Institutionalizing Cultural Financing in Zimbabwe – From Policy Advocacy to Statutory Reform









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Institutionalizing Cultural Financing in Zimbabwe – From Policy Advocacy to Statutory Reform

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implemented by: SELAM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements **3**

1. Executive Summary **8**

Most Significant Changes in Cultural Financing Systems 8

Key Institutional and Policy Shifts 9

Nature and Depth of CfCA's Contribution 11

Key Structural Challenges and Constraints 11

Overall Assessment of Institutionalization Progress 12

2. Country Context Overview **13**

2.1. Structure of the National Cultural and Creative Sector 13

2.2. Pre-CfCA Cultural Financing Landscape (Baseline Condition) 13

2.3. Relevant Policy and Legal Frameworks 15

2.4. Public Financial Management (PFM) Structures Relevant to Cultural Budgeting 15

2.5. Institutional Arrangements 16

2.6. Pre-Existing Coordination and Financing Constraints 16

3. CfCA Implementation Overview **17**

3.1. Key Phases of CfCA Engagement (2024-2026) 17

3.2. Institutional Entry Points 18

3.3. Key Interventions 18

3.3.1 Evidence Generation 18

3.3.2 Policy Dialogue 19

3.3.3. Capacity Building 19

3.3.4 Stakeholder Coordination 19

3.3.5. Advocacy and Public Engagement 19

3.4. Stakeholder Engagement Architecture 19

4. Key Institutional Changes Observed **20**

4.1. Policy Frameworks and Reforms 20

4.2. Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability 24

4.3. Governance and Coordination Mechanisms 29

4.4. Evidence and Data Systems 35

4.5. Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships 39

5. CfCA Contribution Analysis **43**

5.1. Analytical Framework for Assessing Contribution 43
5.2. CfCA's Specific Roles and Interventions 44
5.3. Mechanisms Through Which Change Was Influenced 44
5.4. Interaction with Government Systems and Stakeholders 45
5.5. Other Contributing Actors and Parallel Initiatives 45
5.6. Theory of Change — Operational Validity Analysis 45
Fully Materialised Pathways 45
Partially Realised Assumptions 46
Unexpected Pathways: The Ease of Doing Business Alignment 46
6. Evidence and Institutionalization Assessment 47
Formalization Level of Observed Changes 47
6.1. Extent of Integration into National Systems 47
6.2. Dependence on External Support vs. Internal Government Ownership 48
6.3. Strength and Reliability of Supporting Evidence 48
6.4. Level of Institutional Embedding 48
7. Challenges and Constraints 49
7.1. Institutional Constraints 49
7.1.1. Institutional Implementation Capacity 50
7.2. Financing Constraints 50
7.2.1. Budget Transparency and Resource Traceability Gap 51
7.3. Coordination Challenges 52
7.3.1. Sustaining Reform Momentum 52
7.4. Data and Evidence Gaps 52
7.5. Political Economy and Contextual Constraints 53
8. Lessons Learned 54
8.1. What Worked, and Under What Conditions 54
8.2. What Did Not Work, and Why 55
8.3. Key Enabling Factors for Reform Success 55
8.4. Lessons for Scaling or Replication 56
8.5. Lessons Relevant to AU-Level Cultural Financing Reform 57
9. Sustainability 58
9.1. Overall Sustainability Assessment of Institutional Change 58
9.2. Likelihood of Continuation of Reforms Beyond CfCA Support 59
9.3. Degree of Institutional Ownership Within Government Systems 59
9.4. Key Risks to Sustainability 60

9.5. Opportunities for Strengthening Institutionalization (2026–2030) 60
9.6. Priority Actions Required for Consolidation of Gains 61
9.7. Stakeholder Priorities for Future Programming 61
10. Conclusion 63
10.1. Overall Level of CfCA Contribution to Change 63
10.2. Degree of Institutional Progress Achieved 63
10.3. Strategic Significance for National and Continental Reform 64
Annex 1: Data Collection Methods 65
Annex 2: List of Key Informants 65
Annex 3: Chenhaka Trust Outcome Harvesting Register — Summary 65
Annex 4. Timeline of Major Institutional Changes (2023–2026) 66





1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zimbabwe's cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are recognised for their contribution to employment, cultural identity, social cohesion and economic development. However, prior to the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, the sector operated within a cultural financing environment characterised by limited public investment, weak coordination between government and cultural stakeholders, inadequate economic evidence to support policy decisions, and constrained participation of artists and cultural organisations in public finance and policy processes. These systemic challenges limited the sector's ability to influence national development planning and advocate effectively for increased public investment.

The Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative (2023–2026), implemented in Zimbabwe by Chenhaka Trust, in partnership with Selam, between 2024 and 2026, sought to strengthen cultural financing by improving the evidence base for decision-making, fostering dialogue between government and the cultural sector, and promoting policy and institutional reforms that support the growth of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Rather than focusing solely on programme delivery, the initiative sought to strengthen the institutions, relationships and evidence that underpin cultural financing through research, policy dialogue, multi-stakeholder coordination, advocacy and capacity development.

Most Significant Changes in Cultural Financing Systems

Overall, the assessment concludes that Zimbabwe has made partial institutional progress in strengthening its cultural financing ecosystem. The assessment identified five significant developments in Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem during the implementation period. These include

- The statutory reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees, which NACZ announced and brought into effect on 30 January 2026 and which was subsequently

formalised through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 (National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026, No. 4), gazetted on 29 May 2026, removed a long-standing barrier to the formalisation of artists and creative enterprises.

- The African Union's aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture (AU Assembly Decision AU/Dec.772) was formally incorporated into consultations on the proposed Arts Bill, signalling growing alignment between continental cultural financing commitments and national legislative reform.
- The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) received greater recognition within Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), strengthening their positioning within national economic development planning.
- The government approved capital investment for two proposed public film studios in Harare and Bulawayo through the 2025 National Budget, representing an important commitment towards strengthening creative infrastructure.
- The programme generated evidence that revealed a significant gap between approved cultural budget allocations and actual expenditure, demonstrating that improvements in budget formulation must be accompanied by stronger public financial management and budget execution mechanisms.

Collectively, these developments represent one of the most significant institutional shifts observed during the assessment: a transition from advocacy focused primarily on increasing public budget allocations to evidence-based scrutiny of budget execution, cash disbursement and public financial accountability. This shift broadened national discussions on cultural financing from the quantity of resources allocated to the effectiveness with which those resources are managed, released and utilised, laying the foundation for a more transparent and accountable cultural financing system.

Key Institutional and Policy Shifts

The programme contributed to important institutional shifts that extended beyond individual project activities.

Key Institutional and Policy Shifts

The assessment identified several important institutional and policy shifts that extend beyond individual programme activities and indicate broader

changes within Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. The shifts include;

- **Legislative reform:** The African Union's aspiration for allocating **1% of national budgets to culture** is now explicitly reflected in consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill, demonstrating increased alignment between continental cultural policy commitments and Zimbabwe's legislative reform process.
- **Regulatory reform:** Statutory registration fees administered by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) were reduced with effect from 30 January 2026, when NACZ announced and implemented the new fee structure; this administrative reform was subsequently formalised through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 (the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026, No. 4), published in the Government Gazette on 29 May 2026, lowering barriers to formal participation by artists and creative enterprises.
- **Strategic planning:** Recognition of the Cultural and Creative Industries within Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), particularly under the "Ease of Doing Business" agenda, signalled greater integration of culture into national economic planning and private sector development discussions.
- **Governance and coordination:** Multi-stakeholder dialogue has become more structured through the institutionalisation of collaborative engagement platforms, including seven high-level policy dialogues that strengthened coordination between government, Parliament, regulatory institutions, researchers and the cultural sector.
- **Evidence-informed policymaking:** National discussions on cultural financing are increasingly informed by evidence generated through three national studies on the economic contribution, employment and financing of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), strengthening the role of research in policy development, parliamentary engagement and budget advocacy.
- **Regional policy integration:** The programme strengthened alignment between Zimbabwe's national cultural policy processes and the African Union's Revised Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries, creating stronger linkages between continental policy commitments and domestic reform initiatives.
- **Public financial management oversight:** Cultural financing discussions evolved beyond

advocating for increased budget allocations to include systematic analysis of budget execution and public financial management. The identification of substantial gaps between approved allocations and actual disbursements has shifted attention towards accountability, transparency and the effectiveness of public expenditure.

- **Inclusive stakeholder participation:** The programme strengthened the participation of young people and women in cultural policy processes through the development of a cross-provincial network of advocates representing all ten provinces, contributing to broader inclusion within national cultural financing dialogue.

Nature and Depth of CfCA's Contribution

The assessment concludes that CfCA made a **moderate-to-high catalytic contribution** to these developments. The programme's principal value lay in convening diverse stakeholders, generating credible national evidence, facilitating dialogue and strengthening the capacity of cultural actors to engage with public institutions. The observed changes cannot, however, be attributed to CfCA alone. Progress resulted from the combined efforts of government ministries, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Parliament, cultural associations, researchers, development partners and other stakeholders. Accordingly, this report adopts a contribution analysis approach that recognises CfCA as an important catalyst within a broader ecosystem of institutional reform.

Key Structural Challenges and Constraints

Despite these achievements, significant structural challenges continue to constrain cultural financing in Zimbabwe.

- Public investment in the sector remains limited;
- Approved budget allocations do not consistently translate into actual disbursements;
- Institutional coordination remains uneven, and many artists, particularly those operating in rural and informal contexts, continue to face barriers to formal participation and access to public support.



Continued investment in evidence generation, policy implementation, institutional coordination and sustainable financing mechanisms will therefore be essential to consolidate the gains achieved.

Overall Assessment of Institutionalization Progress

Overall, the assessment concludes that Zimbabwe has made partial institutional progress in strengthening its cultural financing ecosystem. Several reforms, including stronger stakeholder coordination, increased evidence-informed policy dialogue and improved institutional engagement, have become established practices within the sector. Other reforms, particularly those relating to public financing and legislative change, remain in the emerging stages of institutionalisation and require continued government leadership, stakeholder commitment and sustained investment to become fully embedded within national systems.

The Zimbabwe experience demonstrates that strengthening cultural financing requires more than increased financial resources alone. It requires stronger institutions, credible evidence, effective coordination and sustained collaboration between the government and the cultural sector. By helping establish these foundations, CfCA has positioned Zimbabwe to continue advancing cultural financing reforms to support national development priorities and the African Union's broader agenda to strengthen Africa's cultural and creative industries.

The findings presented in this Executive Summary provide a high-level overview of the institutional changes, policy developments and emerging impacts associated with the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative in Zimbabwe. Understanding the significance of these changes, however, requires an appreciation of the policy, institutional and financing environment that existed before the programme was introduced. The following section therefore provides the national context within which CfCA was implemented, establishing the baseline against which the programme's contribution to strengthening Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem is assessed.

Table 1. Summary Assessment of Institutional and Policy Shifts in Zimbabwe's Cultural Financing Ecosystem

Institutional Change Domain	Level	Status	Assessment
Policy and Legislative Reform	Advanced	🟢	AU 1% target reflected in consultative Arts Bill drafts; CCIs recognised in NDS2; NACZ fees reduced with effect from 30 January 2026; formalised through Government Gazette (Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026, gazetted 29 May 2026).
Public Financial Management & Budget Accountability	Emerging	🔵	Analysis revealed a substantial gap between approved allocations and actual disbursements, strengthening focus on budget execution and accountability.
Evidence and Data Systems	Advanced	🟢	Three national economic studies now inform policy dialogue, parliamentary engagement and budget advocacy.
Governance & Stakeholder Coordination	Partial	🟡	National Working Group strengthened collaboration, though provincial and inter-ministerial coordination require further consolidation.
Inclusive Participation	Emerging	🔵	Youth and women advocates mobilised across all provinces, with digital and capacity gaps limiting full participation.
Regional & Continental Policy Alignment	Advanced	🟢	AU Revised Plan of Action aligned with national policy and legislative reform processes.

🟢 Advanced = embedded in policy or institutional practice; 🟡 Partial = operational but not fully embedded; 🔵 Emerging = early progress requiring further consolidation.

2. COUNTRY CONTEXT OVERVIEW

Understanding the contribution of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative requires an appreciation of the institutional, policy and financing environment in which it was implemented. Prior to the commencement of the programme in 2023, Zimbabwe's cultural and creative sector was characterised by significant creative potential but faced persistent structural constraints that limited its contribution to national development. This section establishes the baseline conditions against which the changes documented in subsequent chapters should be understood.

2.1. Structure of the National Cultural and Creative Sector

Zimbabwe has a rich and diverse cultural and creative sector comprising an ecosystem of artistic, cultural, and creative activities, including music, theatre, dance, film, visual arts, literature, crafts, fashion, cultural heritage, festivals, and emerging digital creative industries. The sector provides employment and income for thousands of artists, creative entrepreneurs and cultural organisations while contributing to national identity, social cohesion and economic development.

The sector consists of both formal and informal actors. While established institutions and organisations are concentrated in major urban centres such as Harare and Bulawayo, a significant proportion of artists and creative enterprises operate informally across the country's provinces. Many youth- and women-led creative initiatives continue to face barriers to accessing markets, financing, professional networks and government support. These structural disparities have historically constrained the sector's growth and limited its ability to participate effectively in national development processes.

2.2. Pre-CfCA Cultural Financing Landscape (Baseline Condition)

Before the implementation of CfCA, Zimbabwe's cultural financing landscape was characterised





by chronic underinvestment and a heavy dependence on development partners and philanthropic organisations to finance artistic production, organisational development and cultural programming. Although these partners played an important role in sustaining the sector, the absence of predictable domestic financing mechanisms limited long-term sustainability.

Government investment in culture remained relatively low compared to other development sectors, while advocacy for increased public investment was constrained by limited economic evidence demonstrating the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to employment, economic growth and national development. As a result, cultural funding was often perceived as discretionary expenditure rather than a strategic public investment.

Artists and cultural organisations also had limited knowledge of public budgeting processes and few opportunities to engage meaningfully in policy and budget discussions. Advocacy efforts were frequently fragmented across disciplines and organisations, reducing the sector's collective influence on public policy.

In summary, cultural financing in Zimbabwe was characterised by:

- Heavy reliance on external development partners and philanthropic grant-makers such as the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust, the Embassy of Switzerland, and Africalia, among others.
- Minimal public investment; arts lobbying relied on emotional, subjective petitions rather than empirical data.
- Treasury officials routinely viewed arts funding as discretionary welfare grants rather than strategic economic investments.
- Low awareness among artists of budget processes and policy mechanisms.
- Lack of reliable data demonstrating the economic contribution of the sector.
- Minimal participation of artists in policy discussions and
- Limited organisational capacity among arts associations.

These baseline conditions are documented in the Selam/Nhimbe Trust Baseline Study and Actor Mapping for Public Investment in Zimbabwe's Culture Sector (2024), which found that public

funding for culture rose only gradually and unevenly between 2019 and 2023, from 0.42% of the national budget in 2019 to a range of 0.54%–0.89% between 2020 and 2022, before dipping to 0.75% in 2023, with at least fourteen government ministries and agencies holding some mandate over arts, culture and heritage but no centrally coordinated funding framework, prioritisation system or monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The allocation to the arts, culture and heritage sector rose further to 1.24% of the national budget in 2024, the highest share recorded to date, before falling sharply to 0.60% in 2025, according to the CfCA Study on Trends in Public Investment in Zimbabwe's Culture Sector: A 2025 Follow-up to the 2024 Baseline Assessment (Selam, 2025). This decline occurred despite Zimbabwe's overall national budget increasing by approximately 130% in local-currency (ZWG) terms over the same period (equivalent to a rise from approximately USD4.9 billion to USD7.5 billion), indicating that the reduction reflects a shift in budgetary prioritisation rather than a contraction in the resources available to government as a whole. This reversal reinforces the baseline study's finding that cultural financing in Zimbabwe has lacked a centrally coordinated funding framework or prioritisation mechanism and underscores the continued relevance of CfCA's evidence generation and policy dialogue interventions in working towards a stable, rather than discretionary, budget line for the sector.

The baseline study also found that Statutory Instrument 136 of 2003, which grants registered arts organisations duty-free importation of musical, broadcasting, recording and public-address equipment, had become outdated and misaligned with subsequent cultural policy developments.

These specific gaps, fragmented institutional coordination, weak budget literacy among artists, and outdated statutory instruments directly informed the design of CfCA's evidence generation, policy dialogue and capacity-building interventions described in Chapter 3, and are revisited in Chapter 4 to show how they evolved into the institutional changes documented in this report.

> *"The NACZ has not been prioritised and has remained on the periphery of the economy despite the cultural and creative industries being one of the biggest employers."* — **NACZ Respondent, 22 June 2026**

2.3. Relevant Policy and Legal Frameworks

Zimbabwe's cultural sector operates within a policy environment shaped by national legislation, government strategies and international commitments. The Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture provides overall policy direction, while the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe Act establishes the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) as the statutory institution responsible for regulating and promoting the arts.

The National Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy and the National Culture and Creative Industries Strategy (NCCIS 2020–2030) provide the principal framework for developing Zimbabwe's creative economy and aligns with the country's national development priorities under the National Development Strategy 1 and 2. Sectorial strategies include the Zimbabwe Music Strategy (2022–2027), and Zimbabwe Film Strategy 2025. During the implementation of CfCA, ongoing consultations on the proposed Arts Bill presented an important opportunity to strengthen the legal framework governing the sector and to align national legislation with regional and continental commitments, including the African Union's Revised Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries and the AU's 1% cultural financing target (AU Assembly Decision AU/Dec.772).

As of the writing of this report (July 2026), the proposed Arts Bill remains at the consultative drafting stage led by the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. It has not yet been formally tabled before Parliament, published as a Government Gazette Bill, or assigned a Bill number. This report therefore refers to it throughout as the "proposed Arts Bill" and will require updating with the relevant Bill or Act citation once it is formally gazetted.

2.4. Public Financial Management (PFM) Structures Relevant to Cultural Budgeting

Public financing for the cultural sector is governed through Zimbabwe's Public Financial Management system, under which the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion allocates resources to line ministries through the annual national budgeting process. Budget proposals for the cultural sector are prepared by the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and are subsequently reviewed through government

planning and parliamentary oversight processes before approval by Parliament.

Although the budgeting framework provides an avenue for financing cultural development, stakeholders consistently reported that approved budget allocations do not always translate into actual financial disbursements. This distinction between budget allocation and budget execution emerged as one of the most significant systemic issues affecting implementation and financing within the cultural sector.

2.5. Institutional Arrangements

Governance of Zimbabwe's cultural and creative sector involves a range of public institutions, civil society organisations and private sector actors working at national and sub-national levels.

The Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture is responsible for policy formulation, strategic leadership and legislative development. The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe serves as the statutory regulatory body responsible for implementing arts policies, registering practitioners and supporting sector development. Parliamentary Portfolio Committees provide legislative oversight, while local authorities also influence the sector through licensing, regulation and local development planning.

Beyond government, cultural associations, civil society organisations, development partners and professional networks have historically played an important role in supporting artists, generating evidence, delivering capacity-building programmes and advocating for policy reform. These existing structures provided important entry points for the CfCA initiative.

2.6. Pre-Existing Coordination and Financing Constraints

Prior to CfCA, the sector faced several interconnected institutional challenges that limited its effectiveness.

First, there was a significant evidence gap. Reliable national data on the economic contribution of the cultural and creative industries was limited, making it difficult for policymakers and advocates to demonstrate the sector's development value or justify increased public investment.

Second, coordination between government institutions, cultural organisations and practitioners was often fragmented. Opportunities for structured dialogue were limited, reducing trust and collaboration between key stakeholders.

Third, artists and creative organisations generally lacked the technical capacity to participate effectively in policy development and public budgeting processes. Many practitioners were unfamiliar with government planning cycles, legislative processes and public finance systems.

Finally, persistent financing constraints, including limited public investment, dependence on donor funding and weak transparency regarding resource flows, continued to undermine the growth and sustainability of the sector.

These structural, institutional and financing challenges shaped the strategic design of the Connect for Culture Africa initiative in Zimbabwe. Recognising that sustainable cultural financing requires more than increased resources alone, CfCA focused on strengthening the systems that generate evidence, facilitate dialogue, build institutional relationships and support informed policy reform. The next section describes how these priorities informed the programme's implementation between 2023 and 2026.

3. CFCA IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The structural constraints outlined in the previous section shaped the design and implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative in Zimbabwe. Rather than addressing individual project needs in isolation, CfCA adopted a systems-strengthening approach to improve the policy, institutional, and financing environment for the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Implemented by Chenhaka Trust in partnership with Selam, the initiative recognised that sustainable cultural financing requires credible evidence, coordinated stakeholder engagement and constructive dialogue between government institutions and the cultural sector.

The programme therefore focused on creating conditions that would enable long-term institutional change by strengthening relationships, generating evidence for policy-making and building the capacity of stakeholders to participate more effectively in cultural financing processes.

3.1. Key Phases of CfCA Engagement (2024-2026)

Phase One: Building the Foundation

The initial phase focused on establishing partnerships, engaging key government institutions and mapping the cultural financing landscape. Early consultations helped identify the principal institutional barriers affecting the sector, while creating a shared understanding among stakeholders of the programme's objectives and expected outcomes.

Phase Two: Evidence Generation and Stakeholder Mobilisation

Recognising the lack of reliable economic data as a major barrier to policy reform, CfCA commissioned research on the economic contribution, employment potential and financing of



Zimbabwe's cultural and creative industries. At the same time, the programme strengthened collaboration among government institutions, cultural organisations, researchers and practitioners through structured dialogue and stakeholder engagement.

Phase Three: Policy Engagement and Institutional Strengthening

The evidence generated during the programme was used to facilitate policy dialogue with government ministries, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and other stakeholders. This phase also focused on strengthening advocacy capacity, supporting collaborative platforms and promoting evidence-informed discussions on cultural financing and governance reform.

3.2. Institutional Entry Points

A defining feature of the Zimbabwe programme was its deliberate engagement with institutions responsible for cultural policy, planning, budgeting and implementation. Rather than working solely with cultural practitioners, CfCA sought to influence the wider institutional ecosystem that shapes cultural financing decisions.

Key institutional entry points included:

- Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture
- Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion
- National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ)
- Parliamentary Portfolio Committee responsible for Arts and Culture
- Cultural associations and representative bodies
- Universities and research institutions
- Civil society organisations and development partners

Engaging these institutions created opportunities for dialogue across different levels of government and strengthened collaboration between policy makers and cultural stakeholders.

3.3. Key Interventions

CfCA implemented a range of mutually reinforcing interventions designed to strengthen Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem.

3.3.1 Evidence Generation

The programme commissioned national studies on the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to Zimbabwe's economy, employment and cultural financing. These studies addressed

long-standing evidence gaps and provided a stronger basis for policy dialogue and advocacy.

3.3.2 Policy Dialogue

Structured engagements were organised between government institutions, Parliament, researchers, cultural associations and creative practitioners to promote evidence-informed discussions on cultural financing, governance and sector development.

3.3.3. Capacity Building

Training programmes enhanced the ability of artists, cultural organisations and sector leaders to understand public finance processes, engage in policy dialogue and advocate for reforms affecting the creative economy.

3.3.4 Stakeholder Coordination

CfCA strengthened collaboration among government institutions, civil society organisations, professional associations and development partners, encouraging more coordinated approaches to cultural financing and governance.

3.3.5. Advocacy and Public Engagement

The programme supported awareness-raising activities that promoted recognition of culture as a contributor to economic development and encouraged broader participation in policy discussions.

3.4. Stakeholder Engagement Architecture

CfCA adopted a multi-stakeholder implementation model that recognised cultural financing as a shared responsibility requiring collaboration across institutions. The programme deliberately created opportunities for interaction between government, Parliament, regulatory institutions, researchers, cultural organisations, artists, development partners and civil society.

This approach enabled different stakeholders to contribute according to their respective mandates and expertise. Government institutions provided policy leadership, researchers generated evidence, cultural organisations mobilised practitioners, and development partners supported dialogue and learning. By strengthening these relationships, CfCA helped create a more collaborative environment for addressing cultural financing challenges.

The interventions described above were designed to influence institutions and systems rather than deliver short-term project outputs alone. The following section therefore examines the observable institutional changes that emerged during implementation, distinguishing between programme activities, immediate outcomes and broader changes within Zimbabwe's policy, financing and governance systems.



4. KEY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OBSERVED

The preceding chapter described how the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative was implemented in Zimbabwe through evidence generation, policy dialogue, stakeholder coordination and capacity development. This chapter moves beyond programme implementation to examine the institutional changes that emerged during implementation and the extent to which they have strengthened Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem.

The analysis focuses on changes in policies, legislation, public financial management, governance arrangements, evidence systems, and stakeholder relationships that could influence the cultural and creative industries beyond the programme's lifespan. Rather than documenting project activities or outputs, the chapter examines how CfCA contributed to changes in the systems, institutions and practices that shape cultural financing in Zimbabwe.

The assessment applies a contribution analysis perspective, recognising that institutional change is rarely the result of a single intervention. The observed reforms emerged through the combined efforts of government institutions, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), Chenhaka Trust, Selam, cultural associations, development partners and creative practitioners. Consequently, the analysis assesses CfCA's catalytic contribution within this broader ecosystem of actors while avoiding direct attribution of outcomes to the programme alone.

The chapter is organised around six institutional domains that experienced notable change during the implementation period: (i) Policy and Legislative Reform; (ii) Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability; (iii) Governance and Stakeholder Coordination; (iv) Evidence and Data Systems; (v) Inclusive Participation and Stakeholder Engagement; and (vi) Emerging Systemic Reform Opportunities. For each domain, the report examines the nature of the institutional change, the evidence supporting it, CfCA's contribution, its significance for cultural financing, and the extent to which the change has become institutionalised.

4.1. Policy Frameworks and Reforms

One of the most significant areas of institutional change observed during the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative was the strengthening of Zimbabwe's policy and legislative environment for the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Prior to the programme, national policy frameworks recognised the importance of culture, but there was limited alignment between domestic policy instruments, public financing priorities and continental commitments on cultural development. Policy advocacy was often fragmented, and discussions on cultural financing were largely driven by sector appeals rather than robust economic evidence.

During the implementation period, important progress was made towards strengthening the policy environment. The assessment identified reforms that enhanced legislative discussions, strengthened the integration of culture into national development planning and promoted greater alignment between Zimbabwe's policy framework and the African Union's cultural financing agenda. Although many of these reforms remain in different stages of implementation, together they demonstrate a significant shift towards recognising culture not only as a social and cultural asset, but also as a strategic contributor to economic growth and national development.

What Changed

The assessment identified four notable policy and legislative developments during the implementation period.

1. The African Union's aspiration to allocate 1% of national budgets to culture (AU Assembly Decision AU/Dec.772) was formally incorporated into the consultative drafts of Zimbabwe's proposed Arts Bill. This represents an important policy shift by translating a continental aspiration for financing into a domestic legislative discussion and laying the foundation for future legal recognition of public investment in culture.
2. The Cultural and Creative Industries received greater recognition within Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2, Government of Zimbabwe, January 2026–December 2030), particularly under the Ease of Doing Business agenda. This positioned the sector more prominently within national economic planning and reinforced the growing recognition of culture as a productive economic sector capable of contributing to employment, entrepreneurship and inclusive economic growth.
3. Policy discussions are increasingly focused on ring-fencing public resources for cultural development. While this proposal has not yet been legislated, it reflects an important shift in thinking from advocating for increased budget allocations towards establishing more predictable and protected financing mechanisms for the sector.
4. Policy dialogue facilitated through CfCA strengthened the alignment between Zimbabwe's national cultural policy processes and the African Union's Revised Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries. This created stronger policy coherence between continental commitments and domestic reform processes.

Evidence of Change

Document review confirmed that the African Union's 1% cultural financing aspiration was explicitly referenced during consultations on the proposed Arts Bill, demonstrating increased policy alignment between Zimbabwe's legislative reform process and continental cultural financing commitments. Similarly, analysis of the National Development Strategy 2 showed greater recognition of the Cultural and Creative Industries in national economic planning, particularly regarding enterprise development and the broader Ease of Doing Business agenda.

CASE STUDY

The Late Hon. Desire Moyo and the Ring-Fencing Breakthrough

On 5 December 2024, Chenhaka facilitated a capacity-building workshop in Bulawayo for 60 young culture actors from the Matabeleland Region, facilitated by Lisa Sidambe. The late Honourable Member of Parliament Desire Moyo, himself a cultural professional and active member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Sport, Recreation and Culture, attended as both participant and guest of honour. Chenhaka Trust handed Hon. Moyo three copies of the CfCA Baseline Study and Actor Mapping for Public Investment in Zimbabwe's Culture Sector.

Hon. Moyo subsequently used the baseline study's findings to present a critical structural flaw to fellow parliamentarians: while total government expenditure on culture appeared to be 1.24%, this figure was misleadingly fragmented across 14 ministries. The bulk of these resources was absorbed by administrative overheads, institutional maintenance, and civil service salaries, with negligible resources reaching artists and grassroots sector development. This insight directly contributed to the Arts Bill proposal to ring-fence a dedicated 1% national budget allocation strictly for arts development.

Interviews with government officials, Members of Parliament and cultural stakeholders consistently indicated that policy discussions had become more evidence-informed during the implementation period. Several respondents observed that economic research commissioned through CfCA strengthened the credibility of policy advocacy and enabled government institutions to engage more substantively with proposals for strengthening cultural financing.

A notable illustration of this influence was the proposal advanced by the late Honourable Desire Moyo, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, advocating ring-fencing public resources for arts and culture. Although still at the proposal stage, this recommendation demonstrates how evidence generated through the programme informed high-level legislative discussions and expanded the policy options under consideration.

POLICY INSIGHT

What Ring-Fencing Means for Zimbabwe's Cultural Financing System

Ring-fencing is a public financial management mechanism that protects resources allocated for a specific purpose from being diverted to other expenditure priorities. Within the context of Zimbabwe's proposed Arts Bill, the proposed ring-fenced 1% allocation would transform the African Union's cultural financing aspiration from a broad policy commitment into a legally protected financing mechanism dedicated to the development of the Cultural and Creative Industries.

If implemented, the proposal would support three important objectives:

- **Direct support to artists and creative enterprises** through more predictable funding opportunities for production, cultural preservation and innovation.
- **Investment in creative infrastructure and market development**, including community cultural spaces, digital platforms and creative hubs.
- **Professionalisation of the cultural sector** by strengthening the transition from informal creative activity towards sustainable creative enterprises capable of contributing to employment and economic growth.

Rather than simply increasing public expenditure, ring-fencing would improve the predictability, transparency and strategic use of cultural financing by ensuring that resources appropriated for the sector remain dedicated to their intended purpose.

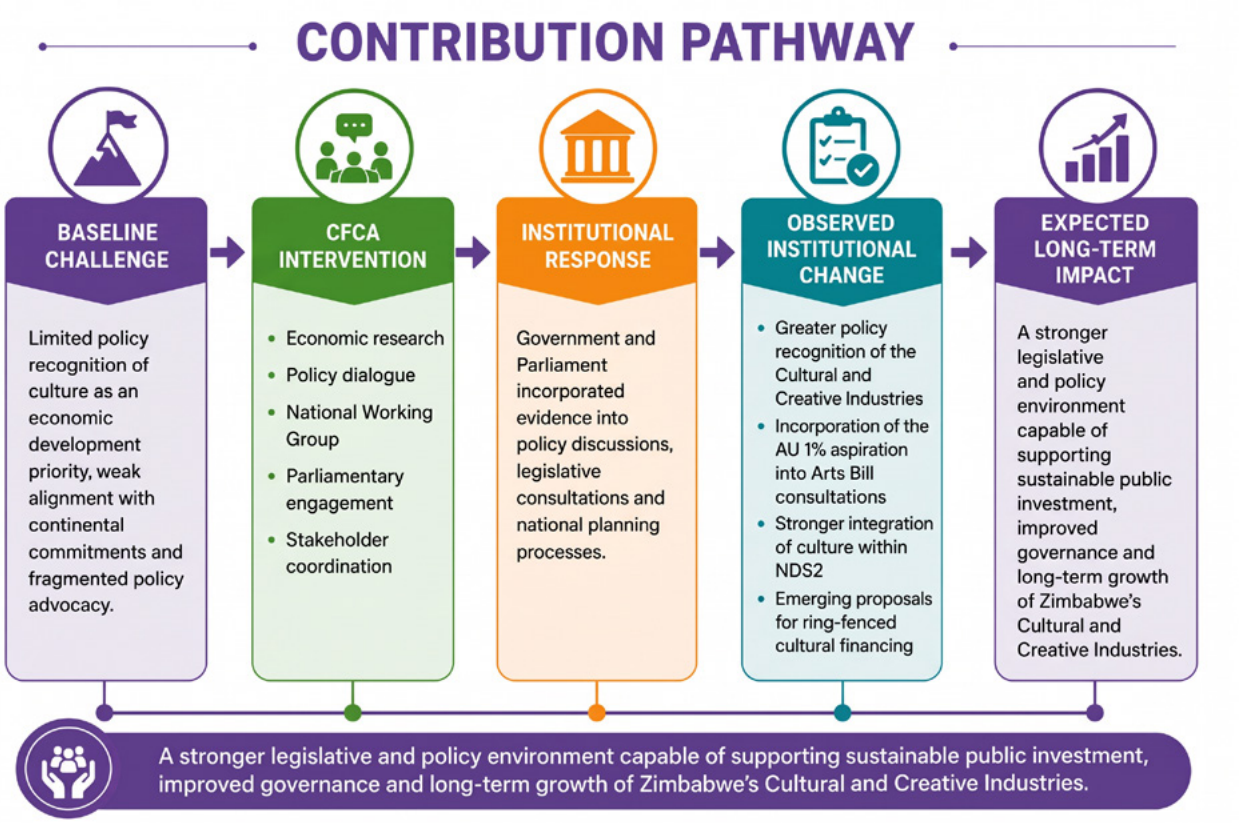


Figure 1.

CfCA's Contribution

CfCA contributed to these policy developments through a combination of evidence generation, structured policy dialogue and sustained stakeholder engagement. Rather than advocating for predetermined policy outcomes, the programme created opportunities for government institutions, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), researchers, and cultural organisations to engage in evidence-informed discussions on cultural financing.

The three national studies commissioned through the programme provided an evidence base that strengthened policy dialogue and legislative engagement, while the initiative created an institutional platform for collective discussion of policy proposals. These interventions enhanced the quality of policy discussions and strengthened collaboration between institutions responsible for shaping Zimbabwe's cultural financing framework.

The assessment recognises that these reforms were achieved through the combined efforts of multiple actors, including the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Chenhaka Trust, Selam, cultural associations and development partners. CfCA's contribution was therefore catalytic, providing evidence, convening stakeholders and supporting dialogue rather than acting as the sole driver of policy change.

Why This Change Matters

Strengthening policy and legislative frameworks is fundamental to improving cultural financing because it creates the institutional conditions within which public investment, governance and sector development can occur. The reforms observed during the implementation period demonstrate a growing recognition of the Cultural and Creative Industries as contributors to national development rather than as discretionary recipients of public support.

Alignment between national policy processes and African Union commitments also positions Zimbabwe to participate more effectively in regional cultural development initiatives and to strengthen the legitimacy of future advocacy for increased public investment in the sector. If sustained, these policy reforms have the potential to improve the predictability, coordination and effectiveness of cultural financing over the long term.

Institutionalisation Assessment

The assessment considers Policy Frameworks and Reforms to have reached an Advanced level of institutionalisation. Significant progress has been

made in embedding cultural financing within national policy discussions, legislative reform processes and development planning. Although some reforms—particularly those relating to the proposed Arts Bill and ring-fenced financing mechanisms—remain under development, the direction of policy change demonstrates strong institutional commitment and provides a solid foundation for future implementation.

Summary Assessment

Analytical Lens	Assessment
Institutional Domain	Policy Frameworks and Reforms
Institutional Location	Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture; Parliament; proposed Arts Bill process; National Development Strategy 2
Nature of Change	Strengthened legislative, policy and strategic planning environment for cultural financing.
CfCA Contribution	Moderate–High through evidence generation, policy dialogue and stakeholder coordination.
Institutionalisation Level	Advanced
Primary Evidence	Arts Bill consultative drafts, National Development Strategy 2, policy documents, stakeholder interviews, parliamentary engagement records.
Expected Long-term Impact	Stronger policy foundations for sustainable cultural financing, improved legislative coherence and greater integration of culture within national development planning.

4.2. Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability

Public Financial Management (PFM) is central to the effectiveness of cultural financing because it determines not only how resources are allocated, but also how they are managed, disbursed and accounted for. Prior to the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, discussions on cultural financing in Zimbabwe largely focused on increasing budget allocations to the arts sector. Comparatively little attention was given to the efficiency of public expenditure, budget execution and the institutional mechanisms governing the flow of resources to cultural institutions and practitioners.

The assessment found that the implementation period was characterised by significant shifts in how cultural financing was understood and discussed. While progress was made in reducing regulatory barriers, increasing public investment in creative infrastructure and improving fiscal transparency, the programme also revealed significant weaknesses in budget execution that continue to constrain the sector. Collectively, these developments demonstrate an emerging transition from advocacy centred solely on resource mobilisation towards a more comprehensive approach to public financial management and accountability.

What Changed?

Three significant changes were observed within Zimbabwe's cultural financing and public financial management system.

1. Statutory registration fees administered by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) were reduced with effect from 30 January 2026, when NACZ announced and implemented the revised fee structure. This administrative reform was subsequently formalised through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 (the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026, No. 4), published in the Government Gazette on 29 May 2026. This regulatory reform lowered the financial barriers faced by artists, cultural practitioners, and creative enterprises seeking formal registration, thereby improving opportunities to participate in the formal creative economy.
2. The government allocated capital resources for the establishment of two proposed public film studios in Harare and Bulawayo through the 2025 National Budget. This represented one of the most significant proposed public investments in creative infrastructure in recent years and signalled increasing recognition of the cultural and creative industries as an area requiring long-term public investment.
3. The assessment identified a substantial gap between approved budget allocations and actual financial disbursements to the cultural sector. Although the sector received an allocation equivalent to 1.24% of the national budget in 2024, analysis of budget execution revealed that only a fraction of the approved resources reached implementing agencies. By 2025, actual cash disbursements had declined by approximately 76.5%, leaving an estimated USD 8.69 million in approved funding undisbursed. This finding shifted attention from budget allocation alone to the broader effectiveness and accountability of public financial management.

Evidence of Change

NACZ's public announcement and administrative records confirmed that the reduced registration fees took effect on 30 January 2026, and Government Gazette notices subsequently confirmed the formalisation of this reduction under Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 (gazetted 29 May 2026). National budget documents provided evidence of the proposed capital allocation for two public film studios. Interviews with government officials, sector representatives and cultural practitioners consistently described both developments as important indicators of the government's increasing commitment to strengthening the cultural sector.

Early Indications and Monitoring Priority

NACZ announced and implemented the reduced fee structure on 30 January 2026, ahead of its formal gazettal through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 on 29 May 2026. The reform had therefore been operating administratively for close to six months by the time this evaluation's fieldwork concluded. However, despite the NACZ official alluding to an increase in the number of individual artists taking advantage of the reduction, there have been no disaggregated administrative statistics on registrations, renewals or category-level uptake following the fee reduction. The assessment was therefore unable to independently verify quantitative trends in artist registrations, the formalisation of creative enterprises or NACZ service uptake attributable to the reform. Association leaders interviewed anticipated an increase in registrations and renewals, particularly among individual artists and small associations previously priced out of formal registration, but these expectations should be read as qualitative and forward-looking rather than as confirmed outcomes. The assessment recommends that NACZ publish registration and renewal statistics for the period since 30 January 2026, disaggregated by category (individual artists, art groups, associations, promoters and studios), so that the formalisation effect of the fee reduction can be independently verified and reported in future monitoring cycles.

The assessment also examined the CFCA report on Trends in Public Investment in Zimbabwe's Cultural Sector (2025), which analysed national budget allocations and expenditure related to the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and its affiliated entities. The analysis confirmed a significant disparity between approved allocations and actual cash disbursements, demonstrating that increased budget allocations alone do not necessarily translate into improved financing for cultural institutions or practitioners.

CASE STUDY 1

From Budget Allocation to Budget Accountability

KEY FINDING

Although Zimbabwe allocated approximately **1.24%** of the national budget to culture in 2024, analysis of budget execution revealed that actual cash disbursements to implementing cultural agencies declined by **76.5%** in 2025 — representing a critical gap between budget commitments and the sector's actual financial delivery.

Budget Execution: Approved Allocation vs. Actual Disbursements (2025)

Indicator	Value
Approved Budget Allocation	USD 10,557,969
Actual Cash Disbursed	USD 2,476,701
Funding Not Disbursed	**USD 8,690,632**
Disbursement Reduction	**76.5%**

Proportional Disbursement Breakdown

23.5%	**76.5% Not Disbursed**
Actually Disbursed	Did Not Reach Implementing Agencies

CASE STUDY 2 | Budgeting and Public Financing Systems

From Budget Advocacy to Budget Accountability

One of the most significant institutional shifts observed during the assessment was the transition from advocating solely for increased public investment in culture to scrutinising the effectiveness of public financial management itself.

Through budget analysis and policy dialogue, CfCA-supported research revealed that although cultural institutions received approved allocations within the national budget, a substantial proportion of these resources did not reach implementing agencies. This evidence fundamentally changed the nature of policy discussions.

THE ADVOCACY PIVOT

BEFORE	"How much has been allocated to culture in the national budget?"
↓ Paradigm Shift	
AFTER	"How much of the approved budget is actually disbursed and utilised by implementing agencies?"

This shift introduced a stronger culture of fiscal accountability into Zimbabwe's cultural financing discourse and provided policymakers with evidence to distinguish between budget commitments and actual expenditure.

> **Institutional Significance:** This case demonstrates a system-level shift from passive resource lobbying to active fiscal accountability — a durable behavioural change that persists beyond the project cycle.

Strategic Convening of Decision-Makers

On 17 January 2025, Chenhaka Trust convened a high-level policy dialogue at Alliance Française, Harare, bringing together senior officials from the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), cultural practitioners and sector experts. During the dialogue, arts administrator Washington Masenda presented evidence demonstrating how statutory NACZ registration fees constrained sector formalisation, entrepreneurship and market participation.

The significance of this engagement lay not only in the evidence presented but also in the deliberate convening of key decision-makers—including the Permanent Secretary, the Director of Arts and the Chief Executive Officer of NACZ—in a single policy forum. This enabled immediate discussion of the issue among those with administrative authority and helped accelerate regulatory reform that may otherwise have taken considerably longer to achieve.

Stakeholders further observed that the programme's emphasis on analysing budget execution introduced a new dimension to discussions of cultural financing. Rather than focusing exclusively on advocating for larger budget allocations, sector actors increasingly examined whether approved resources were reaching intended beneficiaries and whether public expenditure systems were functioning effectively.

Why this matters

By highlighting the importance of budget execution alongside budget allocation, the programme strengthened transparency and accountability within Zimbabwe's cultural financing system. This represents an important institutional shift towards more effective public financial management.

CfCA's Contribution

CfCA contributed to these developments by strengthening the evidence base for public financial management and creating platforms through which government institutions, Parliament and cultural stakeholders could engage in informed discussions on cultural financing.

Research commissioned through the programme expanded the scope of cultural financing analysis beyond resource mobilisation to include budget execution, expenditure tracking and fiscal accountability. Policy dialogues and stakeholder engagements further encouraged government institutions and sector representatives to examine the effectiveness of existing financing mechanisms and to identify opportunities to strengthen public financial management.

The assessment recognises that these reforms and discussions resulted from the combined efforts of government institutions, Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Chenhaka Trust, Selam and other stakeholders. CfCA's contribution was catalytic in generating evidence, facilitating dialogue and strengthening accountability rather than directly determining public financing decisions.

Why This Change Matters

One of the most significant institutional shifts observed during the assessment was the transition from advocacy focused primarily on increasing budget allocations to evidence-based scrutiny of budget execution, cash disbursement and public financial accountability.

This shift represents an important evolution in Zimbabwe's cultural financing discourse. Historically, policy engagement centred on advocating for larger public allocations to the arts and culture sector. While increasing public investment remains important, the assessment demonstrates that the effectiveness of cultural financing depends equally on how approved resources are released, managed and utilised.

Strengthening public financial management is therefore essential to improving cultural financing, as sustainable sector development depends not only on the availability of resources but also on the effectiveness of their management and utilisation. The reduction of statutory registration fees improves access to formal participation in the creative economy, while the proposed investment in public creative infrastructure demonstrates increasing government recognition of the sector's long-term development potential. At the same time, identifying gaps between approved budget allocations and actual expenditure provides an important opportunity to strengthen transparency, accountability and fiscal performance across the cultural sector.

Collectively, these developments contribute to a more mature cultural financing system in which policy discussions increasingly consider not only the size of public investment but also the quality and effectiveness of public financial management. If sustained, this shift has the potential to strengthen the efficiency, transparency and long-term sustainability of Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem.

Institutionalisation Assessment

The assessment considers Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability to be at an Emerging stage of institutionalisation. Important progress has been made in strengthening evidence, improving regulatory conditions and increasing attention to budget accountability. However, routine expenditure monitoring, transparent budget execution and systematic public financial management reforms remain under development and will require sustained institutional commitment to become fully embedded.

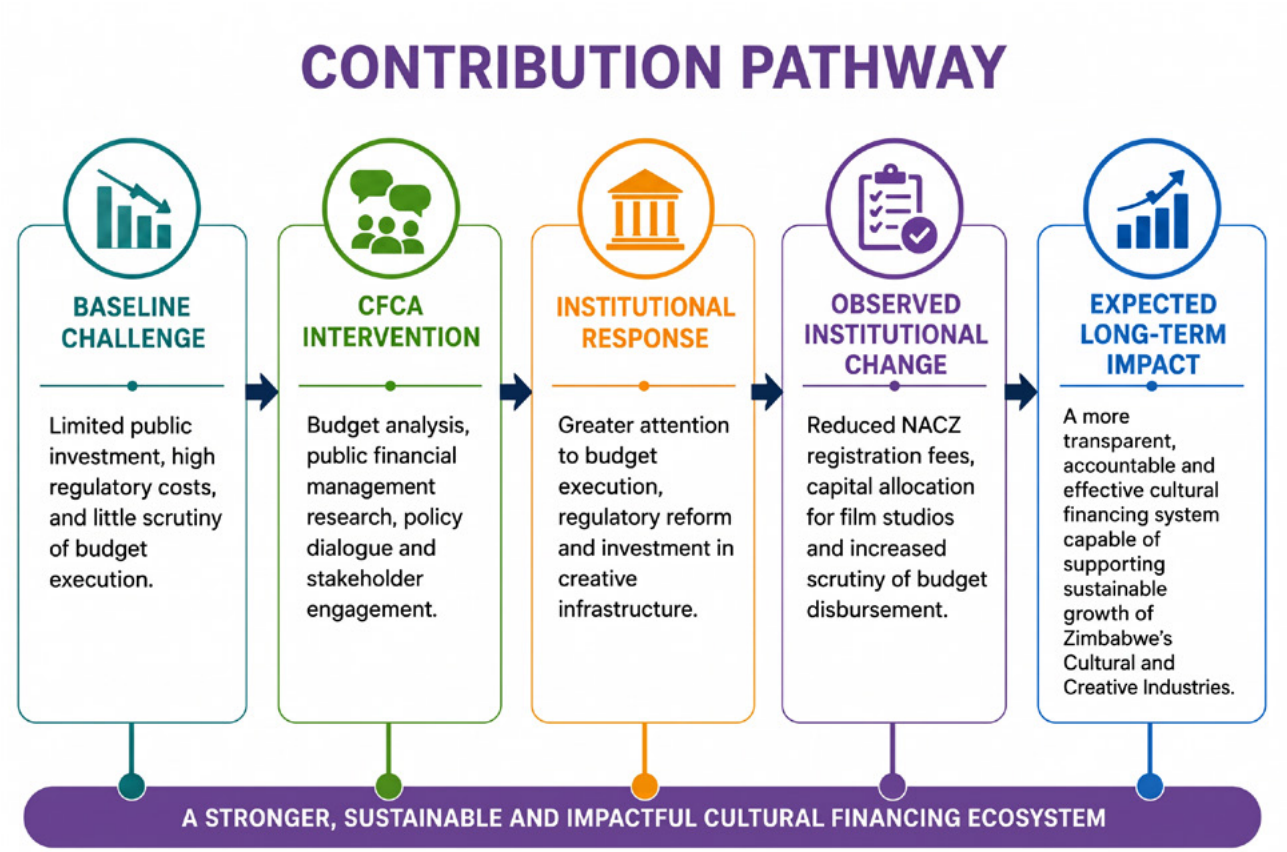


Figure 2.

Summary Assessment

Analytical Lens	Assessment
Institutional Domain	Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability
Institutional Location	Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture; NACZ; Treasury and budget execution processes
Nature of Change	Stronger focus on regulatory reform, budget execution, fiscal accountability and public investment in creative infrastructure.
CfCA Contribution	**Moderate** through budget analysis, evidence generation and policy dialogue.
Institutionalisation Level	**Emerging**
Primary Evidence	Government Gazette, National Budget documents, expenditure analysis, stakeholder interviews and policy dialogue records.
Expected Long-term Impact	Improved transparency, stronger budget execution and more effective public investment in Zimbabwe's cultural and creative industries.

Stakeholder Perspective

"We are deeply focused on the economic contributions of the Cultural and Creative Industries to our national GDP, employment patterns, and the informal sector. The lack of such data has, for years, made it extremely difficult for the sector to justify its need for government funding. Without evidence, our arguments have often been met with goodwill but without the hard numbers to back our worth. These research studies are now giving us a credible tool to demonstrate, beyond rhetoric, what the arts and culture contribute to Zimbabwe's economy and society." **— Senior Official, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe**

What These Reforms Could Mean Economically

The Selam-commissioned Study on the Economic Contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to GDP, Employment and Informal Sector Dynamics in Zimbabwe, the national economic contribution study referenced by the NACZ official quoted above, found that CCIs contributed approximately 5.9% of GDP and 0.7% of national employment in 2024, even though more than 80% of the sector's activity remains informal and largely outside the tax and social protection net. The study identifies high licensing, registration and clearance costs, together with fragmented regulation, as key drivers of this informality. Its principal recommendation to the government is to "streamline licensing processes in the CCIs, aiming to reduce red tape and lower regularisation costs to promote formalisation." Read against this evidence, the NACZ fee reduction and the proposed ring-fenced 1% budget allocation are not only regulatory and fiscal reforms in their own right; they are direct responses to a documented economic constraint. If sustained, they create the conditions for a larger share of the sector's existing GDP and employment contributions to move from the informal to the formal economy, thereby improving tax collection, access to finance, and social protection coverage for artists. The economic contribution study does not itself model or quantify this transition, and the assessment recommends that future rounds of national CCI research track formalisation rates and their fiscal effects directly, so that the economic return on these regulatory reforms can be measured rather than assumed.

4.3. Governance and Coordination Mechanisms

Effective governance is fundamental to strengthening cultural financing because it enables collaboration among institutions responsible for cultural policy, regulation, financing and sector development. Prior to the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, engagement between government institutions, cultural organisations and other stakeholders was largely ad hoc, limiting opportunities for coordinated dialogue on cultural financing and policy reform.

The assessment found that CfCA strengthened governance and coordination by creating regular opportunities for structured engagement between government, Parliament, regulatory

institutions, cultural practitioners, researchers and development partners. Although a permanent coordination mechanism was not institutionalised during the implementation period, the programme significantly improved communication, trust and collaboration among key actors within Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem.

What Changed?

One of the most important governance changes observed during the implementation period was the strengthening of institutional relationships through structured multi-stakeholder engagement.

CfCA facilitated a series of high-level policy dialogues and technical engagements that brought together senior government officials, Members of Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), cultural practitioners, researchers and development partners to discuss challenges affecting cultural financing. These engagements provided opportunities for institutions that traditionally worked independently to exchange perspectives, jointly examine evidence and explore policy solutions.

Illustrative Example: From Dialogue to Regulatory Action

One documented illustration is the high-level policy dialogue convened on 17 January 2025 at the Alliance Française in Harare (see Annex 4), which brought together the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and the Chief Executive Officer of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, alongside Parliamentary Portfolio Committee representatives, cultural association leaders and researchers. The dialogue examined the affordability of NACZ registration and renewal fees as a barrier to formalisation, and the case for incorporating the African Union's 1% cultural financing target into the proposed Arts Bill, drawing directly on evidence from the programme's national studies. Stakeholders trace a direct line from this and similar engagements to two concrete outcomes documented in this report: the statutory reduction of NACZ registration fees, implemented from 30 January 2026 and formalised under Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 (gazetted 29 May 2026), and the incorporation of the AU 1% target into consultative drafts of the Arts Bill. The assessment also found that interactions between government institutions and the cultural sector became more constructive and evidence informed. Stakeholders reported greater openness



to dialogue, increased willingness to consider research findings and stronger collaboration in identifying practical reforms to strengthen the cultural financing system.

Evidence of Change

Interviews with government officials and representatives of cultural organisations consistently indicated that CfCA created valuable spaces for dialogue that had previously been limited. Respondents noted that the programme improved communication between policymakers and the cultural sector, strengthened mutual understanding of financing challenges and encouraged more collaborative approaches to policy development.

Documentary evidence confirmed the implementation of several high-level policy engagements involving the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Parliament, Chenhaka Trust, Selam and representatives of the cultural sector. These engagements



contributed to stronger institutional relationships and increased opportunities for collaborative problem-solving.

Rather than advocating independently for institutional interests, participants increasingly engaged in collective discussions on legislative reform, public financial management and evidence-based cultural financing.

Why this matters

While dialogue platforms are not institutional changes in themselves, sustained interaction between key institutions contributes to stronger governance by improving coordination, reducing fragmentation and creating greater collective ownership of policy reforms.

CfCA's Contribution

CfCA's principal contribution was its convening role. Through evidence-informed policy dialogues, stakeholder consultations and technical engagements, the programme created opportunities for institutions that would not ordinarily engage regularly to discuss cultural financing challenges and potential solutions.

The programme also strengthened the quality of these discussions by ensuring that policy dialogue was informed by credible research rather than advocacy alone. This contributed to greater confidence among government institutions in engaging with sector proposals and strengthened relationships between policymakers and cultural practitioners.

The assessment recognises that governance improvements resulted from the commitment of multiple actors. CfCA's contribution was catalytic in facilitating dialogue, strengthening relationships and promoting collaborative approaches to policy development.

CASE STUDY | Section 4.3 · Coordination and Governance Mechanisms

High-Level Policy Dialogue as a Catalyst for Institutional Collaboration

One of the most significant governance outcomes of CfCA was its ability to convene senior decision-makers and sector representatives within the same policy spaces. These engagements enabled government officials, Parliament, regulatory institutions and cultural practitioners to collectively examine evidence, discuss shared challenges and identify opportunities for reform.

Stakeholders emphasised that the value of these dialogues lay not only in the exchange of information but also in the relationships that were built between institutions. Bringing decision-makers together around credible evidence helped strengthen trust, improve communication and create a more collaborative environment for addressing cultural financing issues.

Who was at the table

→ GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture — executive policy direction

→ PARLIAMENT
Portfolio Committees on Budget and Culture — legislative oversight and advocacy

→ REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS
National Arts Council of Zimbabwe — operational enforcement and sector registration

→ CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS
Artists, associations, and civil society — sector knowledge and field accountability

This shift introduced a stronger culture of fiscal accountability into Zimbabwe's cultural financing discourse and provided policymakers with evidence to distinguish between budget commitments and actual expenditure.

What These Dialogues Produced

01
STRENGTHENED TRUST
Senior officials and practitioners built working relationships across institutional boundaries, reducing adversarial dynamics.

02
IMPROVED COMMUNICATION
Shared evidence created a common analytical language between ministries, Parliament, NACZ, and civil society.

03
COLLABORATIVE REFORM
Dialogue spaces generated specific, actionable reform proposals — including the fee reduction and the 1% Arts Bill target.

"Two weeks ago, I was privileged to be part of a policy discussion with creative players organised by Chenhaka Trust. These are important gatherings that we should continuously create for us to close the gap and create policies that are very conducive for the improvement of livelihoods of CCI players." **— Mr Nicholas Moyo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, speaking at the PANELZ Annual General Meeting**

Institutional Significance: The institutionalisation of inclusive, evidence-based dialogue as the primary mechanism for cultural policy reform represents a durable shift in Zimbabwe's governance culture. These platforms are now publicly endorsed by the Permanent Secretary as essential to sound CCI policy design, transforming Chenhaka Trust from an external advocate into a recognised governance partner.

Why This Change Matters

Strong governance depends on institutions communicating effectively, sharing evidence and coordinating their responses to common challenges. The governance improvements observed during the implementation period demonstrate that effective cultural financing requires not only supportive policies and financial resources but also sustained collaboration between the institutions responsible for their implementation.

Although permanent coordination mechanisms remain under development, the relationships established through CfCA provide an important foundation for future collaboration and more coherent governance of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

Institutionalisation Assessment

The assessment considers **Governance and Coordination Mechanisms** to have reached a **Partial** level of institutionalisation. While the programme strengthened relationships, improved dialogue and encouraged collaborative engagement, these gains remain dependent on continued commitment by participating institutions. Additional efforts will be required to embed structured coordination mechanisms within government systems beyond the programme's life.


CONTRIBUTION PATHWAY
Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships for Effective Cultural Financing
1 BASELINE CHALLENGE
Fragmented institutional engagement and limited opportunities for structured collaboration on cultural financing.
2 CFCA INTERVENTION
High-level policy dialogue, technical consultations, evidence sharing and stakeholder engagement.
3 INSTITUTIONAL DECISIONS AND ACTIONS
Government institutions, Parliament, regulatory bodies and cultural stakeholders engaged in collaborative discussions informed by evidence.
4 OBSERVED INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE
Improved institutional relationships, stronger communication and more coordinated approaches to cultural financing challenges.
5 EXPECTED LONG-TERM IMPACT
More collaborative governance, stronger policy coordination and improved implementation of cultural financing reforms.
Stronger relationships and collaborative engagement today build the foundation for a resilient and sustainable cultural financing ecosystem tomorrow.

Figure 3.

Summary Assessment

Analytical Lens	Assessment
Institutional Domain	Governance and Coordination Mechanisms
Institutional Location	Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture; NACZ; Parliament; cultural associations; inter-institutional policy dialogue platforms
Nature of Change	Strengthened institutional relationships and structured policy dialogue across key actors in the cultural financing ecosystem.
CfCA Contribution	**High** through convening, facilitation and evidence-informed stakeholder engagement.
Institutionalisation Level	**Partial**
Primary Evidence	Stakeholder interviews, dialogue records, programme documentation and policy consultations.
Expected Long-term Impact	Improved institutional collaboration and more coherent governance of Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem.

NACZ–Sector Relationship Transformation

One of the most striking relational changes documented by association leaders is the fundamental repair of the historically adversarial relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and the creative practitioner community. Prior to CfCA engagement, association leaders described the dynamic as characterised by serious animosity. The NACZ was perceived as a punitive enforcement body rather than a supportive development partner. Under CfCA's facilitated engagement model, this relationship underwent a complete transformation.

Association Leaders — Focus Group

"During the CfCA implementation, the relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) improved greatly. Previously, there was serious animosity between the council and the creatives."

4.4. Evidence and Data Systems

Reliable evidence is fundamental to effective cultural financing because it enables governments, policymakers and stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding investment, policy development and sector growth. Prior to the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) operated with limited empirical data on their economic contribution, employment creation and financing needs. As a result, policy discussions and budget advocacy were frequently constrained by the absence of credible national evidence.

The assessment found that CfCA made a significant contribution to strengthening Zimbabwe's cultural evidence ecosystem by generating national research, improving access to sector data, and increasing the use of evidence in public policy dialogue. These developments have strengthened the foundations for evidence-informed policymaking and represent one of the programme's most significant institutional contributions.

What Changed?

The most significant change observed during the implementation period was the establishment of a credible national evidence base for Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

Through CfCA, three national studies examining the economic contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries, cultural employment and cultural financing were produced to address longstanding information gaps affecting policy development and public investment. Together, these studies generated nationally relevant evidence that had previously been unavailable to government institutions, Parliament and the cultural sector.

Beyond the production of research, the assessment found that evidence increasingly became an integral component of policy dialogue. Stakeholders reported that discussions on cultural financing shifted from being largely normative and advocacy-driven to becoming more analytical, drawing upon empirical data to support policy proposals, legislative discussions and budget advocacy.

Evidence of Change

Document review confirmed the completion and dissemination of three national studies examining the contribution of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries to the national economy, employment, and public financing. These studies provided government institutions and cultural stakeholders with quantitative evidence previously unavailable to national policy discussions.

Interviews with government officials, cultural associations and sector representatives consistently indicated that the availability of national evidence strengthened the credibility of policy dialogue. Several respondents observed that research findings were increasingly referenced during engagements with policymakers and Members of Parliament when discussing cultural financing reforms.

The assessment also found evidence that research generated through CfCA informed broader discussions on legislative reform, public financial management and the integration of culture within national development planning.

The assessment findings are reinforced by interviews with senior officials from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, who consistently highlighted the importance of the evidence generated through CfCA in strengthening institutional engagement with government and supporting evidence-informed policy advocacy.

Stakeholder Perspectives

"We are deeply focused on the economic contributions of the Cultural and Creative Industries to our national GDP, employment patterns, and the informal sector. The lack of such data has, for years, made it extremely difficult for the sector to justify its need for government funding. Without evidence, our arguments have often been met with goodwill but without the hard numbers to back our worth. These research studies are now giving us a credible tool to demonstrate, beyond rhetoric, what the arts and culture contribute to Zimbabwe's economy and society." **– Senior Official, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe**

"The CfCA researchers have been very instrumental in informing engagement with the government on policy issues. The research has done very well in informing our work." **– NACZ CEO**

These reflections illustrate how the programme's investment in research strengthened public institutions' confidence to engage the government with empirical evidence rather than normative arguments alone.

CASE STUDY 4.4

From Anecdotal Advocacy to Evidence-Informed Policymaking

One of the most significant institutional shifts observed during the assessment was the transition from advocacy based largely on sector perceptions and anecdotal evidence to policymaking informed by nationally generated economic data.

Prior to CfCA, many discussions of cultural financing relied on qualitative arguments about the social importance of the arts and culture. Although these arguments were widely recognised, they were often insufficient to influence public investment decisions because they lacked nationally verified economic evidence.

The three national studies fundamentally changed this dynamic by providing policymakers with empirical evidence on the contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to Zimbabwe's economy, employment and public finances. As a result, discussions increasingly focused on measurable economic contributions rather than assumptions, strengthening the legitimacy of policy proposals and budget advocacy.

CfCA's Contribution

CfCA played a catalytic role by commissioning nationally relevant research, facilitating the dissemination of findings and creating opportunities for evidence to be discussed within policy and legislative processes.

The programme did not simply generate research; it deliberately integrated evidence into stakeholder dialogue, parliamentary engagement and policy consultations. This strengthened the use of research as a practical tool for decision-making rather than as a standalone academic exercise.

The assessment recognises that the long-term value of these studies will depend upon continued institutional use by government, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, universities and cultural organisations. Nevertheless, CfCA's contribution to establishing this evidence base represents one of the programme's most enduring institutional achievements.

Why This Change Matters

One of the most important institutional shifts observed during the assessment was the transition from policy dialogue based primarily on advocacy and sector perceptions to evidence-informed decision-making supported by nationally generated research.

Strengthening evidence systems is essential because effective cultural financing depends on credible information about the economic contribution, employment impact, and financing needs of the Cultural and Creative Industries. Without such evidence, governments face significant challenges in prioritising public investment, designing appropriate financing mechanisms and evaluating policy effectiveness.

The three national studies, therefore, represent more than research outputs; they constitute a strategic national knowledge resource capable of informing future legislation, public financial management, development planning and cultural policy implementation. If institutionalised through regular data collection and continued use in decision-making, these evidence systems have the potential to strengthen transparency, accountability and long-term investment in Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

Institutionalisation Assessment

The assessment considers Evidence and Data Systems to have reached an Advanced level of institutionalisation. The establishment of a national evidence base has fundamentally strengthened Zimbabwe's capacity for evidence-informed policymaking. While continued investment will be required to update datasets and institutionalise routine cultural statistics, the foundations for long-term evidence-based decision-making have been firmly established.



Figure 4.

Summary Assessment

Analytical Lens	Assessment
Institutional Domain	Evidence and Data Systems
Institutional Location	Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture; National Arts Council of Zimbabwe; Parliament; Cultural Associations; National Cultural Evidence System
Nature of Change	Establishment of a credible national evidence base and increased use of research in policy and financing decisions.
CfCA Contribution	**High-**throughput research commissioning, dissemination and evidence-informed policy dialogue.
Institutionalisation Level	**Advanced**
Primary Evidence	Three national studies, stakeholder interviews, policy dialogue records and documentary review.
Expected Long-term Impact	Stronger evidence-informed policymaking, improved cultural financing and enhanced public accountability.

4.5. Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships

Effective cultural financing depends not only on supportive policies, public investment, and institutional capacity, but also on strong relationships among government, regulatory institutions, and the stakeholders who create, manage, and sustain the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Prior to the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, engagement between government institutions and the cultural sector was often characterised by fragmented advocacy, limited collaboration and weak institutional trust. Cultural associations frequently engaged the government independently, while opportunities for coordinated dialogue across the sector were limited.

The assessment found that CfCA contributed to strengthening stakeholder engagement and institutional relationships by creating opportunities for sustained dialogue, evidence-informed advocacy, and collaborative engagement among government institutions, cultural associations, and creative practitioners. These changes strengthened the sector's ability to participate meaningfully in policy discussions and contributed to a more collaborative cultural financing ecosystem.

What Changed?

The assessment identified three significant institutional changes relating to stakeholder engagement and institutional relationships.

First, relationships between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and the creative sector improved considerably during the implementation period. Stakeholders reported a shift from relationships characterised by mistrust and regulatory tension towards more constructive engagement and dialogue. This strengthened confidence between the sector's principal regulatory institution and creative practitioners, creating a more enabling environment for collaborative problem-solving.

Second, cultural practitioners increasingly engaged government as advocates for their own sector. Rather than participating primarily in advocacy initiatives centred on broader development issues, artists and cultural organisations became more active in advancing policy, financing, and regulatory reforms that directly affect the Cultural and Creative Industries.

Third, the programme contributed to the emergence of a stronger collective practitioner voice. Cultural associations representing different artistic disciplines increasingly collaborated around shared priorities, drawing upon common evidence to engage government more effectively and present coordinated policy positions.

Institutional Location

The institutional changes documented in this section are primarily located within the relationships among cultural practitioners, cultural associations, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, and other institutions responsible for cultural governance. The changes are reflected not only in improved engagement between these actors but also in the growing capacity of the cultural sector to participate collectively in national policy and cultural financing processes.

Evidence of Change

Focus group discussions with association leaders consistently reported significant improvements in the relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and the creative sector. Participants observed that interactions had become more collaborative, reducing historical tensions that had limited constructive engagement between practitioners and the Council.

> *"During the CFCA implementation, the relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and the CFCA improved significantly. Previously, there was serious animosity between the Council and the creatives"* **– Association Leaders during a Focus Group Discussion**

Association leaders also highlighted a noticeable shift in the nature of advocacy in the cultural sector. Whereas artists had previously been mobilised largely in support of broader social and development agendas, they increasingly engaged the government on issues directly affecting the development of the cultural sector.

"Before, the arts were used as an advocacy tool on other issues like human rights, gender, etc., without advancing their sectoral goals. However, in the past three years, we have seen an increase in cultural practitioners engaging the government on issues pertaining to their sector."

The respondents also reported greater collaboration among cultural associations, describing the emergence of a stronger collective voice around shared policy and financing priorities.

"There is a collective voice now among artists. Creatives are willing to collectively lobby on different policy issues" **– Association Leaders – Focus Group**

Together, these findings indicate important improvements in stakeholder relationships, collective engagement and sector-wide advocacy.

Association leaders further observed that the programme contributed to increasing awareness of public policy and cultural financing issues among creative practitioners. Participants reported growing interest in understanding national budget processes, public finance and policy reforms affecting the Cultural and Creative Industries. This suggests that CfCA strengthened not only stakeholder participation but also the sector's policy literacy, enabling practitioners to engage government from a more informed and evidence-based position.

Association Leaders – Focus Group

"There is increased awareness among creatives. There has been an interest in gaining more information around the national budget and policy issues."

This finding suggests that the programme strengthened not only stakeholder participation but also practitioners' policy literacy, enabling more informed engagement with government on cultural financing reforms.

The transition from fragmented stakeholder engagement to stronger institutional relationships and collective advocacy represents an important step towards a more mature cultural financing ecosystem. When practitioners engage government as organised stakeholders, supported by credible evidence and collaborative networks, they are better positioned to influence policy, strengthen accountability and contribute to sustainable sector development.

CfCA's Contribution

CfCA played a catalytic role in strengthening stakeholder engagement by creating opportunities for dialogue, evidence sharing and collaborative policy engagement between government institutions and the cultural sector. Through research dissemination, stakeholder consultations and high-level engagement platforms, the programme strengthened communication, encouraged collaboration across cultural associations and improved relationships between practitioners and public institutions.

Importantly, the programme also provided a common evidence base around which different organisations could organise collective advocacy. This strengthened the confidence of practitioners to engage government on issues affecting their own

CASE STUDY 4.5

From Cultural Messengers to Cultural Stakeholders

One of the most significant changes observed during the assessment was the evolution of the cultural sector's own advocacy identity. Historically, artists and cultural practitioners frequently contributed to advocacy campaigns on broader social issues such as human rights, gender equality and civic participation. While these initiatives demonstrated the value of the arts in advancing development objectives, they did not always strengthen the sector's own policy, financing and institutional priorities.

Through evidence generation, structured dialogue and engagement with public institutions, CfCA helped create opportunities for practitioners to articulate their own development agenda. Cultural associations increasingly engaged the government on issues relating to cultural financing, public investment, regulatory reform and sector development, while collaboration across artistic disciplines strengthened the sector's ability to advocate collectively.

Equally important was the transformation of the relationship between the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and creative practitioners. Improved communication, greater trust and more constructive engagement contributed to a more enabling institutional environment in which stakeholders could work together to address challenges affecting the Cultural and Creative Industries.

sector and encouraged more coordinated participation in cultural financing discussions.

The assessment recognises that these changes also reflect the commitment of cultural associations, government institutions, regulatory agencies and development partners. CfCA's contribution was catalytic in facilitating dialogue, strengthening relationships and creating opportunities for collaborative engagement.

Why This Change Matters

One of the most significant institutional shifts observed during the assessment was the transition from fragmented and externally driven stakeholder engagement towards stronger sector ownership, collaborative advocacy and more constructive institutional relationships.

Strengthening stakeholder engagement is essential because sustainable cultural financing depends upon continuous dialogue between policymakers and the practitioners whose livelihoods are directly affected by financing decisions. Improved institutional relationships foster trust, strengthen accountability and create opportunities for more responsive policymaking.

The emergence of a stronger collective practitioner voice also enhances the sector's ability to engage government strategically, ensuring that policy dialogue increasingly reflects the priorities and experiences of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

Institutionalisation Assessment

The assessment considers **Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships** to have reached an **Emerging** level of institutionalisation. Significant progress has been made in strengthening relationships, collective advocacy and stakeholder participation. However, sustaining these gains will require continued dialogue, ongoing collaboration and institutional commitment beyond the lifespan of the CfCA initiative.



Figure 5.

Summary Assessment

Analytical Lens	Assessment
Institutional Domain	Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships
Institutional Location	National Arts Council of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, cultural associations, artist networks and other cultural sector stakeholders.
Nature of Change	Strengthened stakeholder relationships, increased collective advocacy and improved engagement between public institutions and the cultural sector.
CfCA Contribution	**Moderate–High** through stakeholder engagement, evidence generation and collaborative policy dialogue.
Institutionalisation Level	**Emerging**
Primary Evidence	Focus group discussions, stakeholder interviews, programme documentation and policy engagement records.

5. CFCA CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

The preceding chapter documented the key institutional changes observed within Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem during the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative. While these findings demonstrate significant progress across policy reform, public financial management, governance, evidence systems and stakeholder engagement, they do not in themselves establish that these changes were caused solely by the programme.

This chapter, therefore, assesses the extent to which CfCA contributed to the institutional changes documented in Section 4. The analysis adopts a Contribution Analysis approach, recognising that institutional change is typically the result of multiple interacting actors, contextual factors and policy processes rather than a single intervention. Consequently, the purpose of this assessment is not to attribute outcomes exclusively to CfCA, but rather to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to conclude that the programme made a credible, plausible and significant contribution to the observed institutional changes.

The assessment draws upon documentary review, stakeholder interviews, and focus group. It examines the programme's theory of change, the mechanisms through which change occurred and the role played by other institutions and contextual factors in shaping observed outcomes.

Rather than asking "Did CfCA alone produce these changes?", the contribution analysis asks a more appropriate evaluation question:

"To what extent did CfCA contribute to the institutional changes observed, and through what mechanisms did this contribution occur?"

This distinction is particularly important within public policy and institutional reform programmes, where outcomes emerge through collaboration among government institutions, Parliament, regulatory agencies, civil society organisations, development partners and the Cultural and Creative Industries themselves.

The findings indicate that CfCA functioned primarily as a catalytic intervention. Rather than directly implementing policy reforms, the programme strengthened the conditions under which institutional change could occur by generating credible evidence, facilitating policy dialogue, convening key stakeholders and supporting evidence-informed decision-making. These catalytic functions are assessed in the sections that follow.

5.1. Analytical Framework for Assessing Contribution

A central principle of this evaluation was the need to distinguish between programme activities, intermediate outcomes and institutional change. Policy influence programmes often generate a wide range of results, but not all results represent systemic or institutional transformation. To avoid overstating programme achievements, the evaluation adopted a structured analytical framework that classified evidence according to the level at which change occurred.

Activities such as policy dialogues, networking meetings and stakeholder consultations were considered important programme outputs because they created opportunities for engagement and learning. These activities, however, were not treated as evidence of institutional change in themselves. Instead, the assessment examined whether they contributed to broader outcomes, including increased policy awareness, stronger stakeholder engagement and greater use of evidence in public discourse.

Institutional change was assessed only where there was verifiable evidence that policies, regulations, governance arrangements or institutional practices had changed and where these changes were supported by documentary evidence and stakeholder validation. This distinction ensured that the assessment focused on sustainable changes embedded within institutions rather than on programme implementation alone.

Table 5.1 summarises the analytical framework that guided the classification and verification of changes throughout this evaluation.

Table 5.1: Distinction Matrix for Assessing Levels of Change

Change Category	Description & Institutional Mapping	Evidence & Verification Metric	Role in Contribution Analysis
Activity-Level Change	Policy dialogues, parliamentary engagements, dissemination of economic studies, stakeholder consultations.	Registers	Inputs that created opportunities for change
Output / Outcome Level Change	Increased policy literacy, stronger collective practitioner voice, improved stakeholder relationships, greater use of economic evidence in policy discussions.	Interviews	Intermediate changes supporting institutional reform
Institutional / System-Level Change	Statutory reduction of NACZ registration fees, incorporation of the AU 1% aspiration into Arts Bill consultations, integration of CCIs into NDS2, evidence-informed policymaking, strengthened public financial accountability.	Official documents	Enduring changes assessed for CfCA's contribution

5.2. CfCA's Specific Roles and Interventions

CfCA's catalytic role. CfCA did not function as an isolated project intervention. Instead, it operated as a horizontal policy integrator and operational catalyst, connecting evidence, institutions and sector actors in ways that helped accelerate policy and regulatory change.

5.3. Mechanisms Through Which Change Was Influenced

- Cognitive Shift from 'Petitioning' to 'Rights-Claiming': By simplifying complex international treaty texts and mapping them against local policy gaps, CfCA taught creatives to frame local demands as binding regional compliance obligations under treaties already signed by the state.
- Compression of Bureaucratic Loops: CfCA's curated forums brought Ministry administrative designers and NACZ executives into the same room simultaneously, forcing immediate administrative breakthroughs that typically take years through sequential engagement.
- Narrative Appropriation: CfCA strategically aligned cultural demands with the Government's macroeconomic narrative, the 'Ease of Doing Business' directive. By proving that high registration fees forced creatives into the untaxed

informal economy, CfCA enabled state actors to map the fee rollback onto the broader agenda of the Office of the President and Cabinet, shielding the reform from bureaucratic pushback.

5.4. Interaction with Government Systems and Stakeholders

The project maintained a collaborative, mutually accountable relationship with state organs. Recognising the government's desire to modernise through National Development Strategies, CfCA positioned itself as a technical partner, providing high-value empirical data that line ministries could use to justify their funding needs to the Ministry of Finance. Respondents consistently identified CfCA as an important catalyst and convening platform, with a contribution rating ranging from Moderate to High.

5.5. Other Contributing Actors and Parallel Initiatives

In alignment with the principles of Contribution Analysis, this report acknowledges that CfCA thrived within an established, cooperative ecosystem. The initiative was built directly upon years of foundational groundwork, sector frustration mapping, and grassroots mobilisation maintained by pioneer local civil society organisations, specifically the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust, Savanna Trust, Arterial Network, PANELZ and Nhimbe Trust. While these local trusts sustained the sector's long-term baseline momentum, CfCA's entry provided the macro-level continental platform and econometric toolkits necessary to convert decades of grassroots frustration into concrete statutory reforms.

5.6. Theory of Change — Operational Validity Analysis

This section evaluates the performance of the CfCA Theory of Change (ToC) in driving Zimbabwe's creative sector reforms, drawing from the implementation experience and impact documentation produced by Chenhaka Trust.

Fully Materialised Pathways

Pathway 1: Evidence Generation to Legislative Sensitisation

The anticipated pathway that robust empirical data would displace emotional advocacy rhetoric materialised as planned. The three research studies provided Parliamentary Portfolio Committees with the precise analytical leverage needed to engage with Treasury from an informed position. This was the decisive catalyst for the Arts Bill 1% target and the NACZ fee reduction.

Pathway 2: Targeted Institutional Dialogues to Administrative Action

The pathway connecting curated high-level policy spaces to regulatory reform achieved its peak expression on 30 January 2026, when NACZ officially slashed registration fees (an administrative reform subsequently formalised through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026, gazetted 29 May 2026). Bringing the Ministry's Permanent Secretary and the NACZ CEO into the same room on 17 January 2025 compressed the typical multi-year bureaucratic loop into a definitive twelve-month action plan.

> *"Our Ministry crafts policies that are informed by stakeholders. By and large, Chenhaka's intervention together with other arts associations influenced some of the decisions that were made by the Ministry and NACZ, like the slashing of fees."*
>
> **Director of Arts and Culture**
> Ministry of Sport and Recreation, Arts and Culture

Partially Realised Assumptions

Uniform Decentralised Grassroots Action

The programme assumed that capacity-building workshops and the youth residency would translate into uniform, decentralised policy lobbying across all 10 provinces. In practice, while legal literacy spiked among direct participants, provincial-level advocacy remains uneven. The structural centralisation of media networks and financial infrastructure in Harare and Bulawayo meant rural and peripheral creative clusters faced persistent logistical barriers.

Fast-Tracked Passage of the Arts Bill

The initial ToC assumed that securing executive buy-in would rapidly accelerate the formal passage of the Arts Bill. This underestimated the statutory complexity of legislative drafting within the Attorney General's office and the competitive backlog of bills on the Parliamentary calendar. While stakeholder input has been successfully harmonised, the legislative pipeline remains slow.

Unexpected Pathways: The Ease of Doing Business Alignment

A significant, unintended but highly effective pathway emerged: the explicit appropriation of the government's 'Ease of Doing Business' macroeconomic narrative. During high-level policy dialogues, state actors mapped CCI complaints directly onto the Office of the President and Cabinet's broader economic reform agenda. Linking the NACZ fee reduction to national macro-indicators rather than cultural wellness alone gave the reform an unintended high-velocity administrative pathway that protected it from bureaucratic pushback.

6. EVIDENCE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION ASSESSMENT

This section evaluates the extent to which the institutional changes identified in the preceding chapters have become embedded within Zimbabwe's policy, governance and public financial management systems. It examines the degree of formalisation of the observed changes, their integration into national planning and budgeting processes, the level of government ownership, the strength of the supporting evidence and the overall level of institutional embedding. Drawing on documentary evidence, stakeholder interviews, Outcome Harvesting and Contribution Analysis, the assessment distinguishes between reforms that have become institutionalised and those that remain dependent on continued implementation, coordination and stakeholder engagement.

Formalization Level of Observed Changes

The assessment found that several of the most significant institutional changes catalysed during the 2024–2026 implementation period have progressed beyond programme activities and have been formalised through government policy and administrative processes. The statutory reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees, effective 30 January 2026 and formalised through Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 on 29 May 2026, represents a formal regulatory reform. Similarly, the African Union's aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture has been incorporated into consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill, signalling its progression from a continental policy aspiration to a domestic legislative priority. In addition, the integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries into the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) under the Ease of Doing Business agenda reflects growing policy recognition of the sector within Zimbabwe's national development framework.

6.1. Extent of Integration into National Systems

The assessment found varying levels of integration across national systems.

- Planning Integration (High): The integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries into NDS2 demonstrates that the sector is increasingly recognised within Zimbabwe's national development planning architecture.
- Legislative Integration (High): The incorporation of the AU 1% cultural financing aspiration into the consultative Arts Bill process reflects growing alignment between national legislation and continental policy commitments.
- Public Financial Management Integration (Moderate): Cultural allocations are incorporated within national budget processes; however, the assessment identified significant weaknesses in budget execution. While resources are appropriated through the national budget, delays and shortfalls in cash disbursement continue to constrain implementation.

- Evidence System Integration (Moderate–High): The three national studies have strengthened the use of evidence within policy discussions and parliamentary engagement. Continued institutional investment will be required to sustain routine data collection and update national cultural statistics.

6.2. Dependence on External Support vs. Internal Government Ownership

The assessment found strong government ownership of several institutional reforms, particularly those relating to policy, legislation and regulatory administration. The statutory reduction of NACZ registration fees, legislative drafting processes and the integration of culture within NDS2 are now being advanced through government systems and no longer depend on external programme implementation. However, continued support from civil society organisations and development partners remains important for sustaining evidence generation, policy dialogue, stakeholder engagement and independent monitoring of budget execution. These functions continue to complement government leadership by strengthening accountability and evidence-informed decision-making.

6.3. Strength and Reliability of Supporting Evidence

The assessment is supported by a high level of methodological triangulation. Qualitative evidence generated through stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change techniques was systematically cross-referenced with documentary evidence, including statutory instruments, government policy documents, parliamentary records, national budget publications and programme documentation. This combination of qualitative and documentary verification strengthened the credibility of the findings and reduced the risk of relying on single-source evidence.

The institutionalisation assessment demonstrates that the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative contributed to important and, in several cases, well-established policy and institutional reforms within Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. Many of the changes documented in this evaluation have progressed beyond programme activities and are now reflected in government policies, regulatory frameworks and institutional practice. These developments provide a strong foundation for the continued advancement of the Cultural and Creative Industries.

However, the assessment also indicates that institutionalisation is not synonymous with full implementation or long-term sustainability. Several structural, financial and institutional constraints continue to affect the effectiveness, reach and durability of these reforms. Understanding these challenges is essential for identifying the actions required to consolidate institutional gains and strengthen future cultural financing reforms. The following section, therefore, examines the principal constraints and contextual factors that continue to shape Zimbabwe's cultural financing landscape.

6.4. Level of Institutional Embedding

Institutional Domain	Formalisation	Integration into National Systems	Government Ownership	Evidence Strength	Overall Institutionalisation
Policy Frameworks and Reforms	High	High	High	High	**Advanced**
Public Financial Management and Budget Accountability	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	**Moderate**
Governance and Coordination Mechanisms	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	**Moderate**
Evidence and Data Systems	High	High	Moderate–High	High	**Advanced**
Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Relationships	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	**Emerging–Moderate**

7. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

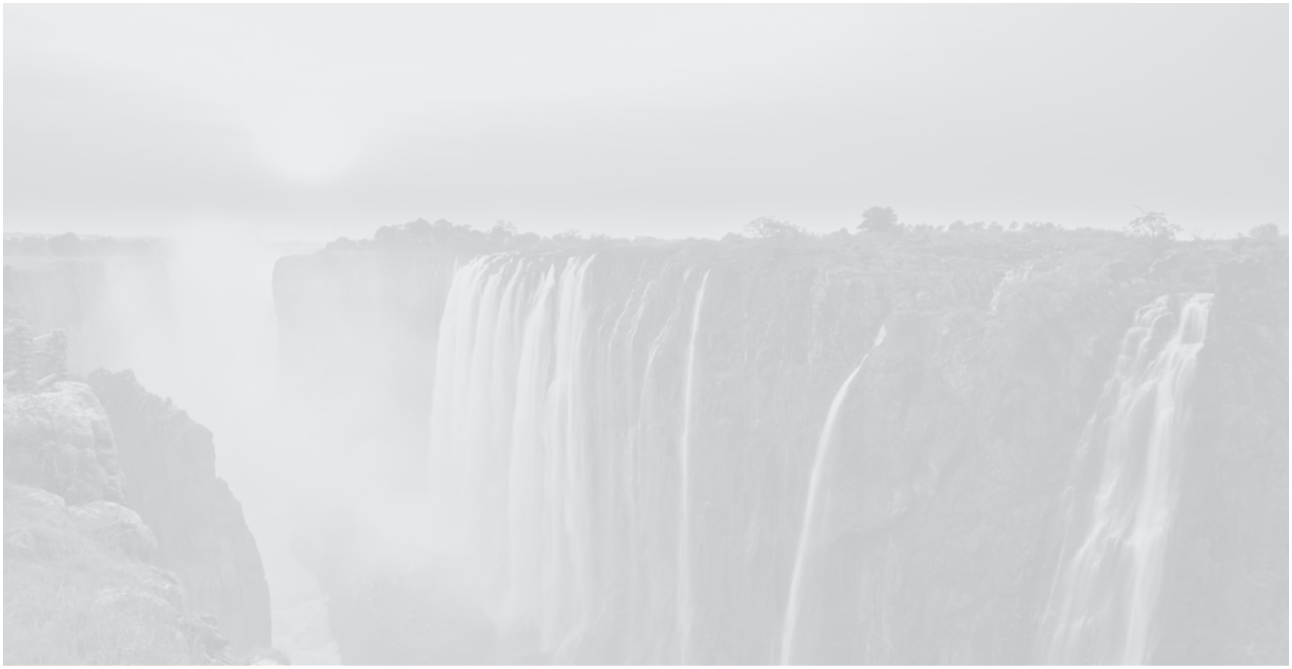
The preceding chapters demonstrate that the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative contributed to significant institutional progress in Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. Important advances were observed in policy reform, public financial management, evidence generation, governance and stakeholder engagement, while the institutionalisation assessment indicates that several of these changes have become embedded within government systems to varying degrees.

At the same time, the evaluation recognises that institutional transformation is neither linear nor complete. Despite the progress achieved, a number of structural, institutional and contextual constraints continue to limit the pace, depth and sustainability of reform. These constraints influence the effectiveness with which policies are implemented, resources are mobilised and disbursed, institutions coordinate their mandates and evidence is translated into sustained improvements across the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

This section, therefore, presents a balanced assessment of the principal challenges that continue to affect Zimbabwe's cultural financing landscape. The analysis examines institutional constraints, financing challenges, coordination limitations, remaining data and evidence gaps, and broader political economy factors that shape the operating environment. Identifying these constraints does not diminish the significance of the reforms documented in this report. Rather, it highlights the areas requiring continued attention by government, cultural institutions, civil society and development partners to consolidate gains and sustain long-term institutional change.

7.1. Institutional Constraints

Despite the institutional progress documented in this report, several structural constraints continue to limit the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of Zimbabwe's cultural financing system. Foremost among these is the evolving institutional mandate and capacity of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ). While recent reforms have strengthened the Council's role in supporting policy implementation and engagement with the sector, stakeholders observed that aspects of its statutory mandate remain primarily oriented towards regulation, registration and compliance, with comparatively limited mechanisms for promoting investment, enterprise development, innovation and the commercialisation



of intellectual property across the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

As the creative economy expands into areas such as digital content creation, cultural entrepreneurship, creative technology and intellectual property-based industries, respondents indicated that existing institutional arrangements would need to continue evolving to respond to these emerging opportunities. Strengthening the developmental, investment promotion and market facilitation functions of sector institutions would further enhance the implementation of cultural financing reforms and support the long-term growth of Zimbabwe's creative economy.

The assessment also identified institutional capacity constraints that extend beyond statutory mandates. Stakeholders noted that effective implementation of policy reforms requires continued technical capacity, adequate financial resources and stronger coordination across government institutions responsible for planning, budgeting, regulation and programme implementation. Without these complementary institutional capacities, the benefits of policy and regulatory reforms may not be fully realised.

These findings do not diminish the significant progress achieved through the CfCA initiative. Rather, they indicate that while important institutional reforms have been initiated, continued institutional strengthening will be necessary to consolidate these gains and support a more enabling environment for the sustainable development of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

7.1.1. Institutional Implementation Capacity

Although significant policy and regulatory reforms have been initiated, stakeholders observed that the effective implementation of these reforms depends on continued institutional capacity within government agencies and sector institutions. Limited technical capacity, competing institutional responsibilities and resource constraints may slow the translation of policy commitments into operational programmes. Continued investment in institutional strengthening, skills development and implementation systems will therefore be necessary to ensure that policy reforms deliver tangible benefits across the Cultural and Creative Industries.

7.2. Financing Constraints

While the evaluation found encouraging progress in strengthening the policy and institutional environment for cultural financing, financial sustainability remains one of the most significant constraints affecting the long-term development of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). The assessment demonstrates that the challenge is no longer confined to budget allocations but increasingly concerns the effectiveness, predictability, and transparency of public financial management throughout the budget execution cycle.

The analysis revealed a significant gap between approved budget allocations and actual cash disbursements to cultural institutions. Although the government has demonstrated increasing recognition of the sector through budgetary allocations

and proposed investment in creative infrastructure, the release of approved resources to implementing agencies remains inconsistent. This limits the ability of public institutions to implement programmes, support practitioners, and translate policy commitments into tangible sectoral outcomes.

This challenge is compounded by a decline in the overall share of the national budget directed to the sector: having risen to 1.24% in 2024, the highest level recorded since 2019, public funding for arts, culture and heritage fell to 0.60% of the national budget in 2025, even as the national budget itself grew substantially over the same period (Selam, 2025). Taken together, the disbursement gap and the declining budget share point to a common underlying constraint: the cultural financing gains achieved during the CfCA implementation period remain administratively and politically contestable, rather than institutionally secured.

Budget Execution Gap (2024–2025)	
Approved Budget Allocation (2024)	USD 10,557,969
Actual Cash Disbursed (2025)	USD 2,476,701
Undisbursed Approved Funding	USD 8,690,632
Reduction in Cash Disbursement	76.5% ↓

Interviewees consistently reported: "Money may appear in policy documents or budget statements, but it does not necessarily reach the sector."

One of the most important findings of this evaluation is that sustainable cultural financing depends not only on securing greater public investment, but also on strengthening systems for monitoring budget execution, expenditure tracking and fiscal accountability. The assessment, therefore, suggests that future advocacy efforts should extend beyond influencing budget allocations to promoting greater transparency throughout the entire public financial management cycle.

As Zimbabwe's Government continues to demonstrate commitment to supporting the Cultural and Creative Industries, future reform efforts should increasingly focus on ensuring that allocated resources are:

- **Measurable**, through transparent budget execution and disbursement tracking systems;
- **Accessible**, by ensuring that approved resources reach implementing institutions and creative practitioners in a timely and equitable manner; and
- **Impactful**, by translating public expenditure into measurable improvements in sector performance, cultural production and creative livelihoods.

The evaluation, therefore, concludes that strengthening public financial management remains a critical priority for consolidating the institutional gains achieved through the CfCA initiative. Ensuring that approved resources are effectively disbursed and utilised will be essential to sustaining policy reforms, strengthening institutional confidence and realising the long-term development potential of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

7.2.1. Budget Transparency and Resource Traceability Gap

Beyond the challenges associated with budget allocations and cash disbursements, the evaluation identified a further constraint relating to the transparency and traceability of public resources once they enter government systems. While previous sections have examined whether approved funds are released by Treasury, stakeholders raised an equally important concern regarding the visibility of how these resources are ultimately utilised and whether they reach the intended beneficiaries within the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

Association leaders and creative practitioners consistently reported that there is limited publicly accessible information demonstrating how resources allocated to the cultural sector are distributed and utilised after disbursement. As a result, practitioners are often unable to verify whether public expenditure has translated into tangible support for artists, cultural organisations and creative enterprises.

Association Leaders — Focus Group

The biggest challenge, however, has been the lack of transparency on how the budget allocated to the cultural sector has been utilised. There is no evidence that the money reached the artists."

The assessment found that this transparency gap weakens accountability across the cultural financing system. Without accessible information on resource utilisation, practitioners who

successfully advocate for increased public investment face difficulties demonstrating the practical impact of these allocations to their constituencies. Consequently, confidence in public financing processes may be undermined despite improvements in policy commitments and budget allocations.

At the same time, the evaluation identified an important behavioural shift catalysed through CfCA's evidence generation and capacity-building initiatives. Stakeholders reported that creative practitioners have become increasingly interested in monitoring not only the level of public investment, but also how resources are allocated, managed and utilised throughout the public financial management cycle.

Association Leaders — Focus Group

"Cultural workers have begun to interrogate how resources are distributed."

This emerging culture of public expenditure scrutiny represents an important institutional development. It extends the sector's advocacy beyond securing policy commitments and budget allocations towards strengthening transparency, accountability and evidence-informed oversight of public resources. Sustaining this shift will require continued improvements in public financial reporting, greater accessibility of expenditure information and stronger mechanisms for tracking whether public investment reaches intended beneficiaries across Zimbabwe's cultural sector.

7.3. Coordination Challenges

The evaluation found that the CfCA initiative contributed to improved collaboration and dialogue among government institutions, regulatory agencies, cultural practitioners and other sector stakeholders. However, despite these gains, coordination across the cultural financing ecosystem remains uneven and is not yet fully institutionalised.

Stakeholders reported that collaboration between line ministries, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), local authorities and other public institutions continues to rely largely on individual leadership, personal relationships and periodic consultations rather than formalised inter-institutional coordination mechanisms. While these relationships have strengthened considerably during the programme period, their effectiveness remains vulnerable to changes in leadership, institutional priorities and resource availability.

The assessment further found that coordination challenges become more pronounced beyond the national level. Although national policy dialogue has improved, stakeholders indicated that provincial and district-level structures require further strengthening to ensure that policy reforms, financing initiatives and institutional decisions are implemented consistently across the country. Greater vertical coordination between national institutions and sub-national structures will be important for extending the benefits of cultural financing reforms to creative practitioners operating outside the major urban centres.

Addressing these coordination challenges will require the continued institutionalisation of multi-stakeholder engagement, clearer roles and responsibilities across government institutions, and stronger mechanisms for information sharing, joint planning and implementation. Strengthening institutional coordination will not only improve policy implementation but also enhance accountability, reduce duplication and support a more coherent and inclusive cultural financing system.

7.3.1. Sustaining Reform Momentum

The evaluation found that maintaining the momentum generated through CfCA will require continued institutional commitment beyond the programme period. Several stakeholders noted that regular policy dialogue, evidence generation and collaborative engagement should become routine functions of sector institutions rather than activities undertaken only during externally supported initiatives. Institutionalising these processes will be important for sustaining reform momentum and ensuring continued progress in cultural financing.

7.4. Data and Evidence Gaps

Although the CfCA initiative made a significant contribution to strengthening Zimbabwe's evidence base through the commissioning of three pioneering studies on the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), important gaps remain in the institutionalisation of cultural statistics and evidence systems. The evaluation found that the programme substantially improved the availability and use of economic evidence for policy dialogue, legislative reform and budget advocacy. However, sustaining these gains will require permanent institutional arrangements for the routine collection, analysis and dissemination of cultural statistics.

A key challenge identified during the assessment is the absence of a fully institutionalised **Cultural Satellite Account (CSA)** within the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT). Without a permanent, government-funded statistical framework, measuring the contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to national output, employment, trade and the informal economy remains dependent on periodic research initiatives rather than continuous national statistical reporting.

Stakeholders further noted that the current evidence base requires regular updating to reflect the rapidly evolving nature of the creative economy, particularly in emerging areas such as digital content creation, creative entrepreneurship, cultural tourism and intellectual property-based industries. Continued investment in cultural statistics will therefore be essential to ensure that policy decisions, budget allocations and sector planning remain informed by current and reliable evidence.

The evaluation concludes that while Zimbabwe has made significant progress in establishing an evidence-informed approach to cultural policymaking, further institutionalisation of cultural statistics is required to ensure that evidence generation becomes a routine function of national statistical systems rather than a project-driven activity. Embedding cultural data collection within government institutions would strengthen long-term policy planning, improve public financial decision-making and provide a more robust basis for measuring the contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to national development.

7.5. Political Economy and Contextual Constraints

The evaluation found that the implementation and sustainability of cultural financing reforms continue to be influenced by Zimbabwe's broader political and macroeconomic environment.

While the CfCA initiative contributed to significant institutional progress, the pace and scale of reform remain shaped by contextual factors that extend beyond the programme's direct sphere of influence.

Stakeholders identified persistent macroeconomic challenges, including fiscal constraints, currency fluctuations, inflationary pressures and competing national development priorities, as factors that affect the availability and predictability of public resources for the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). These broader economic conditions influence government expenditure decisions and can constrain the implementation of otherwise well-designed policy and financing reforms.

The assessment also highlighted continuing infrastructure and digital connectivity gaps, particularly in provincial and rural areas. Limited access to reliable electricity, internet connectivity and digital infrastructure reduces opportunities for artists, cultural organisations and creative enterprises to fully utilise digital platforms, access emerging markets and benefit from evidence, policy tools and financing opportunities developed through national initiatives. These disparities risk widening the gap between well-resourced urban centres and practitioners operating in more remote locations.

Taken together, these contextual factors underscore that sustainable cultural financing reforms require more than policy and institutional change alone. Long-term success will depend upon continued macroeconomic stability, investment in digital and physical infrastructure, and sustained government commitment to creating an enabling environment in which the Cultural and Creative Industries can contribute fully to Zimbabwe's social and economic development.

Constraint Severity Matrix

Constraint	Severity	Likely Effect on Institutionalisation	Priority
Budget execution and cash disbursement	High	Delays implementation of approved reforms	High
Institutional mandate limitations	Medium–High	Restricts long-term sector development	High
Inter-institutional coordination	Medium	Slows implementation consistency	Medium
Data and evidence sustainability	Medium	Weakens future evidence-informed decision-making	Medium
Broader macroeconomic and fiscal pressures	High	Limits public investment and reform implementation	High

8. LESSONS LEARNED

The preceding chapters documented the institutional changes influenced by the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, assessed the programme's contribution to these changes, examined the degree of institutionalisation and identified the principal challenges affecting Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. Building on these findings, this chapter synthesises the key lessons emerging from the evaluation to inform future cultural financing reforms in Zimbabwe and across the African continent.

The lessons presented are derived from stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, documentary review, Outcome Harvesting and Contribution Analysis. They reflect practical implementation experience rather than theoretical observations and identify the conditions under which institutional reform was most effective, the factors that constrained progress and the considerations necessary for sustaining and scaling future interventions. Collectively, these lessons provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, government institutions, development partners and cultural stakeholders seeking to strengthen cultural financing systems within complex governance environments.

8.1. What Worked, and Under What Conditions

The evaluation found that the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative was most effective where interventions combined credible evidence, strategic stakeholder engagement and government ownership. Rather than relying on advocacy alone, the programme supported institutional change by creating opportunities for policymakers, regulatory agencies and cultural practitioners to engage around shared evidence and common reform priorities. Several implementation approaches emerged as particularly effective.

Evidence-led advocacy proved highly effective where credible national data addressed long-standing policy information gaps. The commissioning of national studies on the Cultural and Creative Industries equipped government institutions, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and sector stakeholders with robust evidence on the economic contribution, employment potential and financing needs of the sector. This strengthened the credibility of policy dialogue and enabled advocacy efforts to move beyond anecdotal arguments towards evidence-informed decision-making.

High-level multi-stakeholder dialogue was most successful where key decision-makers participated simultaneously in structured policy engagement processes. By convening representatives from government ministries, regulatory institutions, Parliament and the cultural sector within the same dialogue platforms, CfCA facilitated more informed discussions, strengthened mutual understanding and accelerated institutional decision-making. The evaluation found that this collaborative approach contributed to reforms that would likely have required significantly longer periods to achieve through conventional advocacy processes.

Government ownership emerged as a critical condition for successful institutional reform. While CfCA played an important catalytic role through research, technical support and stakeholder facilitation, policy reforms and regulatory decisions were ultimately led and implemented through government systems. This strengthened the legitimacy of reforms and increased the likelihood of their institutionalisation beyond the programme period.

Constructive stakeholder engagement strengthened trust and collective action across the cultural financing ecosystem. The evaluation found that sustained dialogue between government institutions, cultural practitioners and sector associations contributed to improved institutional relationships, greater policy literacy and the emergence of a stronger collective practitioner voice. These changes created a more collaborative environment for addressing complex policy and financing challenges.

Finally, the strategic alignment of evidence generation with national policy and legislative processes significantly increased programme influence. The availability of credible research during discussions on the Arts Bill, National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) and cultural financing reforms enabled stakeholders to utilise evidence when

opportunities for policy change emerged. This demonstrates the importance of aligning research, advocacy and stakeholder engagement with national policy windows to maximise institutional impact.

8.2. What Did Not Work, and Why

The evaluation identified several implementation assumptions that proved insufficient to address the complexity of institutional reform within Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. While these did not diminish the overall achievements of the CfCA initiative, they provide important lessons for the design of future policy influence programmes.

Policy reform alone did not guarantee improvements in public financial management. During implementation, there was an implicit expectation that securing stronger policy recognition and increased budget allocations for the Cultural and Creative Industries would translate into improved financial support for the sector. However, the evaluation demonstrated that policy commitments and approved budget allocations do not automatically result in timely cash disbursements or effective utilisation of public resources. Significant gaps remained between budget appropriations and actual resource flows to implementing agencies, highlighting the need for future interventions to extend beyond policy advocacy and incorporate systematic monitoring of budget execution, expenditure tracking and fiscal accountability throughout the public financial management cycle.

Centralised engagement did not consistently generate uniform implementation across all provinces. National policy dialogues and stakeholder consultations were effective in strengthening engagement at the central government level. However, the evaluation found that the translation of these reforms into provincial and local contexts was uneven. Differences in institutional capacity, infrastructure, digital connectivity and access to information limited the ability of some provincial stakeholders to participate fully in policy processes and utilise the tools and opportunities generated through the programme. This experience demonstrates that future interventions should complement national-level engagement with stronger decentralised implementation strategies and sustained support for provincial and local institutions.

These experiences reinforce an important lesson from the evaluation: institutional reform is rarely achieved through single policy interventions or isolated advocacy activities. Sustainable change requires continuous engagement across the entire policy cycle—from evidence generation and legislative reform to budget execution, institutional implementation and local-level adoption. Future cultural financing initiatives should therefore adopt adaptive implementation approaches that recognise the complexity of institutional change and respond to emerging challenges as they arise.

8.3. Key Enabling Factors for Reform Success

The evaluation identified several interrelated factors that created an enabling environment for the institutional reforms observed during the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative. These factors worked in combination and should be regarded as mutually reinforcing conditions rather than isolated drivers of change.

1. **Government commitment and policy openness** emerged as the most significant enabling factor. The Government of Zimbabwe's commitment to strengthening the Cultural and Creative Industries through national development planning, legislative reform and continued stakeholder engagement created an environment in which policy dialogue could translate into tangible institutional change. The alignment of cultural financing reforms with national priorities under the National Development Strategy (NDS2) and broader economic transformation agenda increased the relevance of the programme and strengthened government ownership of the reforms.
2. **Credible evidence and research** provided the foundation for informed policy dialogue. The availability of robust national studies on the economic contribution and financing needs of the Cultural and Creative Industries enabled government institutions, Parliament and sector stakeholders to engage in policy discussions using verifiable evidence rather than anecdotal claims. This significantly enhanced the credibility and influence of cultural financing advocacy.
3. **Constructive multi-stakeholder engagement** also proved essential. Bringing together government institutions, regulatory bodies, cultural practitioners, sector associations and development partners created opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, strengthened institutional trust and encouraged shared

ownership of reform processes. This collaborative approach reduced adversarial engagement and supported more productive policy dialogue.

4. The evaluation further found that **strong sector leadership and an established civil society** played an important enabling role. Existing cultural networks and trusted sector organisations provided effective channels for mobilising practitioners, disseminating evidence and sustaining engagement throughout the reform process. Their longstanding relationships within the sector helped build confidence in the programme and encouraged broad-based participation in policy discussions.
5. Finally, **the strategic timing of programme interventions** significantly increased the programme's influence. By aligning research dissemination, policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement with ongoing national processes, including the Arts Bill consultations, budget discussions and implementation of NDS2, the programme was able to engage decision-makers when opportunities for institutional reform were most likely to emerge. This alignment between evidence, stakeholder engagement and policy windows proved critical to achieving meaningful institutional change.

8.4. Lessons for Scaling or Replication

The Zimbabwe experience demonstrates that institutional reform is most effective when interventions are designed to strengthen and work through existing national systems rather than creating parallel structures. Future cultural financing programmes should therefore prioritise collaboration with established government institutions, recognised sector organisations and trusted civil society partners that already possess institutional legitimacy, stakeholder confidence and sustained engagement within the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Building upon existing institutional relationships is more likely to generate lasting reforms than establishing new coordination mechanisms that may not be sustained beyond the life of a programme.

A second lesson concerns the value of **strategic multi-stakeholder convening**. The evaluation found that bringing policymakers, regulatory institutions, implementing agencies, researchers and cultural practitioners together within the same policy dialogue platforms created opportunities for timely decision-making, strengthened mutual understanding and accelerated consensus on reform priorities. Future initiatives should continue to prioritise structured, evidence-informed dialogue that enables decision-makers and stakeholders to engage directly on shared policy challenges.



The evaluation also demonstrates the importance of integrating **public financial management and expenditure tracking** into programme design from the outset. While policy reforms and increased budget allocations represent important achievements, Zimbabwe's experience shows that these gains must be accompanied by systematic monitoring of budget execution, cash disbursement and resource utilisation. Incorporating expenditure tracking as a core component of cultural financing programmes will strengthen accountability, improve transparency and help ensure that public investment translates into tangible benefits for artists, cultural organisations and creative enterprises.

Finally, the evaluation highlights the importance of adopting adaptive implementation approaches that respond to changing policy opportunities and institutional realities. Programmes seeking to influence cultural financing should combine robust evidence generation, sustained stakeholder engagement and continuous learning, enabling interventions to evolve as reforms progress. This flexibility increases the likelihood that institutional changes will become embedded within government systems and remain sustainable beyond the period of external programme support.

8.5. Lessons Relevant to AU-Level Cultural Financing Reform

The Zimbabwe experience offers several important lessons that may inform the implementation of the African Union's cultural financing agenda and broader continental efforts to strengthen the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs).

1. The evaluation demonstrates that **continental policy commitments are most influential when translated into nationally relevant policy and legislative processes**. The incorporation of the African Union's aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture into consultative drafts of Zimbabwe's proposed Arts Bill illustrates how regional policy frameworks can strengthen domestic reform efforts when supported by credible evidence, stakeholder engagement and sustained dialogue between government and civil society. This experience suggests that AU frameworks achieve greater impact when they are actively integrated into national policy and legislative processes rather than remaining aspirational commitments.
2. The evaluation highlights the importance of **expanding accountability beyond budget allocations to include budget execution and resource utilisation**. Zimbabwe's experience demonstrated that increases in approved budget allocations do not necessarily translate into resources reaching implementing institutions or creative practitioners. This finding suggests that continental monitoring frameworks could be strengthened by complementing assessments of national budget allocations with greater attention to budget execution, cash disbursement and expenditure tracking. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of public investment in the Cultural and Creative Industries across Member States.
3. Lastly, the evaluation underscores the strategic value of **evidence-informed policymaking** as a foundation for cultural financing reform. The commissioning and utilisation of national economic studies significantly strengthened policy dialogue, legislative engagement and budget advocacy in Zimbabwe. This experience suggests that supporting Member States in establishing sustainable cultural statistics systems and in regularly generating sector evidence could substantially improve the quality of policy formulation, resource mobilisation and accountability across the continent.

Collectively, these lessons demonstrate that successful cultural financing reform requires more than increased financial commitments alone. Sustainable progress depends on the interaction among credible evidence, effective institutions, transparent public financial management, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and continued political commitment at both national and continental levels.

The lessons presented in this chapter demonstrate that sustainable institutional reform depends not only on effective programme design and implementation, but also on the extent to which reforms become embedded within government systems and continue to be supported beyond the life of external interventions. Building on these lessons, the following section assesses the sustainability of the institutional changes documented in this evaluation, examining the likelihood that the gains achieved through the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative will be maintained, strengthened and expanded during the 2026–2030 period.

9. SUSTAINABILITY

The institutional changes documented throughout this evaluation represent important milestones in strengthening Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. However, the ultimate success of these reforms will depend not only on what was achieved during the implementation of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, but also on the extent to which these gains are sustained, strengthened, and institutionalised beyond the programme period. Sustainability, in this context, refers to the capacity of government institutions, sector stakeholders and national systems to maintain and build upon the reforms initiated through CfCA without continued reliance on external programme support.

Drawing on the institutional changes identified in Section 4, the contribution analysis in Section 5, the institutionalisation assessment in Section 6, the challenges and constraints discussed in Section 7, and the lessons emerging from the evaluation in Section 8, this chapter assesses the future trajectory of Zimbabwe's cultural financing reforms. It considers the likelihood that institutional gains will continue beyond CfCA support, the extent of government ownership, the principal risks that could affect sustainability, and the opportunities available to further strengthen institutionalisation during the 2026–2030 period.

The assessment recognises that sustainability is not a fixed endpoint but a gradual process through which policies, institutional practices, stakeholder relationships and evidence systems become embedded within national governance structures. Consequently, the analysis considers both the progress already achieved and the actions required to consolidate these gains, ensuring that the reforms catalysed through CfCA continue to contribute to the long-term development of Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

9.1. Overall Sustainability Assessment of Institutional Change

Sustainability Dimension	Assessment	Key Evidence and Justification
Political Sustainability	**Moderate–High**	Government commitment to the Cultural and Creative Industries has strengthened through integration into the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), continued Arts Bill reform processes, statutory regulatory reforms and sustained policy dialogue. These developments indicate that cultural financing has gained increased political recognition and is likely to remain on the national policy agenda.
Institutional Sustainability	**Moderate**	Key policy and regulatory reforms have been embedded within government systems, particularly within the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ). However, continued institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination and implementation mechanisms will be required to consolidate these reforms over the long term.
Financial Sustainability	**Low–Moderate**	Although Government has demonstrated increasing commitment through policy reforms and budget allocations, significant challenges remain in budget execution, cash disbursement and resource traceability. Long-term sustainability will depend on strengthening public financial management and ensuring that approved resources consistently reach implementing institutions and creative practitioners.
Stakeholder Sustainability	**Moderate–High**	The evaluation found stronger institutional relationships, increased policy literacy, improved collaboration and the emergence of a more confident, evidence-informed practitioner community. These gains provide a durable foundation for continued stakeholder engagement and collective advocacy beyond the CfCA programme period.
Evidence Sustainability	**Moderate**	The three national studies established a strong evidence base for cultural financing reforms and significantly improved evidence-informed policymaking. However, sustaining these gains will require the institutionalisation of cultural statistics, regular data collection and continued investment in national evidence systems, including stronger collaboration with ZIMSTAT.

9.2. Likelihood of Continuation of Reforms Beyond CfCA Support

The evaluation concludes that the likelihood of the continuation of the key institutional reforms initiated through the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative is moderately high, particularly in areas where reforms have been formalised through government policies, regulatory decisions and legislative processes. Several of the most significant changes observed during the evaluation have progressed beyond programme activities and are now embedded within national institutional frameworks, increasing the probability that they will be sustained beyond the life of the programme.

The statutory reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees remains in effect, while the incorporation of the African Union's aspiration to allocate 1% of national budgets to culture into the consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill demonstrates continued momentum towards legislative reform. Similarly, the integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries into the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) provides an important policy foundation for continued government recognition of the sector within national planning and economic development processes.

The evaluation also found that the programme has strengthened institutional knowledge, policy awareness and evidence-informed decision-making among government institutions and sector stakeholders. These capacities are likely to endure beyond the programme period because they have become integrated into ongoing policy dialogue and institutional practice. While the pace of future reforms will continue to depend on political commitment, institutional capacity and resource availability, the foundations established through CfCA provide a strong platform for continued progress.

Overall, the assessment indicates that the continuation of reforms is supported by increasing government ownership, strengthened stakeholder engagement and the formalisation of several key policy and regulatory changes. Continued attention to implementation, public financial management, and evidence generation will, however, be essential to ensure that these reforms translate into sustained improvements across Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

9.3. Degree of Institutional Ownership Within Government Systems

The evaluation found a moderate to high degree of institutional ownership of the reforms supported through the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative, particularly at the policy and regulatory levels. Throughout the implementation period, government institutions progressively assumed greater leadership in advancing cultural financing reforms, with several key policy and regulatory decisions being adopted and implemented through established government systems rather than remaining programme-driven initiatives.

Evidence of this ownership is reflected in the statutory reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees, the incorporation of the African Union's aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture into consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill, the integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries into the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), and Government's proposed investment in public film studio infrastructure. Collectively, these actions indicate increasing recognition of the Cultural and Creative Industries as an important contributor to national development, economic growth and employment.

Stakeholder interviews further demonstrated that government institutions increasingly value evidence-informed policymaking and collaborative engagement with the cultural sector. The Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and other public institutions have continued to engage stakeholders in policy dialogue and legislative processes, reflecting growing institutional commitment to the development of the sector.

While government ownership of policy reforms is well established, the evaluation also found that sustaining implementation will require continued investment in institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, public financial management and national evidence systems. Continued collaboration between government, cultural stakeholders and development partners will therefore remain important in supporting implementation while ensuring that ownership of reforms remains firmly embedded within national institutions.

9.4. Key Risks to Sustainability

Risk	Level	Assessment
Budget Execution and Cash Disbursement	**High**	Persistent weaknesses in budget execution and cash disbursement may limit implementation of approved cultural financing policies despite increased budget allocations and policy commitment.
Uneven Provincial Implementation	**Medium**	Variations in institutional capacity, digital connectivity and infrastructure may limit the extent to which reforms benefit creative practitioners across all provinces.
Institutional Mandate and Capacity	**Medium**	Continued institutional strengthening will be required to ensure that sector institutions effectively implement and sustain evolving cultural financing reforms.
Sustainability of Evidence Systems	**Medium**	Maintaining evidence-informed policymaking will require institutionalised cultural statistics, regular data updates and continued investment in national evidence systems.
Implementation Coordination	**Medium**	Continued collaboration among government institutions, regulatory bodies and cultural stakeholders will be necessary to sustain implementation and maintain reform momentum.
Declining Share of National Budget Allocation	**High**	Public funding for arts, culture and heritage fell from 1.24% of the national budget in 2024 to 0.60% in 2025, even as the national budget itself grew substantially over the same period, indicating that recent institutional and policy gains have not yet translated into a stable or protected budget share and may be vulnerable to future reprioritisation.

9.5. Opportunities for Strengthening Institutionalization (2026–2030)

The evaluation identified several strategic opportunities that could further strengthen the institutionalisation of cultural financing reforms during the 2026–2030 period. These opportunities build upon the progress already achieved through the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative and provide a foundation for consolidating long-term institutional change.

1. **Implementation of the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2)** provides an important opportunity to further integrate the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) into national, provincial and local development planning. Continued alignment of cultural financing with national economic development priorities could strengthen decentralised planning, encourage greater policy coherence across levels of government and enhance the visibility of the creative economy within broader development frameworks.
2. **Enactment of the proposed Arts Bill** represents a significant opportunity to consolidate many of the reforms initiated during the evaluation period. Once enacted, the legislation has the potential to provide a stronger statutory foundation for cultural financing, institutional governance, and continued alignment with regional and continental policy commitments, including the African Union's aspiration to allocate 1% of national budgets to culture.
3. **Strengthening public financial management systems** offers a further opportunity to improve the effectiveness of cultural financing. Building on the evidence generated by the evaluation, government institutions and sector stakeholders have an opportunity to institutionalise budget execution monitoring, expenditure tracking, and resource traceability, ensuring that approved public investments translate into tangible benefits for artists, cultural organisations, and creative enterprises.
4. **Institutionalising national cultural statistics and evidence systems** presents another important opportunity. Continued collaboration among government institutions, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), and sector stakeholders could establish routine mechanisms for collecting, analysing, and disseminating cultural statistics. This would strengthen evidence-informed policymaking and provide a more sustainable basis for future planning, budgeting and evaluation.
5. Finally, **consolidating collaborative governance and stakeholder engagement** provides an opportunity to sustain the culture of evidence-informed dialogue established through CfCA. Continued engagement among government institutions, Parliament, regulatory agencies,

cultural practitioners, and development partners will be important for maintaining reform momentum, supporting implementation, and strengthening institutional ownership beyond the programme period.

9.6. Priority Actions Required for Consolidation of Gains

The evaluation identifies the following priority actions as critical for consolidating the institutional gains achieved through the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative and strengthening the long-term sustainability of cultural financing reforms in Zimbabwe.

1. **Strengthen public financial management and expenditure accountability.** Future efforts should move beyond policy advocacy alone to institutionalise systematic monitoring of budget execution, cash disbursement and resource traceability throughout the public financial management cycle. Strengthening expenditure tracking mechanisms will help ensure that approved public resources reach implementing institutions and creative practitioners, thereby improving transparency, accountability and the effectiveness of public investment.
2. **Strengthen decentralised implementation of cultural financing reforms.** Building upon the policy and institutional progress achieved at the national level, future initiatives should invest in strengthening provincial and local implementation capacity. This includes supporting local institutions, improving access to policy information, adapting knowledge resources to local contexts and enhancing coordination between national and sub-national governance structures to ensure that reforms benefit creative practitioners across all provinces.
3. **Institutionalise national cultural statistics and evidence systems.** The evaluation demonstrates the value of evidence-informed policy-making in advancing cultural financing reforms. A priority for the 2026–2030 period should therefore be the establishment of sustainable mechanisms for collecting, analysing and disseminating cultural statistics, including continued collaboration with the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT). Institutionalising cultural data systems will provide a stronger evidence base for future policy formulation, budgeting and evaluation.
4. **Strengthen the enabling policy and regulatory environment for the Cultural and Creative Industries.** The continued implementation of the proposed Arts Bill and the ongoing review of policies and statutory instruments provide an opportunity to further modernise Zimbabwe's cultural governance framework. Particular attention should be given to strengthening incentives that promote investment, entrepreneurship, innovation, and market development across the full Cultural and Creative Industries ecosystem, including a review of fiscal measures that support creative production and enterprise development.
5. **Institutionalise collaborative governance and evidence-informed policy dialogue.** Sustaining the momentum generated through CfCA will require continued collaboration between government institutions, Parliament, regulatory bodies, cultural practitioners and development partners. Establishing regular mechanisms for policy dialogue, evidence sharing and joint review of implementation progress will strengthen government ownership, reinforce accountability and support the continued institutionalisation of cultural financing reforms beyond the programme period.

9.7. Stakeholder Priorities for Future Programming

During stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions, association leaders and representatives of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) identified several priorities that they believe would strengthen future cultural financing programmes. These perspectives complement the evaluation findings presented in this report and reflect the sector's own priorities for sustaining reform momentum beyond the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative.

1. **Sustain continuous policy engagement.** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining regular, structured engagement with government institutions rather than relying exclusively on large, resource-intensive events. Periodic dialogue with the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), Parliament and other key institutions was viewed as an effective means of maintaining policy momentum, strengthening institutional relationships and responding to emerging policy issues as they arise.
2. **Strengthen a decentralised community of policy advocates.** Stakeholders recommended

continued investment in building the capacity of committed cultural practitioners from across Zimbabwe's provinces to engage in policy dialogue, budget advocacy and public accountability. Strengthening a geographically diverse network of informed advocates would help sustain engagement beyond individual project cycles while improving representation from provincial and rural communities.

3. **Consolidate collaborative governance mechanisms.** Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of maintaining the collaborative relationships established during the programme between government institutions, cultural practitioners, sector associations and development partners. Continued investment in structured dialogue, joint planning and evidence sharing was considered essential for sustaining trust, supporting implementation and strengthening institutional ownership of cultural financing reforms.



10. CONCLUSION

This evaluation assessed the contribution of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative to strengthening cultural financing systems in Zimbabwe between 2023 and 2026. Using Outcome Harvesting, Contribution Analysis, documentary review and stakeholder consultations, the assessment examined the institutional changes influenced by the programme, the extent to which these changes have become embedded within government systems, the challenges that continue to affect implementation and the prospects for sustaining these reforms beyond the programme period.

Overall, the evaluation finds that CfCA made a significant catalytic contribution to Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem. By combining evidence generation, strategic policy dialogue and collaborative stakeholder engagement, the programme strengthened the conditions for institutional reform and contributed to measurable changes in policy, regulation, governance and public financial management. While these achievements were realised within a broader context of government leadership and longstanding sector advocacy, the programme played an important role in accelerating reform processes and strengthening evidence-informed decision-making across Zimbabwe's Cultural and Creative Industries.

10.1. Overall Level of CfCA Contribution to Change

The evaluation concludes that the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative made a significant and catalytic contribution to strengthening Zimbabwe's cultural financing ecosystem during the 2024–2026 implementation period. Through the generation of credible evidence, strategic policy dialogue, collaborative stakeholder engagement and technical support, the programme contributed to important institutional changes in policy, regulation, governance and public financial management.

The assessment recognises that these reforms were achieved within a broader context of government leadership, longstanding advocacy by cultural practitioners, civil society organisations and sector associations, and the contribution of other development partners. Rather than acting in isolation, CfCA strengthened and accelerated ongoing reform processes by providing evidence, facilitating dialogue and creating opportunities for collaboration between government institutions and cultural stakeholders. This catalytic role enabled existing reform momentum to translate into tangible institutional outcomes.

Drawing on the Contribution Analysis undertaken in this evaluation, the overall level of CfCA's contribution to institutional change is assessed as **Moderate to High**. This assessment reflects the programme's significant influence in accelerating policy and regulatory reforms while appropriately recognising that institutional change resulted from the combined efforts of government institutions, cultural practitioners, civil society organisations and other sector partners. The evaluation, therefore, concludes that CfCA was an important catalyst for institutional reform whose influence is evident in the strengthening of Zimbabwe's cultural financing policy and governance architecture.

10.2. Degree of Institutional Progress Achieved

The evaluation concludes that Zimbabwe achieved substantial institutional progress in strengthening its cultural financing ecosystem during the 2023–2026 period. The assessment documented significant advances in policy reform, regulatory change, evidence generation, stakeholder engagement and the integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) into national development planning. Collectively, these reforms represent an important shift towards a more coordinated, evidence-informed and institutionally supported approach to cultural financing.

Among the most significant achievements were the statutory reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees, the incorporation of the African Union's aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture into consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill, the integration of the Cultural and Creative Industries into the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2),

and the establishment of a stronger national evidence base through the commissioning of three pioneering economic studies. These reforms have strengthened the institutional environment within which the cultural sector operates and increased government recognition of the sector's contribution to national development, employment and economic growth.

Drawing on the institutionalisation assessment presented in Section 6, the evaluation concludes that policy and regulatory institutionalisation has reached an advanced level, reflecting the extent to which key reforms have been incorporated into government policy, regulatory frameworks and legislative processes. At the same time, institutional progress remains uneven across the cultural financing system. While policy reform has advanced considerably, public financial management, particularly budget execution, cash disbursement and resource traceability, remains at an emerging stage of institutional development. Continued efforts to strengthen implementation, institutional capacity and fiscal accountability will therefore be essential to consolidate the progress achieved during the evaluation period.

10.3. Strategic Significance for National and Continental Reform

The findings of this evaluation have important implications for the future of cultural financing reform in Zimbabwe and across the African continent. The Zimbabwe experience demonstrates that institutional change within the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) is most effective when credible evidence, inclusive stakeholder engagement, government ownership and sustained policy dialogue are pursued in an integrated manner. Together, these elements created an enabling environment for policy and regulatory reforms that extend beyond individual programme outputs and contribute to longer-term institutional development.

At the national level, the evaluation demonstrates the value of evidence-informed policymaking in strengthening cultural governance and public investment. The experience of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative shows that high-quality research, constructive engagement between government and cultural stakeholders, and alignment with national development priorities can significantly strengthen policy dialogue and contribute to meaningful institutional reform. The findings also highlight the importance of complementing policy advocacy with continued attention to implementation, public financial management and institutional accountability.

At the continental level, the evaluation provides practical lessons for African Union Member States seeking to strengthen cultural financing systems. Zimbabwe's experience illustrates how regional policy aspirations, such as the African Union's commitment to increasing investment in culture, can be translated into nationally owned policy and legislative reforms when supported by credible evidence, effective institutions and collaborative governance. The evaluation further demonstrates the importance of strengthening public financial management, expenditure tracking and evidence systems to ensure that policy commitments translate into tangible benefits for cultural practitioners and institutions.

Ultimately, the strategic significance of the CfCA initiative lies not only in the institutional reforms achieved during the evaluation period but also in the demonstration that sustainable cultural financing requires an integrated approach combining policy reform, evidence generation, institutional capacity, stakeholder collaboration and accountable public financial management. These lessons provide a valuable foundation for future cultural financing initiatives in Zimbabwe and offer relevant insights for broader continental efforts to strengthen the Cultural and Creative Industries as drivers of inclusive social and economic development.

Most Significant Change

"The increased participation and confidence of cultural actors in policy dialogue and advocacy processes, supported by stronger evidence, improved relationships with government institutions, and growing recognition of culture as an economic sector."
— Consolidated Interview Findings, June 2026

In conclusion, the CfCA initiative has helped establish a stronger institutional foundation for cultural financing reform in Zimbabwe. The priority now is to consolidate these gains through sustained government ownership, effective implementation, continued evidence generation and collaborative stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the reforms achieved continue to strengthen the Cultural and Creative Industries as a driver of national development.

Annex 1: Data Collection Methods

Method	Purpose
Documentary Review	Review of policies, legislation, budgets, programme reports and strategic documents.
Key Informant Interviews	Collection of evidence from senior government officials, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), cultural associations and other strategic stakeholders.
Focus Group Discussions	Validation of institutional changes, stakeholder perspectives and lessons emerging from programme implementation.
Outcome Harvesting	Identification and verification of significant institutional changes occurring during programme implementation.
Contribution Analysis	Assessment of CfCA's contribution to observed institutional changes while recognising the influence of other actors and contextual factors.

Annex 2: List of Key Informants

Institution	Position	Method
Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture	Director of Arts and Culture	Key Informant Interview
National Arts Council of Zimbabwe	CEO	Key Informant Interview
National Arts Council	Provincial Manager	Interview
Cultural Associations	Association Leaders:	Focus Group
Parliament	Portfolio Committee	Interview
Zimbabwe Theatre Association	Chairperson	Interview
PANELZ	Executive Chairperson	Interview
House of Arts	Director	Interview
Chenhaka	Programmes Manager	Interview

Annex 3: Chenhaka Trust Outcome Harvesting Register — Summary

The following summarises the 10 outcomes documented in the Chenhaka Trust CfCA Outcome Harvesting Register, providing the evidentiary backbone of this report.

Outcome	Domain	Institutionalization Status
1. 1% Target in Arts Bill	Policy	Established
2. NACZ Fee Reduction	Institutional	Embedded
3. Inclusive Dialogue Platforms	Governance	Embedded
4. Film Studio Budget Allocation	Financing	Established
5. Unified Advocacy Coalition	Stakeholder Engagement	Embedded
6. Economic Research Adopted by Parliament	Evidence Systems	Embedded
7. CCIs in NDS2 Ease of Doing Business	Policy / Systems Change	Embedded
8. Youth & Gender Coalition (10 Provinces)	Governance / Youth & Gender	Emerging
9. Shift to Disbursement Auditing	Financing / Fiscal Accountability	Established
10. AU Action Plan Mapped to Domestic Strategy	Policy / Regional Integration	Embedded

Outcome	CfCA Contribution Rating	Significance Rating
1. 1% Target in Arts Bill	High	High
2. NACZ Fee Reduction	High	High
3. Inclusive Dialogue Platforms	High	High
4. Film Studio Budget Allocation	Moderate	Moderate
5. Unified Advocacy Coalition	High	High
6. Economic Research Adopted	High	High
7. CCIs in NDS2	High	High
8. Youth & Gender Coalition	Moderate	High
9. Shift to Disbursement Auditing	High	High
10. AU Action Plan Mapping	High	High

Annex 4. Timeline of Major Institutional Changes (2023–2026)

Period	Institutional Milestone	Significance
2023	Launch of the Connect for Culture Africa (CfCA) initiative in Zimbabwe.	Established the foundation for evidence generation, policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement on cultural financing.
2024	Commissioning and dissemination of three national studies on the Cultural and Creative Industries.	Strengthened the national evidence base and informed policy discussions on cultural financing, employment and economic contribution.
2024–2025	High-level policy dialogues and stakeholder consultations involving Government, Parliament, the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ), cultural associations and development partners.	Improved institutional relationships and strengthened evidence-informed policy engagement.
January 2025	High-level policy dialogue convened at Alliance Française in Harare.	Brought senior policymakers and sector stakeholders together, contributing to momentum for subsequent regulatory reforms.
2025–2026	Cultural and Creative Industries incorporated into National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2).	Elevated recognition of the sector within national development planning and economic policy.
30 January 2026	NACZ announces and brings into effect the reduction of National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) registration fees.	Reduced regulatory barriers to formalisation and demonstrated government responsiveness to evidence-informed policy dialogue.
29 May 2026	Statutory Instrument 93 of 2026 formally gazettes the NACZ fee reduction (National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026, No. 4).	Regularised the administrative reform in law, providing a citable legal basis for the reform and enabling independent verification by stakeholders.
2026	African Union aspiration for allocating 1% of national budgets to culture incorporated into consultative drafts of the proposed Arts Bill.	Strengthened alignment between national legislative reform and continental cultural policy commitments.
2026	Public financial management analysis identified significant gaps between budget allocations and cash disbursements.	Shifted sector advocacy from budget allocation towards budget execution, expenditure tracking and public financial accountability.
2026	Completion of the CfCA National Impact Story Evaluation.	Documented institutional change, assessed CfCA's contribution and identified priorities for sustaining reforms during the 2026–2030 period.




CICA



