LUSAKA

THE LUSAKA FOOD SYSTEMS DESK

Lusaka's food system comprises multiple interconnected activities and stakeholders. Historically, however, the city lacked a formal mechanism for coordinating these actors, resulting in fragmented interventions, duplication of effort, and weak institutional linkages. The AfriFOODlinks pilot therefore explored whether food-systems coordination could be embedded within local government structures rather than remaining dependent on individual, time-bound projects.

Through the intervention, a food systems desk was established within Lusaka City Council, supported by a council resolution Minute Number C/22/05/2025 and a designated food systems coordinator. The initiative also revitalized the Lusaka Food Policy Council and supported the development of the Lusaka Food Strategy 2026–2030. Chilenje Market served as a practical demonstration site, linking institutional reform with tangible improvements in waste management, sanitation, food safety, and the overall market environment.

The model has progressed towards institutionalization. Lusaka City Council has allocated a modest budget to support the operations of the Food Systems Desk, demonstrating growing institutional ownership and commitment to its sustainability. The Council has also established a multidisciplinary technical working group comprising representatives from relevant departments. The group is supporting the mainstreaming of food-systems considerations across municipal planning, programmes and service delivery.
The Food Systems Desk now serves as a permanent platform for coordination, planning, information sharing, stakeholder engagement, and resource mobilization. The appointment of dedicated food-systems officials at city level offers strong potential for replication, and several Zambian local authorities have expressed interest in adopting the model. However, replication should be adapted to each local authority's institutional capacity, governance arrangements, and food-system priorities.

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KEY TAKEAWAY
Lusaka demonstrates that sustainable food-system transformation can begin by embedding a permanent coordination mechanism within local government, supported by political commitment, an operational budget and cross-departmental technical structures that mainstream food systems into municipal planning and service delivery.



