

LUANGWA BASIN HEALTH REPORT CARD

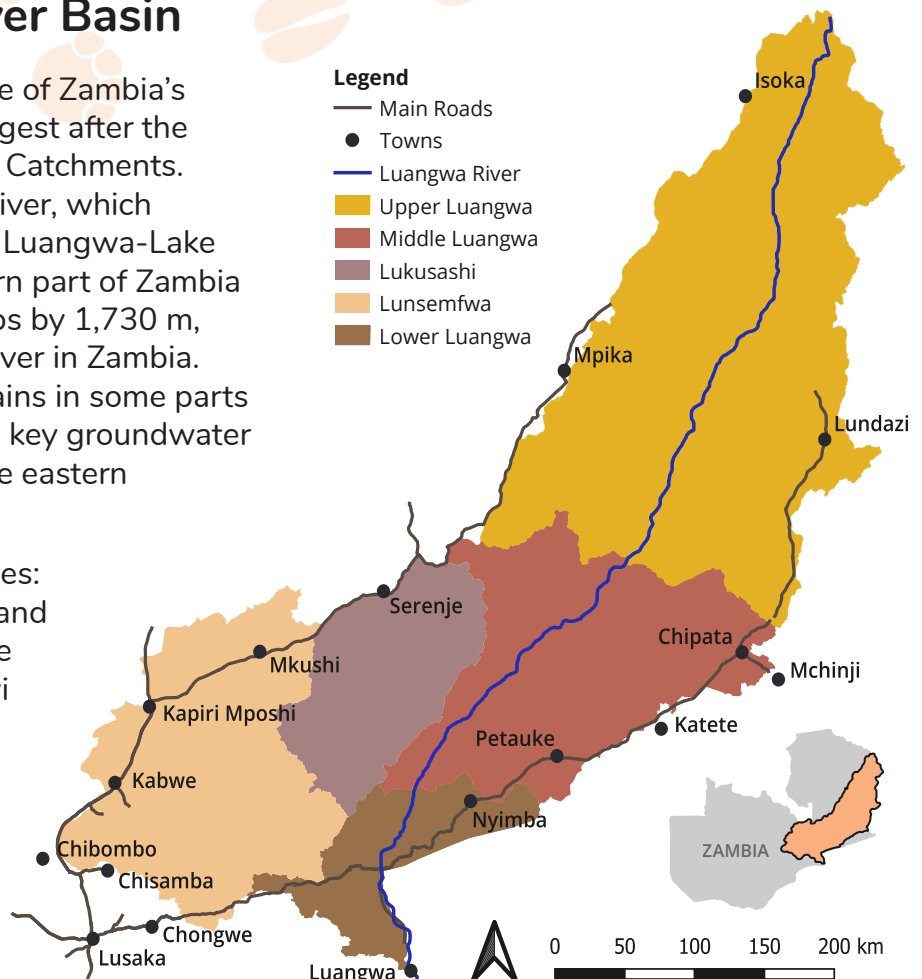
Workshop Newsletter
6–8, 13–15 May 2024

Two stakeholder workshops to develop the basin health report card for the Luangwa River Basin occurred in May 2024. The first workshop was held in Katete, Zambia and the second was held in Mpika, Zambia with both spanning two and a half days. More than 50 stakeholders were in attendance, representing government, the private sector, academic institutions, and the public sector. The goals of the workshops were to 1) identify shared values, threats, and priorities in the basin; 2) propose indicators; 3) identify data sources and expertise; and 4) discuss the communication of the report card with decision makers, funders, and the public.

About the Luangwa River Basin

The Luangwa River Catchment is one of Zambia's six catchment areas and the third largest after the Zambezi Main River and Kafue River Catchments. It gets its name from the Luangwa River, which originates in the Mafinga Hills of the Luangwa-Lake Malawi watershed in the northeastern part of Zambia and ends at Feira. The elevation drops by 1,730 m, the largest drop in elevation of any river in Zambia. The river also has extensive flood plains in some parts that have alluvial aquifers that act as key groundwater sources for the rural population in the eastern parts of Zambia.

Administratively it lies in five provinces: Muchinga, Eastern, Central, Lusaka, and Copperbelt. The catchment forms the international boundaries with Malawi to the east, Democratic Republic of Congo to the northwest, and Mozambique and Zimbabwe to the south. It is divided into the following subcatchments: Upper Luangwa, Middle Luangwa, Lukusashi, Lunsemfwa, and Lower Luangwa.



A map of the Luangwa River basin, showing the five regions.

Developing the Luangwa River Basin Report Card

Two critical aspects of the report card process are co-design and co-development. They refer to the involvement of stakeholders in conversations about conceptualization, visioning, determination of values, discussions about threats and concerns, identification of scope and scale, and prioritization of basin features. The workshop activities were geared towards promoting discussion among participants, ensuring every voice was heard, and ultimately, reaching a consensus on the key priorities to highlight in the report card.



Workshop participants engaged in several interactive activities. Photos by Lili Badri.

Creating a shared vision for the basin

Stakeholders identified key traits that they valued about their watersheds (values) and actions that threaten those values (threats). Values or threats that were suggested more times by different participants are larger, helping to visualize how consensus is built around good indicators of watershed health. There were 68 unique values and 52 unique threats identified.

Values



Threats



Proposed indicators for the Luangwa River Basin

Identified values and threats were assigned to six broad categories: social and cultural, management and governance, health and nutrition, ecosystems and landscape, economy, and water quality and quantity. In groups, participants were asked to think about relevant indicators associated with these categories. Participants were asked to choose their top three indicators in each category and the indicators with the most votes are shown below in order of importance:



Social & cultural

- ▶ Human-wildlife conflict
- ▶ School attendance
- ▶ Heritage sites
- ▶ People per household
- ▶ Quantity of schools
- ▶ Alternative livelihoods



Water quality & quantity

- ▶ Dissolved oxygen
- ▶ Coliforms
- ▶ Water points
- ▶ Precipitation index
- ▶ Physical parameters
- ▶ Flowing perennial rivers



Management & governance

- ▶ Natural resources funding
- ▶ Impact assessments
- ▶ Climate change programs
- ▶ Community-based organizations in resource management
- ▶ Community conservation education & support
- ▶ Protected area management plan



Economy

- ▶ Agricultural production
- ▶ Locally-owned tourism businesses
- ▶ Mining employment
- ▶ Fish production
- ▶ International and local tourists
- ▶ Key crop production



Health & nutrition

- ▶ Access to clean water
- ▶ Access to adequate sanitation
- ▶ Malnutrition
- ▶ Health facilities
- ▶ HIV prevalence
- ▶ Medical equipment availability & access

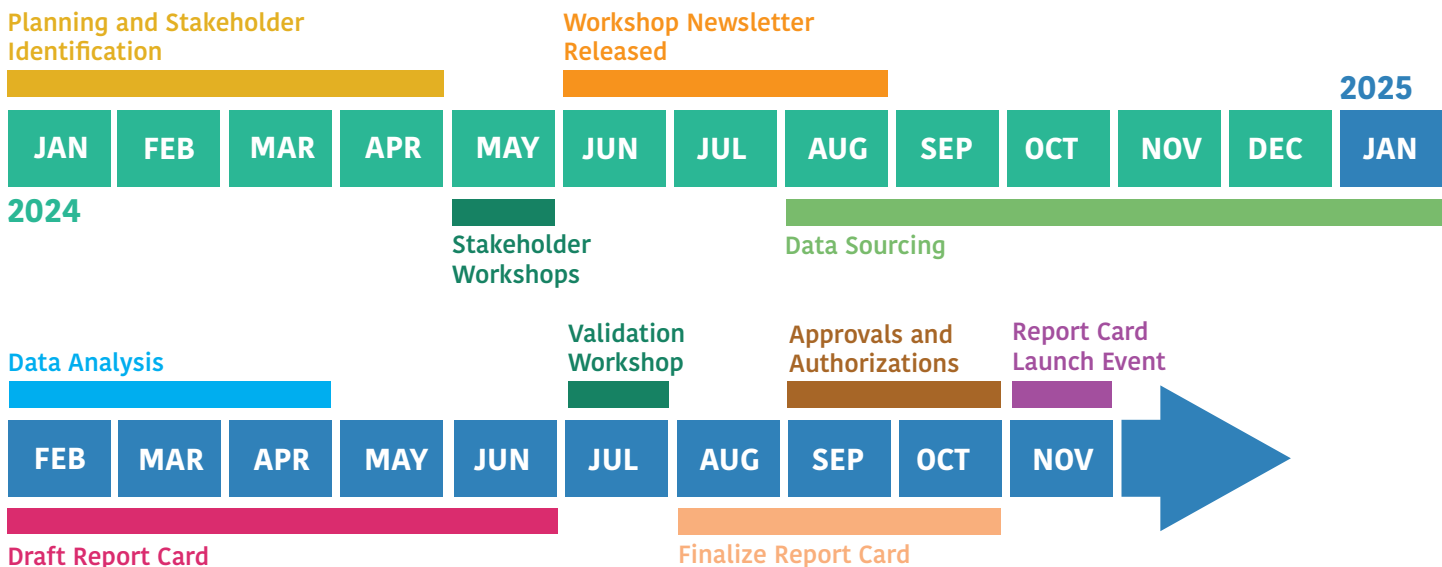


Ecosystems & landscape

- ▶ Forest cover
- ▶ Carnivores
- ▶ Protected lands
- ▶ Temperature
- ▶ Flood & drought impacts
- ▶ Rate of deforestation

Next steps and project timeline

After the workshops, the data will be compiled by WWF Zambia who will consult with participants to help find the relevant data and the relevant people who can help with data analysis. Once the scores have been calculated, the report card document will be drafted and a validation workshop will take place to consult with stakeholders about the findings and develop recommendations. The report card is set to launch in November 2025.



Acknowledgments

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Cover photo by Lili Badri.

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