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"Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia" (EPDN),
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REVISED NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY POLICY

Summary and recommendations for Civil Society by EPDN



The Policy was published in 2021; Duration 2021 – 2030



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Vision

"Optimal food and nutrition security for a healthy and productive nation."

Mission

"To provide integrated, affordable, accessible, and equitable, quality food and nutrition security services that are responsive to the needs of the population."

Goal

"To ensure that the population has access to adequate, affordable, safe, quality food and water throughout their life cycle that always meets their nutrient requirements for optimal healthy and productive lives."

Leading Offices / Ministries / Agencies (O/M/As)

Addressing the challenge of hunger and achieving national food security is complex and involves many actors, sectors and individuals. Therefore, **the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP)** is the responsibility of many stakeholders including "government ministries and agencies, development partners, private sector, academia and civil society organisations."

The FNSP's implementation is thus the joint responsibility of numerous and different stakeholders. Nevertheless, specific government structures are essential in the implementation of the policy.

These are: **The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR) and the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MHSS).**

Governance: What does the policy say about responsible bodies?

The policy assigns a wide range of roles and responsibilities to all line ministries, various agencies and offices – reflecting **the multi-sector, cross-cutting nature of nutrition and food security.** In addition, the policy explicitly acknowledges the important role played by non-state stakeholders **including international development partners, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector in ensuring Namibia's food and nutrition security.**

The **FNSP** outlines in detail the mandates of the many O/M/As with regards to the policy's coordination, oversight and implementation. Below are some examples of specific mandates and implementers.

The **MAWLR** plays a crucial role as it is **"mandated to promote sustainable production, productivity, and diversification of the agricultural sector towards food security and the sustainable management" of natural resources.** The ministry is also tasked with ensuring that land is equitable allocated and well managed to the benefit of all citizens. Importantly, the **MAWLR** also hosts **the National Secretariat for the implementation and coordination of the FNSP.** The ministry is responsible for everything concerning food production, and an estimated quarter of the tasks outlined in the policy.

OPM is tasked with overseeing the **overarching coordination structure of the FNSP.** Furthermore, **OPM** is home to the **Directorate of Disaster Risk**



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Management (DDRM) which ensures that food and nutrition issues are considered in national response plans in the case of emergencies such as floods and droughts.

The **MHSS also plays key responsibilities in the FNSP.** The ministry is responsible among others **for providing technical guidance to all other sectors with regards to healthy nutrition.** In addition, *MHSS* should ensure that existing health information systems collect quality data on key nutrition indicators.

The successful implementation of FNSP relies on the work of many stakeholders. However, to meet the many ambitious policy targets, stakeholders must coordinate and align their activities with each other. **Indeed, the coordination structure to implement and oversee the FNSP is crucial and outlined in great detail in the policy.** It is important to note that coordination mechanisms are **located at all operational levels – namely the national, regional, constituency and community level.** Naturally, the policy’s coordination bodies located at the national level are the most important in terms of decision-making. These are:

1. **The Food and Nutrition Security Council (FNSC);** oversees all stakeholders involved in food and nutrition issues. It is made up of Cabinet Ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister and provides the Cabinet with crucial information for approval.
2. **The Food and Nutrition Security Inter-Agency Steering Committee (FNSIASC);** it primarily is tasked with providing technical advice to the *FNSC* with regards to implementing the policy. Committee members are made up of relevant line ministry’s Executive Directors and is chaired by **the Secretary to the Cabinet.** *FNSIASC’s* work is supported **by six working groups** made up of technical experts addressing specific issues on food and nutrition.
3. Both the *FNSC* and the *FNSIASC* rely on **the third coordination mechanism located at national level – the National Secretariat (NS).** The secretariat offers

crucial administrative support to the FNSC and FNSIASC and takes care of day-to-day tasks such as arranging meeting, preparing summary documents, informing and coordinating stakeholders. The NS is hosted by MAWLR.

4. **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)** are also represented in the coordination structure. CSOs, academia and private sector representatives form part of the **Nutrition and Food Security Alliance of Namibia (NAFSAN).** *NAFSAN’s* role is acknowledged by the *FNSP*, **with NAFSAN members primarily serving on the six working groups under the FNSIASC, providing technical guidance.** *FNSIASC* also has the power **to co-opt additional members from CSOs** that are not necessarily part of *NAFSAN*. Finally, according to the policy **CSOs also play an important role at the community level by being part of the Village Development Committees.**





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Policy Objectives & Benefits: What main measurable and positive outcome should be produced by the policy?

At its heart, the policy clearly sets out four main objectives with measurable targets, to advance nutrition and food security. These are:

Objective 1

By 2030, reduce the prevalence of undernourishment from 30.9% to 15% and maintain overweight and obesity among children under five years of age below 5%, by facilitating the provision of adequate food and nutrition for mothers and children and ensuring optimal health and productivity of the people of Namibia throughout their lifecycle.

Key Outcomes

- Legislation and supportive family, workplace, and social environments to enable and encourage breastfeeding improved.
- Greater awareness created on the importance of optimal nutrition as well as cognitive, emotional, and social development within the first 1000 days of a child's life.
- Nutritional status of mothers, infants and young children improved.
- Cases of acute malnutrition are better detected, treated, and prevented within health facilities and communities

Objective 2

By 2030, increase domestic food production of local consumption from 30% to 60% and enhance processing, marketing, and consumption of food to improve access to nutritious and safe food for the populace of Namibia at all times.

Key Outcomes

- Increased local production of safe and nutritious foods, especially by
- smallholders' farmers, with improved access to markets.
- Food waste reduced, as well as food processing, preservation, storage and overall management of food improved.
- More households are provided with safe, healthy and nutritious food.
- Sustainable whole food systems approach implemented, integrating aspects of nutrition and food safety, climate smart agriculture, as well as holistic land use practices and water management systems.





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Objective 3

By 2030, reduce prevalence of stunting from 24% to 12% through nutrition-sensitive interventions and by ensuring access to health care services, sanitation, hygiene, education, and social protection programmes for all people in Namibia.

Key Outcomes

- Urban and rural communities’ and household’s access to safe water, hygiene, and sanitation improved.
- School nutrition significantly improved through a combination of integrated approaches, including comprehensive nutrition awareness and sustainably
- maintained school gardens • Social Protection Systems increase coverage and provide better services,
- including non-conditional cash transfers, specifically for women, youth, and
- marginalized communities.

Objective 4

By 2030, increase investment in food and nutrition security by at least 10% of national budget annually and ensure an enabling environment of effective coordination and implementation.

Key Outcomes

- Implementation, coordination, and monitoring systems as well as research and overall capacity for implementing all food and security related policies improved and are aligned with other relevant strategic frameworks.
- Overall national and regional investment in and commitment to food and nutrition security has significantly increased.

Implementation Action Plan (IPA)

It is important to take note off the Implementation Action Plan (IAP) and the Coordination Structure (CS) that underline the FNSP. The IAP and CS are each specified in separate documents.

The IAP provides a detailed logical framework indicating individual strategies, activities, outputs and targets for each of the four main objectives.





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What does the policy say about public participation in the making of it and in the revision?

Efforts to develop the current policy were kicked off in 2015 by MHSS and with the support of the **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)** of the United Nations.

Public participation played a role in developing the *FNSP*. Hence, extensive stakeholder consultations took place with a wide range of stakeholders including non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and private sector representatives.

In addition, efforts were made to source information at regional and local level.

Three fact-finding missions took place in 2018 to the Khomas, Zambezi and Erongo regions – informing the policy’s revision.

The current policy should not be seen as an unmovable and cast in stone. Instead, it is stated in the *FNSP* document that the policy “should be revised as national priorities change and new evidence becomes available.” To revise the policy a number of steps have to be undertaken including stakeholder consultations, mandating some form of broader participation efforts to review and revise the existing policy which would also include civil society.

What are the associated costs / budget assigned to the policy?

The previously mentioned *IAP* provides a comprehensive logical framework broken down into strategies, activities and targets among others. Each activity listed in the framework, is provided with a cost figure, usually per year. Of note, the *IAP* only covers five years of policy implementation from 2021/22 to 2025/26. The total cost of the *IAP*, covering five years, is nearly NAD 39 billion.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the policy say about its enforcement?

The policy does not contain information about its enforcement.

What does the policy foresee about its evaluation?

The *FNSP* explicitly talks about the importance of establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework to regularly track and evaluate the policy’s implementation and identify potential shortcomings. Lead implementers and their co-partners are tasked with submitting annual monitoring reports to the *FNSC* and the *NS* - tracking progress by utilising the targets and output indicators stipulated in the *IAP*. According to the policy, the reports “will gauge the level and quality of stakeholder engagement and track progress of achieving the intended policy outcomes.” This information should also be used in the revision of the policy.





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What does the policy need to succeed?

1. Addressing food and nutrition challenges in Namibia is difficult and requires **many stakeholders to coordinate and cooperate closely together**; Hence the coordination structure made up of the *FNSC*, *FNSIASC* and so forth need to work well and consistently.
2. Unfortunately, much of the national data on food and nutrition is dated. **Monitoring needs to be improved; new and current data needs to be collected and analysed as a matter of urgency**, so the policy’s implementers can **better target their efforts**.
3. It is crucial that stakeholders, including government departments, international agencies, academia, CSOs and business entities coordinate and – were possible **bundle their initiatives**.
4. Programming needs to shift from focusing on short-term emergency relief to **an emphasis on longer-term preparation and prevention**; this will also require raising awareness of and communicating the *FNSP* better.

The policy and civil society - the policy’s impact on the day-to-day work of CSOs

The **importance of adequate food and nutrition for all citizens cannot be understated**.

The *FNSP* provides important guidance and background information to CSOs active in this field.

NAFSAN’s is an important conduit for CSOs requiring ongoing information and guidance with regards to programming and national priorities set by the *FNSC*.

In turn NAFSAN’s can collect and collate monitoring data from CSOs and present them to senior decision-makers more quickly and easier than individual CSOs.

The policy **therefore contributes towards coordinating and improving CSOs efforts** in the food and nutrition sector.





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Recommendations: How can CSOs make best use of the policy?

The *FNSP's* overarching four objectives, as well as relevant strategies, outputs and targets should **provide CSOs with guidance on how to prioritise and structure their own efforts.** CSOs play a significant role **as implementers of food and nutrition projects in local communities.** The capacity of government and international agencies is limited CSOs should play a strong role in advocacy and publicising the policy, sharing information with stakeholders at regional and national levels and playing an active role in monitoring and evaluating programmes.

With regards to monitoring efforts – this does not only concern CSOs own work, but also the work of government O/M/As and international development partners such as United Nations (UN) agencies. The policy's *IAP* provides a detailed framework to track progress towards targets and identify respective responsible actors. In this way CSOs can greatly contribute to holding powerful organisations accountable for their actions, and contributing to public transparency.

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You can find the Policy here:
[FNS-POLICY.pdf \(nafsan.org\)](#)

**You can find the Food and Security
coordination structure here:**
[Documents - MAWLR - Portal Ariel \(gov.na\)](#)

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