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Development Watch Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 5

March 2026

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Reopening of NANGO Offices and 2026 Welcome Message

Season's greetings from the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO). I am pleased to extend warm compliments and a heartfelt welcome to our members, partners, stakeholders, and the general public as we officially resume office operations following the festive season break. Please be advised that with effect from 12 January 2026, all NANGO offices have fully resumed operations.

This new year presents a timely opportunity to reaffirm NANGO's commitment to institutional strengthening; enhancing our value proposition to membership; positioning NANGO as a hub for CSO capacitation and knowledge generation; strengthening collective advocacy and policy influence; fostering an enabling operating environment; and promoting effective CSO engagement on both national and global development agendas. NANGO remains steadfast in its mandate to coordinate, represent, and strengthen the civil society sector in Zimbabwe.

As we embark on 2026, we remain acutely aware that the operating environment for CSOs in Zimbabwe and beyond continues to evolve in complex and often challenging ways. This environment is increasingly shaped by regulatory shifts, persistent political and socio-economic uncertainties, shrinking development financing, and deepening social challenges placing immense pressure on CSOs and the communities we serve.

The Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act remains only partially operationalised. Key processes are still outstanding, including the gazetting of the accompanying regulations, the reconstitution of the PVO Board, and the establishment of the new PVO Registrar's Office.

In addition, a significant backlog of registration applications remains unresolved. For many organisations in transition, this situation has generated heightened anxiety, uncertainty, and frustration as they seek to regularise their legal status. These realities underscore the continued importance of sustained and constructive engagement with regulators, alongside the provision of practical compliance guidance and strengthened sector-wide coordination.

Compounding the regulatory context are ongoing shifts in the development financing landscape. Budgetary contractions, donor strategic realignments, and evolving global priorities driven by geopolitical shifts and humanitarian crisis continue to reshape funding flows. At the same time, Zimbabwe faces persistent socio-economic challenges, including high unemployment, rising drug and substance abuse, worsening mental health outcomes,

deepening poverty, and enduring social inequalities. These challenges have intensified demand for CSO interventions at a time when available resources are increasingly constrained.

This growing mismatch between needs and resources reinforces the urgency of strengthening partnerships with diverse stakeholders, exploring domestic resource mobilisation opportunities, and engaging in forward-looking conversations on sustainable development financing. As a sector, we are called not only to adapt, but to innovate, collaborate, and collectively safeguard civic space, while remaining responsive to the communities we exist to serve.

During the course of 2026, NANGO will roll out several flagship initiatives, including: the 3rd Edition of the CSO Symposium commemorating World NGO Day; CSO support and accompaniment on the implementation of the PVO Amendment Act, 2025; CSO Capacity Development Programme; Regional Annual NGO Expos Winter Schools; the 16th Edition of the NANGO Annual NGO Directors' Summer Retreat; ongoing **“Talk to Your Regulator”** sessions; and Compliance Clinics, among others.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to our development partners, government institutions, private sector actors, academia, the media, and all allies of civil society for their continued collaboration and support. These partnerships remain critical in fostering dialogue, mutual accountability, and collective action towards improving the lives of the people we serve.

I encourage all members, partners, and stakeholders to actively engage with us throughout the year as we deepen our partnerships and work together for greater collective impact.

Once again, I warmly welcome you to the 2026 work year and extend my best wishes for what promises to be a productive, impactful, and transformative year ahead.

In solidarity,

Mr. Ernest Nyimai
Executive Director, NANGO



Zimbabwe's FATF Mutual Evaluation and Its Implications for Civic Space



Zimbabwe has commenced preparations for its third round [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\) Mutual Evaluation](#), scheduled for 2026–2027. The Mutual Evaluation will assess the country's compliance with international standards on Anti-Money Laundering, Countering the Financing of Terrorism, and Countering Proliferation Financing (AML/CFT/CPF), including FATF Recommendation 8, which specifically relates to Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). This process is highly consequential for civic space. Without proactive and informed civil society engagement, there is a risk that overly restrictive regulatory measures may be introduced under the banner of international compliance, further limiting the ability of CSOs to operate freely and legitimately. At the same time, the evaluation presents an important opportunity for civil society to influence risk assessments and policy responses to ensure that AML/CFT/CPF measures are proportionate, evidence-based, and consistent with international human rights standards.


Pre-Mutual Evaluation Workshop

As part of the preparatory phase, the [Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group \(ESAAMLG\)](#) convened a Pre-Mutual Evaluation Workshop from 12 – 16 January 2026 at Rainbow Towers Hotel in Harare. The workshop aimed to prepare key stakeholders who will be directly involved in Zimbabwe's Mutual Evaluation, including officials working on AML/CFT/CPF matters and representatives expected to engage with FATF assessors during the evaluation process. Participation targeted institutions responsible for policy, regulation, and implementation within the national AML/CFT/CPF framework.

Civil society participation in the workshop was limited, reflecting the historically constrained involvement of NPOs in FATF-related processes. Through NANGO's facilitation, representatives from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), the Alliance of Community-Based Organisations (ACBOs), and the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum attended the workshop, alongside the PVO Registrar and officers from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW). In total, four representatives participated on behalf of the NPO constituency.

Relevance to Civic Space and Ongoing Advocacy

The workshop was particularly significant for civil society as it builds on ongoing advocacy around FATF Recommendation 8, which has frequently been misinterpreted and misapplied in



ways that justify disproportionate regulation of NPOs. In Zimbabwe, such misapplication has contributed to restrictive legal and policy developments, including provisions within the Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) Amendment Act of 2025. The limited representation of NPOs at the workshop further underscores the need for deliberate and coordinated engagement to ensure that civil society perspectives are adequately reflected throughout the Mutual Evaluation process.

Historically, Zimbabwean civil society has not meaningfully participated in previous FATF Mutual Evaluations and has largely been excluded from in-country AML/CFT/CPF processes. Many CSOs and CBOs have a limited understanding of how the Mutual Evaluation operates, the areas of focus for assessors, and the potential implications of the process for civic space and organisational operations. This knowledge gap heightens the risk of regulatory responses that may undermine legitimate civil society work.

Sector-Wide Sensitisation and Preparedness


In response, NANGO is prioritising a sector-wide sensitisation and awareness initiative aimed at strengthening CSO and CBO preparedness for Zimbabwe's upcoming FATF Mutual Evaluation. The initiative will focus on demystifying the Mutual Evaluation process, clarifying the intent and scope of FATF Recommendation 8, and explaining the role of civil society in supporting compliance while safeguarding operational freedoms. It will also address in-country AML/CFT/CPF obligations, typical areas of assessor scrutiny, and practical measures organisations can adopt to identify compliance gaps and mitigate risk.

The overall objective of this initiative is to strengthen sectoral understanding of FATF Recommendation 8, empower organisations to engage meaningfully with the Mutual Evaluation exercise, and foster collective advocacy for risk-based, proportionate, and rights-respecting AML/CFT/CPF oversight. This is particularly important given that NPOs will be afforded an opportunity to engage directly with FATF assessors during the Mutual Evaluation process.

Establishment of the Zimbabwe NPO FATF Technical Working Group

Based on key takeaways from the preparatory process and lessons from other jurisdictions, including Kenya, NANGO intends to establish a Zimbabwe NPO Technical Working Group (TWG) on FATF. The TWG will serve as a structured and coordinated platform to strengthen civil society engagement in FATF-related processes. It will facilitate engagement with regulators, policymakers, and other stakeholders on the implementation of a risk-based approach to AML/CFT/CPF oversight that is effective without undermining civic space.

The TWG will also monitor AML/CFT/CPF compliance trends, assess regulatory risks, and provide timely updates and technical guidance to CSOs. Through coordinated advocacy, peer



learning, and capacity building, the group will support efforts to prevent the securitisation of civic space and ensure that compliance measures do not become tools for arbitrary or disproportionate restrictions on civil society. It will further enable CSOs to anticipate regulatory changes, provide informed input into the Mutual Evaluation, and contribute meaningfully to shaping national AML/CFT/CPF responses.

Key Elements of the Mutual Evaluation

The Mutual Evaluation will assess both Zimbabwe's technical compliance with the FATF 40 Recommendations and the effectiveness of its AML/CFT/CPF system. Mandatory Recommendations to be assessed include Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 8, 15, 24, 25, 30, 31, 38, and 40. The process will culminate in a single public Mutual Evaluation Report that provides an internationally agreed assessment of Zimbabwe's compliance and effectiveness, alongside recommendations for strengthening the national AML/CFT/CPF framework.

Of particular relevance to civil society is Immediate Outcome 10, which examines the extent to which Zimbabwe has applied focused and proportionate mitigation measures to NPOs identified as vulnerable to terrorist financing abuse, without disrupting or discouraging legitimate NPO activities. FATF Recommendation 8 explicitly seeks to address the historical misapplication of counter-terrorism financing measures to the non-profit sector. It requires countries to identify relevant risks, apply proportionate and targeted measures, and remain mindful of the impact of regulation on legitimate NPO activities. Measures that are overly burdensome or restrictive, or that impose obligations such as due diligence on NPOs, are not consistent with the FATF standards.

Key Timelines to Watch

- 15 June 2026 – Submission of Technical Compliance Questionnaire
- 30 June 2026 – Virtual Presentation on Risk and Context
- 14 Aug to 14 Oct 2026 – Draft Technical Compliance Annexes
- 14 Jan – 4 Feb 2027 – On-Site Mutual Evaluation Visit
- August 2027 – Final Mutual Evaluation Report and Plenary Discussion

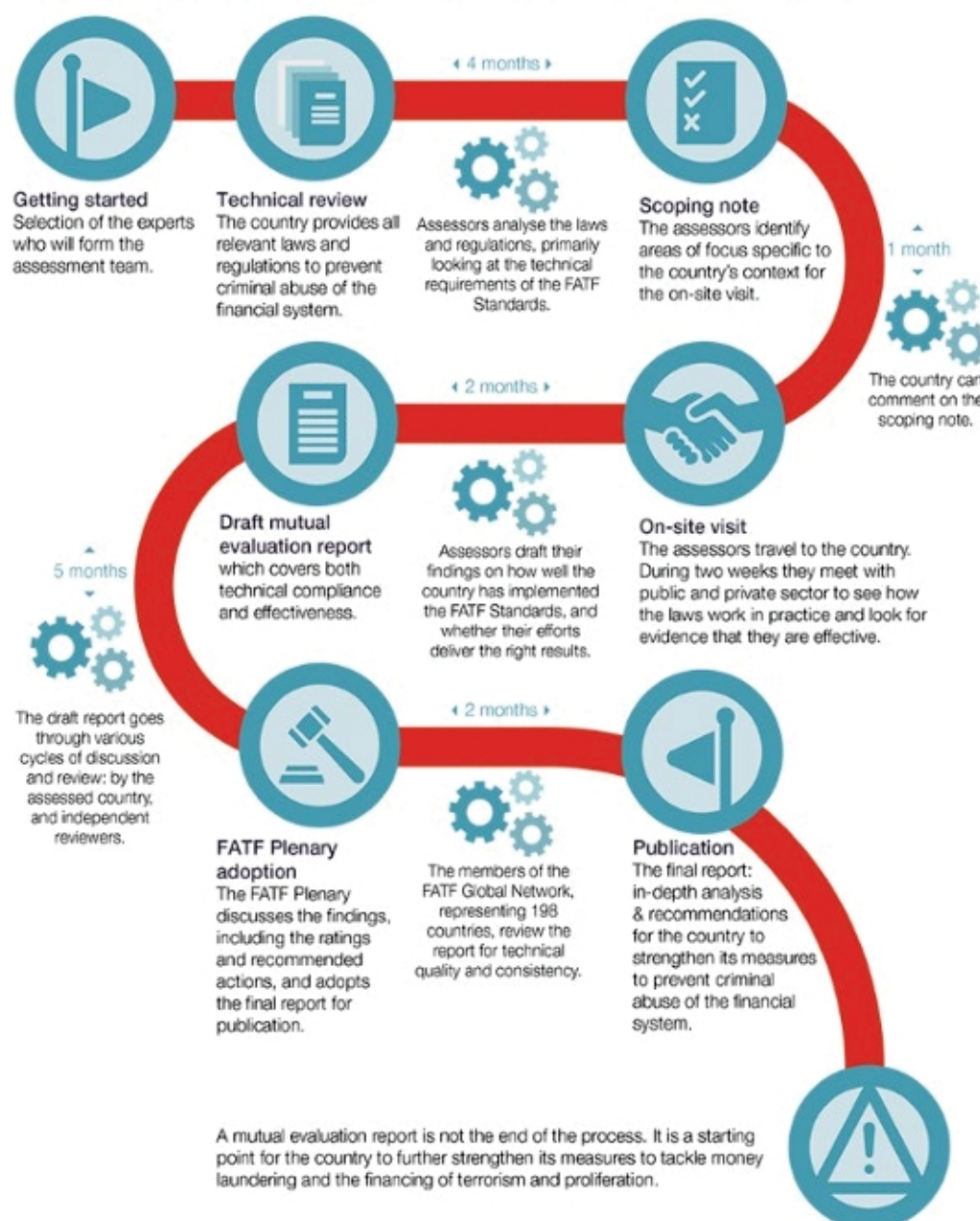
During the 15th Edition of the NANGO Annual NGO Directors' Summer Retreat, held in Masvingo, a dedicated session on the FATF Mutual Evaluation Overview was convened to further enhance civil society understanding of the process and its implications. A presentation was delivered by Mr. Tichafa Chigaba, Deputy Director at the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) Zimbabwe, who provided insights into the Mutual Evaluation framework, key assessment areas, and expectations for Zimbabwe ahead of the 2026–2027 evaluation cycle. The engagement formed part of NANGO's ongoing efforts to promote informed, constructive dialogue between civil society and regulators on AML/CFT/CPF issues. For those who were unable to attend the

session, the recording is available and can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/Q9tW9hqw-XE>

Looking Ahead

The FATF Mutual Evaluation represents a critical moment for Zimbabwe's civil society sector. The way AML/CFT/CPF standards are interpreted and implemented during this process will have lasting consequences for civic space, organisational autonomy, and democratic participation. Sustained, coordinated, and technically informed civil society engagement will be essential to ensure that international compliance obligations strengthen transparency and accountability without eroding the freedoms necessary for civil society to operate effectively.

The Mutual Evaluation Process



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Proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 3 (2026): Possible implications on Civic Space in Zimbabwe

Update developed for information dissemination purposes

On 10 February 2026, the Cabinet approved the proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 3, 2026 at its first meeting of the year. The proposed Bill seeks to introduce major changes to Zimbabwe's Constitution. These changes would affect how the President is elected, the length of terms for the President and Members of Parliament, the management of elections, the appointment of key public officials, and the structure of human rights institutions. From the first post-Cabinet press briefing, the proposed Bill is presented as a way to promote political stability, policy continuity, and institutional efficiency. However, the proposed changes raise serious concerns about democratic accountability, separation of powers, and the state of civic space. This update seeks to inform stakeholders within the civic space about these developments. Civil society organisations, including NANGO, have not yet convened to develop a collective position on the proposed Bill.

One of the most significant proposals is the repeal of Section 92 of the Constitution and its replacement with a system where Parliament elects the President. Under this proposal, Members of Parliament (MPs) would vote to choose the President, and the Chief Justice or another designated judge would oversee the process. Although judicial oversight is presented as a safeguard, the shift from a direct public vote to a parliamentary vote would fundamentally change how citizens choose their Head of State. It would remove the direct role of voters in electing the President and place that power in the hands of MPs. In a context where public trust in institutions is already under pressure, reducing direct citizen participation in electing the President may weaken public confidence and limit an important moment of democratic engagement.

The proposed Bill also amends Sections 95, 143, and 158 to extend the term of office for both the President and Parliament from five to seven years. The Cabinet frames this change as a way to reduce election-related disruptions and promote policy continuity. However, longer terms reduce the frequency of electoral accountability, limiting opportunities for citizens to hold leaders to account and potentially weakening civic engagement. Elections, though often politically intense, are constitutionally protected moments for citizens to voice concerns, demand accountability, and influence governance. Extending terms lengthens the period during which executive and legislative authority can operate without renewed public endorsement. In a context of prolonged economic and social strain, regular democratic renewal is a key mechanism for accountability, and changing these cycles shifts the balance between political stability and responsiveness to citizens.




The proposed amendment to Section 120 increases the number of Senators appointed by the President by 10, raising the total from 80 to 90 Senators. While the reform may aim to broaden expertise and strengthen oversight, it also increases executive influence within Parliament. A Parliament with more presidential appointees may face challenges in exercising strong and independent oversight, especially on laws that affect civil liberties, freedoms of association and assembly, and public participation. Civil society relies on an independent legislature to raise citizen concerns and uphold constitutional safeguards. Expanding presidential appointment powers, therefore, requires careful consideration in light of the principle of separation of powers.

The proposed Bill also introduces significant changes to electoral management. It establishes a Zimbabwe Electoral Delimitation Commission (ZEDC) and transfers delimitation responsibilities from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to this new body. In addition, it removes ZEC's role in voter registration and in compiling and keeping the voters' roll, transferring these functions to the Registrar-General. While these reforms are presented as efforts to improve efficiency and institutional specialisation, dividing electoral responsibilities across multiple institutions may raise concerns about coordination, transparency, and accountability. Public trust in elections depends on clear, independent, and credible systems. Where institutional arrangements appear to weaken independence or blur lines of responsibility, public confidence in electoral processes may decline, which can directly affect civic participation.

Clause 14 of the proposed Bill removes the requirement for public interviews in judicial appointments. The 2013 Constitution introduced public interviews to promote transparency and merit-based selection. Removing this process reduces public visibility into how judges are appointed. An independent and transparent judiciary plays a central role in protecting freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. If judicial appointments are perceived as less transparent, concerns about independence may arise, potentially weakening public confidence in the courts as protectors of constitutional rights.

The proposed Bill further repeals Part 4 of Chapter 12 of the Constitution, which establishes the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC), and transfers its functions to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC). Although this consolidation is framed as promoting efficiency and coherence, dissolving a specialised gender-focused body may reduce focused attention on gender equality issues. Independent commissions were designed to provide dedicated oversight in specific areas of rights protection. Gender justice has remained a key area of civic engagement in Zimbabwe, and these changes may affect how gender-specific concerns are prioritised and addressed.



Taken together, the proposed amendments represent a significant restructuring of Zimbabwe's governance framework. The changes extend executive authority in certain respects, increase presidential appointment powers, reorganise electoral management, remove a transparency mechanism in judicial appointments, and merge independent oversight institutions. While each amendment may be presented as a technical or administrative reform, their combined effect shifts the balance of power in ways that may affect accountability, citizen participation, and institutional independence.

These governance debates take place within a broader social and economic context marked by prolonged economic hardship, ongoing political contestation, and increasing social pressure. Over time, economic and political challenges can deepen into broader social strain, characterised by polarisation, mistrust, and reduced public confidence. In such circumstances, protecting civic space becomes even more important. Civic space goes beyond the legal right to associate or assemble; it reflects the real ability of citizens to participate meaningfully, hold institutions accountable, and influence decisions that affect their lives.

The key question raised by the proposed Constitutional Amendment No. 3 is not only whether it promotes stability, but whether it strengthens citizen power or concentrates power further within state institutions. Sustainable national stability depends on servant leadership, active and informed citizenship, strong checks and balances, and a constitutional order that places citizens, country, and constitution at its centre. As stakeholders within the civic space reflect on these developments, constructive dialogue, vigilance, and principled engagement will remain essential to ensure that constitutional reforms strengthen rather than limit civic space.

Disclaimer: *This update provides information only and does not represent a formal position. Civil society actors are expected to engage in further collective reflection and dialogue in the coming period.*

National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations

Strengthening the voice of NGOs operating in Zimbabwe



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NANGO Commemorates World NGO Day 2026

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) today joined the global community in commemorating World NGO Day 2026, reaffirming the indispensable role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in driving Zimbabwe’s development, strengthening resilience, and advancing people-centred transformation.


As part of the commemorations, NANGO convened the 3rd Annual CSO Symposiums in Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, and Mutare, bringing together more than 400 CSOs and key stakeholders from civil society, Government, development partners, the private sector, labour, academia, and non-state actor apex bodies. These symposiums provided a platform to celebrate the enduring contribution of civil society while fostering dialogue, collaboration, and strategic reflection.

This year’s suggested theme, “Celebrating People-Driven Transformation: Adapt, Innovate, and Empower for Resilience and Sustainable Impact,” resonates strongly within Zimbabwe’s current development context. The theme underscores that meaningful and sustainable transformation is not institution-driven, but people-driven, rooted in communities organising around shared needs, aspirations, and solutions.

Speaking during the commemorations, NANGO leadership highlighted that civil society continues to operate within a complex environment marked by economic constraints, climate vulnerabilities, public health pressures, evolving regulatory frameworks, and shifting global development cooperation models. Despite these challenges, the sector remains resilient, innovative, and deeply committed to serving communities.

Across Zimbabwe, CSOs are:

- Strengthening access to health and social protection services;
- Advancing gender equality and disability inclusion;
- Supporting livelihoods and climate resilience initiatives;
- Promoting democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law;



Leveraging digital technologies to enhance youth participation and civic engagement. While many of these interventions operate quietly, their cumulative impact is transformative — reinforcing resilience at household, community, and institutional levels.

The symposium also emphasised the importance of adaptation and innovation within the sector. In a rapidly evolving global and national landscape, CSOs are increasingly embracing diversified resource mobilisation strategies, digital tools, improved governance systems, social enterprise models, and strengthened compliance mechanisms to sustain their work.

Central to the discussions was the operationalisation of the PVO Amendment Act. NANGO reiterated the sector’s commitment to constructive engagement to ensure that implementation of the Act remains clear, practical, and facilitative — safeguarding the continuity of essential humanitarian and development services delivered to communities across Zimbabwe. An enabling environment, NANGO emphasised, is built on predictability, transparency, accountability, and mutual trust. It must balance regulatory oversight with operational effectiveness while protecting public interest and safeguarding civic contribution.

World NGO Day serves not only as a celebration but also as a call to action — to recognise the professionalism, ethical leadership, and unwavering commitment of CSO workers who remain at the frontline of service delivery and advocacy, often under significant strain. It also reaffirms the importance of collaboration among Government, development partners, private sector actors, labour, and academia in advancing inclusive and sustainable national development.

NANGO expressed appreciation to State actors for ongoing dialogue toward creation of an enabling operating environment for CSOs, to development partners for their continued solidarity amid global funding uncertainties, and to the broader NGO ecosystem for its resilience and dedication.

As Zimbabwe navigates complex socio-economic realities, NANGO reaffirmed its commitment to fostering and safeguarding an enabling environment in which civil society can thrive and continue contributing to national development.

World NGO Day 2026 stands as both a celebration and a renewed pledge — to adapt in the face of change, to innovate amid constraints, to empower communities for sustainability, and to build resilience for a people-driven, inclusive Zimbabwe.

HOW DOES AN NGO REGISTER ON TARMS?

Step 1

Self-Service Portal

Visit the official Self Service Portal – SSP at mytaxselfservice.zimra.co.zw



Step 2

SSP User Account

Create an SSP user account by clicking on the **"Sign Up"** hyperlink and follow the steps to get your Username and Password.

Step 3

Account Log In

Log into the system using your username and password and follow the steps as directed.

Step 4

Existing Taxpayer

If you are an existing taxpayer with BP number, click on the **"Register with an Existing BP Number"** hyperlink and follow the instructions.

Step 5

New Taxpayer

If you are a new taxpayer, choose the appropriate option from **"Register as an Individual"** or **"Register as an Organisation"** or **"Register as a Representative of a Deceased Taxpayer"** and follow the steps.

Step 6

Bank Selection

Select your preferred bank to link to the **ZIMRA Single Account** located in that bank. Note that, you should be an **account holder** in that bank to facilitate tax transactions.

All NGOs are encouraged to contact their nearest **NANGO Offices** should they face registration challenges or email us at info@nangozim.org or get in touch with the **ZIMRA Contact Center** on **585/0868800761**



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Published by NANGO
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