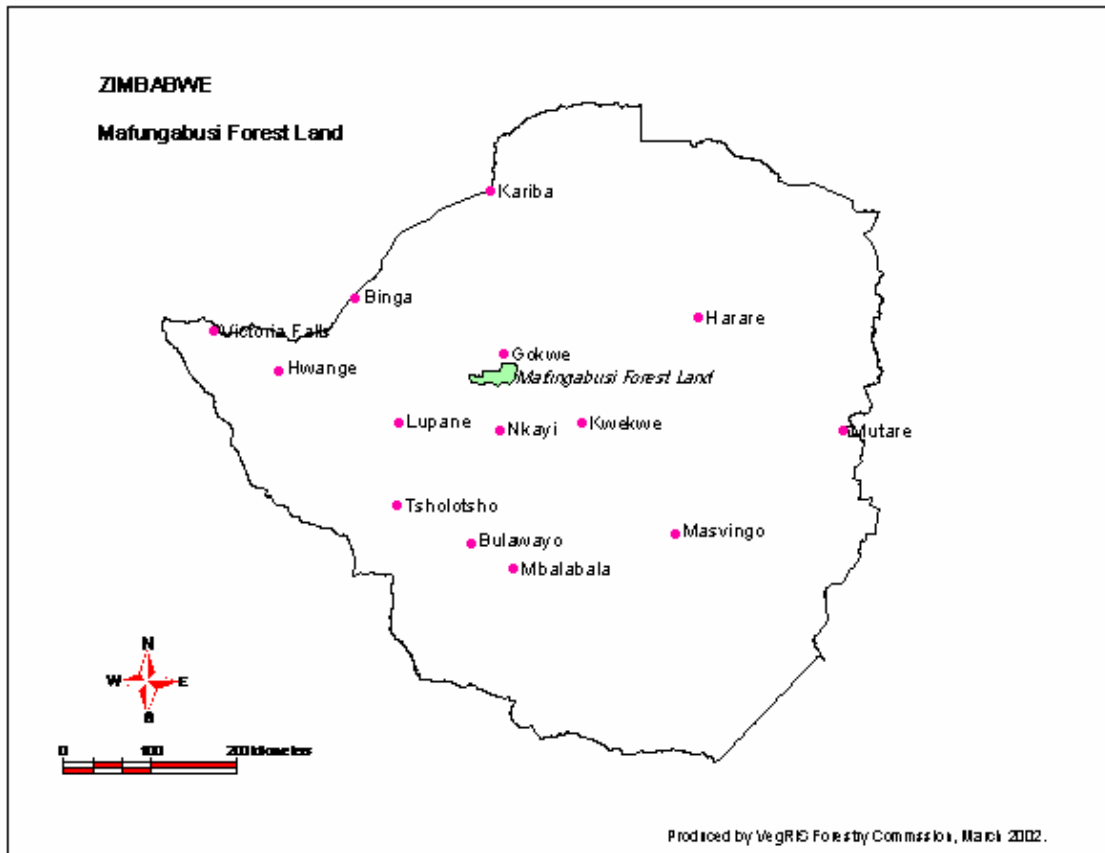


**Figure 1:** Map of Zimbabwe indicating the location of Mafungautsi Forest



**Box 1:** Example of ‘Look and Learn’ Tour in the ACM project

Two FC officers for Gokwe North and South Districts and the Provincial Forest Extension Manager for Midlands province and representatives from 5 RMCs around the Mafungautsi forest visited the Nyagadza carpentry project in Chipinge where they learnt how the communities in Nyagadza were managing (harvesting and monitoring) their indigenous woodlot. This was a big learning opportunity for both the FC and communities as one of the most contentious issues around the forest is the harvesting of timber by local communities. Timber harvesting is still outside the resource sharing agreement, yet communities have continued to illegally access this high value resource. This trip was therefore a learning opportunity for the two major stakeholders around the forest on what kind of systems could be implemented to ameliorate the conflict between the FC and communities with regard to timber harvesting. Following this trip, the three FC officers administered a questionnaire to establish among other things; the number of harvesters, their qualifications, tools and skills they had and the volume of timber they harvested per given time. This survey is yet to be followed by another survey to find out the amount of timber available in the forest. This survey aimed to establish the feasibility of allowing timber harvesting by communities in Mafungautsi along the Nyagadza model – so far, licenses to harvest timber have been occasionally given to big outside timber logging companies. The FC officers hoped to use the findings of these surveys as a basis to argue for allowing communities to harvest timber from the forests with their top management. This is one step that could later influence the forest policy as it relates to the use of Mafungautsi or better still, other state forests. (Mutimukuru *et al.*, 2006)

### **Box 2: Example of participation in the management of firewood collection**

In trying to regulate and generate information on firewood collection, the Batanai RMC came up with a new mechanism where ordinary exercise books were stamped to make receipts. These receipts were given to people strategically located along the forest boundary so that they could levy Zim\$500 to all firewood collectors who collect firewood on days outside the designated firewood collection days. The people issuing out firewood receipts included kraalheads and RMC members. This initiative was primarily meant to regulate firewood collection, and to a lesser extent, serve as a cash generation project. The inclusion of traditional leaders (for instance the village heads) in the firewood collection monitoring was a commendable development as they had complained of being left out of the resource sharing programme

### **Box 3: Example of renewed accountability of the RMCs and conflict resolution**

Because of the serious problems they faced in their RMCs related to unequal distribution of the broom grass resource, the Gababe RMC members took the lead in developing a system that would ensure equitable distribution of the resource. The new system involved dividing the grass vlei into a number of small plots so that many people could have access to the good and better grass, unlike previously when only a few could access it. The new system worked well in reducing conflicts over access to some parts of the forest. This initiative also provided an opportunity for closer collaboration between the RMC and the user group, for the first time the RMC was able to respond to concerns coming from the users. Previously the RMC showed very little concern for issues raised by users. The RMC was only concerned with issuing out permits, and responding to demands from the FC.

### **Box 4: Example of communities demanding accountability.**

Cases of funds embezzlement by RMC members have been reported in a number of RMC's around the forest. Local politicians are said to have tried to access RMC funds hoping to use the money to fund political activities. At Batanai RMC, committee members were threatened with physical harm or expulsion from the RMC if they did not hand over the money to the local ward councilor. But now knowing that RMC money is public money which cannot be used without the approval of the community, the RMC members from the RMC remained resolute and refused to hand over the money to the ward councilor, who wanted to use the money to sponsor a ruling party function that was scheduled to take place in their area. The RMC members insisted that it was important for them to organize a meeting with community members to find out if they wanted their money to be used in this way or not.

**Box 5:** Example 2 of communities demanding accountability.

Of late, communities in some RMCs around Mafungautsi have taken an active role in monitoring the performance of their RMCs by demanding that they become accountable to them also and not only to the FC. For instance, in Chemwiro Masawi, communities have organised various meetings where they also invite the FC officer and the councillor to give the RMC members a platform to update them on their progress with regard to; their finances, activities carried out and problems faced. At one of the meetings that was organised, the FC officer helped communities to understand the constitution binding the work by RMC members. After this meeting, the councillor (one of the local level stakeholders) was happy and said that '*nhasi zvataziva basa reRMC, chokwadi vatichagadza pazvigaro zveRMC vanenge vatogara papfumo remoto nekuti tinenge tichivaongorora kuti vari kuita basa ravo nemazvo here kana kuti kwete*' – meaning, 'now that we know the work that the RMC members are supposed to do, the next people to be elected in the RMC positions will be seating on a burning spear as we will monitor and check if they are doing their work properly or not'. The FC officer attributed this development to the constant interactions between RMCs, which resulted in communities examining their performance relative to other RMCs. (Mutimukuru *et al.*, 2006)