Broadening the Reach: Broadcast & Digital Media

To ensure findings from the ZDG Ford Foundation project were disseminated widely, SAIPAR utilized the radio. We disseminated key findings from the ZDG-Ford Foundation Project, translating complex data into digestible insights for the business and financial community through appearances on **Money FM.**

14. STRATEGIC FOCUS 5: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

We continued to strengthen the institutional foundations needed to enhance the scale, quality, and impact of our research and policy engagement. We introduced a centralized digital Management Information System integrating programme management, finance, administration, and knowledge management to support real-time decision-making. To complement these reforms, we recruited a Head of Communications and an Institute Administrator, boosting our human capacity. These investments have reinforced SAIPAR's operational efficiency, institutional resilience, and readiness to manage complex, multi-donor initiatives, while delivering policy-relevant research that strengthens donor confidence and lays the groundwork for long-term impact.

Annual Report 2025



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