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# REVENUE MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE: CASE OF CHEGUTU MUNICIPALITY

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**ABSTRACT**
This study examines the revenue mobilization strategies used by local authorities, specifically focusing on Chegutu Municipality in Zimbabwe. The motivation for this research came from management meetings held at Chegutu Municipality from May to July 2025, during which a significant link was found between effective revenue mobilization and the municipality's ability to meet its service delivery obligations. The study evaluates the effectiveness of current revenue generation methods, identifies main challenges, and explores innovative strategies to strengthen local revenue streams. An exploratory research approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The methodology mainly involved analyzing secondary data from Chegutu Municipality's internal databases and financial reports, along with a comprehensive review of relevant literature on municipal operations. Primary data was gathered through interviews with key informants, including senior municipal officials. Additionally, the methodology included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observational methods, and detailed document analysis. A total of 112 participants took part, including members of the Chegutu Municipality management team, residents, and officials from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works, and National Housing. The results show that, although some revenue mobilization strategies in Chegutu Municipality are effective, a complex mix of socio-economic and political factors still hinder optimal revenue collection, which impacts service delivery. Major issues identified include persistently low compliance rates among ratepayers and limited stakeholder engagement. The study concludes that successful revenue mobilization strategies must be highly adaptable to current socio-economic and political conditions. Therefore, it recommends diversifying revenue sources and increasing public participation in revenue-related initiatives. This research provides practical insights for local authorities in Zimbabwe and similar contexts, aiming to improve revenue mobilization strategies amid difficult economic and fiscal conditions.

**Keywords:** Revenue, Mobilization, Strategies, Service delivery.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Contextual analysis of local governance in Zimbabwe

The National Development Agenda in Zimbabwe places significant emphasis on the role of local authorities. On November 1, 2023, His Excellency, President Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, launched the "Call to Action – No Compromise to Service Delivery" framework. This initiative explicitly links the performance of local authorities to the broader national aspiration of achieving an upper-middle-income economy by 2030, as outlined in Vision 2030 Agenda. This vision underscores that while income per capita defines an upper-middle-income economy, the quality-of-service

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delivery by local authorities must align with the standards expected of such an economy. An integrated approach is being implemented to ensure that all 92 urban and rural local authorities nationwide provide services consistent with this ambitious national goal.

The legal framework governing urban councils in Zimbabwe is mainly outlined in the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15. This Act specifies a broad range of responsibilities for local authorities, which are essential for the operation and development of urban areas. These key functions include, but are not limited to, providing potable water, valuing and assessing properties for rating purposes, cleaning, waste collection and disposal, and operating fire brigades and municipal police. Additionally, urban councils are responsible for delivering social services such as education, health, and ambulance services, as well as maintaining social amenities, housing, parking, and constructing and maintaining sewers, drains, and roads. Successfully fulfilling these extensive service delivery responsibilities depends on local authorities raising enough sustainable revenue. (World Bank, 2019). Globally and especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe, effective revenue collection is seen as a vital function supporting quality service delivery, promoting local development, and enhancing communities' overall well-being (Alm & Farooq, 2024). However, Zimbabwean local authorities regularly face major challenges in generating sufficient revenue. These difficulties arise from a mix of economic limitations, restricted fiscal tools, and deeply rooted systemic institutional weaknesses.

A notable disjuncture exists between the central government's ambitious national vision and the practical realities encountered by the local authorities. While the "Call to Action" framework and Vision 2030 set high standards for service delivery and economic transformation, on-the-ground situation at the local level is frequently characterized by severe financial limitations and operational inefficiencies. This creates a substantial gap between policy aspirations and practical implementation. For instance, despite the national directives for improved performance, many local authorities struggle to mobilize revenue with collection efficiencies reportedly falling below 50% (Dube, 2019). This suggests that merely articulating a grand vision or setting performance benchmarks from the top is often insufficient without simultaneously addressing the profound structural and operational impediments that hinder local fiscal capacity. Such a situation necessitates a more integrated, multi-level governance approach which extends beyond policy pronouncements to include tangible support, robust capacity building and fundamental reforms of the underlying systems which empower local authorities to meet their mandated responsibilities. The study, therefore, seeks to establish revenue mobilization strategies for local authorities to enhance revenue collection efficiency and contribute to the attainment of an upper-middle-income economy by 2030.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Chegutu Municipality is struggling to achieve 100% revenue collection efficiency. This failure to collect enough revenue affects the quality-of-service delivery; therefore, it is important to develop revenue mobilization strategies to improve services, which in turn helps reach growth goals and supports the country's Vision 2030. Chegutu Municipality exemplifies the wider challenges faced by urban councils across Zimbabwe. The municipality is dealing with a serious decline in revenue streams and faces significant rates arrears from residents, businesses, and even government departments. As of March 2025, Chegutu's Finance Director, Mr. F. Shuwa, noted that the municipality was owed over ZWL 228,805,364.48 in unpaid rates and fees (Chegutu Municipality, 2025). This large debt directly hampers the municipality's ability to provide services, causing visible infrastructure deterioration and reduced service quality. The financial challenges in Chegutu are complex. The municipality's revenue base is narrow and unreliable, with ongoing drops in property rate collections, low compliance with business license requirements, and a general failure to tap into other revenue sources (Government of Zimbabwe, 2025). Adding to these problems, fiscal transfers from the central government—including devolution grants—and support from donors have become more inconsistent. This unpredictability demands a major reevaluation of the municipality's financial strategy, with a focus on increasing self-reliance.

Beyond the revenue sources themselves, systemic inefficiencies worsen Chegutu's financial problems. The enforcement of revenue-related bylaws remains weak, technological updates are slow, and institutional capacity is often limited (Mbambi, 2024). The broader national economic and policy environment, marked by hyperinflation and frequent policy changes, creates significant volatility and uncertainty, further complicating the local fiscal situation (Zimbabwe National Risk Assessment Report, 2021). These factors collectively lead to ongoing underperformance in local revenue collection, placing heavy pressure on fiscal resources, hindering service delivery, and undermining public trust in local governance. A notable gap exists in current academic research on revenue mobilization in Zimbabwe. Although various strategies have been introduced over time, there is a lack of empirical evaluation regarding their actual effectiveness, adaptability, and sustainability, especially within small-to-medium-sized municipalities like Chegutu.

Most research tends to focus on major urban centers, often overlooking the unique challenges and potential benefits faced by smaller municipalities. This oversight has created a critical gap, especially around context-specific strategies that could genuinely improve these local authorities' financial health. Chegutu Municipality's challenges demonstrate a self-perpetuating negative cycle, often called the vicious cycle of distrust and underperformance. Chronic revenue shortfalls lead to poor service delivery, which fuels public dissatisfaction and results in low compliance among ratepayers. This reduced compliance then worsens revenue gaps, continuing the cycle of underperformance and diminishing public confidence in local governance (Zimbabwe National Risk Assessment Report, 2021). This pattern indicates that simply introducing new revenue collection strategies without addressing underlying governance issues and service delivery problems will likely produce limited and unsustainable results, as citizens' willingness to pay remains affected. Breaking this cycle requires a comprehensive intervention that addresses financial, governance, and public engagement issues to restore both functionality and legitimacy to the municipality.

**1.3 Research objectives**

The overall objective of this study is to establish revenue mobilisation strategies suitable for Chegutu Municipality.

**1.3.1Auxiliary Objectives:**

i) To identify and assess the current revenue mobilization strategies employed by Chegutu Municipality
ii) To evaluate the effectiveness of existing revenue mobilization methods in meeting the financial needs of the municipality.

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iii) To establish factors affecting revenue mobilization in Chegutu Municipality
iv) To explore best practices in revenue mobilization from other local authorities within the region that could apply to Chegutu
v) To suggest revenue mobilisation strategies suitable for Chegutu Municipality

**1.4 Research Questions**

Main Research Question

What revenue mobilization strategies can be adopted by Chegutu Municipality?

**1.4.1 Complementary Research Questions**

i) What are the current strategies used by Chegutu Municipality to mobilize revenue?
ii) How effective are these revenue mobilization strategies in ensuring adequate service delivery and development?
iii) What are the factors influencing revenue mobilization in Chegutu Municipality?
iv) What are the best practices in revenue mobilization in other cities and the region that are relevant to Chegutu?
v) What revenue mobilization strategies can be adopted by Chegutu Municipality?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON MUNICIPAL REVENUE GENERATION

Local governments worldwide typically rely on a range of revenue sources to fund their operations and service delivery. These commonly include property taxes (rates), user fees for services like water and refuse collection, business licenses, intergovernmental transfers (grants) from central or provincial governments, and borrowing (loans) from financial institutions (UN-HABITAT, 2015). Each of these sources has its strengths and weaknesses, particularly when applied in a developing context. Property taxes, for instance, are generally considered stable but can be challenging to administer effectively in areas with outdated valuation rolls or weak enforcement. User fees are directly linked to service consumption, promoting efficiency, but can be regressive if not properly structured.

Nevertheless, developing countries frequently encounter significant impediments to effective revenue generation. These include narrow tax bases, often due to a large informal sector that is difficult to tax and low collection efficiency stemming from administrative weaknesses and inadequate enforcement (IMF, 2024). These issues are frequently compounded by economic volatility, such as hyperinflation and currency fluctuations and broader institutional weaknesses, including issues of governance and transparency.

In the African context, intergovernmental fiscal transfers remain the most significant source of revenue for the majority of cities. The region also faces particular challenges in mobilizing tax revenue, often characterized by prevalent exemptions in personal and corporate income tax regimes. For instance, capital gains and financial incomes are frequently untaxed or taxed at low rates and corporate income tax exemptions are widely used to encourage investment, often through special economic zones (Dube, 2019). While intended to stimulate growth, these exemptions can significantly narrow the tax base and limit revenue potential. Reviewing best practices and innovations from other regions and within Africa reveals several priorities for improving both the efficiency and equity of tax systems. These include enhancing tax policy design to broaden the tax base and increase progressivity, strengthening revenue administration to improve compliance and implementing structural reforms. There is also a growing recognition of the significance of repayable finance such as municipal borrowing and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as crucial mechanisms for closing infrastructure investment gaps and accelerating job creation.

Despite the potential of such financing, many developing cities struggle to access commercial finance, leading to what can be described as the “missing middle” in municipal finance. This challenge arises from a combination of demand-side constraints, where municipalities often lack creditworthiness and the capacity to structure viable projects that can attract private investment, and supply-side challenges characterized by shallow financial markets and limited investor appetite (SALGA, 2012). For instance, only a small fraction of large cities in developing countries possess an international investment-grade credit rating, and even fewer have issued municipal bonds. This inability to access larger pools of capital for infrastructure and services limits their capacity for significant development. Therefore, effective revenue mobilization strategies should extend beyond basic internal collection to encompass building the institutional capacity and financial credibility necessary to access diverse capital markets, thereby unlocking greater investment for sustainable urban growth.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted an exploratory case study design to provide an in-depth analysis of revenue mobilization strategies, specifically within Chegutu Municipality. This design is especially suitable for this study because it allows for a detailed exploration of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the municipality in revenue collection. The study involved a diverse group of 112 participants, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of revenue mobilization from multiple stakeholder perspectives. This group included members of the Chegutu Municipality management team, residents, and officials from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works, and National Housing. To gain detailed insights into the operational and financial aspects of revenue mobilization, key informant interviews were specifically conducted with officials such as the Director of Finance, Revenue Accountant, Debt Collection Manager, Environmental Health Officer, and Deputy Engineer. Including these different groups enabled triangulation of perspectives, providing a complete view of the challenges and opportunities in revenue generation within the municipality (Hasan & Kumar, 2024). The study also involved a thorough analysis of secondary data primarily sourced from Chegutu Municipality’s internal databases and financial reports. This analysis included a review of monthly financial reports, budget documents, debt registers, revenue collection reports, and audit reports. The purpose was to gain quantitative insights into the municipality’s revenue sources, collection efficiency, historical arrears, and expenditure trends over time. This empirical basis was essential for assessing the municipality’s financial performance and identifying key patterns.

The comprehensive array of data collection methods, such as secondary data, key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, observation, and document analysis, was a strategic choice for triangulation. This multi-source approach significantly enhances the validity

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and reliability of the findings by allowing for cross-referencing information and perspectives from different angles (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For instance, the financial reports indicated the collection rates, while interviews with the Debt Collection Manager explained the operational challenges, and observations revealed the procedural gaps or the prevailing public sentiment. This integrated approach is particularly valuable towards mitigating potential biases which the study acknowledges as a limitation by providing a more complete and corroborated picture of the complex realities of the revenue mobilization in Chegutu Municipality. The quantitative data was derived primarily from questionnaires, Chegutu Municipality's financial reports, and descriptive statistics. This involved calculating measures such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations to summarize and present the key characteristics of the data. For instance, the descriptive statistics were used to quantify revenue collection rates, identify the proportion of outstanding arrears from different sectors, for instance, residents, businesses, government departments, and analyze trends in revenue performance over time. This allowed for a clear empirical assessment of the effectiveness of existing revenue mobilization methods and the scale of financial challenges. The qualitative data was obtained from key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, observational notes, and document analysis, thematic analysis was the primary technique.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents and analyzes the empirical findings of the study, addressing each auxiliary research objective in detail. The analysis incorporates both quantitative data derived from Chegutu Municipality's financial reports and qualitative information gleaned from key informant interviews and resident perceptions.

### 4.1. Revenue Mobilization Strategies Chegutu Municipality

**Property Rates and Valuation**

The study found that property rates constitute a fundamental revenue source for urban councils, typically based on property valuations. In March 2025, property rates contributed ZIG2, 433,967.03 to the municipality's revenue. A significant portion of the budget, specifically ZIG257, 560,811.00, is allocated towards Governance and Administration, which encompasses rate collection efforts. The municipality explicitly identifies the "effective use of valuation roll" as both a short-term and medium-term strategy for enhancing revenue. Despite the recognition of property rates as a primary income stream and the strategic intent to utilize the valuation roll effectively, there appears to be a substantial under-exploitation of the property tax base. Financial reports consistently show low collection efficiency for "Rates" standing at 32% in February 2025 and 31% in March 2025. This indicates that a significant portion of billed rates remains uncollected. Furthermore, the presence of vacant commercial stands within the municipality suggests a substantial untapped revenue potential.

**Business Licenses and Fees**

Documentary review revealed that business licenses and various associated fees represent another significant traditional revenue stream for Chegutu Municipality. In March 2025, "Business License" contributed ZIG1, 213,986.56 to the municipality's revenue. The municipality's database enumerates a wide array of businesses, including 655 distinct entries ranging from groceries, butcheries, and hardware stores to pharmacies and private schools. Moreover, 60 contractors,

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engineers, and artisans are listed, indicating a diverse base for licensing and related fees. These fees also encompass charges for health inspections, building inspections, and plan approvals, all contributing towards the municipal coffers.

While business licenses are a major contributor, there is a potential for revenue leakage stemming from compliance issues and internal control weaknesses. Compounding this, the Executive Summary highlights disciplinary issues within the finance department, including instances of "missing receipt books" and employees "converting USD dollars to ZWL/ZWG". Such irregularities directly point to internal fraud or mismanagement, particularly concerning cash-based transactions such as license fees. Respondent 15 confirmed this, stating that:

> *We have had issues, yes. Some staff, unfortunately, have been found to be diverting funds or not issuing proper receipts. It's a constant battle to ensure all business license fees collected actually reach the municipal accounts. We have even had cases where entire receipt books just vanish, making it impossible to track (R15).*

These internal control failures and compliance gaps mean that the municipality is likely losing substantial revenue, undermining the overall effectiveness of this traditional revenue source. This situation underscores the critical need for robust internal audit and control systems as revenue mobilization efforts can be undermined from within, eroding both financial capacity and public trust. The low compliance rates also indicate an untapped revenue potential from the informal sector and unregistered businesses, representing a significant opportunity for broadening the tax base.

**Leases and Rentals (Commercial, Churches, Open Spaces)**

The study found out that the Municipality actively generates revenue through leasing of various properties and spaces. The Churches and Open Spaces database provides a detailed breakdown of leased properties, churches, and other open spaces, indicating their respective monthly rental incomes. For instance, the Council Lease Register alone totals $13,634 USD per month with individual leases ranging from a swimming bath at $10,000/month to smaller spaces for mobile money transfers at $150 USD/month. Churches contribute an additional $4,924 USD per month from 64 leased sites, while other open space leases generate $9,755 USD per month. Furthermore, "Way Leave" agreements with entities like NRZ, ZESA and Water Way Leave also contribute to revenue. The Tuckshops data base lists 32 Tuckshops with leases, each contributing $23 or $46 USD monthly.

Despite the diverse portfolio of leased properties, there is an indication of untapped potential and contract management deficiencies. The financial reports show that the collection efficiency for "Lease / Rent" is consistently low, recorded at 29% in February 2025 and 33% in March 2025. This suggests that a significant portion of the billed rental income is not being collected. A review of the market stalls reveals that out of 1908 market stalls, 946 are non-active. This represents a substantial underutilized asset base which could generate considerable revenue if effectively managed and leased. The "Overnight Car Park" in the Council Lease Register, for instance, has no listed monthly rent indicating a potential oversight in monetizing certain municipal assets. Respondent 1, noted that:

> *We have so much land and so many market stalls, but half of them are sitting idle. We need a better system to market these assets and ensure consistent collection from the ones that are leased. It is frustrating to see so much potential just wasted (R1).*

These observations collectively suggest weaknesses in lease management, enforcement, and overall asset utilization strategies, leading to a significant loss of potential revenue from existing municipal properties. This situation indicates that optimizing existing asset utilization through better management and marketing, rather than solely focusing on new projects, presents an immediate and significant opportunity for revenue diversification and enhancement.

**Income Generating Projects (IGPs)**

In a strategic move to diversify its revenue base beyond traditional taxes and fees, Chegutu Municipality is actively considering several income-generating projects. The Chegutu Municipality finance report for March 2025, lists these proposed IGPs: "Water bottling", "Quarry," "Guest houses," "Flats (student accommodation)," "Sand abstraction," "Mining," and a "Truck Inn". The responsibility for these initiatives has been assigned to the Business Development Officer, indicating a dedicated focus on their exploration and potential implementation. The exploration of these IGPs represents a forward-looking approach towards revenue diversification, aligning with the study's recommendation to "diversify revenue streams. Nevertheless, the current status of these projects, being "considered," suggests they are in early stages of development and are not yet contributing significantly to the municipality's immediate revenue needs. The acute fiscal challenges faced by Chegutu Municipality as demonstrated by declining collection efficiencies, substantial outstanding debtors and prevailing liquidity challenges, highlight a pressing need for short-term financial solutions. Respondent 5 noted that:

> *These income-generating projects are our future but they take time and significant investment. We cannot rely on them for immediate cash flow. Our focus right now has to be on improving what we already have. We are talking years, not months, before these can make a real impact (R5).*

While strategically sound for long-term sustainability, these IGPs are unlikely to provide immediate relief to the municipality's current liquidity constraints. This necessitates a balanced approach which not only invests in future diversification but also vigorously addresses current collection inefficiencies from the existing revenue streams. This situation indicates a critical mismatch between long-term diversification strategies and acute short-term fiscal needs.

## 4.2. Administrative and Policy-Based Strategies

Beyond direct revenue streams, Chegutu Municipality employs various administrative and policy-based strategies aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its revenue collection processes. Given the substantial outstanding debt, effective debt recovery is paramount for Chegutu Municipality. The Chegutu financial reports 2025, explicitly outline several debt recovery mechanisms, including "Aggressive debt collection" and the implementation of "Payment plans" as both short-term and medium-term strategies. A key innovation highlighted is the "Proposed use of smart meters" (prepaid water meters), which is deemed "crucial" for debt collection as a portion of the historical debt can be recovered when ratepayers purchase tokens monthly. Litigation is also mentioned as a strategy to enforce debt recovery. The study underscores the urgency of this issue,

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noting that the Municipality is "grappling with issues such as declining revenue streams, significant rates arrears from residents and businesses". Despite the stated commitment to aggressive debt collection, the municipality faces a systemic challenge of debt accumulation. The Debtors Age Analysis consistently reveals that the largest portion of outstanding debt is categorized as "120 DAYS+," amounting to ZiG163, 472,694.32 out of a total ZiG228, 805,364.48 in March 2025. This indicates that traditional debt recovery methods are largely ineffective against long-standing arrears. Respondent 10, the Director of Finance, highlighted during an interview that the municipality was owed over ZWL 228,805,364.48 in unpaid rates and fees, which had "negatively affected cash flow and operations". The Director of Finance, Mr F. Shuwa further elaborated:

> *The sheer volume of old debt is paralyzing us. It is on the books, but it is not cash. We can't pay our suppliers or fund new projects with uncollected arrears especially when government entities are also major defaulters. We send out notices, we call, but it is like shouting into a void for the really old debts.*

The proposed introduction of smart meters for water is a clear acknowledgment that the conventional methods are failing to address the chronic debt problem, necessitating a more automated and pre-emptive approach to debt recovery. This persistent accumulation of aged debt suggests that the underlying causes of non-compliance, such as residents' inability or unwillingness to pay or a lack of perceived consequences for non-payment, are not being adequately addressed by current "aggressive" methods. This implies the need for a more sophisticated, tiered debt management strategy which moves beyond generic "aggression" to targeted, systematic interventions, potentially leveraging technology for automated recovery and enforcement. The significant debt owed by government entities and large corporations represents a complex barrier to financial health, requiring high-level strategic intervention.

**Digital Integration and ERP Systems**

The study found out that Chegutu Municipality recognizes the strategic significance of technology towards enhancing efficiency and transparency in its operations. The municipality currently utilizes several Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, including PROMUN for general ledger, stores, cashbooks, creditors, debtors billing, costing, debtors' loans and rentals and human resources; SIMACC for land sales and billing; LADS for parking, Mobicol vending, and housing; EGP for procurement; and GIS for geographical information systems. A "digitization roadmap proposal" from Axis Solutions is currently under consideration by management with the aim of ensuring that "all departments" process is done electronically so as to enhance efficiency and reduce various risks. The municipality believes that technology-based operations will "cut costs on labor and improve on easy of doing business as well significantly reduce bureaucracy and reduction of instances of corruption.

While the intent to digitize is clear, the current state of fragmented systems and the ongoing consideration of a comprehensive roadmap suggest that full digital integration has not yet been achieved. The presence of multiple, distinct ERP platforms for different functions can lead to data

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silos, reconciliation challenges and operational inefficiencies, limiting the full benefits of digitization. Respondent 12,

> *We have many systems but they do not always talk to each other. It is like having different pieces of a puzzle that do not quite fit. A unified system would be a game-changer for efficiency and transparency. Right now, we spend too much time manually reconciling data between different platforms (R12).*

The fact that a "digitization roadmap proposal" is still "being considered" implies that the municipality is in the early stages of realizing its vision for a fully integrated digital system. The explicit mention of reducing "instances of corruption" through technology also hints at existing vulnerabilities within the manual or semi-manual processes. This fragmentation and incomplete integration mean that the municipality has not yet fully leveraged technology to its potential for revenue mobilization which could contribute to existing inefficiencies and vulnerabilities in financial management. True digital transformation, involving a unified ERP system, is not merely an efficiency upgrade but a fundamental governance reform that can plug revenue leakages, enhance transparency, and rebuild public trust by demonstrating accountability.

**Ward-Based Retention Strategy**

An innovative policy adopted by Chegutu Municipality to incentivize timely payments is the ward-based retention strategy. This initiative encourages residents to pay their dues by allowing their respective wards to retain a percentage of the collected revenue for a ward-based project of their choice. Specifically, wards can retain 10% or 5% of what they collect upon reaching a threshold of 80% or 50% respectively of their budgeted revenue. Ward 10 has been highlighted as a success story, having surpassed the 50% threshold with a collection efficiency of 53% and will therefore be allocated 5% of its revenue for a chosen project. Despite the success in Ward 10, there are indications of disparities in incentive effectiveness and potential equity concerns across the municipality. The Finance Committee Reports provide ward-based collection efficiencies, showing a wide range of performance. For instance, Ward one recorded a mere 24% collection efficiency while Ward 12 stood at 22%. This significant variation suggests that the incentive may not be equally effective or motivating for all wards. Respondent 10, noted that:

> *Ward 10 did well, but it's not working everywhere. Some wards have more challenges and the incentive might not be strong enough if basic services are not there. We need to rethink how we motivate everyone. It feels unfair to some wards when others are struggling with basic infrastructure.*

The call from policymakers to "refine the ward retention strategy" to "take into consideration a number of factors" further supports the notion that its current design may have limitations or unintended consequences, potentially related to fairness or perceived equity amongst the different areas of the municipality. This means that for the strategy to be truly effective across the municipality, it needs to be adapted to local contexts, perhaps by adjusting targets, providing additional support or linking it more directly to visible service improvements within each ward.

**4.3. Effectiveness of Existing Revenue Mobilization Methods**

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The overall revenue collection efficiency for Chegutu Municipality, excluding grants and land sales, has shown a notable decline from January to March 2025 in the documentary review. In January 2025, the efficiency stood at 89.11%. This figure dropped to 79.94% in February 2025. By March 2025, the efficiency further decreased to 65.31% (Chegutu Municipality, Finance Committee Reports 2025). When including grants and land sales, the total collection efficiency for March 2025 was 43.06% or 42%. The research problem explicitly states that Chegutu Municipality is failing to reach 100% collection efficiency and highlights that efficiencies falling below 50% are common for many local authorities. The observed downward trend in collection efficiency from 89.11% in January to 65.31% in March indicates a rapidly deteriorating fiscal health and potential unsustainability. While the January figure appears high, the subsequent sharp decline is alarming. This trend directly contradicts the municipality's stated goal of enhancing revenue collection efficiency and poses a significant threat to its capacity to meet the service delivery standards outlined for Vision 2030. The "chronic revenue deficits" mentioned in the problem statement are clearly evidenced by this declining ability to collect budgeted revenue. Respondent 8 commented that:

> *The trend is alarming. We started the year strong, but the drop-in collection efficiency month-on-month is a clear indicator that our current methods are not sustainable. We are essentially running on fumes. If this continues, we would not even be able to cover basic operational costs (R8).*

The current revenue mobilization strategies, despite being in place, are not effectively stemming this decline, leading to an increasingly precarious financial position for the municipality. The rapid and significant decline in overall revenue collection efficiency over a mere three-month period signals a critical and worsening fiscal crisis, suggesting that existing strategies are not only ineffective but are being overwhelmed by internal and/or external pressures. This implies that reactive measures will be insufficient; proactive and adaptive strategies are needed to stabilize revenue collection in a highly dynamic environment.

**Table 1.1: Chegutu Municipality Monthly Revenue Collection Efficiency (Jan-Mar 2025)**

| Month | Budgeted | Actual Collection | Variance | Relative % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 15,587,036.00 | 13,889,254.68 | -1,697,781.32 | 89.11% |
| February | 15,587,036.00 | 12,460,501.58 | -3,126,534.42 | 79.94% |
| March | 15,587,036.00 | 12,216,648.63 | -3,370,387.37 | 78.38% |
| TOTAL | 46,761,108.00 | 38,566,404.89 | -8,194,703.11 | 82.48% |

**Source:** *Primary data*

**Figure 1.1:** Monthly Revenue Collection Efficiency

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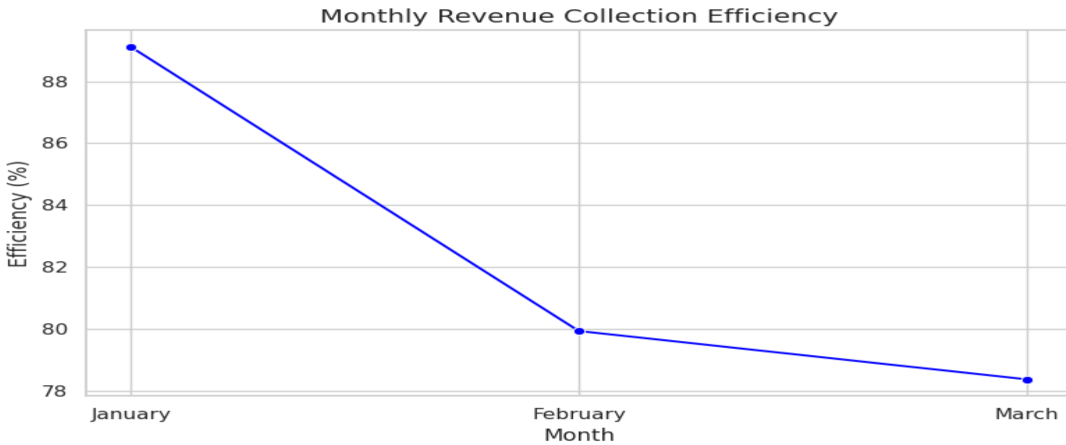


This line graph illustrates a downward trend in revenue collection efficiency over the first quarter of 2025. Starting at 89.11% in January, efficiency dropped to 79.94% in February and further declined to 78.38% in March. This suggests a weakening in collection performance, potentially due to economic constraints or operational inefficiencies.

**4.4 Performance analysis of Key Revenue Streams**

The documentary analysis of individual revenue streams reveals significant variability in their collection efficiencies. For March 2025, the collection efficiencies were as follows: Water (64%), Rates (31%), Land Purchase (100%, though with a negative balance carried down in the detailed report, indicating complex accounting or reversals), Refuse (78%), Sewer (31%), Lease/Rent (33%), Home Ownership (22%), Presumptive Tax (6%) and Vendors (19%). The major revenue drivers for March 2025 were Rates (ZIG2,433,967.03), Business License (ZIG1,213,986.56), Refuse removal (ZIG1,025,703.93), Estate (ZIG988,146.00, with Commitment Fees alone at ZIG1,274,144.00) and Water (ZIG866,085.00). The data highlights a significant disconnect between revenue potential and its actualization. While “Rates” and “Water” are identified as major revenue drivers, their respective collection efficiencies of 31% and 64% indicate that a substantial portion of the billed revenue from these critical sources remains uncollected. The 100% efficiency for “Land Purchase” is misleading given the accompanying negative balance, suggesting that this category may involve repossessions or complex financial adjustments rather than consistent new sales. Furthermore, the extremely low efficiencies for “Presumptive Tax” (6%) and “Vendors” (19%) suggest that these potentially broad-based sources are largely untapped or are subject to severe management and enforcement deficiencies. Respondent 6 noted that:

> *Presumptive tax and vendors are huge potential areas but our collection from them is abysmal. It's either an enforcement issue, a lack of proper registration or both. We are leaving a lot of money on the table there, especially from the informal sector (R6).*

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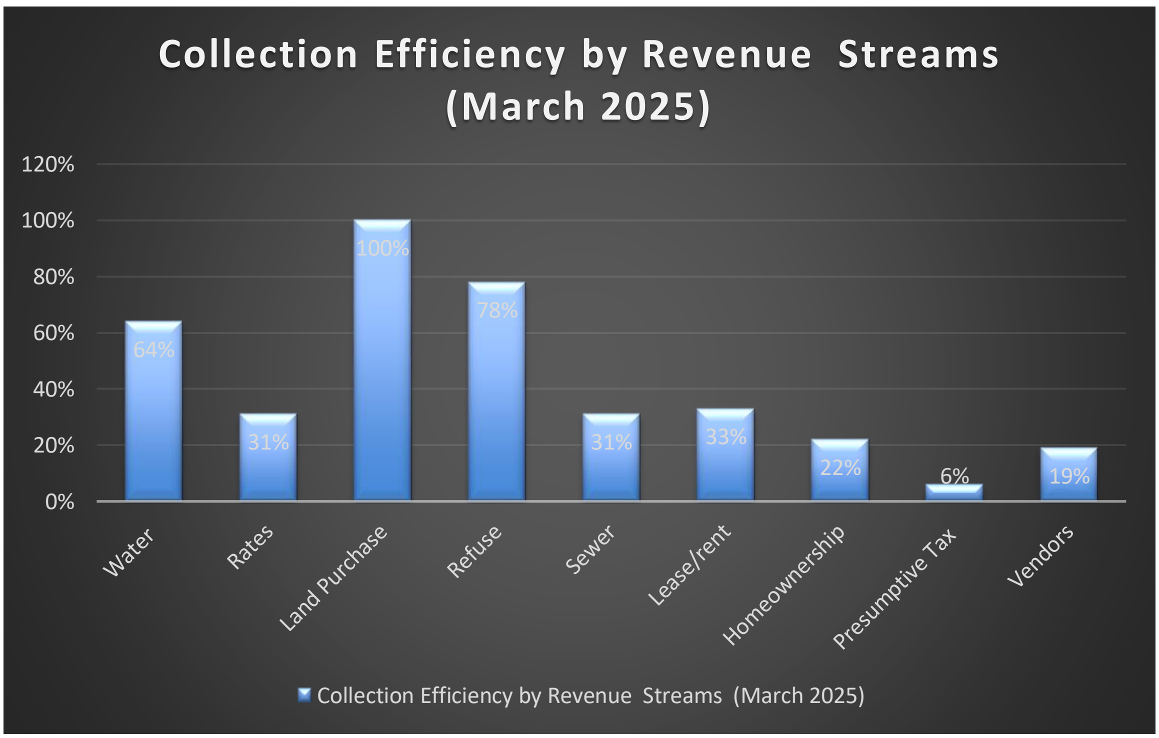
This analysis underscores that Chegutu Municipality's revenue base is not only narrow, as noted in the problem statement but also inefficiently managed, leading to significant leakages even from its primary income sources. This situation points to an urgent need for targeted strategies to improve collection from existing streams before relying solely on the promise of diversification. The extremely low collection efficiencies for "Presumptive Tax" and "Vendors" indicate a critical failure to effectively tap into the informal sector and small-scale businesses, representing a significant missed opportunity for broadening the tax base. This implies that Chegutu's efforts to diversify and broaden its tax base are severely hampered by its inability to effectively formalize and collect from these segments, perpetuating reliance on underperforming traditional sources

**Figure 1.2:** Chegutu Municipality Collection Efficiency by Revenue Stream (March 2025)




**Source:** *Primary Data*

The bar chart highlights significant disparities in collection efficiency across revenue streams. While land purchase achieved full collection (100%), critical services such as water (64%), refuse (78%) and sewer (31%) showed mixed performance. Notably, presumptive tax (6%) and home ownership (22%) were severely underperforming, indicating areas needing targeted recovery strategies.

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**Impact on Service Delivery and Financial Sustainability**

The core motivation for this study stemmed from the observed relationship between effective revenue mobilization and the municipality's capacity to fulfill its service delivery obligations. The study explicitly states that "declining revenue streams, significant rates arrears undermine the Municipality's ability to deliver on its mandate. Respondent 10 highlighted that:

> *The municipality was owed over* ZWL 228,805,364.48 *in unpaid rates and fees which had negatively affected cash flow and operations (R10).*

Despite significant budget allocations for essential services such as Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (ZIG151,656,080.00) and Road services (ZIG13,664,403.00), the problem statement notes persistent failures in these very areas, such as providing potable water, cleansing, refuse removal, and road maintenance. Respondent 3 stated that:

> *Our budget for water and sanitation is significant, but if we are only collecting 64% of water bills and our overall efficiency is dropping, that money isn't reaching the services. The potholes on our roads are a direct result of this financial squeeze. We simply do not have the cash to maintain infrastructure (R3).*

The municipality's consistent failure to achieve optimal revenue collection directly translates into compromised service delivery and significantly hinders its progress towards the national Vision 2030. This creates a vicious cycle where poor service delivery, experienced directly by citizens through issues such as deteriorated roads and erratic water supply, erodes public trust and willingness to pay. This, in turn, further exacerbates revenue deficits. The "significant rates arrears" and "considerable public dissatisfaction regarding poor service delivery" are direct manifestations of this erosion of public trust. Perceptions from interviewed residents underscore this challenge. Respondent two stated that:

> *Why should I pay for water which only comes once a week? The roads are full of potholes, and the clouds of dust in our roads pauses a serious health hazard to residents. Until we see real improvement, it is hard to justify paying our rates. We feel ignored (R2).*

Respondent 11 remarked that:

> *We hear about millions owed, but we do not see that money being used to fix our problems. Where does it all go? There is no transparency. It feels like a black hole (R11).*

The above sentiments illustrate a breakdown of the social contract, where citizens' willingness to comply with revenue obligations is directly tied to their perception of value for money and accountability. The municipality's decision to implement "customer care training" in response to "a number of complaints...regarding the way we serve our customers" is a clear indication that low public satisfaction is recognized as a factor impacting revenue. Beyond the financial mechanisms, the municipality must address the fundamental issue of public trust and perceived value for money. Improving service delivery is not merely an outcome of better revenue collection but also a prerequisite for sustained revenue compliance as citizens are more likely to pay for services they

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deem reliable and of good quality. The pervasive public dissatisfaction, directly linked to visible service delivery failures and perceived lack of transparency regarding collected funds, fundamentally undermines the social contract, making sustained revenue compliance unattainable regardless of collection mechanisms. This implies that any revenue mobilization strategy must prioritize rebuilding public trust through demonstrable service improvements and enhanced transparency. Without addressing this fundamental breakdown of the social contract, financial interventions alone will be superficial and unsustainable.

### 4.5 Factors Affecting Revenue Mobilization in Chegutu Municipality

The challenges in revenue mobilization for Chegutu Municipality are attributable to a complex interplay of both internal operational and institutional factors, as well as external socio-economic and political conditions. Internal factors related to the municipality's operations and institutional capacity significantly impede its revenue mobilization efforts.

### Debt Management and Arrears

The study found out that ineffective debt management is a primary cause of Chegutu Municipality's chronic revenue deficits. The Debtors Age Analysis, as presented in Table 1.2, consistently shows that the largest portion of outstanding debt is categorized as "120 DAYS+". For instance, in March 2025, ZiG163, 472,694.32 out of a total ZiG228, 805,364.48 in outstanding debt fell into this long-overdue category. This indicates a systemic failure in debt recovery where a predominant proportion of the municipality's potential revenue is locked up in old, difficult-to-collect arrears. Corporate debtors alone owe over ZiG4 million, with ZINWA being the largest single corporate debtor at ZiG2, 057,377.60. The study found out that the municipality was owed over ZWL 82 million in unpaid rates and fees, which had "negatively affected cash flow and operations". This overwhelming volume of aged debt directly contributes to a severe liquidity crisis and compounding financial strain. The municipality's total creditors stood at ZiG66, 323,112.83 as at 31 March 2025 while debtors were ZiG228, 805,300.00, yielding a debtor-to-creditor ratio of 1:3.4, as detailed in Table 1.2. This ratio indicates that the municipality is owed significantly more than it owes, yet it faces "prevailing liquidity challenges" and a "mismatch of United States dollars and ZiG in terms of revenue received on a daily basis. This implies that the large receivables are largely uncollectible, preventing the conversion of billed revenue into actual cash flow. This inability to generate sufficient cash directly impacts the municipality's capacity to pay its creditors such as ZESA, ZIMRA, and EMA and to fund its daily operations. The municipality is thus caught in a severe liquidity trap, where uncollected old debt starves current operations, leading to a compounding cycle of financial strain and an inability to deliver services effectively. The overwhelming proportion of aged debt creates a severe liquidity crisis, preventing the conversion of billed revenue into usable cash flow. Furthermore, debt from government entities and large corporations adds a layer of complexity, requiring differentiated and potentially politically sensitive recovery strategies.

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**Table 1.2: Chegutu Municipality Debtors Age Analysis Summary (March 2025)**

| | CURRENT | 30 DAYS | 60 DAYS | 90 DAYS | 120 DAYS+ | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WATER | 19,015,496.14 | 10,091,615.66 | 6,550,690.58 | 12,800,448.38 | 19,440,570.12 | 67,898,820.88 |
| RATES | 16,402,167.55 | 12,179,813.54 | 4,624,218.57 | 14,936,832.47 | 59,288,857.55 | 107,431,889.68 |
| REFUSE | 2,881,787.86 | 2,292,833.47 | 2,176,444.08 | 2,575,587.60 | 12,977,393.38 | 22,904,046.39 |
| LAND SALES | 1,503,987.90 | | | | | 1,503,987.90 |
| SEWERAGE | 947,793.50 | 672,244.06 | 652,180.38 | 817,081.14 | 6,697,507.09 | 9,786,806.17 |
| RENT | 1,853,635.59 | 1,280,544.46 | 1,575,537.85 | 1,709,159.10 | 9,579,295.02 | 15,998,172.02 |
| VENDORS | 3,200,877.96 | | | | | 3,200,877.96 |
| PRESUMPTIVE TAX | 80,763.48 | | | | | 80,763.48 |
| TOTAL | 45,886,509.98 | 26,517,051.19 | 15,579,071.46 | 32,839,108.69 | 107,983,623.16 | 228,805,364.48 |

**Source:** *Primary data*

**External Socio-Economic and Political Factors**

Documentary analysis found out that beyond internal operational aspects, external factors significantly influence Chegutu Municipality's ability to mobilize revenue, often creating an unpredictable and challenging fiscal environment. The study found out that Zimbabwe's volatile macroeconomic environment presents a significant external constraint on Chegutu Municipality's revenue mobilization. Respondent 4 explicitly characterizes the national economic climate as "rapidly changing," marked by "hyperinflation and frequent policy shifts". Chegutu Municipality's financial reports further elaborates on these challenges, highlighting "prevailing liquidity challenges" and a "mismatch of United States dollars and ZiG in terms of revenue received on a daily basis". Respondent 10 stated that:

> *The monetary policy authorities have maintained a grip on the liquidity within the economy. This has resulted in a serious liquidity challenge that is seriously affecting the performance of the institution and sustainability of operations. There is now a mismatch of United States dollars and ZiG in terms of revenue received on a daily basis. We hope the situation is going to improve, but it makes planning almost impossible (R10).*

This macroeconomic instability leads to a significant erosion of revenue value and creates considerable planning uncertainty. Hyperinflation and currency volatility mean that even if revenue is collected in local currency, its real value can rapidly diminish, especially if there are delays in converting it to more stable foreign currency or in utilizing the funds for procurement and projects. The "mismatch of United States dollars and ZiG" implies that the municipality may be collecting revenue in a depreciating local currency while its operational costs, capital

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expenditures or debt servicing obligations might require more stable foreign currency. This dynamic makes financial planning and budgeting extremely difficult and undermines the long-term sustainability of municipal operations. This aligns with scholarly observations by Smoke (1994), who argues that unstable macroeconomic conditions, particularly high inflation, consistently erode the real value of local government revenues and make effective financial planning exceedingly difficult. Similarly, Bahl and Linn (1992) emphasize that in such contexts, local authorities face immense challenges in adjusting their revenue instruments, such as property valuations and user fees, rapidly enough to keep pace with escalating operational costs. This often leads to chronic deficits and an inability to maintain service levels. Mbambi (2024) further discusses the impact of exchange rate of volatility on the informal economy in Zimbabwe, highlighting how such instability creates uncertainty for traders and limits their ability to maintain inventory and meet demand which indirectly affects the municipal tax base. External economic instability creates a moving target for revenue mobilization, making it challenging for the municipality to achieve financial sustainability regardless of its internal collection efforts, necessitating adaptive strategies and potentially a shift towards stable currency-based billing where feasible.

**Public Compliance and Stakeholder Engagement**

The study found out that low public compliance and insufficient stakeholder engagement, exacerbated by public dissatisfaction with service delivery are major external impediments to revenue mobilization. The study identifies "low compliance rates" and "insufficient stakeholder engagement" as "persistent issues". It also notes "considerable public dissatisfaction regarding poor service delivery" by local authorities in Zimbabwe. This dissatisfaction as observed by Denhere, Nyamapfeni and Dube (2012), contributes towards a reluctance to pay for services. In response to the "Call to Action" by His Excellency President of Zimbabwe, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, which emphasized the need for local authorities to improve revenue collection, Chegutu Municipality plans to develop a "communication strategy" which includes "roadshows, dramas and skits," aimed at improving its "image building and to ensure coherence within and outside the organization". These factors indicate a breakdown of the social contract between the municipality and its citizens, characterized by an accountability deficit. If citizens do not feel engaged in the governance process, lack understanding of how their money is utilized or do not perceive tangible value for their payments, their willingness to comply with revenue obligations diminishes. The "considerable public dissatisfaction regarding poor service delivery" directly fuels this non-compliance. The municipality's plan for a communication strategy is an acknowledgment of this deficit, aiming to rebuild trust and improve its public image. Effective revenue mobilization is therefore not solely a technical or financial exercise; it is fundamentally a governance challenge rooted in fostering public trust, ensuring transparency in financial management and demonstrating accountability for collected revenues and improvements in service delivery. Respondent 13, a long-term resident shared that:

> *They always tell us to pay, but what do we get in return? The roads are still bad, water is scarce and refuse piles up. Until they show us where our money goes and actually fix things, why should we bother (R13)*

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This sentiment reinforces the findings of Alm and Farooq (2024) who suggest that tax collections can be increased by improving citizen trust in government. Conversely, reports of municipal corruption can lead to decreased property tax revenue as noted by Tsai et al. (2018). This highlights that pervasive public dissatisfaction, directly linked to visible service delivery failures and perceived lack of transparency regarding collected funds, fundamentally undermines the social contract, making sustained revenue compliance unattainable regardless of collection mechanisms. Any revenue mobilization strategy must prioritize rebuilding public trust through demonstrable service improvements and enhanced transparency.

**4.6. Best Practices in Revenue Mobilization from Other Local Authorities**

Exploring best practices from other local authorities, particularly within the region, provides valuable insights and potential models for Chegutu Municipality. A number of municipalities in Sub-Saharan Africa face similar challenges and their successful strategies offer actionable lessons. One prominent area of success is digital transformation in revenue administration. Sierra Leone, for instance, saw its revenue collections double in the first quarter of 2019 after commissioning the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA World). Similarly, the Democratic Republic of Congo increased its provincial revenues by over 70% between 2014 and 2017 through establishing a taxpayer register and improving tax officer mobility. Within Zimbabwe, the City of Mutare’s implementation of the Local Authorities Digital System (LADS) led to a significant increase in revenue collection from 35% to nearly 72%. These examples demonstrate that leveraging technology for accurate taxpayer records, streamlined billing and transparent payment platforms can dramatically improve collection efficiency and reduce opportunities for corruption. Research by Oti-Akenteng, Ocansey and Asamoah (2025) confirms that digitalization has a statistically significant positive effect on revenue generation. Dzansi et al. (2022) also found that technology can significantly increase tax collections, even beyond its initial intended purpose, by enabling revenue collectors to optimize their time allocation.

Streamlining administrative processes and improving billing practices have also proven effective. Kampala, Uganda, doubled its local revenues in just four years by focusing on building accurate taxpayer records, enhancing billing effectiveness and creating simple, transparent payment platforms. Nairobi, Kenya, addressed burdensome local fees by introducing a unified business permit which reduced compliance costs for businesses while increasing municipal revenues. These initiatives highlight the significance of simplifying tax forms and centralizing collection responsibilities to increase efficiency and reduce rent-seeking opportunities. The innovative approaches to debt management and collection are crucial. While Chegutu is considering smart meters, other municipalities have implemented comprehensive debt recovery techniques. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) emphasizes a systematic approach to debt recovery, tailoring interventions to the level of delinquency. This includes early reminders, payment plans and as a last resort, litigation. The effectiveness of these techniques is often linked to clear communication and consistent enforcement. Balino and Sundararajan (2008) highlight the importance of sound public debt management strategies for reducing borrowing costs and containing financial risk. The IMF and World Bank (2013) also emphasize the need for developing countries to strengthen their debt management frameworks and build capacity in this area.

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Revenue diversification is another critical best practice. Many towns in Africa are moving beyond reliance on traditional rates and fees. Instead of selling land outright, municipalities are leasing it for commercial and industrial use, retaining ownership while generating steady income. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are being explored for projects such as small-scale renewable energy plants, water bottling or agro-processing hubs, which create jobs and generate revenue. Examples include eThekwini Municipality in South Africa which profitably manages its own electricity and water services, reinvesting surpluses into community projects and towns in Botswana which have established successful agricultural and tourism partnerships. Developing tourism packages, festivals, and industrial or agricultural clusters by offering incentives like tax breaks and expedited permits can also broaden the ratepayer base and boost local employment. Fjeldstad (2016) notes that while local revenues are necessary, they are often not sufficient to provide adequate services for fast-growing urban populations in Africa, underscoring the need for diversification.

Finally, fostering political commitment and public trust is fundamental. In Za-Kpota, Benin, a framework that facilitates discussion between elected officials and civil servants on domestic resource mobilization (DRM) strategies has partially addressed the challenge of political commitment. Building trust between citizens and the state, through transparent use of resources and responsive service delivery has been shown to strengthen compliance. Performance incentives for tax collectors as demonstrated in Punjab, Pakistan, can also motivate staff and increase revenue. These examples collectively underscore that successful revenue mobilization requires a holistic approach which integrates technological solutions, administrative reforms, diversification efforts, and strong governance with public engagement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

An examination of revenue mobilization strategies in Chegutu Municipality revealed a complex interaction of internal and external factors that collectively hinder its financial sustainability and service delivery capacity. The study found that Chegutu Municipality relies heavily on traditional own-source revenues, but their collection efficiencies are consistently low, indicating considerable untapped potential and revenue leakages. While efforts to diversify income through leases, parking fees, and proposed income-generating projects are underway, many are either underperforming or still in early stages, offering little immediate fiscal relief. The overall revenue collection efficiency has shown a concerning decline, falling well below optimal targets and threatening the municipality's financial viability. This is worsened by serious internal operational and institutional weaknesses, including chronic aged debt that hampers liquidity and human resource gaps, along with internal control deficiencies that create vulnerabilities to corruption. Externally, the volatile macroeconomic environment, marked by hyperinflation and currency mismatch, significantly reduces revenue value and introduces substantial planning uncertainty. Additionally, low public compliance and insufficient stakeholder engagement, often driven by deep dissatisfaction with service delivery, contribute to a breakdown in the social contract between the municipality and its citizens. This situation reveals that Chegutu Municipality is caught in a vicious cycle where persistent revenue shortfalls lead to poor service delivery, which in turn fuels public dissatisfaction and low compliance, further deepening revenue gaps. This cycle is fundamentally a governance issue, emphasizing that effective revenue mobilization depends as much on building public trust, ensuring transparency, and demonstrating accountability as it does on implementing reliable financial mechanisms. Without addressing these interconnected financial, operational, and governance problems comprehensively, the municipality's capacity to fulfill its service delivery dmandate and support national development goals will remain severely limited.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and comparative analysis with best practices, the following recommendations are put forth for Chegutu Municipality to enhance its revenue mobilization strategies:

**Enhance Institutional Capacity and Governance**

- **Address Human Resource Gaps and Training**: Urgently fill critical staff vacancies in key revenue collection sections such as the debt collection section. The revenue collection value chain is inadequate hence the need to recruit personnel dealing with categorized zones. Different revenue streams should be assigned to individuals responsible for dunning within thirty days. It is essential for the Municipality to collect and follow up on revenue in a systematic way rather than to wait for blitz.
- Implement continuous professional development and customer care training programs for all staff interacting with ratepayers, fostering a culture of efficiency, professionalism, and ethical conduct.

**Accelerate and Consolidate Digital Transformation**

- **Implement a Unified ERP System**: Prioritize and accelerate the full deployment of a single, integrated ERP system across all municipal departments. This will centralize data, automate billing and collection processes, enhance financial reporting, and significantly reduce opportunities for fraud and human error, drawing lessons from Mutare's success with LADS.
- **Digital Valuation Roll and Taxpayer Register**: Invest in comprehensive digital cadastral surveys and keep an accurate, up-to-date electronic valuation roll and taxpayer register. This forms the foundation for effective property rate and business license collection, ensuring all potential revenue sources are identified and billed accurately.
- **Roll out Smart Water Meters**: Speed up the installation of prepaid water meters across all residential and commercial properties. This will improve water charge collection efficiency, reduce outstanding debts, and enhance public perception of fair billing, thereby boosting compliance.

**Diversify and Optimize Revenue Streams**

- **Fast-Track Income-Generating Projects (IGPs)**: Conduct thorough feasibility studies and develop solid business plans for the identified IGPs (water bottling, quarry, and guest houses). Secure the necessary capital and expertise to move these projects from concept to active revenue sources, ensuring they are managed on sound commercial principles.
- **Optimize Asset Monetization**: Conduct a comprehensive audit of all underutilized municipal assets, including inactive market stalls and vacant land. Develop transparent strategies for their effective leasing or development through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), ensuring fair market value and maximizing long-term revenue streams.
- **Explore Municipal Bonds**: For large-scale infrastructure projects that can generate revenue, Chegutu should explore the possibility of issuing municipal bonds, expanding its access to capital markets beyond traditional grants.
- **Implement Robust Internal Controls and Accountability**: Establish strong internal

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control systems, conduct regular internal audits, and enforce strict measures to prevent corruption and embezzlement. This includes careful management of receipt books, transparent cash handling procedures, and clear accountability mechanisms for all revenue collection activities.

- **Foster Political Commitment**: Promote a framework for regular, constructive dialogue between elected officials and municipal staff on revenue mobilization strategies, ensuring political will aligns with administrative efforts to implement reforms.

**Rebuild Public Trust and Enhance Stakeholder Engagement**

- **Implement a Comprehensive Communication Strategy**: Develop and execute a proactive communication plan to educate residents on the importance of paying rates, how their funds are used, and the direct connection to improved service delivery. Use various channels, including community roadshows, local media, and digital platforms.
- **Demonstrate Tangible Service Delivery Improvements**: Ultimately, sustained revenue compliance depends on visible improvements in essential services like water supply, waste management, and road maintenance. Showing tangible value for money is key to rebuilding public trust and encouraging a culture of compliance and willingness to pay.
- **Refine Ward-Based Retention Strategy for Equity**: Review and improve the ward-based retention strategy to ensure fair application and effectiveness across all wards, considering different socio-economic conditions. This can boost community participation and ownership in revenue collection efforts. By implementing these comprehensive and interconnected strategies, Chegutu Municipality can move towards a stronger and more sustainable revenue mobilization framework, enabling it to fulfill its service delivery goals**.** mandate, restore public trust and significantly contribute towards Zimbabwe's Vision 2030

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