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NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY (NHP) 2023

Summary and recommendations for Civil Society by EPDN



The policy was published in 2024; the first policy review should take place in the financial year 2028/29



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Vision

“Adequate housing as the cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable urban and rural development in Namibia.”

Mission

“Creating clear pathways towards progressively achieving adequate housing for all socio-economic groups.”

Goal

“The overarching policy goal is to enable broad access to housing opportunities and adequate housing to progressively improve living and socio-economic conditions for urban and rural residents through a committed partnership between stakeholders in government, civil society, the private sector, residents and international development partners.”



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

The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD) is the custodian of the NHP. Other O/M/As with important roles related to housing include:

- **Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR)**
- **Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT)**
- **Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises (MFPE)**
- **Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT)**
- **Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA)**
- **Namibian Standards Institution (NSI)**

The policy also highlights the crucial part played by regional councils (RCs), local authorities (LAs), traditional authorities, and the National Housing Enterprise (NHE) in determining housing needs and creating housing opportunities in their respective jurisdictions or administrative areas.





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What does the policy say about responsible bodies?

The successful implementation of the policy will rely on strong partnerships between government, private sector, civil society, academia, and resident communities. Hence, most stakeholders carry a certain level of responsibility pertaining to oversight, monitoring, coordination and implementation. *NHP* includes an implementation framework that outlines in detail respective stakeholders’ mandates and responsibilities. For example:

The **Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD)**, is responsible specifically for reporting on policy implementation and achievements in relation to set timelines, targets and budgets. **Crucially, the policy foresees the creation by MURD of a Programme Implementation, Coordination, Management and Support Unit (PICMSU).**

This unit will be staffed by experts and will be vital in coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the *NHP*. Notably the policy contains detailed terms of references including: mandate, key tasks and staffing requirements for the *PICMSU* in Appendix 6.

National Housing Policy Implementation Steering Committee (*NHPISC*).

Another key implementing body is the **National Housing Policy Implementation Steering Committee (NHPISC)**. *NHPISC* will support *MURD* in overseeing and directing of the *NHP* implementation. Besides including executive directors from key ministries such as *MURD*, *MFPE* and *MWT*, the steering committee will also include representatives from Shack Dwellers Federation Namibia (*SDFN*) and housing specialists from universities and the private sector. Additionally, the *NHPISC* will have the

power to co-opt further representatives from academia, civil society, public enterprises and business sector as the need arises.

What main measurable and positive outcome should be produced by the policy?

In a nutshell the *NHP*’s central outcome should be the provision of “housing opportunities and adequate housing” to the great majority of Namibian citizens, to improve living standards and socio-economic development. Governments’ role will therefore shift from a provider of houses to providing and ensuring effective mechanisms – enabling housing opportunities. Put differently, the main outcome of the policy is to create a conducive, beneficial environment. This environment will encourage stakeholders to initiate, plan and carry out projects to service land and construct houses in an affordable manner. This overarching outcome is emphasised in the policy’s goal and repeat throughout the document.

The policy document includes a comprehensive Implementation Action Plan (Appendix 7). This plan is divided into the eight objectives and sub-divided further into 13 strategies. Together, the objectives and associated strategies provide **a broad and detailed implementation framework in terms of activities that need to be undertaken to ensure the *NHP*’s success.** The Implementation Action Plan (*IAP*) logical framework includes strategies, activities, key indicators, and baseline data for each respective policy objective.

An initial **estimate foresees the need to provide 30,000 houses per annum from 2023 to 2030, to replace current and future shacks in informal settlements.**



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Policy Objectives & Benefits

To achieve the *NHP*'s stated goal the policy wants nothing less than to **drastically reform how housing and serviced land is managed, planned-out, administrated and financed in Namibia**. The policy identifies the root causes of the country's housing crisis as: “bureaucratic and standards-oriented environment” resulting in high housing costs simply beyond the reach of most citizens. The solution to this crisis, according to the *NHP* is: **“enabling a broad spectrum of implementers, including residents and communities, to create housing opportunities and housing units through a partnership approach.”**

The policy sets out the following eight objectives:

Objective 1. Unlock housing opportunities at scale for urban and rural residents at all socio-economic levels by 2030;

Objective 2. Strengthen Namibia's legal and regulatory framework on access to adequate housing by 2030;

Objective 3. Focus public expenditure proportionally on Priority Target Groups (PTGs), including targeted subsidies for housing opportunities;

Objective 4. Re-align state-supported housing provision mechanisms to provide access to adequate housing for all PTGs;

Objective 5. Capacitate O/M/As, non-state implementers and residents for accelerated and enhanced implementation to meet the country's housing need;

Objective 6. Increase private sector investment in adequate housing provision;

Objective 7. Improve the environmental, social and spatial sustainability of neighbourhoods and housing units in line with the SDGs; (Sustainable Development Goals) and

Objective 8. Foster housing innovation and collective learning in the housing sector.

In practice the objectives aim to create a broad, inclusive and supportive **enabling environment for stakeholders to easily realise their own specific housing opportunities** – tailored to their needs and means. Furthermore, the *NHP* classifies households according to **the total monthly income, ranging from ultra-low to ultra-high** (Appendix 2). Households falling into ‘ultra-low, low’ and ‘middle’ household income groups are **designated as Priority Target Groups (PTGs)**. Particularly the first two of these *PTGs* – ultra- and low-income groups are **eligible for subsidies and grants** with regards to land and housing developments. With this *PTG* mechanism focusing expenditure on low-income households as stipulated in objectives 3 and 4 – **the policy should especially benefit poorer citizens.**

What does the policy say about public participation in its drafting and its revision?

The development of the *NHP* started in April 2021 under the leadership of *MURD*, *MFPE*, and the National Planning Commission (*NPC*). A task team made up of additional ministry officials and representatives from *NPC*, *NHE*, *SDFN*, National Housing Action Group (*NHAG*) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (*NUST*) carried out the bulk of the policy revision. In addition to reviewing the housing policy 2009 and the 2013



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mass housing development programme blueprint, the task team **consulted a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society via workshops and encouraged written submissions from the public throughout 2022**, and three regional consultations on the IAP,

Public and community participation is an important part of the NHP. Indeed, one of its guiding principles states: **“the policy emphasises and provides for public ownership through citizen participation, continuous public engagement, education and capacity building.”**

Active community consultation and involvement forms a core aspect component of the Participatory Informal Settlement Upgrading (PISU) and Sustainable Incremental Greenfield Development SIGD mechanisms – which are key to facilitating incremental land and housing development. Finally, the policy outlines in Appendix 8, **which laws need to be revised to include public participation guidelines** and those which require additional stakeholder input.

The NHP makes allowances for **the annual review and revision of outputs**, targets and budgets of the IAP. The policy document states that such annual IAP revisions are necessary to: “account for changes in housing needs, implementation capacity, and budgetary allocations, as well as availability of improved data.” An annual revision can for example be used to include updated national census figures in the IAP. Housing targets and budgets can be thus adjusted to reflect current trends and needs – without requiring changes to the NHP itself. **The revision process will be consultative and include inputs from all relevant stakeholders in the housing sector.**



Associated costs/ budget assigned to the policy?

The IAP provides a detailed, annual cost estimate for each of the eight policy objectives and is divided into appropriate strategies and activities. Estimates are given for five financial years – 2024/25 to 2028/29. Particularly objectives one and four will require significant financial commitment of multiple billion Namibian Dollars.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the policy say about its enforcement?

One of the key tasks of PICMSU will be to ensure: **“accountability to and by various partners, effective oversight of various Government O/M/As and other Implementers.”** Furthermore, policy implementation foresees a **partnership approach between many different stakeholders – implying joint accountability.** An enforcement mechanism is not stipulated.

What does the policy foresee about its evaluation?

According to the policy, **monitoring and evaluation will be the responsibility of the PICMSU** – utilising the IAP and a yet to be **developed framework.** The **PICMSU is also required to report back to the steering committee on a monthly basis on land and housing.** It is foreseen that such **reporting is shared widely with stakeholders to reflect on the policy achievements and to revise NHP’s targets and budgets on an annual basis.** The IAP does not provide quantifiable targets; instead, **general outputs** are stated which cannot be equated to measurable targets.



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What does the policy need to succeed?

Too succeed the policy needs to:

1. Establish a strong national, regional and local stakeholder **coordination mechanisms**
2. **Adjust, align and revise all legislation, policies and strategies** that are relevant to housing and land; **implement progressive regulation** that enable housing opportunities and limit / **suspend rules that hamper housing and land provision**
3. Institute a large-scale public subsidy-system to finance the NHP; subsidise should provide for **tenure security, basic services and housing loan** – and flow to **community partnerships, low-income PTGs**, local and regional authorities
4. Encourage and facilitate **active community participation** in planning and carrying out construction projects together with close partnerships with Regional Councils, Local Authorities and civil society
5. Set **an overall goal for number of houses build or hectares of serviced land provided** over the duration of the policy implementation.

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

Housing remains a critical development challenge for Namibia. **The NHP is a well formulated and sophisti-**

cated document; it should have significant bearing on relevant CSOs and their work with regards to land development, housing and urban planning. Given the policy's **emphasis on public and community participation - CSOs will be important in facilitating active and meaningful communication between communities, Local Authorities, Regional Councils, national government and related stakeholders. CSOs should also have an important role to play in coordinating the PISU and SIGD mechanism** in their respective locality.

Practically, land and housing development requires significant capacity and resources. Therefore, **many CSOs will be best placed to support housing initiatives with tasks that require local knowledge and community contacts and less resources.**

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

Civil society is an **important stakeholder** when it comes to realising the goal of the *NHP*. **CSOs can play multiple roles including popularising the policy and its goals, gathering local data from communities and facilitating community engagements around urban planning.** Indeed, the policy is based on existing practices such as **housing developments carried out by SDFN / NHAG groups in cooperation with local authorities.** Thus, CSOs could also act as **implementers on behalf of beneficiaries from respective communities undertaking land servicing and housing projects.**

The participatory approach championed by the policy requires extensive work on part of the implementers; **it offers good opportunities for local CSOs to get active in this area and assist LAs and fellow stakeholders** for example by: **organising and facilitating information**



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sessions and initiating community meetings to gather information.

By continuing **to engage with, publicise and demand information on the progress** of the NHP - CSOs can contribute to ensuring public interest on this vital topic and **through evidence-based monitoring to hold government accountable.**

Contact Details

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You can find the policy here:

[LEGISLATION - murd - Portal Ariel \(gov.na\)](#)



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