Multistakeholder platforms for integrated landscape governance: The case of Kalomo District, Zambia

Freddie S. Siangulube [a,b,*], Mirjam A.F. Ros-Tonen [a], James Reed [b,e], Kaala. B. Moombe [b,c], Terry Sunderland [b,d]

[a] *Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 VW Amsterdam, the Netherlands*
[b] *Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia*
[c] *Sociology of Development and Change, Wageningen University, Wageningen, the Netherlands*
[d] *Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia, 2424 Main Hall, Vancouver V6T 124, Canada*
[e] *School of Global Development, University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park, UK*

ABSTRACT

Multistakeholder platforms (MSPs) that bring together a range of actors to collaboratively address land and natural resource governance issues are increasingly common in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the extent to which such platforms effectively harmonise complex social-ecological challenges and deliver improved outcomes is poorly understood. This study examines how MSPs across different scales of governance in Zambia have influenced and facilitated more integrated landscape governance. Based on literature review, policy document analysis and key informant interviews, we found that MSPs vary in form, function, influence and efficacy. Both formal and informal MSPs were found to enhance deliberative governance through the participation of key actors who contribute towards efforts to reconcile diverging and potentially conflicting interests. At the national level, MSPs benefit from broad actor presence and opportunities to lobby for policy and institutional change. Legally instituted MSPs at the district level provide a bridge between national policy development and local resource governance. Meanwhile, informal and formal local-level MSPs are strong in addressing resource conflicts and fostering community coordination and customary rules and regulations. However, local-level MSPs are less successful in influencing policy change due to weak linkages with formal governance institutions. These weak linkages between local and national governance levels have negative downward effects (i.e. poor policy performance and policies not taking root at the local level). We conclude that while MSPs offer the potential to improve stakeholder dialogue, deliberate feedback loops and enhanced linkages with other stakeholders at both district and national levels are needed to achieve more collaborative, equitable and effective landscape governance.

1. Introduction

Deforestation, forest degradation and unsustainable use of natural resources are persistent challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, often perpetuated by weak governance arrangements (Riggs et al., 2018; Nansikombi et al., 2020; Mihaylova, 2023). These challenges have compromised food security, worsened the impacts of climate change, and forced forest fringe communities into extreme poverty (Naeem et al., 2016; Ehara et al., 2023). Global environmental policy frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) acknowledge the interconnectedness of these issues and the need to address them holistically (Akhtar-Schuster et al., 2017; Reed et al., 2020). Acknowledging that sectoral solutions have typically proven inadequate to address these interconnected challenges as they fail to account for externalities or unforeseen outcomes (Vermunt et al., 2020), multistakeholder platforms (MSPs) are widely used in environmental management policies as dialogue-focused and collaborative mechanisms to facilitate negotiations of trade-offs and synergies between conservation, development and livelihoods (Estrada-Carmona et al., 2014; Kusters et al., 2018; Barletti and Larson, 2019; Reed et al.,

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* Corresponding author at: Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 VW Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
E-mail address: f.s.siangulube@uva.nl (F.S. Siangulube).

2019; Sirimorok and Rusdianto, 2020). Such MSPs are becoming more prevalent in the global South (Bisseleua et al., 2018; Omotayo and Zikhali, 2019; Ratner et al., 2022; Siangulube, 2023). Despite the abundant literature on MSPs providing theoretical insights into the broader principles of participation and widespread uptake of MSPs in various contexts (Elia et al., 2020; Sirimorok and Rusdianto, 2020; Sigalla et al., 2021; Sarmiento Barletti et al., 2022), there is little empirical evidence of their effectiveness in the tropics beyond measuring beneficiaries' perceptions (van Ewijk and Ros-Tonen, 2020). Hence, more empirical studies are needed to enhance triple loop learning in policy and practice—whereby actors not only ask whether they do things 'right' (single-loop learning) and do the 'right things' (second-loop learning) but also question whether the right things are done (third-loop learning) (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

Integrated landscape approaches (ILAs), embedded in the broader landscape governance theory, are among the recently acknowledged ways for dealing with multiple and often conflicting stakeholder interests in complex political and social-ecological systems and propose the use of MSPs (Sayer et al., 2013; Kusters et al., 2018; Reed et al., 2016, 2020). Guiding principles for landscape approaches reflect contemporary efforts to facilitate cross-scale and cross-sector engagement to reconcile conservation and development goals (Sayer et al., 2013). The ILA literature contends that competing claims of stakeholders require an inclusive approach that considers the importance of synergising diverse stakeholder interests at multiple scales (Reed et al., 2019; Pedroza-Arceo et al., 2022). MSPs are central to this thinking, recognising that no single actor or entity alone can address complex landscape-scale 'wicked problems' and achieve integrated landscape governance[1] (van Oosten, 2013; Haines-Young and Potschin, 2014; Ros-Tonen et al., 2014; Stickler et al., 2018). Instead, flexible and transparent concerted efforts of multiple stakeholders are needed (Balint et al., 2011; Defries and Nagendra, 2017).

Notwithstanding numerous limitations and acknowledging that MSPs are not the panacea to solve cross-scale problems (Søreide and Truex, 2013; Sirimorok and Rusdianto, 2020), their potential to facilitate participation and actor engagement are under extensive discussion and increasingly regarded as useful in overcoming institutional fragmentation (Ros-Tonen et al., 2018; Riggs et al., 2018). Authors in the landscape governance literature use a variety of terms that are synonymous with MSPs (e.g., multistakeholder forums, stakeholder platforms, stakeholder partnerships, and networks) (Barletti and Larson 2019; van Ewijk and Ros-Tonen 2020). In this paper, we conceptualise MSPs as a) physical or virtual forums that assume different forms and purposes in either voluntary or statutory settings; b) spaces for stakeholder participation to resolve temporal or long-term problems through dialogue; c) institutionalised rather than ad hoc meeting spaces; and d) involving multiple actors or stakeholder groups (Djalante, 2012; Brouwer et al., 2015; Bisseleua et al., 2018). This paper focuses on physical, formal and informal MSPs established to facilitate the negotiation of conservation and development objectives in a Zambian natural resource governance context.

Zambia has seen a proliferation of MSPs at national, district and local governance levels because of the devolution of natural resource governance and decision-making. Given the co-existence of several sectors and actors in a legal pluralism arrangement (different governance regimes with overlapping jurisdictions (Bavinck and Gupta, 2014)), there is a need to better understand how different multistakeholder platforms facilitate stakeholder participation and reconcile multiple interests in the context of natural resource governance to foster conservation goals. To the best of our knowledge, no such examination of the potential of MSPs or similar modes of governance across different governance scales that facilitate more integrated landscape governance has been conducted in Zambia to date. Focusing on the Kalomo District in the Southern Province of Zambia, this study seeks to draw lessons on the potential of MSPs to establish common concerns and negotiate conflicting aims and interests. This serves to inform the ongoing COLANDS[2] initiative about the potential implementation of ILAs in the Kalomo District. To achieve this overarching goal, we ask how MSPs across different jurisdictional levels facilitate participation in natural resource governance and decision-making and how they navigate and help reconcile multiple and conflicting stakeholder interests to pursue conservation and development goals in the Kalomo District of Zambia.

To answer these questions, we first provide context to natural resource governance in Zambia, showing its nested nature and involvement of multiple stakeholders. The methodology section presents specifics on the study area, the sampling method, and the methods used to collect data on national, district and local MSPs with varied interests and mandates. The result section analyses the potential of MSPs to facilitate participation and reconcile various stakeholder interests by negotiating synergies and trade-offs and links the mandates and interests of the MSPs to the principles for an integrated landscape approach (Sayer et al., 2013). The paper concludes that improving stakeholder participation and dialogue, creating deliberate feedback loops, and enhancing cross-level linkages between stakeholders and policymakers can help to implement an ILA for more collaborative, equitable and effective landscape governance.

2. Natural resource governance in Zambia

Natural resource governance in Zambia is largely driven by the central government. Like most tropical African countries with polycentric governance arrangements (Potts, 2020), Zambia's policy framework struggles to support natural resource conservation and sustainable development, partly due to institutional conflicts about their mandates and policy incoherence in a 'nested landscape' (Kalaba et al., 2014). The recent Eighth National Development Plan (ENDP 2017–2021), a national policy on development, acknowledges such discords (O'Connor et al., 2020; GRZ, 2022). The plan recognises integrated multi-sectoral approaches to development, emphasising inclusive participation in sustainable development planning. While several legal provisions encourage inclusivity in natural resource governance, the 'how' to operationalise remains challenging (Ashraf et al., 2016; Kalaba, 2016). For example, the 2013 decentralisation policy that set the stage for equitable stakeholder participation in both statutory and customary institutions lacks a coherent implementation framework.

The Department of Climate Change and Natural Resources of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment is responsible for the conservation of natural resources as well as the formulation, coordination, and implementation of policies and programmes, with the support of several government agencies and non-state actors (Table 1). Various policies and legislations also recognise traditional institutions as important partners in biodiversity protection, especially on customary lands and in game management areas. With the decentralisation of natural resource governance, additional actors such as timber companies, charcoal associations, civil society, research organisations and community cooperatives have emerged. Furthermore, with increasing

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[1] Integrated landscape governance is defined in this paper as holistic landscape management interactively engaging multiple sectors, actors and institutional arrangements to achieve resilient and multifunctional landscapes (van Oosten et al., 2013; Sayer et al., 2013; Ros-Tonen et al., 2014). Integrated landscape approaches constitute one set of approaches to achieve integrated landscape governance. Other examples are jurisdictional approaches (Stickler et al., 2018) and ecosystem approaches (Haines-Young and Potschin, 2014).

[2] The Collaborating to Operationalise Landscape Approaches for Nature, Development and Sustainability (COLANDS) initiative is a CIFOR-led project that seeks to initiate, analyse and evaluate the implementation of integrated landscape approaches. For more information see https://www.cifor-icraf.org/colands/.

Table 1

Natural resource governance arrangements in Zambia.

| Natural resource component	Jurisdiction	Guiding legal framework	Governance bodies	
			State institutions	Non-state and private organisations
Biodiversity	National Parks, Game Management Areas (GMAs), customary land, private sanctuaries, forests	Environmental Management Act 2011 National Policy on Environment 2007 National Resources Conservation Act 1970	Ministry of Green Economy and Environment (MGEE) -Dept. of Climate Change and Natural Resources. - Traditional leadership -Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA)	Conservation non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), public-private partnership arrangements, e.g., Africa Parks in Sioma Ngwezi National Park
Water resources	Open water systems, e.g. rivers and wetlands	Water Management Act 2011 Wetland Policy 2018 National Water Policy 2013	Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation -Water Resource Management Agency (WARMA) -Department of Water Resource Development	National Water and Sanitation Company Water utility companies at the provincial and district levels. Water Forums
Forestry	National forest reserves, local forest reserves, customary land, private forests	Forest Act 2015 Lands Act 1995 Forestry Policy 2014	Ministry of Green Economy and Environment -Forestry Department Traditional leaders	Timber Associations Charcoal traders and producer associations Private forestry companies, Environmental NGOs/community-based organisations (CBOs). Local communities
Agro-biodiversity	State, private and customary lands	National Agriculture Policy 2016 Lands Policy 1995	Ministry of Agriculture	Private seed companies Research organisations Agricultural cooperatives Livelihood NGOs
Fisheries	River systems, wetlands	Fisheries Act 2011 National Agricultural Policy 2016	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock - Fisheries Department Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation	Private fisheries companies Fisheries management committees
Wildlife	National Parks, GMAs, wildlife sanctuaries, community conservation areas, private wildlife estates, Transboundary Conservations Areas (TFCAs)	Zambia Wildlife Act 2015 Wildlife policy 2018	Ministry of Tourism and Arts Department of National Parks and Wildlife Traditional leaders in GMAs	Various conservation NGOs/CBOs Private game ranches Community Resource Boards

Source: Compiled by the authors.
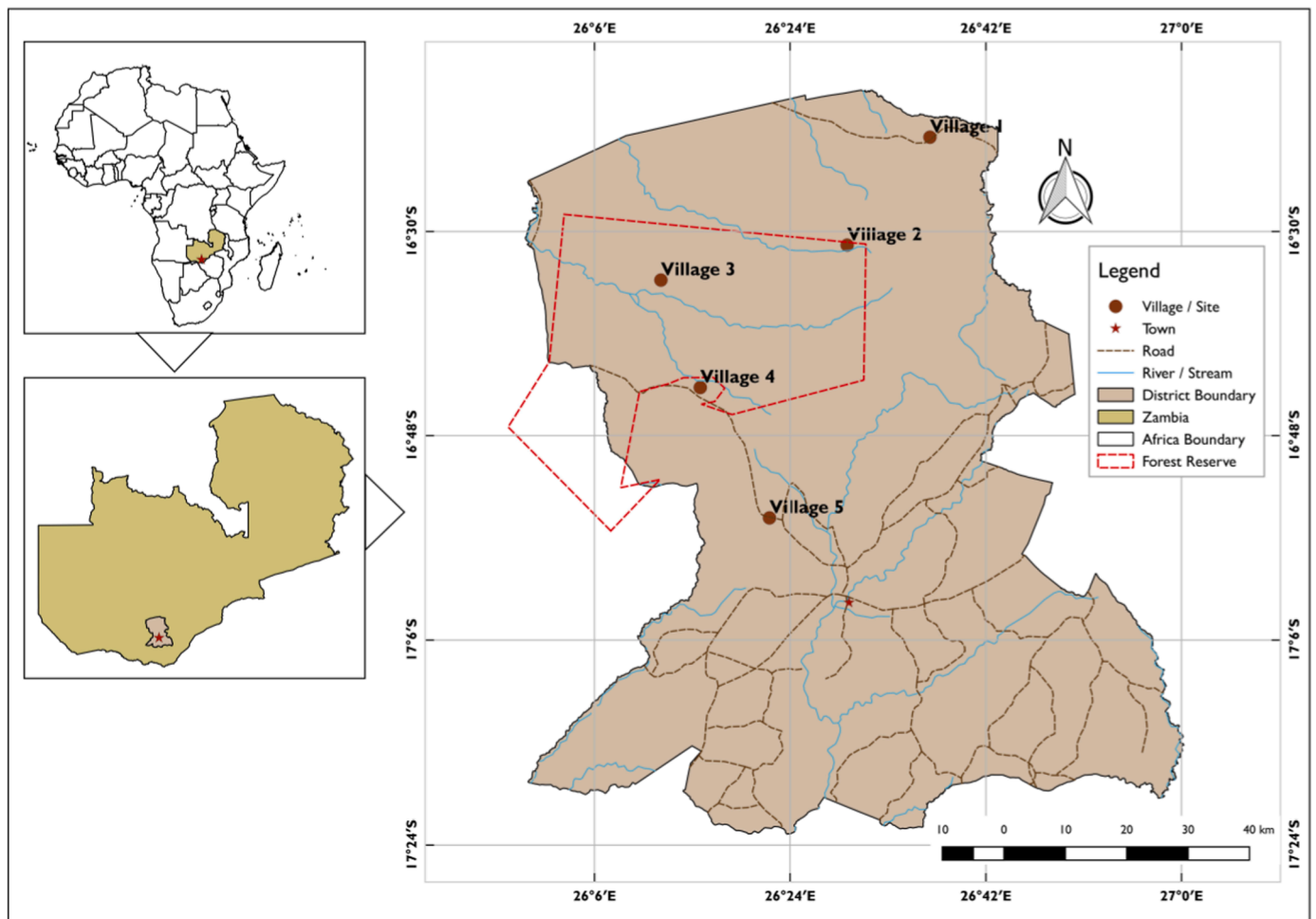
Fig. 1. Location map showing Kalomo District and villages included in the study area (
Source: Authors).

demand for natural resources such as timber and wildlife from emerging economies such as China, landscape governance in the global South, including Zambia, is becoming increasingly complex. This is because both visible and non-visible landscape actors with varying capacities, positions of power, legitimacies, expectations, and practises influence the conservation-development agenda (Sabatier, 1991; Schusser et al., 2015; Siangulube et al., 2023). Therefore, landscape governance approaches require integrating social-political mechanisms that foster actor negotiations and identify common concerns, the hope being that such a paradigm shift could lead to more equitable natural resource governance and management.[3]

3. Materials and methods

3.1. Study area

This research was carried out in Kalomo District (Fig. 1) in Zambia between November 2019 and October 2020. The study area lies in the Kafue Basin in southern Zambia in a mixed land-use complex comprising

a tourism corridor, agricultural cropland and pasture, a national park and settlements. The district's governance system is marked by legal pluralism, with statutory governance falling under central government agencies. Under customary governance, Kalomo District has three independent chiefdoms: Sipatunyana, Chikanta and Siachitema. In terms of natural resource governance, the district is a typical illustration of a contested landscape characterised by weak institutional linkages, tensions between different governance levels, and disputes over land use and access to natural resources. The increasing demand for land for agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, and increasing production for national and international markets have placed further pressure on the forest resource base.

The district hosts the Kalomo Hills forest reserve (No. P13), southern Zambia's largest local forest reserve. The forest reserve borders the oldest national park in Zambia and the second largest in Africa, the Kafue National Park (Thapa, 2012). It was gazetted under Government Notice No. 102 of 1952 to be a source of biomass energy for the district and to protect the Ngwezi, Sichifulo, Kalomo, Nanzhila and Chitongo water recharge systems. The forest reserve, which lies in the Siachitema and Chikanta Chiefdoms, has undergone tremendous pressure, and vegetation cover decreased in extent from over 138,844 ha in 1984 to about 40,255 ha in 2020 (Moombe et al., 2020; Mbanga et al., 2021).

3.2. Sampling design

Purposive sampling was used to select relevant MSPs at the national, district and community levels. This means that the decision on the

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[3] Natural resource management is understood in this paper as the measures taken to sustainably manage renewable resources such as forests, water, wildlife and soils. Natural resource governance refers to the political, legal and institutional framework for natural resource management and defines who has a say in decisions taken regarding the allocation and use of natural resources (adapted from Ros-Tonen et al., 2008).

Table 2
MSPs and respondents included in this study.

MSP	Representative	MSP category	Brief description of the MSP	Jurisdictional level
National level				
Zambia Community-Based Natural Resources Management Forum (ZCNRMF)	Program Officer (n = 1)	Non-state (CSO)	Membership-based national forum championing dialogues at the national and local level on community-based natural resource management.	National, district and local
Zambia Climate Change Network (ZCCN)	National Coordinator (n = 1)	Non-state (consortium of CSOs on climate change)	National platform for dialogue on climate justice and sustainable development.	National
Agricultural Consultative Forum (ACF)	Program Manager (n = 1)	Non-state (NGO)/private sector	Mobilise and engage stakeholders across the country in matters of agriculture enterprise development and sustainable natural resource management.	National, district
Inter-ministerial Committee on Climate Change (IMCC)	Secretariat (n = 1)	State	High-level governmental forum that coordinates climate policy and activities, budgets and a roadmap for climate change protocols.	National
District level				
District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC)	Head of government agencies and NGOs (n = 18)	State	Coordinates all stakeholders at the district level and champions policy dialogue, planning, and implementation.	District
Consultative Working Group (CWG)	Traditional leaders and representatives of government agencies and CSOs (n = 26)	State and non-state (draws membership from all sectors)	District MSP composed of various sectors to foster dialogue on decision-making for conservation and development	District
Community level				
Village Productivity Committees (VPCs)	VPC members or former members from each of the 5 target villages (n = 10)	Non-state (customary governance setting)	Representatives of villages in decision-making at the local level	Local
For validation				
Charcoal Producers and Traders Association	Charcoal Traders Association Chairperson (n = 1)	Non-state (private sector)	Provides coordination of private sector involvement in economic activities	Provincial
Land Alliance	Regional Land Alliance Coordinator (n = 1)	Non-state actor (NGO)	Sensitise local communities on land policies and land uses	National
National Environmental Protection Dialogue Forum	Secretariat – Centre for Environmental Justice (n = 1)	Non-state (national MSP)	Champions national dialogue on environmental justice	National
Council of Senior Headmen	Senior Headman (n = 1)	Non-state (traditional leader)	Traditional leaders who are part of the local governance structure at the chiefdom level	Local
Climate Change and Natural Resources Department	Director (n = 1)	State (Ministry of Lands & Natural Resources)	Coordinates policy formulation in natural resource management	National

choice of the units of analysis—the MSPs—was based on the following selection criteria: a) having a mandate and interest in enhancing conservation and development, b) being an institutionalised physical MSP (statutory, customary or hybrid; based on legal provisions or voluntary association); and c) contributing to a representative sample of MSPs operating at national, district and local levels, with local being defined as being embedded in one or more of the three chiefdoms of Kalomo District. The subsections below specify the sampling process for each level and how participants representing each level—the units of observation—were selected for an interview (see Table 2).

3.2.1. National MSPs

We reviewed various documents to identify and make a list of appropriate national MSPs (see supplementary material, Appendix A). We sought to identify MSPs with a combination of conservation and development objectives among its mandates and a direct or indirect impact on activities in Kalomo District, which resulted in an initial list of seven MSPs. Next, we employed snowball sampling to identify more MSPs. In this iterative process, additional MSPs were added to the list, while others were removed, the latter mainly because they had either no conservation objectives in their mandate or did not have any activities in the study area. We assumed that the sampling had reached the saturation level when no new MSPs were added to the list based on our criteria (Marshall, 1996). The final list consisted of four MSPs that met the criteria, all of which were included, implying a 100% response rate.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions that rendered many respondents unavailable, we altered the initial research design, which envisioned interviewing at least three persons in each MSP. Instead, we purposely selected one representative from each MSP by considering their previous experience and roles by reviewing past reports and meeting minutes, if available. To mitigate research bias associated with relying on a single respondent and improve the validity and credibility of the findings, we employed data triangulation by interviewing additional respondents from comparable MSPs. These respondents are referred to as validation respondents in Table 2. Even though these respondents were not associated with the targeted MSPs, they were selected using the same criteria. Therefore, responses from all respondents are deemed adequate to answer the study's research questions (see the discussion section). A semi-structured questionnaire was used (see Section 3.3 and supplementary material, Appendix B).

3.2.2. District-level MSPs

Two relevant district-level MSPs were identified through document analysis: the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) and the Consultative Working Group (CWG). The DDCC is a formal district platform that brings together all heads of government agencies, traditional leaders, and representatives of civil society organisations and the private sector. The CGW is an informal MSP composed of various district-level organisations with an interest in Kalomo Hills forest reserve issues. The latter platform functions as an entry point for implementing a landscape approach through the COLANDS initiative that aims to operationalise landscape approaches and learn from the experience.

The DDCC platform discusses all development and environmental management-related activities in the district, and participation is mandatory for government agencies, CSOs and some private sector actors with a presence in the district. The convenors of DDCC meetings provided an attendance list consisting of 56 names, of which 33 were selected based on the selection criterion that they had participated in MSP activities for at least one year (2019–2020). We assumed that if a potential respondent had consistently participated in MSP processes for at least a year, they would have gained adequate knowledge to respond to the questions. Of the 33 qualifying respondents, 18 were responsive, while the remaining 15 were unavailable for interviews due to COVID-19 restrictions and other commitments on scheduled dates, implying a response rate of 55%. Based on similar criteria, 29 respondents were

selected from the CWG attendance lists, of whom three were already selected as participants in DDCC meetings, resulting in 26 interviewees, representing a 100% response rate. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for the MSP respondents (see supplementary material, Appendix A material).

3.2.3. Local community MSPs

The local community MSPs—the Village Productivity Committees (VPCs)—are formal local-level MSPs composed of members elected through village meetings held every two years for a maximum of three consecutive terms. The VPC membership varies from one village to another (between 10 and 15 members) and usually has fair gender and age representations.

At the local level, a cluster sampling technique was used, where a village was considered a cluster. Five villages were selected in three chiefdoms (Section 3.1, Fig. 1) based on how active a VPC was. A village register was used to identify members who have served in the VPC at any given time. In each cluster, two representatives were randomly selected from the village registers (one currently serving in MSP and the other being an ex-member). A total of 10 were involved as informants in the five clusters. The response rate was 100%, given that all selected respondents were available for interviews.

Five additional respondents were purposely selected for validation (see Table 2). Of the 74 MSP representatives sampled for interviews, 63 were interviewed, implying an 85% response rate. The remaining 15% were unavailable for various reasons, mainly due to other commitments on scheduled times or because COVID-19 health guidelines[4] restricted social interactions in certain places.

3.3. Data collection and analysis methods

The study employed a combination of data collection methods, i.e., participant observation in workshops, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and text analysis of peer-reviewed and grey literature, policy documents, and media reports. Although the study focuses on Kalomo District, data collection was much broader, given that some MSPs operate at the national level. The main themes that guided data collection were derived from the research questions (see Section 1) and included terms of participation, decision-making procedures, common and conflicting interests among actors, issues and arrangements referring to specific natural resources (forest, land, water), and the potential for integrated approaches. Supplementary sources of information included published reports of organisations championing or seen to be critical of the MSPs in different sectors. The five respondents randomly selected for validation were interviewed using an open-ended questionnaire (see supplementary material, Appendix C). Finally, the first author attended six MSP meetings between August 2019 and October 2020, including National Charcoal Dialogue, CWG and VPC meetings. Qualitative data was coded based on these themes and analysed using MAXQDA software (Kuckartz and Rädiker, 2019).

4. Results

Below, we address the two research questions and analyse how MSPs across different jurisdictional levels facilitate stakeholder participation in natural resource governance and decision-making (4.1; research question 1) and how they help navigate and reconcile multiple and conflicting stakeholder interests (4.2; research question 2).

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[4] Other interviews were possible during the pandemic because the first author is native to Zambia and restrictions did not apply everywhere.

Table 3
Overview of MSPs with natural resource governance mandate in Kalomo District.

Jurisdictional level	MSP	Mandate	Terms of stakeholder participation	Degree of influence		Spheres of influence
				National	Kalomo District	
National (n = 4)	Zambia Community-Based Natural Resource Management Forum (ZCBNRMF)	Promotes dialogue and shares best practices in sustainable NRM, learning and influencing policy and government decision-makers on NRM (forestry, fisheries, water, agriculture, land, and wildlife).	Membership-based NGOs and CBOs with interests in community resource management. Quarterly meetings.	Policy lobbying	Community mobilisation and communication on sustainable utilisation of natural resources.	Institutional changes in Community Forestry policy
	Zambia Climate Change Network (ZCCN)	Coordinates stakeholder engagement, information sharing, financing, lobbying and advocacy in climate change policies and related issues.	Membership-based, drawing from individuals, institutions, professional bodies, academia and state entities.	Capacity building of CSOs, information sharing, lobbying and advocacy	Institutional and governance strengthening of member CSOs and CBOs	Formulation of national Bill on Climate Change
	Agriculture Consultative Forum (ACF)	Promotes policy dialogue and public-private consultation in developing and implementing sectoral agricultural and natural resource policies.	Open to interest groups drawn from government, farmer's unions, agro-NGOs, private sector and donors, with inputs from DDCCs.	Policy lobbying through advisory notes to policymakers and technical papers to wider interest groups on several agricultural and natural resource issues	Mobilising farmers to participate in policy developments at the local level.	Influenced the parliamentary committee on agriculture to consider community resilience adaptation through irrigation in light of climate change.
	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change (IMCCC)	Coordinates climate change policies and facilitates implementation through line ministries.	Restricted affiliation by invitation through the IMCCC secretariat.	Policy formulation and financial mobilisation		
District (n = 2)	District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC)	Coordinates policy implementation by all key state and non-state actors involved in various development and conservation activities in the district.	Mandatory membership of all state and non-state actors with conservation and development mandates in the district.	Implementation of decentralisation policies in the field of conservation and NRM	Policy implementation through local administrative structures, e.g., wards and Village Productivity Committees	Harmonisation of conflicting conservation-development aims through the implementation of decentralisation policy.
	Committee Consultative Working Group (CWG) on ILAs	Reconciles the interests of various groups and mobilises technical and financial support and social capital to support the implementation of policies and activities at the district level.	Interest-based and voluntary. Represents organisations and agencies with mandates in conservation and development. Meets when needed through face-to-face meetings.	Policy lobbying Financial mobilisation	Implementation of resolutions through local administrative structures	Stakeholder conflict resolution resulting in proposed re-zoning of Kalomo Hills forest reserve.
Community (n = 5)	Village Productivity Committees (VPCs) in Villages 1,2,3,4,5	Ensure equitable access to land and other resources; facilitate village-level planning; mediate social conflicts among villages; and enforce local rules and regulations.	Representation of village members through elections. Platforms meet monthly depending on the issues at hand.	Lobbying for the implementation of conflict resolutions	Conflict resolution platform	Conflict resolution on grazing issues and agriculture vs. forestry conflicts in the forest reserve

NRM = natural resource management; NGOs = non-governmental organisations; CSOs = civil society organisations; CBOs = Community-based organisations
Source: Compiled by the authors based on fieldwork in 2019–2020.

4.1. Stakeholder participation in natural resource governance and decision-making

MSPs differ by whether they were established by law (ZCCN, IMCCC, DCCC, VPCs) or by voluntary associations (ZCBNRMF, ACF, CWG—see Table 2 for acronyms), as well as by jurisdictional level (national, district, local). The type of MSP determines who participates and on what terms.

Most national-level MSPs have clear mandates, but stakeholder representation and terms and conditions for participation vary from platform to platform. Some national MSPs have strict representation requirements, while others operate an 'open door' policy. For example, the Zambia Community-based Natural Resources Management Forum (ZCBNRF) and the Zambia Climate Change Network (ZCCN) are both

membership-based and require that a representative of an organisation agrees to the set rules and pays membership fees. Other platforms, such as the Agriculture Consultative Forum (ACF), draw their membership "from any interested organisation, individual, or group".[5] Yet, in other MSPs, participation is restricted to specific interest holders and by invitation only (e.g., climate change policy matters in the IMCC) (see Table 3). There are transparent procedures for participating in these spaces in all cases, which is critical to legitimacy. In the words of one respondent, "Fair representation can impact the legitimacy and acceptability of MSPs' decisions".[6]

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[5] Interview with a National MSP respondent, Lusaka, November 2020.
[6] Interview with CWG respondent, Kalomo, August 2020.

Table 4

Perceptions of the roles of MSPs in natural resource governance.

Perceived roles of MSPs to navigate natural resource governance and development objectives in Kalomo District	% of the number of respondents				
	All (N = 63)	National level (n = 4)	District level (n = 44)	Local level (n = 10)	Validation (n = 5)
Help in designing incentives to encourage actors to conserve nature	15.9	75	13.6	0	20
Help to effectively mobilise and use financial and technical resources (economies of scale)	13.1	0	16	0	20
Help build stakeholder networks through coordination of actors and create partnerships across sectors	73.0	50	91	20	40
Help explain the implications of natural resource policies on local people's livelihoods, thus closing the policy-implementation gaps	82.0	75	80	90	100
Enable transformative actions towards the sustainable management of natural resources	63.5	25	75	50	100
Create a shared vision and common goals and enhance problem solutions	27	25	13.6	100	0
Manage power differences and conflicts in decision-making processes	22.6	25	22.7	100	0

Source: Interviews 2019–2020.

The national MSPs are mostly driven by experts and technocrats from government agencies, business communities, and civil society organisations interested in or affected by environmental governance. This wide spectrum of stakeholders from diverse interest groups, whose mandates relate to various developmental and environmental policies, is important to foster a crossbreed of actions, a necessary element for integration (e.g., in the ZCBNRMF). The ACF engages diverse stakeholders to lobby for small-scale farmers and agriculture commodity associations to participate in business decision-making influencing the agriculture and natural resource sectors.

At the district level, the District Administration determines stakeholder engagement in the DDCC MSP. Stakeholders in this MSP include state institutions, the private sector, and traditional leaders to discuss broader district challenges. The district CWG MSP invites stakeholders from a wide range of sectors, most of whom are already members of DDCC with specific interests in livelihoods, conservation, and developmental issues in the Kalomo landscape. In both MSPs, there is overlapping membership of state and non-state actors. The presence of civil society organisations that represent marginalised people in the district and local spaces enables MSPs across governance scales to share and discuss issues of common concern.

Due to the diversified composition of district-level platforms—they extend beyond the village and district capitals where decisions are made—the selection of representatives and facilitators is more complex and problematic than at the national level. For instance, only heads of departments or institutions are considered, some of whom are not familiar with local dynamics, while they are supposed to serve as the link between the government and community interests "even though we tend to represent more the interests of the government and implement policies".[7] The facilitation of DDCC meetings lacks objectivity and neutrality as it is moderated by the District Commissioner, who also serves as a controlling authority for government departments. This institutional set-up may compromise impartial deliberations.

Representation of communities by traditional leaders and headmen is equally problematic in the DDCC and CWG. While these leaders are 'link actors' of local-level MSPs where they are de facto members, one of the respondents[7] observed that the Chiefs "do not fully represent the aspirations of the community members on contentious issues" such as settlements, access to forest resources, and licensing schemes of forest products (notably charcoal). These speculations were based on what some respondents perceived as "bribes": "Traditional leaders receive a salary from central government".[8] Another respondent cited the case of the Kalomo Hills forest reserve as being "poorly represented by traditional leaders [Chief] at the DDCC".[9] In contrast, CWG meetings are facilitated by scientists from the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), a research and capacity-building institution engaged in multi-stakeholder dialogues about forest issues. Usually, the facilitators are chosen from among participants depending on the nature of the issues under consideration. Unlike the DDCC, this approach enhances good facilitation and objectivity and helps moderate power imbalances in CWG sessions.

At the community level, engagement in VCPs is through elected community members who represent village-level people. In addition, participation in these spaces can be through invitation. Some community members deemed influential (based on affluence or formal education) are invited to special meetings to engage in matters of common interest, such as land-use conflicts and boundary disputes, and discuss development priorities and bylaws, among others. Occasionally, village head persons nominate these influential individuals to CWG meetings. Although this may foster linkages between MSPs, in one village, such an individual was a source of misinformation and was not held accountable.

Community members generally trust their governing structures and processes built over several generations. Through a transparent, participatory process, local communities convene to elect representatives. Almost every village MSP meeting is moderated by the village headperson as a *de facto* facilitator, except for contentious issues such as complex land disputes, which are facilitated by a senior headperson. However, these facilitators are conflicted between trying to hold spaces of equitable dialogue and enforcing cultural norms that dictate behaviour in traditional settings. Thus, cultural norms are inherently embedded in MSP protocols, limiting effective engagement, especially for women and youths who are discouraged from publicly disagreeing with the elders.

MSPs from all three governance levels (national, district, and local) have some degree of influence on natural resource governance and development outcomes. Given a wide constituency of stakeholders, national MSPs influence policies and mobilise financial and technical resources with spillover effects on the Kalomo landscape in the short and long term. For example, one respondent said the strength of national MSPs lies in their ability to "mobilise stakeholders from the government, mining, banking sectors, timber associations, traditional leaders, donor communities and civil society to advocate for reforms in the taxation of natural resources as well as to strengthen environmental impact assessment procedures".[10] Such reforms are likely to positively strengthen natural resource management at both the national and district level. The district- and local-level MSPs particularly engage stakeholders to "mediate in conflicts over natural resources"[11] by facilitating

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[7] Interview with a VCP member, Village 1 in Kalomo District, August 2020.

[8] Interview with a VPC member, Village 1 in Kalomo District, August 2020.

[9] Interview with a VPC member, Village 3 in Kalomo District, August, 2020.

[10] Interview with a National MSP respondent, Lusaka, December 2020.

[11] Interview with a respondent from the District MSP, Kalomo, August 2020.

Table 5

Aligning integrated landscape approach principles to MSPs at various jurisdictional levels.

Integrated landscape approach principles (Sayer et al., 2013)		National MSPs	District MSPs	Local MSPs
10 Principles (P)	Description of principle as applied in this study			
P1. Continual learning and adaptive management	Preparedness to cope with uncertainties in landscape governance issues, learn from experiences, and adapt.	±	+ +	+ +
P2. Common concern entry point	Identification of shared interests and opportunities based on mutual trust.	+ +	+ +	+ +
P3. Multiple scales	Awareness of the effects of decisions and actions taken at different scales of governance in the local context.	+ +	+ +	+
P4. Multifunctionality	Reconcile trade-offs between different stakeholder needs and landscape goods and services.	+	+ +	+ +
P5. Multiple stakeholders	Recognising and identifying multiple and diverging stakeholder interests and aspirations in decision-making.	+ +	+ +	+ +
P6. Negotiated and transparent change logic	Enhance good governance practices by defining mutually agreed goals and transparent consensus-building processes towards a theory of change.	+ +	+ +	+ +
P7. Clarification of rights and responsibilities	Define clear rules on how to access resources, define clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and how conflicting interests can be resolved and recourse to be taken.	±	+	+ +
P8. Participatory and user-friendly monitoring.	Different stakeholders can be part of the monitoring process, use and share the information, and integrate such knowledge into their respective activities.	+ +	+ +	+ +
P9. Resilience	Harnessing actions to address landscape-level threats and allow recovery after perturbation to continue accessing goods and services from a system	-	+	+ +
P10. Strengthened stakeholder capacity	Deliberately enhance skills to take up roles and responsibilities and participate in decision-making through capacity building.	+ +	+ +	±

Scale to assess which ILA principle aligns with MSP objectives: + / + + align (strongly). -/– align (weakly). ± do not align.
Source: Compiled by the author based on fieldwork in 2020.

dialogue around conservation and development issues. Table 3 provides an overview of the terms of stakeholder participation per jurisdictional level and MSP and the degree of influence on natural resource governance and decision-making.

4.2. Reconciling stakeholder interests in natural resource governance

4.2.1. Common and competing stakeholder interests

We cross-tabulated, evaluated, and contrasted the mandates of all MSPs (Table 3) to identify common and competing interests across stakeholders (supplementary material, Appendix E). In general, interests represented by national-level MSPs primarily focus on policy dialogue and lobbying, information sharing, and influencing government decisions in natural resource management. The district-level MSPs focus on reconciling the interests of various groups, coordinating policy implementation by key state and non-state actors, and mobilising financial and social capital (networks) to implement activities aimed at fostering conservation. Local-level MSPs are interested in ensuring the enforcement of local rules and regulations regarding equitable access to land and natural resources and mediating conflict resolution at the village level. There are synergies among MSPs based on their mandates and activities. All national MSPs have common interests in policy lobbying and influencing government decisions, except for the ACF, whose interests do not directly relate to other national MSPs. The ACF focuses more on agro-enterprise development in the agriculture and natural resource sectors (business). At the district level, the DDCC and CWG reveal strong synergies in fostering district-level dialogue and communicating policy development, which can be attributed to overlapping membership. In turn, this synergy of district MSPs positively impacts attempts to reduce resource-use conflicts in and around the Kalomo Hills forest reserve.

Additionally, we found conflicts of interest among some MSPs. The VPCs of villages 2 and 3 (see Fig. 1) conflict with ZCBNRMF mandates in which the latter 'blame' VPCs for undermining conservation efforts by not stopping settlement, engaging in agriculture, and grazing in the forest reserve, thus compromising the integrity of the natural resource base in the forest reserve. Following this, the CWG acted as a bridging institution between VPCs, government agencies (agriculture and forestry), and the ZCBNRMF to initiate dialogue on sustainable natural resource management in the Kalomo Hills forest reserve.

4.2.2. Reconciling multiple interests

To assess whether and how MSPs are instrumental in reconciling multiple stakeholder interests, we first asked respondents to list the five most important functions of their MSPs. Responses based on similar terms, phrases, and meanings were grouped, resulting in seven categories (Table 4).

The results indicate that 82% of respondents believe that their MSP helps explain policies and facilitate uptake at the grassroots level, allowing diverse interests to converge in policy implementation. This has positive implications for narrowing policy-implementation gaps at the community level, where natural resources policies are translated into actions. Respondents identified district MSPs as suitable bridges between national policy development and local resource management, although we did not find concrete evidence to support this. About 73% of respondents, mainly from the district level, considered MSPs necessary for building stakeholder networks that are key in reconciling various interests by exchanging ideas and experiences. All respondents from community MSPs identified the VPCs as important in brokering power differences, which they considered important for conflict resolution and efforts to reconcile multiple stakeholder interests. Furthermore, they perceive MSPs as important in helping to harness a shared vision, identify common goals, and enhance problem-solving. This contrasts quite strongly with national and district-level respondents, suggesting that higher-level actors do not consider power or shared goals so important as they have the power to determine the goals. Despite the very small sample size at the national level, there was no consensus on any role, which seems problematic. While participants in national and district MSPs see financial and technical resource mobilisation as important functions of MSPs, those at the local level do not. This analysis also shows that the governance level influences perceptions about the role of MSPs in reconciling multiple stakeholder interests.

4.2.3. The legal framework as enabling or constraining the reconciliation of multiple interests

Respondents considered the policy framework as significant for the functioning of MSPs. Laws and regulations mentioned as enabling the functioning of MSPs for natural resource governance across scales are shown in Appendix D (Supplementary material).

We found more policy awareness at the national and district levels

than at the community level. One prominent VPC respondent, for example, stated that he was unaware of the Forest Act of 2015, the principal statute governing forest management. This could point to a disconnect between MSPs who advocate for regulations and local people who are meant to support efforts to implement natural resource management policies on the ground. Furthermore, certain regulations noted by respondents at the national and district levels, such as the decentralisation policy, the Environmental Management Act, and REDD+ , have a focus that supports ILAs, negotiating trade-offs between conservation and development. Respondents from all MSPs acknowledged that policies rarely translate into tangible benefits at the grassroots level due to poor communication and weak linkages of MSPs with policymakers. Most district and local respondents noted that policy decisions on environment and development at the national level fail to take root in communities because "local institutions are not linked to higher-level policymakers". As such, "legal frameworks need to be better aligned with local needs and interests".[12] Local-level MSP respondents stressed that while statutory laws and policies are well intended, they are insufficient to address local needs. Customary rules and regulations enforced through VPCs are closely tied to local settings and are better able to address local problems. An example of such a claim was a comparison of local rules and statutory regulations in the Kalomo Hills forest reserve. For example, VPCs in Villages 2, 3 and 4 guide people to manage forest patches between agriculture fields, and communities strictly adhere to this advice.

In contrast, the Forest Department issues tree felling permits (for charcoal, fuel wood, or timber), which only the powerful traders can afford, undermining local rules and capacity. Given the logistical barrier for the poor, tree-felling permits are unworkable in rural communities, and only local rules are deemed suitable to address the resource problem. This contrast illustrates the disconnect between local rules enforced in VPCs and statutory regulations advocated by national MSPs.

4.2.4. MSP mandates and alignment with ILA principles

Finally, it is important to assess whether the MSPs align with the principles of integrated landscape approaches (Sayer et al., 2013), as this indicates their potential to reconcile diverging stakeholder objectives. Table 5 lists and summarises the principles and indicates the extent to which the MSPs studied align with them. The scores are based on whether a principle is reflected in the mandates given for each MSP and comes over explicitly (++ and +), mildly (±) or is not mentioned at all (-). Overall, there is strong alignment between the MSP mandates and the ILA principles at all levels, particularly regarding

common concern entry points, multiple stakeholders and scales, negotiated and transparent change logic, and participatory and user-friendly monitoring. Local MSPs feature more strongly in clarifying rights and responsibilities but comparatively less in strengthening stakeholder capacities.

5. Discussion

This paper unpacked various MSPs across different scales of governance and their potential to facilitate stakeholder participation for equitable and sustainable natural resource governance. It identified the synergies across MSPs and provided insights into why stakeholder engagement, representation, transparency, and legitimacy issues are important for MSP effectiveness and reconciling landscape interests in integrated landscape governance. It did so in the context of landscape governance, which focuses on managing the interconnected sociopolitical components of landscapes and balancing various stakeholders' interests and goals by designing effective engagement processes (Görg, 2007; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2022). Zambia's policies and legislation on resource governance support inclusive participation, from

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[12] Interview with DCCC respondent, Kalomo, August 2020.

problem identification to developing and pursuing collective solutions (see supplementary material, Appendix D). This aligns with the contemporary discourse on participatory governance, defined as a "subset of governance theory which puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices" (Fischer, 2012, p. 457). The rest of this discussion summarises the main insights acquired from the analysis.

First, the analysis contributed insights into the *design* of MSPs and participatory processes in landscape governance, revealing various modes of participation (based on institutional affiliation, voluntary association, or open invitations, spheres of influence (e.g., policy, reconciling competing interests, conflict resolution), jurisdictions (national, district or local communities) and mandates. Beyond modes of participation, the effectiveness of MSPs is determined by how inclusive the participatory decision-making processes are regarding composition, agenda setting, moderation, and facilitation (see Brouwer et al., 2015). This study showed that all MSPs benefit from broad actor presence. However, such broad-based participation challenges MSP design in terms of representativeness (particularly of actors at the community level) and the capacity to deal with cultural impediments and power imbalances. This calls for neutral moderators to navigate these challenges, as we noted in district and local MSPs. Critics of MSP narratives draw attention to such institutional design challenges that gloss over these complexities, claiming a failure to recognise the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, power imbalances, and legitimacy issues (McKeon, 2017; Schleifer, 2019). However, this study shows that while MSPs differed in their structures, goals, and mandates, their functionality was somehow transparent in defining the rules of the game of participation processes. We contend that enhancing this transparency further may contribute to better MSP performance, leading to desired ILA outcomes (MacDonald et al., 2022; Ratner et al., 2022).

Second, this study underscored the *importance of institutional linkages, cross-scale interactions, and building networks* to leverage impacts. There is an appreciable level of interaction among MSPs within the same scale of governance through member overlaps. However, our comparison of MSPs at different levels and analysis of how these cross-scale spaces interact with each other is not yet sufficiently developed for the MSPs to be called effective in facilitating more integrated landscape governance. Legally instituted MSPs at the district level provide a bridge between national policy development and local resource governance. Meanwhile, informal and formal local-level MSPs are strong in addressing resource conflicts and fostering community coordination and customary rules and regulations. The national MSPs remain largely sector-focused and show weak institutional linkages with local MSPs. Yet, national and district MSPs have common interests, such as policy lobbying, as do district and local level MSPs. In the context of ILA Principle 2 on 'common concerns' (see Table 5), similar interests can be reconciled and negotiated for better collective outcomes on what Foley et al., (2017, p. 123) refer to as "pooling capabilities"—a key feature of ILA implementation. In Kalomo District, MSP participants are often drawn from the same constituency of stakeholders. Traditional leaders, for example, are members of local MSPs and are invited to the Consultative Working Group (CWG) and District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCC). This institutional overlap holds the potential to represent a departure from the exclusionary participation prevalent in most MSPs towards a more integrated participatory process aimed at achieving a 'win-more lose-less' outcome (Mai and Sunderland, 2009; Sayer et al., 2013; Sunderland et al., 2013). The key assumption underlying integrating these MSPs across scales is that they create opportunities to mobilise multiple stakeholders, facilitate the sharing of knowledge and technology, and maximise resources.

Third, we looked at the *representativeness* of MSPs. Stakeholder representation, as other studies have argued, is the most practical way to foster inclusivity and effective decision-making outcomes in MSPs (Larson and Barletti, 2020; Sirimorok and Rusdianto, 2020). However, if representatives are not well selected, the contradictory feature of

representative governance approaches can lead to undesirable outcomes detached from local realities and people's aspirations because decisions are made by a few elected or appointed actors with cultural, economic, or political power. In this study, some local communities expressed concerns regarding their representatives (chiefs) having self-seeking agendas (while attending DDCC MSPs meetings), potentially undermining effective representations. District- and local-level MSPs still struggle with fostering inclusive dialogue (equitable participation of women and youths). However, the data used for this study does not permit drawing definite conclusions about how well the interests of the groups are represented in the studied MSPs, and more research is required to explore this subject. Yet, representation is important in ensuring the legitimacy of MSPs and other discursive spaces through what Dryzek and Niemeyer, designate as a discursive representation which entails "acting for others in terms of the discourses to which they subscribe" (Dryzeks and Niemeyer, 2006, p.481; Birnbaum et al., 2015).

Fourth, and related to the previous point, is the *democratic quality of deliberative processes* (Belfer et al., 2019; Birnbaum et al., 2015). In this regard, participatory governance proponents anticipate that decision outcomes of inclusive dialogue will likely better reconcile the interests of most stakeholders, thus increasing the chances of their acceptability (Hendriks, 2009). In this regard, Parkinson (2003, p. 180) speaks about the "reflective assent" of stakeholders, which entails dialogue until one's predispositions align with common concerns. Such reconciling efforts must consider the preferences and interests of different stakeholders and governance values such as legitimacy, shared trust, and inter-actor communication. For the MSPs studied in this paper and others in similar contexts, it means that in-depth reflections are needed on how inclusive approaches (such as ILAs) can support legitimate and inclusive conversations leading to what others refer to as discursive legitimation (Steffek, 2009; Berg and Lidskog 2018).

Fifth, the study revealed *the importance of enabling legislation* as a prerequisite for negotiating and reconciling stakeholder interests. In this respect, national and district MSPs focus on reconciling policy reforms, while local MSPs focus on resolving resource conflicts. Reflecting on the differences between local-level MSPs and those at the national and district levels, local-level institutions are more successful in conflict resolution and applying traditional rules to conserve landscape resources despite less knowledge about enabling formal policies. This suggests that local MSPs successfully resolve problems because they apply customary rules rather than engage with formal bureaucratic policies and regulations and have the freedom to do so. The implication for ILA implementation is that MSPs are context-specific, and factors that facilitate their effectiveness must be understood in their settings.

Finally, participatory governance focuses on resolving tangible problems by bringing together the impacted parties to discuss trade-offs (Kearney et al., 2007). Since the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework of the 1990' s, regions in the global South embraced participatory governance approaches in resource management (Crook and Manor, 2000). This shift resonates with ILAs and is envisaged to improve local stewardship (Ribot, 2006). In the context of the Kalomo landscape, it is important to assess whether MSPs are essential to implementing ILAs, as stated in the literature (Reed et al., 2016, 2020; Kusters et al., 2018). The analysis showed that, overall, there is strong alignment between the MSP mandates and the ILA principles at all levels, confirming that MSPs are key entry points for implementing landscape approaches.

Additional research is required to address three shortcomings in this study. First, we focused more on the functionality of MSPs at the district landscape level where COLANDS' ILA initiatives are targeted. Due to time limitations and the unavailability of other potential respondents in most national MSPs following COVID-19 restrictions, the sampling intensity of national MSPs was not exhaustive; thus, other perspectives might have been left out. Through triangulation, we tried to circumvent this weakness. Second, further research would be necessary to better understand how the perspectives of the marginalised groups are represented within MSPs. Third, we recommend further investigations into how intra-MSP dynamics, such as power dynamics, affect stakeholder engagement.

6. Conclusion

Integrated landscape governance, encompassing landscape approaches, proposes using multistakeholder platforms as participatory mechanisms to facilitate equitable stakeholder participation in a multilevel landscape governance system. This study shows that while MSPs provide opportunities for policymakers, traditional authorities, civil society organisations and land and resource users to negotiate their interests, participation in the studied MSPs is complex. These institutions of governance vary in form, function, influence and efficacy depending on the jurisdictional level at which they operate. MSPs have clear mandates and well-defined stakeholders, of which some are common across MSPs, which is a starting point for considering landscape-level integration. However, the lack of deliberate mechanisms for cross-scale collaborations impedes the effective reconciling of landscape-level stakeholder interests, and this calls for a reflection on how MSPs could be designed to build synergies based on common goals and mandates, a feature that is lacking in most MSP designs, including those studied in the Kalomo District.

The study shows that both legally instituted and informal MSPs align with ILA aims of enhancing processes aimed at negotiating conservation and development trade-offs. Specifically, local-level MSPs appeared to be instrumental in resolving conflicts using local rules, but their efficacy in translating national-level policies to sustain local needs and aspirations remains limited due to weak cross-level linkages with national and district MSPs. On the other hand, legally instituted MSPs at the district level provide a bridge between national policy development and local resource governance, while national MSPs benefit from broad actor presence and opportunities to lobby for policy and institutional change.

Although cross-scale linkages have not yet been sufficiently developed for the MSPs to effectively facilitate more integrated landscape governance in the study area, we conclude that MSPs are essential for implementing integrated landscape approaches. Therefore, improving cross-level linkages between stakeholders and policymakers, strengthening stakeholder participation and dialogue, and creating deliberate feedback loops can help improve the implementation of integrated landscape approaches and collaboration and achieve equitable and effective landscape governance. We acknowledge that MSPs are not a panacea to resolving the conservation-development dichotomy due to some limitations, including the difficulty in ensuring equitable participation of all stakeholders across governance levels. The deliberative democratic processes underlying MSPs ought to allow representations of the voices of the majority, thus underpinning the importance of legitimacy and acceptability of the decisions in MSPs. But whether the voices of vulnerable groups, such as women and youths, are adequately heard remains subject to further research. This paper recommends that MSPs need improved institutional designs that guarantee equitable representation of all stakeholder groups from the local level in higher-level policy processes, including the voices of the marginalised. Improved communication and cross-level interactions with local MSPs can help achieve this.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Freddie Sayi Siangulube: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Visualisation, Writing-original draft. **Mirjam A.F Ros-Tonen:** Conceptualization, Writing-reviewing and editing, Methodology, Validation, Supervision. **Kaala B. Moombe:** Methodology, Writing- reviewing and editing. **James Reed:** Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Terry Sunderland:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Methodology,

Supervision, Validation, Resources, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing interests or personal relationships that could appear or influence the work as reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.landusepol.2023.106944.

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