

Zambia sets global benchmark for community forest conservation

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Twelve communities in the Luangwa Valley are benefitting from direct cash payments of K50 million (\$2.3 million) thanks to a partnership with forest conservation business BCP (BioCarbon Partners).

The ground-breaking Lower Zambezi REDD+ Project (LZRP) and Luangwa Community Forests Project (LCFP), facilitated by BCP in partnership with communities, the Zambian Forestry Department and Department of National Parks and Wildlife have resulted in direct monetisation of forest resources by local people.

The public-private-community projects set a new standard in forest conservation that puts the nation at the forefront of global efforts to combat climate change, while protecting forest resources and creating livelihood opportunities for local people.

His Royal Highness Chief Bunda Bunda said: “My community has worked hard towards this REDD+ verification success for Zambia. We thank the government for helping our Chieftdom to access REDD+ benefits and to BCP for the partnership, which has increased employment, livelihoods and development projects.”

LZRP is the world’s first REDD+ project to pass seven Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) audits, enabling income to be generated from credits that offset the carbon footprints of organisations producing greenhouse gases. LZRP was also the first REDD+ project in Africa to achieve triple-gold validation under the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard for exceptional social impact.

BCP CEO Dr Hassan Sachedina said: “We are privileged to support government and community efforts to conserve the Luangwa-Lower Zambezi ecosystem, one of the greatest remaining wildlife strongholds on earth.

“This has been a tough year due to the pandemic; tourism and conservation funding have declined, but through the extraordinary efforts of our partners such as Forestry Department, the LCFP has channelled K50 million into communities in 2020. We are grateful for USAID backing the LCFP’s development. This is just the beginning of a long-term, self-sustainable conservation model which benefits communities and wildlife”.

At 944,000 hectares, the triple-gold CCB validated LCFP is Africa’s largest project by hectares and improves the lives of 217,000 people in 12 chiefdoms, while LZRP covers 40,000 hectares and benefits 7,000 people in 1 chiefdom.

Source: <https://www.businesswireindia.com/zambia-sets-global-benchmark-for-community-forest-conservation-69453.html>