

Part One

SYNTHESIS OF THE COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY ASSISTANCE: LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

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Between 2005 and 2008 the FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) assisted Bhutan, Cambodia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zanzibar in mainstreaming food security and nutrition (FSN) into their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national planning processes. With the intention of sharing the experiences gained and identifying the factors that influence the effectiveness of policy assistance, five country case studies were prepared summarizing the overall objective of the programme in each country, the expected outcomes and the experiences in providing food security policy assistance.

The findings and lessons learned included in this synthesis paper are based on a sample of country experiences. Thus, the paper provides indicative, and by no means definitive, suggestions as to how to best assist countries in mainstreaming FSN into national policies and strategies. As additional experience is gained and analysed, it may eventually be possible to define best practices and develop guidelines to be used by practitioners.

The synthesis is structured around four sections, each of which corresponds to a group of critical factors in mainstreaming FSN. The first section explains the importance of carefully designing the process through which policy assistance will be delivered, including the identification of the most relevant counterparts, requirements for sustainable ownership and in-depth situation analysis. Section two argues that policy assistance should support formulation as well as implementation. The need for both institutional and human capacity building is discussed in section three. Finally, section four discusses the importance of capturing the institutional and political dimensions.

I. DESIGNING THE FSN POLICY ASSISTANCE PROCESS

□ Identifying opportunities and partners' abilities before engaging in FSN policy assistance processes

The formulation of an overarching national development policy, and in some cases also sectoral policies, provided an opportunity for FSN to be mainstreamed into policy and planning. Overarching national policies included poverty reduction strategies in Bhutan and Mozambique, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Zanzibar, the Strategy for Agriculture and Water in Cambodia, and the Economic Recovery Strategy in Kenya. Sectoral strategies included the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Policy in Bhutan. The ability to engage in these processes was influenced by the timing of the policy assistance project; acknowledgment of the importance of FSN by national counterparts and country-based UN partners; and the in-country presence of a proactive policy assistance team.

The analysis of the policy context performed during the in-country policy assistance also included the identification of the most appropriate counterpart so that it could champion the cause. In some cases, this was not the Ministry of Agriculture, whose role was sometimes even challenged by national institutions.

In Bhutan the timing of the policy assistance project provided ample opportunity to feed the Bhutan National Food Security Strategy Paper (BNFSSP) into the 10th Five Year Plan (FYP). A previous attempt at integrating a comprehensive approach to building FSN into national planning had been

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unsuccessful since it had not been timed to coincide with the country's five-year planning process. The country-level presence of a proactive policy assistance team meant that this team was able to promptly identify and engage in policy processes that it had not anticipated. Even if this involvement in the policy process took place before, and in parallel to the formulation of the poverty reduction strategy, it was not less important to FSN mainstreaming. In Mozambique, FAO took the opportunity of the formulation of the second version of the PRSP to support a deeper integration of FSN. FAO assessed fulfilment of key conditions such as the policy climate and political will, as well as national capacity, and deemed the context appropriate. In Zanzibar, the acknowledgment of the importance of FSN in the UNDAF was thanks to the support provided by FAO's sister agencies. This made it easy to go a step further in integrating FSN into national policy processes since this idea was supported by influential actors and was already part of the policy debate.

Lessons Learned

- Identify policy spaces for FSN mainstreaming into policy and planning.
- Ensure in-country presence of a proactive policy assistance team that will allow monitoring of the evolving policy processes and debates.
- Ensure timely intervention of the FSN policy assistance project.
- Identify the "best" counterpart to influence the policy formulation process.

□ **Creating stakeholder ownership for sustainability of FSN policy assistance efforts**

Policy assistance for FSN mainstreaming involved a wide spectrum of stakeholders. These included government, civil society organizations, universities and UN agencies that had varying degrees of influence over the policy process.

In most cases, higher levels of stakeholder influence were associated with a higher degree of ownership over the FSN strategy. In Zanzibar, continuous consultations to seek views from a wide range of stakeholders at all stages of the process resulted in broad-based ownership of the policy documents. A similar situation took place in Kenya, where the formulation of the FSN strategy was the result of in-depth consultation of key stakeholders through workshops organized at decentralized levels. In Mozambique the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) followed a highly participatory and transparent process whereby the MPD established thematic working groups that included government and civil society organizations. In addition, all interested stakeholders could comment on drafts of the PRSP (e.g. in regional consultations organized by MPD and a non-governmental organization (NGO) umbrella association). With respect to FSN, Mozambique's technical secretariat for FSN established an ad-hoc working group that provided inputs to the PRSP formulation on time. On the contrary, in Cambodia the lack of in-depth participation from main stakeholders such as ministry officials hindered the policy process and reduced the sense of ownership. In Bhutan there has been little buy-in of the BNFSSP by actors outside of the Ministry of Agriculture, including UN agencies. This is to the extent that food security has not been included in the UNDAF, although this was being drafted at the same time as the BNFSSP. Government participation in formulation was also low because of low-level expertise in multi-dimensional household food security planning.

Stakeholder ownership of FSN mainstreaming was achieved by involving stakeholders in the process itself and by raising awareness of the importance of FSN. The joint definition of the policy assistance work plan between the government and the FNPP team has also been instrumental in ensuring ownership, as demonstrated in the cases of Cambodia and Mozambique. Another way of increasing ownership was illustrated in the cases of Cambodia, Kenya and Mozambique, where efforts were made by the in-country policy assistance team to raise the profile of FSN issues in the policy agenda. Actually, as the topic was being discussed and increasingly debated, key stakeholders were not only increasing their understanding of the issues in question but also developing an interest in having control over the process. This was the case in Kenya and the controversy between the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, with each one claiming control of the FSN mandate and related agenda. Lastly, communication, when well designed and managed, helps increase ownership. This was demonstrated in Kenya, which had a well defined communication strategy among stakeholders; Zanzibar, which published brochures and policy documents to inform grassroots stakeholders; and Cambodia, which set up an on-line FSN forum that could reach stakeholders in remote provinces.

Intense participation in order to achieve ownership goes beyond national counterparts. In the cases of Kenya and Zanzibar, the policy assistance process benefited from the contributions of international and foreign technical agencies with which partnerships had been established at the beginning of the process. It also meant that the proposals were owned by a group of supporters that included national counterparts as well as a wide spectrum of development partners. Similarly, in Zanzibar close partnerships were established with the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Save the Children. These facilitated the sharing of experiences and were particularly important in building national capacities. On the other hand, in Bhutan, where close collaboration among UN agencies did not take place, a coherent UN support to FSN is missing and dampening the effectiveness of the policy assistance project. In Mozambique, the ad hoc working group, which included government actors, NGOs, civil society and UN agencies, generated a higher sense of involvement in the policy making process than ever before.

Lessons Learned

- Ensure ownership of the policy process through continuous consultation with key stakeholders (both national and international, and multi-sector) and building of partnerships with technical agencies.
- Define a communication strategy throughout the policy process to effectively inform and engage key stakeholders.

□ **Fully capturing in-country situations**

At the outset, an in-depth situation analysis of the national context with respect to the integration of institutional (human-related) and technical factors proved relevant for defining the FSN-related issues, shaping the policy assistance project and identifying opportunities for leveraging FSN. In particular, the analysis of local dynamics and their influence on the policy process as well as the understanding of national policy makers' various interests and concerns contributed to integrating FSN in the policy debate with a highest likelihood of success.

As shown in the case of Mozambique, a technical evaluation of the level of integration of FSN in existing policies/strategies is useful in revealing the shortcomings of existing policies and provides a more solid basis from which to argue for mainstreaming FSN into a new overarching policy document such as the PRSP. Similarly, in Kenya the assistance began with an assessment of household-level FSN and a review of existing and past FSN-related policies. In the case of Zanzibar, the casual analysis performed during the preparation phase helped create a consensus on the priority areas related to FSN issues to be addressed early on in the policy assistance process.

In Kenya and Zanzibar, the results of the analytical studies helped guide the development of policy recommendations and interventions. However, their impact might have been stronger if the analyses had been completed and disseminated before the beginning of the drafting process.

Lessons Learned

- Invest in policy intelligence work on FSN at country level during the preparatory phase in order to better target, schedule and design the assistance, from the institutional and technical points of view.
- Allocate sufficient time in the work plans of policy assistance projects for conducting the analyses so that the preparatory phase is completed before the formulation phase starts.

II. PROVIDING POLICY ASSISTANCE FROM FORMULATION TO IMPLEMENTATION

□ **Ensuring availability of reliable FSN data**

The lack of data or reliable information is a common finding of most policy assistance projects. However, the case studies show that very often an additional bottleneck is the capacity to analyse FSN data and use this to inform decision making.

The lack of up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive data on household-level food security and of FSN indicators was a constraint to formulating and, in particular, implementing FSN strategies in Bhutan and Cambodia. In Bhutan, as a consequence of the lack of household FSN data for analysing the relative importance of factors of food insecurity and nutrition by area and types of households, prioritization and targeting of the wide range of measures included in the BNFSSP was impossible. Measures included in the BNFSSP have been incorporated in the 10th FYP. However, the lack of any specific targeting to benefit the food-insecure means that these interventions are unlikely to directly contribute to improving household food security. On the other hand, in Zanzibar, a comprehensive situational and causal analysis of existing food insecurity and nutrition problems that drew on relevant survey data, as well as the specific knowledge and expertise of staff of governmental and non-government agencies, allowed to identify the causes of vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition for different groups of households. This provided guidance for targeting interventions and integrating the required institutional changes.

Lessons Learned

- Base policy formulation on reliable, comprehensive and disaggregated data on household-level FSN.
- Increase efforts to strengthen and improve data collection, analysis and dissemination, and the use of information for policy action.
- Increase the understanding of FSN at conceptual and operational levels.

There was a very limited understanding among national counterparts and development partners of the multi-dimensional nature of FSN. This justified the need for policy assistance but it also meant that unless project design provided sufficient attention to building capacities and awareness, national counterparts would be unable, and insufficiently motivated, to critically contribute to the FSN policy debate, even though there were opportunities for doing so. In all countries FSN was primarily understood in terms of national-level self-sufficiency in food to be achieved by the Ministry of Agriculture through increased food production. This understanding inhibited the effective participation of other sectors.

In Cambodia project implementation was hindered by inadequate levels of understanding of FSN as an important cross-cutting issue for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This lack of understanding was evident among both the national actors and representatives of external partner organizations, who did not appreciate the significance of FSN. Important development partners tended to have an exclusive thematic focus on which to target their development aid and did not regard FSN as a high priority. In Mozambique, although FSN issues are widely understood as a multi-dimensional concept that goes beyond food availability, the institutional set-up for FSN planning distorts the distribution of sectoral responsibilities for FSN. Ministries of Health, Education and other ministries appreciate the role they play in ensuring FSN in the country. However, the organizational set-up – whereby the FSN coordination body is placed within the Ministry of Agriculture – shows that FSN is still mainly viewed as an exclusively agricultural issue. As a consequence, other ministries are reluctant to fully participate in the debate. Similarly, in Kenya, FSN was not viewed as a multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral goal that required the coordinated effort of all concerned at national and local levels. A segmented view of FSN gave rise to a situation in which agriculture and nutrition competed against each other, thus hampering the opportunities for collaboration and synergy between sectors.

Regarding the linkages between FSN and poverty several findings emerged. For example, in Bhutan, once the multi-dimensional nature of FSN was conveyed to stakeholders this confused the boundaries between FSN and poverty. With the broadening of the FSN concept beyond food production to include food access, FSN is now being equated with poverty reduction plus increased food production. With this understanding of FSN, and given that poverty reduction and food production were already taking place before the BNFSSP, the added value of a specific FSN approach is unclear among planners in the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB). This is an important flaw since recent data show that equating food insecurity to poverty is an inadequate approach to reducing food insecurity in Bhutan. An FSN analysis of the 2007 Bhutan Living Standards Measurement Survey shows that there are important differences between poverty and food insecurity: not all of the most undernourished districts

are the poorest² The implication is that if only poverty criteria were used for prioritizing districts for targeting, districts with high level of food insecurity would be excluded. Evidence of the inter-relationship between food insecurity and poverty³ was useful for arguing for the mainstreaming of FSN into poverty reduction strategies, on the grounds that FSN is a prerequisite for poverty reduction, but was insufficient for demonstrating the value-added of a specific FSN approach. As a consequence, a specific FSN approach is missing and poverty reduction is equated with food security. In addition, by presenting FSN as a means to reducing poverty, rather than as an end in itself, non-poor food-insecure areas and households may become marginalized in terms of attention received through public policies.

Lessons Learned

- Build an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of FSN at the beginning of the policy assistance project.
- Specify the added-value of the FSN focus by clarifying the relationship and differences between poverty and FSN.

□ **Providing technical assistance from policy formulation to implementation**

FNPP country programmes were successful in formulating FSN strategies but relatively less so in mainstreaming FSN into national-level strategies and, in particular, into operational plans. This largely reflects the focus of the policy assistance project which, in its inception, was predominantly targeted at formulating national-level FSN strategies. The link between FSN policies/strategies and operational documents is not automatic. Whereas national counterparts easily agreed to include FSN in policy documents, there was inertia, if not resistance, when it came to taking the initiative to include FSN in operational plans, and the push for FSN was absent once the project ended.

In Bhutan the FSN strategy was effectively mainstreamed into sectoral policies, donor pledges and MDG reporting through the in-country presence of a food security advisor. However, the advisor was no longer available at the time of formulating the 10th FYP. In concrete terms, an FSN focus is missing in the 10th FYP, although the BNFSSP was approved well before formulation of the 10th FYP had begun. On the contrary, in Mozambique the FSN advisor was a member of the working group that formulated the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme, and FSN measures have been well integrated into this. In Cambodia, strategy formulation was smooth but programme implementation was hindered by insufficient time (due to project's duration) to change policy-makers' perceptions of the significance of FSN and its implications. In Bhutan, Cambodia and Mozambique the project's duration and its initial national-level focus did not allow FSN to be mainstreamed into decentralized operational plans. To overcome the difficulties associated with a project duration that is shorter than the time-lag between policy formulation and programme implementation, in Zanzibar the FSN policy and programme were formulated in parallel and interactively. This guaranteed that FSN was represented in both strategy as well as operational plans and injected realism into policy targets and priorities.

In Zanzibar, government funding for the implementation of the Zanzibar Food Security and Nutrition Policy and Programme started to be integrated in sector budgets with the 2008/9 budgeting process. This allowed budgeting processes to be aligned with the formulation of policy and programme implementation and ensured that funds were not only committed but actually earmarked for programme implementation in the overall national budget allocation exercise.

Lessons Learned

- Provide policy assistance throughout the policy cycle, including the mainstreaming of FSN into operational plans at national and sub-national levels.
- Design FSN policy and operational documents in parallel in order to ensure coherence between policy and programming, and realism of policy objectives.

² Tobgay, S., Mischler, F., Covarrubias K., Zezza, A., 2008. Right to Food Assessment in Bhutan: Looking at policies, legal framework and institutions, FAO, Rome.

³ Stamoulis, K. and Zezza, A., 2003. A Conceptual Framework for National Agricultural, Rural Development, and Food Security Strategies and Policies, FAO, Rome.

III. BUILDING CAPACITIES IN FSN POLICY AND PLANNING

□ **Focusing on capacity building: an essential requirement for all projects**

Institutional and human capacities have proven to be critical in shaping the outcome of policy assistance. In Cambodia, insufficient institutional and human capacities inhibited adequate participation by key stakeholders from government and professional organizations in processes of policy formulation and operationalization. The mirror image of this was Mozambique, where appropriate institutional capacities for food security co-ordination increased the level of participation at both national and district levels.

The extent to which institutional and human capacity building activities were included in project activities depended more on the interest expressed by either the policy assistance team or the project counterparts than on needs identified. In Cambodia, Mozambique, Kenya and Zanzibar, policy assistance for mainstreaming FSN into policy included activities to strengthen the capacities of national counterparts. In Zanzibar capacity-building activities ranged from raising awareness and understanding about FSN issues and about the multi-sectoral linkages involved in implementing FSN measures, to methods for multi-sectoral planning and use of food security, nutrition and poverty information in policy formulation among technical staff, to methods for preparing and broadly disseminating FSN information. The long-term commitment of the project, which was achieved through collaborative partnerships with other UN agencies, allowed capacity strengthening activities to be sustained over time. Policy advisors realized that this focus on capacity building was sometimes at the expense of slower progress in policy and programme formulation but expected that this would translate into more long-lasting effects of the policy assistance. In Kenya a different approach was adopted. Here the focus was on addressing the most significant technical gaps in policy analysis among government officials so that they could design future policies with greater autonomy. In Cambodia, technical assistance was provided through a national project coordinator who was placed in the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD), which helped shape technical support towards a clear emphasis on capacity-building activities. Coordinated training between Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), WFP and FNPP assistance created a pool of policy/programme planners and analysts with enhanced capacities to address FSN issues and their policy implications.

The policy assistance was particularly useful in integrating FSN issues into: (i) various documents such as sectoral strategies and implementation programmes; and (ii) the policy debate among national agencies and ministries at both central and decentralized levels, as well as among some NGOs. These stakeholders now fully appreciate the importance of the FSN concepts and objectives in the context of various development policies. In contrast, the project in Bhutan largely focused on the timely completion of the BNFSSP rather than on developing RGoB capacities in food security analysis and planning. Responsibilities for the formulation of important food security policy and planning documents were outsourced to non-RGoB technical experts. This resulted in the timely completion of a technically robust BNFSSP and of the related planning guidelines but did not address gaps in national capacities for food security planning and forestalled RGoB ownership of the BNFSSP. As a consequence, the momentum behind the BNFSSP slowed significantly once the assignments of the international technical experts were completed.

Lessons Learned

- Include sustained and well targeted capacity-building activities at all stages of the policy assistance process.
- Make sure that the project addresses both individual and institutional capacity building needs for FSN.

□ **Strengthening capacities of the policy assistance team: a matter of credibility**

The case studies show that the policy assistance outcome is influenced by adequacy and variety of skills mobilized in the policy assistance team. More particularly there is a need to combine technical

and analytical skills with soft skills including managerial skills⁴. Kenya and Mozambique are particularly illustrative cases. In Kenya, experience showed that to be effective in interacting with policy makers at the time of major political crisis, the national project coordinator should have had excellent interpersonal skills as well as very high technical profile in order to be able to directly interact with the highest government representative on a regular basis and thereby keep FSN high in the political agenda. Mozambique was an experience of complex project team management and shows the extent to which the combination of the above-mentioned skills is important. Such a situation would have required excellent negotiation and communication skills to overcome the difficulties that emerged and resulted in deadlocks.

In the case of Zanzibar, it turned out that in order to remain on the cutting edge of the policy assistance process, sound analytical and technical skills were critical. The policy assistance team proposed by FAO worked very closely with the national team. The FAO team was able to share technical experience gained in other countries and adapted this to Zanzibar's circumstances, so as to avoid any kind of imposition of "blueprint" solutions. This approach contributed to increased technical credibility of the team and improved the reputation of FAO as a knowledge-based organization and at the same time strengthened the capacities of the national team.

Since it is difficult to find one expert who possesses all the required skills, Kenya, Mozambique and Zanzibar benefited from the support of a policy assistance team composed of members who had an array of technical, analytical and soft and managerial skills that were required as the project unfolded.

Lessons Learned

- In the design of the policy assistance project, build a well composed multi-disciplinary team that can cover a wide spectrum of technical, analytical, managerial and soft skills.
- Before the in-country intervention, spend time clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of all contributors including headquarters staff, country office staff, experts and the project team.

IV. ADDRESSING THE INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

□ Guaranteeing effective institutionalization and coordination mechanisms

FSN mainstreaming involved numerous institutions that were poorly coordinated, a recurrent challenge to the policy assistance process. The lack of a well defined national institutional setting for FSN coordination with clarified mandates has often been a constraint to effective coordination of policies and programmes/actions of line ministries and agencies. More often than not, the policy assistance process was faced with an institutional conundrum that undermined the opportunity for concretely mainstreaming FSN into policy.

This was the case in Bhutan where the ambiguity over the RGoB institution that should be responsible for BNFSSP formulation and implementation and the lack of a coordinated approach to FSN among in-country UN and donor agencies compromised the effectiveness of the assistance provided. Similarly, in Kenya there was no accepted structure to guide, coordinate and monitor the activities of over 18 ministries that were expected to participate in the implementation of the FSN policy. The complex architecture in the coordination structure contributed to the delay in the approval process. Moreover, in a context of political instability, with neither a Secretariat nor a loose coordination structure, it has not been possible to secure the necessary financial resources for the different line ministries to implement the FSN strategy. In Mozambique the FSN coordinating body struggled with its institutional placement within a department of the Ministry of Agriculture. Similarly, in Cambodia FSN involved several ministries with overlapping mandates, making it difficult to reach agreement on their respective roles. In all these cases the institutional setting made the coordination of FSN activities difficult. In Zanzibar, on the contrary, a governmental institution (the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment) that had a clear mandate for FSN recognized by other governmental institutions

⁴ Soft skills are defined in Maetz and Balié (2008) as skills required for "soft" aspects of policy work: political economy, political science, sociology, negotiation, facilitation and communication. Maetz, M. and Balié, J. 2008. Influencing Policy Processes. Lessons from experience. Policy Assistance Series 4. FAO. Rome.

assumed the lead for the Zanzibar Food Security and Nutrition Policy and Programme formulation, and received a mandate to coordinate other line ministries with mandates that related to FSN issues.

Lessons Learned

- Clarify at the outset the roles and functions of the concerned agencies involved in FSN.
- Host the national programme for FSN mainstreaming in an adequate institutional structure that has a clear mandate on FSN and is able to effectively coordinate policies and programmes of line ministries and agencies.
- Integrate the analysis and strengthening of the institutional context which refers to people, structures, processes, rules, and mechanisms of social order in order to guarantee the effectiveness of FSN policies.
- Gain political commitment at all levels.

The policy climate, defined as the result of the assessment of the quality of the policy debate in a country, varied across countries, as did efforts to influence it in favour of food security. In Zanzibar it soon became clear that in order to effectively mainstream FSN into the Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, the policy assistance project would have to provide support to educating public officials about FSN core concepts and issues in order to gain their commitment. In the case of Cambodia, CARD advocated with credibility, raising the priority of FSN issues in the strategic planning process, acting as policy champion for policy change and influencing the policy climate. Although it played a critical role, as a “general” agency it did not have strong power and authority vis-à-vis key line ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. On the other hand, in Bhutan, project design took into account the importance of the technical element of policy assistance. However, sensitization and lobbying activities to mobilize support in favour of the BNFSSP – both within and beyond RGoB – and to address the political dimensions of the policy process were not included in the project. The support of this broader range of activities and actors could have provided additional vigour and endurance to the process of integrating the BNFSSP into the 10th FYP, a process ever more important in the context of Bhutan’s recent transition to a parliamentary democracy.

While in most cases the policy assistance project benefited from stakeholders’ commitment, high-level political support has varied considerably. In general, the country experiences have shown that given its multi-sectoral dimensions, FSN policy has a higher chance of being mainstreamed into national, regional and sectoral plans when the actors who are able to influence the policy process see the need for policy change. In particular, since government has primary responsibility for the FSN process, it is essential to have all administrative levels endorse the policy process before implementation.

This was the case in Zanzibar, where political will on the part of the government accompanied the entire policy assistance process. Continuous recognition on the part of high-level government officials of the importance of the formulation work carried by the national team contributed to the relatively fast track from policy and programme development to official policy endorsement of the FSN Policy and Programme. On the contrary, in Kenya government support was characterized by the slow pace and the limited sense of urgency in implementing the policy, due to the lack of commitment at highest governmental levels. The delay of the approval process was compounded by the overall political uncertainty before the elections and the instability after the elections. Politicians were more taken up with the elections and related issues than with food insecurity and malnutrition.

However, government’s commitment alone does not guarantee the success of the policy process. In Bhutan, the project’s focus on a narrow set of actors within RGoB meant that project design did not garner support in favour of FSN mainstreaming among actors who would be able to influence the policy process, in this case UN agencies and donors.

Lessons Learned

- Support the development of an advocacy strategy on FSN concerns directed at gaining commitment of not just lower-level experts but also higher-level policy makers and key influential partners.

V. CONCLUSION

This synthesis of the five country case studies provides a first indication that FSN mainstreaming requires comprehensive and sustained policy assistance that ranges from ensuring the availability of FSN data, to sensitizing key stakeholders on the importance of FSN, to building human capacities for food security policy analysis and institutional capacities for food security coordination. Policy assistance during formulation is necessary but not sufficient – leaving an FSN “footprint” requires assistance to be provided throughout the policy cycle. Additional research is now required to develop these lessons into guidelines for good practice in FSN mainstreaming.

Checklist for effective mainstreaming of FSN in policy

- Food-insecure people or groups are identified, their livelihood strategies and activities are described, and an analysis of the causes of food insecurity is conducted.
- The underlying interests and concerns of all stakeholders, including policy makers, as well as the local dynamics and their influence on the policy process are fully understood.
- Policy priorities and operational measures are targeted to the various groups identified; they result from a participatory and multi-sector approach that ensures ownership and they address the multiple underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Operational plans are in place to achieve FSN goals. Targets and benchmarks are established in the food security strategies.
- Budgetary resources are allocated to implement operational plans.
- An institutional framework is in place and functioning to support inter-sectoral planning and coordination (among sectors and among levels of government) to achieve FSN goals, targets and benchmarks. This framework foresees broad stakeholder participation.
- Monitoring activities are included in operational plans, and are funded. Monitoring systems use multi-sector information to monitor the achievement of FSN targets and benchmarks, and the implementation of FSN actions targeted at food-insecure groups.
- Individual and institutional capacities are strengthened on FSN-related issues to ensure sustainability.

Maarten Immink and Jean Balié, 2008.

Part Two

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

PROVIDING POLICY ASSISTANCE TO MAINSTREAM FOOD
SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN NATIONAL POLICIES AND
STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 1

THE CASE OF BHUTAN

By Marco Knowles⁵

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1.1 Introduction

Between 2005 and 2007, through the FAO Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP), FAO assisted the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) in formulating the Bhutan National Food Security Strategy Paper (BNFSSP) and in mainstreaming this into the Tenth Five-Year Plan (10th FYP). The objective of this case study is to exploit the rich experience gained through this policy assistance project. The lessons learnt will be useful in orienting FAO's future work in policy assistance and, more specifically, in providing indications of areas of interventions for food security policy assistance in Bhutan. This case study is based on a review of reports of lesson-learning workshops that involved RGoB and FAO staff; RGoB 9th and 10th FYPs and planning guidelines; and discussions with advisors who were closely involved in the policy assistance project.

In 2004, the Director of the Agricultural Development and Economics Division (ESA) of FAO visited Bhutan and made a presentation on the FAO food security framework. As a follow-up, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of RGoB requested FAO's policy assistance in formulating its first-ever food security strategy. In response, a policy assistance project was designed based on consultations between FAO and the Policy and Planning Division (PPD) of the MoA. The purpose of the project was to assist the RGoB in developing a framework that would allow RGoB to adequately prioritize and plan food security interventions in its 10th FYP across sectors and at national and decentralized levels, as well to sensitize RGoB staff on the linkages between food insecurity and poverty.

The project was composed of two phases. The first phase comprised the formulation of a food security strategy plus a supporting analysis of Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) Census 2000 and a review of policy-level constraints to food security. The BNFSSP formulation process included regional and national-level validation workshops, with the participation of *Gups* (i.e. elected block/sub-district administrators) as well as representatives from the different Ministries, UN agencies and the donor community. The second phase involved formulating guidelines for decentralized development planning with a food security perspective and training district planning staff in the use of these guidelines. During the first phase of the project, the PPD of the MoA was the main project counterpart within the RGoB and was responsible for co-ordinating the project within the RGoB. The MoA contributed staff for organizing and facilitating the regional workshops and provided office space, whereas the project funded hiring of national and international consultants and the workshop costs. Since the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the 10th FYP, during the second phase of the project the GNHC also became a major project counterpart.

⁵ The views expressed in this paper are strictly personal and in no way represent the views of the Royal Government of Bhutan and of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. I am very grateful to Thomas Braunschweig, Kinlay Dorjee, Maarten Immink, Jean Balié, Samm Musoke and Chadho Tenzin for their useful comments and suggestions but take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

During the first phase, the policy assistance team was made up of two project-funded national consultants who were technically assisted by an Agricultural Policy Support Officer. The latter and the Project Co-ordinator were based in FAO Headquarters in Rome. The national consultants were experienced in data analysis but did not have expertise in food security analysis and planning.⁶ In order to be able to provide additional in-country technical assistance, during the final phases of BNFSSP formulation, FAO partnered with the country office of the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV). Through this partnership SNV provided the policy assistance team the services of a country-based International Advisor who had previously worked on food security analysis with FAO.

In order to facilitate an inter-sectoral approach to food security, a multi-sectoral National Task Force⁷ was established, which was meant to oversee and co-ordinate BNFSSP formulation. In the second phase, an International Consultant was responsible for formulating the guidelines for decentralized planning and training district planners, in consultation with an inter-ministerial working group that included representatives from all the Ministries with a stake in food security, as identified in the BNFSSP. The working group was co-led by the PPD of MoA and the Local Planning Division of the GNHC. The inter-ministerial membership of the working group and co-leadership more closely reflected the multi-sectoral nature of the BNFSSP than did the National Task Force, whose membership was predominantly from the MoA. Mechanisms for systematically involving non-state actors, other than FAO, who invariably play a part in influencing national policy processes, were not put in place.

1.2 Factors that influenced the implementation of the policy assistance project

1.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses within the policy assistance agency

FAO is at the forefront of thinking around food security policy analysis. Through international fora such as the World Food Summit and the annual meetings of the Committee on World Food Security, it has been able to create global consensus on the approach to food security. FNPP funding and the project approval process endowed FAO with an uncharacteristic ability to swiftly deliver timely technical assistance. FAO's technical competence and new agility were important assets for food security policy assistance. Despite this potential, early phases of project implementation were characterized by FAO's inability to fully deliver its high level of expertise in food security policy analysis into the BNFSSP formulation process, primarily due to: a) the capacities of the policy assistance team to deal with the complex nature of food security; b) inadequate institutional arrangements within FAO for providing sustained and high-quality technical assistance at the country level and the disproportionate attention dedicated to developing conceptual models compared to that dedicated to formulating guidance material for grounding these conceptual models; and c) project design that allowed only for short-term assistance.

FAO's internationally accepted models⁸ for strategic food security planning propose addressing the four pillars of food security (availability, access, utilization and the stability of each of these) through short- and long-term measures. However, before the inclusion of the SNV International Advisor, the policy assistance team that was formulating the BNFSSP was not familiar with these strategic approaches to food security. The technical assistance that the policy team was receiving was insufficient and largely focused on increasing agricultural production and commercialization. Consequently, important pillars of food security such as stability and utilization, linkages between food security and nutrition and a focus on guaranteeing the food security of the most vulnerable through short- and longer-term measures –all of which were relevant to the food security situation in Bhutan–

⁶ This is not the consequence of a poor selection process of national consultants but reflects the lack of in-country expertise in multi-sectoral food security planning during BNFSSP formulation.

⁷ The National Task Force included: Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Chairperson); Director, Department of Agriculture (member); Director, Department of Livestock (member); Director, Council of Renewable Natural Resources Board (member); Executive Director, Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulation Authority (member); Head, Marketing Unit, Ministry of Agriculture (member); Director, Public Health Unit, Ministry of Health (member); Joint Director, Department of Planning, Ministry of Finance (member); Director, National Statistics Board (member); Deputy Secretary, Planning and Policy Division, Ministry of Agriculture (Secretary) assisted by the Lead Consultant.

⁸ "Conceptual Framework for National Agricultural, Rural Development, and Food Security Strategies and Policies" and the Twin-track approach to hunger reduction were important references.

were not addressed in early versions of the BNFSSP. During the concluding phases of BNFSSP formulation, FAO was better able to deliver its food security expertise into the BNFSSP formulation process since the SNV International Advisor had intimate knowledge of FAO's strategic food security models. In fact, the presence of the Advisor was comparable to having an FAO food security expert within the in-country team.

The complexity of food security made the bottlenecks to delivering country-level technical assistance even more evident. In spite of the SNV International Advisor's familiarity with FAO's strategic food security models, the policy assistance team lacked the required expertise and faced considerable difficulties in designing a strategy that was sufficiently comprehensive to address the underlying causes and manifestations of food insecurity without becoming an unrealistic catch-all strategy that lost a distinctive focus on food security. Technical assistance from FAO Headquarters and guidance material to help fill this gap were not available.

Both phases of the policy assistance project suffered from their reliance on short-term technical assistance that was aimed at producing tangible outputs rather than providing sustained support to a process that built capacities and ownership over time. The country-level presence of the SNV International Advisor was useful in finalizing a technically solid BNFSSP and integrating this into sectoral policies, donor pledges and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reporting. Likewise, the input of the International Consultant was critical in developing guidance material for grounding the BNFSSP in decentralized plans and to begin building capacities for using these guidelines. However, once the partnership agreement between SNV and FAO and the International Consultant's contract were over, critical technical assistance was no longer available. This was further aggravated by unavoidable delays in the preparation of the 10th FYP, which meant that the RGoB was not able to start formulating the 10th FYP when technical assistance for mainstreaming the BNFSSP into the Plan was available.

1.2.2 *Exogenous opportunities and constraints*

The 10th FYP represented an opportunity for mainstreaming food security into national policy and programming. The food security situation in the country was such that a food security strategy was highly relevant. Moreover, the RGoB's historic appreciation of the importance of food security – albeit from a self-sufficiency perspective – meant that RGoB was open to mainstreaming food security into its national policy and programming documents. Limited in-country expertise in addressing food security meant that there was scope for a policy assistance project but also represented difficulties for project implementation. The institutional setting, including the ambiguity over the RGoB institution that should be responsible for BNFSSP formulation and implementation and the lack of a co-ordinated approach to food security among in-country UN and donor agencies, dampened the effectiveness of the assistance provided.

Food security has been an explicit and formal objective of the RGoB at least since 1989, when it developed the Accelerated Food Production Programme, and was later reconfirmed through the 1994 the Comprehensive National Food Security Programme (CNFSP). Since then, food security objectives have centred on achieving food self-sufficiency targets. The data available during BNFSSP formulation proved that a national-self-sufficiency approach was not entirely adequate for reducing food insecurity in the country, which is also characterized by insufficient food availability at the sub-national level, poor food access and utilization, and malnutrition.⁹ Since the country had no prior experience in addressing food security comprehensively, capacities for developing and mainstreaming a comprehensive approach to food security were low. The lack of expertise in multi-sectoral food security planning and the dire need for such an approach meant that a policy assistance project for mainstreaming a comprehensive approach to food security planning was highly relevant to RGoB. The

⁹ Estimates of food consumption indicated that in food-insecure Dzongkhags, daily calorie intake per capita averaged at about 1,883 kilocalories; 1999 data on the nutritional status of children less than 5 years of age showed that as much as 40 percent of children are stunted and 19 percent are underweight (Ministry of Health, 2002. Public Health Bulletin).

timing of the project was perfect since it provided ample opportunity for feeding the BNFSSP into the 10th FYP (2008-2013)¹⁰.

On the other hand, the gap in experience with food security policy analysis and planning was also a millstone for the policy assistance project. As a consequence, comprehensive, up-to-date, reliable and country-wide data with which to assess food security status and causality were not available during BNFSSP formulation. This meant that information was not available for identifying priority thematic and geographic areas of interventions and for convincing RGoB staff that problems of food access, utilization, stability and nutrition required a specific food security strategy and could not be achieved through poverty reduction alone. In addition, national participation in BNFSSP formulation was low due to weak national capacities to take part in an analytical food security debate, still nascent civil society organizations and the low priority given to participating in the formulation of a new strategic approach to food security relative to other activities. The weak capacities of the FAO representation in Bhutan, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) fixed focus on poverty – to the exclusion of food security – meant that UN agencies in Bhutan were unable to fill this gap in national capacities by jointly supporting the RGoB in food security analysis and mainstreaming. This was especially evident between late 2006 and early 2007, when UNDP was collaborating with the GNHC in preparing the Bhutan Living Standard Measurement Survey (BLSS). Through the FAO representation, FAO Headquarters provided UNDP with detailed suggestions for including food security and nutrition indicators in the BLSS, but this was to no effect. As a consequence, an opportunity was lost for making much-needed food security and nutrition information available to RGoB.

The most appropriate institutional housing for the BNFSSP was unclear and has created difficulties in mainstreaming the BNFSSP into the 10th FYP. The MoA was the main interlocutor during BNFSSP formulation and has a major role to play in BNFSSP implementation, given the prevalently rural dimension of food insecurity and its experience in food security planning, albeit with a different approach. On the other hand, since the BNFSSP is a multi-sectoral strategy, once it was formulated responsibilities for mainstreaming food security into the 10th FYP were passed from the MoA to the GNHC, which has a mandate for inter-ministerial planning and co-ordination but has not been previously involved in food security planning and in BNFSSP formulation. The GNHC's engagement with the BNFSSP and capacities to oversee its mainstreaming are, understandably, low.

1.3 Assessment of policy/strategy outcomes

In May 2006 the BNFSSP was officially approved as the RGoB's strategic approach to food security and as a tool for mainstreaming food security into planning and for co-ordinating relevant actors across sectors at national and decentralized levels. Based on the picture of food security that was put together on the basis of the dispersed data that was available during BNFSSP formulation, the BNFSSP proposes a multi-sectoral approach to food security, including short- and longer-term interventions at the national and decentralized levels with the objective of increasing food availability, access and utilization and the stability of each these and establishing linkages between food security and nutrition. Indications on the appropriate geographic targeting of activities are also included. Safety nets are also proposed, which represent a new programming approach in Bhutan, for securing access to food by the most food-insecure and during lean months. As demonstrated by a recent and more in-depth food security analysis (Covarrubias and Zezza, 2008), the strategic approach described in the BNFSSP is highly relevant to the specific food security situation in Bhutan.

The BNFSSP is a hybrid between a policy statement and an operational document. As a consequence, its use and placement within planning process are ambiguous. It is not a policy document since it does not describe the RGoB's vision of food security. This places the BNFSSP in a policy vacuum since the country lacks a policy statement testifying to a high-level commitment to, and vision for, a multi-sectoral approach to food security in the country and indicating the desired balance between self-sufficiency and more market-based approaches to food security. As an operational document, the BNFSSP does not indicate the relative importance of the interventions proposed for different areas and groups. Considering the extent of the areas of intervention that are proposed, such prioritization is very important for facilitating mainstreaming. Furthermore, even though the conceptual

¹⁰ A previous attempt at a comprehensive approach to food security was made in the 1994 Comprehensive Food Security Programme (1994) but its implementation failed since it was not timed to coincide with the country's five-year planning process.

linkages between food security and poverty are discussed, there is no explanation of what distinguishes food insecurity from poverty in Bhutan, and of the operational implications of these differences. In this way, although the BNFSSP justifies the need for reducing food insecurity as a pre-requisite for reducing poverty, it does not demonstrate why food insecurity should not be equated with poverty and the value-added of a specific food security approach. With respect to the contents of the BNFSSP, the sharp rise in global food prices and the trade measures adopted by Bhutan's major trading partners suggest that the BNFSSP over-emphasized a technical approach to food security and did not provide all the due recognition to the political considerations surrounding RGoB's historic self-sufficiency targets. Finally, even though overall food security targets are set, more specific sector-wide food security targets were not established. Such targets would have created incentives for the uptake of a multi-sectoral approach (e.g. nutrition objectives in interventions concerning MoA and Ministry of Trade and Industry).

Even though it is difficult to attribute causality between the BNFSSP and the 10th FYP, a comparison of the approaches to food security described in the 9th and the 10th FYPs suggests that the BNFSSP has very gradually begun changing the thinking around food security. In the 9th FYP the strategic approach to food security was exclusively to increase national-level food production, whereas the language of the RNR 10th FYP describes the role that the agricultural sector also has to play in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition by increasing people's economic and physical access to nutritionally adequate food. Food security also features within the interventions of the Ministry of Health (MoH). This includes interventions for reducing anaemia and malnutrition through food supplementation and fortification programmes. Neither of these interventions, which are included in the BNFSSP, were part of the 9th FYP. The BNFSSP was also mainstreamed into sectoral policies (agricultural and horticultural policy for the 10th FYP, donor pledges (round table document 2006) and MDG reporting (MDG report 2005).

These positive signs should be interpreted with caution. A more in-depth review suggests that in concrete terms a specific food security focus is still missing in the 10th FYP. Until the 9th FYP, when food security was conceived in terms of achieving national-level self-sufficiency, the differences between food security and poverty reduction strategies was clear: in simplistic terms, food security was about increasing national production and poverty reduction involved increasing incomes. Having now broadened the understanding of food security beyond food production to include food access has blurred the boundaries between food insecurity and poverty to the extent that food insecurity is now being equated with poverty reduction + food production. With this understanding of food security among planners, the need for a specific food security approach is unclear since food production and poverty reduction were already taking place. This is a significant failing since recent data show that equating food insecurity with poverty is an inadequate approach to reducing food insecurity in Bhutan (see box 1).

Box 1: Differences between poverty and food insecurity in Bhutan

The food security analysis of the 2007 Bhutan Living Standards Measurement Survey (BLSS) shows that there are important differences between poverty and food insecurity. For instance, although some of the most undernourished districts in the country are also the poorest (e.g. Zhemgang, Samtse and Mongar), the least poor are not necessarily the most nourished. Gasa has the second-lowest Dzongkhag-level poverty rate in Bhutan, yet it ranks as the third most undernourished. The same holds true for Paro (the third least poor Dzongkhag yet the third most undernourished) and Wangdue (the fifth least poor yet the most undernourished of all Dzongkhags). The implication of these differences is that if only poverty criteria were used for prioritizing Dzongkhags for targeting, Dzongkhags with a high level of food insecurity, such as Gasa, Paro and Wangdue, would be excluded (Covarrubias and Zezza, 2008).

Food security and nutrition targets and indicators are missing from the 10th FYP,¹¹ the planning guidelines and the BLSS 2007, which is meant to be used as a baseline for monitoring progress and achievements of the RGoB's development planning. Without these food security targets, strategically planning for food security becomes almost impossible. The absence of a food security approach in planning is further confirmed by the planning guidelines for the 10th FYP, which only mildly refer to food security and the project profiles included in the 10th FYP. Although the MoA project profiles cover

¹¹ The only exception is the inclusion of per capita food availability as an example of a food security indicator in the RNR planning guidelines for the 10th FYP.

a broad range of interventions proposed in the BNFSSP, they give no indication of how activities will be targeted and adapted in order to benefit the food-insecure. Unless this targeting and adaptation takes place, these interventions will not be directly contributing to improving household food security.¹² Although BNFSSP interventions are included in the 10th FYP of the MoH, within this sectoral plan nutrition is still being addressed mainly from a health perspective and the contribution of food security is understated. MoA interventions maintain a similarly narrow sectoral alignment and in substance do not focus on improving nutrition through agricultural-sector interventions.

Critical food security interventions included in the BNFSSP, which imply innovative programming approaches in Bhutan, have not been included in the 10th FYP. This includes distinctively food security interventions for guaranteeing access to food by the most vulnerable, stabilizing availability and making information available to decision makers. The role that other sectors, such as trade, education and the public works department, have to play in food security is not yet fully recognized. This is especially worrying for food-insecure people who live in rural areas where agriculture does not offer a way out of food insecurity. It also raises concerns regarding the extent to which sectors outside the MoA recognize that they have a responsibility for food security and/or the perceived legitimacy of the BNFSSP by those who were not closely involved in the formulation process.

Planning in accordance with the 10th FYP at district (Dzongkhag) and block (Geog) levels began in 2008. To assist planners in including food security within the decentralized plans, the project assistance project developed “Guidelines for decentralized development planning with a food security perspective”. Through the policy assistance project Dzongkhag planners have been trained in using the planning guidelines. With the FNPP-supported policy assistance drawing to a close, the project will not be able to provide additional support to the implementation of the BNFSSP. However, ongoing FAO-supported in-country activities are contributing to the BNFSSP implementation process. They include an FAO-initiated food security assessment of BLSS 2007 data, which provides key information required for targeting and prioritizing interventions, demonstrating the relevance of a specific and multi-sectoral approach to food insecurity and of the immediate need for safety-net programmes.

1.4 Assessment of policy assistance effectiveness

Within the MoA, the BNFSSP has contributed to very gradually increasing awareness that food security is about more than increasing agricultural production and that it is not only the responsibility of the MoA. However, with the caveat that all of the necessary evidence is yet not available, it appears that at the national level, mainstreaming into the 10th FYP has so far been less than expected, even though the BNFSSP is highly relevant to Bhutan’s food security situation and was completed on time for integration into the 10th FYP.

At national and sectoral levels, project objectives were largely focused on the timely delivery of the BNFSSP rather than on developing RGoB capacities in food security analysis and planning. Accordingly, in order to compensate for the RGoB’s lack of expertise in developing and mainstreaming a multi-sectoral approach to food security, planning responsibilities for the formulation of important policy and planning documents were outsourced to technical experts. This ensured the timely completion of a technically robust BNFSSP and planning guidelines but did not address the underlying gaps in national capacities for food security planning and forestalled the development of RGoB ownership of the BNFSSP (see box 2). As a consequence, the momentum behind the BNFSSP and in-country abilities to implement this diminished once the assignments of the SNV Advisor and the International Consultant were completed. At the decentralized level, where more emphasis was placed on capacity strengthening, but where planning has not yet begun, it is expected that the capacity building that has taken place will help ensure that food security is mainstreamed into decentralized plans at least more than in the national plans. Furthermore, project duration and delays in the preparation of the 10th FYP have meant that the policy assistance project was able to assist BNFSSP formulation but not to support its implementation through the 10th FYP.

¹² Details on how interventions will be targeted and mechanisms for ensuring that the food-insecure will be able to participate in these activities are not available in the project profiles that are included in the 10th FYP.

Box 2: Technical assistance for building capacities and ownership

Another technical assistance project funded through FNPP on value chain analysis provides an example of how ownership can be built when capacity building is integrated into project design, even without FAO's field presence. The project included repeated technical assistance missions, at critical phases of the value chain analysis, to train RGoB staff responsible for collecting and analysing data and reporting writing. This approach provided RGoB staff the opportunity for learning by doing. RGoB staff were accountable for key outputs and FAO staff for providing the necessary technical assistance. The staggered missions partly obviated the constraint imposed by the lack of field presence by an FAO technical expert, although more regular technical assistance between missions was called for. Commodity development programmes that were developed through this technical assistance have been included in the 10th FYP.

The technical and operational weaknesses of the BNFSSP are attributable to: a) the RGoB's limited participation in BNFSSP formulation, which meant that there was little clarity on the required characteristics of the BNFSSP for it to serve specific planning purposes; b) the fact that the formulation process itself did not include a review of past policies and programmes relevant to food security, meaning that the approach described in the BNFSSP rather simplistically suggests breaking away from past approaches without having carefully considered past achievements and lessons learnt and building on these; c) lack of data, which undermined the use of the BNFSSP as an operational document since it was not possible to identify priority interventions; and d) insufficient FAO technical assistance vis-à-vis translating complex food security models into a feasible food security strategy.

The project's only modest impact in mainstreaming the BNFSSP into the 10th FYP is associated with the project's narrow focus in terms of the areas of intervention, actors involved and policy processes it targeted. Whilst project design recognized the importance of the technical element of policy assistance, the broader spectrum of factors and actors influencing the relevant policy processes was not part of the policy assistance project. Sensitization and lobbying activities to mobilize support in favour of the BNFSSP – both within and beyond the RGoB – and to address the political dimensions of the policy process were not included in the project. The support of this broader range of activities and actors could have provided additional vigour and endurance to the process of integrating the BNFSSP into 10th FYP by providing political and technical support to ensure that critical and distinctively food security interventions like safety nets would have been included; sectors beyond the MoA would have been mobilized to fulfil their food security responsibilities, and interventions would have been targeted at food-insecure people and tailored around their needs.

The project's narrow focus on the RGoB as the only institutional counterpart meant that other non-RGoB actors which also have an influence on policy processes, namely UN agencies and donors working in Bhutan, were not directly engaged in the BNFSSP other than in its validation. This had a number of consequences: food security is not mainstreamed in the UNDAF 2008-2012 although this was developed at the same time as the BNFSSP; actions of UN agencies and donors are un-coordinated (see, for example, the lack of inclusion of food security and nutrition variables in the BLSS 2007); and the BNFSSP was not mainstreamed into the IFAD-funded Agricultural Marketing and Enterprise Promotion Programme (AMEPP). The project's ability to establish partnerships with other agencies was also constrained by the annual nature of the FNPP and the absence of a medium- to longer-term programme framework for FAO Bhutan.

The project was centred on mainstreaming food security into one policy process (the 10th FYP), on the assumption that as the overall planning document this would automatically lead to food security mainstreaming into other relevant policy process. However, as was seen with the agricultural and horticultural policy and with the donor round table document, even in a context in which government planning is very much organized around five-year plans, the policy process is, in reality, made up of a host of policy processes taking place before, during and after the completion of the 10th FYP document itself.

The project was faced with an institutional conundrum that undermines the opportunity for concretely mainstreaming food security into RGoB planning. The GNHC Ministry has the mandate for overseeing implementation of a multi-sectoral strategy but lacks the expertise for doing so. On the other hand, the mandate of the MoA means that it still has the greatest incentives and capacities for mainstreaming food security but it does not have a role in food security planning. During project design the MoA was identified as the institutional partner for BNFSSP formulation since it had the greatest capacities for

this compared to other RGoB institutions. However, as it became obvious that a national – as opposed to a sectoral – food security strategy required interventions across sectors, responsibilities for BNFSSP implementation were shifted to the GNHC. This shift may have made sense when looking at the RGoB organogramme, but it was not accompanied by the required capacity building, thus leaving the GNHC with the responsibility for implementing a strategy with which it had had no previous involvement or familiarity and, perhaps, deprived the MoA of a role as a BNFSSP champion.

1.5 Conclusions and lessons learnt

The impact of the policy assistance project on mainstreaming food security into national policy formulation and implementation has been both supported and undermined by project design and the policy-institutional setting. On the one hand, the project's timing, which coincided with the formulation of the 10th FYP, together with RGoB's appreciation of the importance of food security, created a favourable setting for effectively mainstreaming food security into national policies and programming. FAO's large body of experience in food security policy in a context in which expertise in approaching food security multi-sectorally was limited meant that FAO assistance was needed for mainstreaming food security into the 10th FYP. The project's flexible design allowed FAO to partner with SNV and provide in-country technical assistance exclusively dedicated to the BNFSSP. This country-level technical assistance was important for ensuring satisfactory technical quality of the BNFSSP and in exploiting opportunities for mainstreaming food security into relevant documents concerning policy and planning and donor pledges.

On the other hand, project design and the policy-institutional setting also diminished the project's impact. Project design did not pay attention to the political economy of the policy process and focused exclusively on technical interventions and a narrow set of actors within the RGoB, as if assuming that the absence of an adequate food security approach within national policies could be entirely attributed to insufficient technical know-how. The absence of the necessary food security focus in the 10th FYP, even after technical inputs for BNFSSP formulation were provided, suggests that mainstreaming food security into policy processes is not just a matter of providing technical expertise to formulate a strategy that is then automatically entered into government's overall planning processes. Even though the project had a technical focus, FAO's technical contribution to food security mainstreaming was only mild since adequate arrangements for knowledge transfer were not in place. This was especially critical when considering the complexity of food security and the lack of in-country expertise in a multi-sectoral approach; once the short-term assignments of the technical experts were completed, there were no in-situ capacities or nor sufficient ownership of the BNFSSP.

The project's focus on a narrow set of actors within the RGoB meant that project design did not elicit support for food security mainstreaming among actors that are able to influence the policy process (e.g. UN agencies, donors, members of parliament). This was especially important when considering the non-RGoB institutional setting in Bhutan, which is characterized by FAO's weak in-country capacities to support food security mainstreaming and the absence of co-ordinated support for food security mainstreaming among UN and donor agencies. In addition, the initial choice of MoA as the institutional partner for a national and multi-sectoral strategy created difficulties to BNFSSP implementation since the multi-sectoral nature of the BNFSSP meant that responsibilities for its implementation had to be passed on to the GNHC, which did not have the capacities to implement this and deprived the BNFSSP of its champion. Based on these findings, lessons learnt for future policy assistance projects in Bhutan – and perhaps also beyond – are listed below.

□ Building capacities in food security policy and planning

Considering the limited expertise in food security analysis and planning, food security policy assistance projects should be designed to build in-country capacities in food security analysis and planning across sectors. This will be crucial in allowing for genuine participation by national stakeholders in policy debates and planning, in developing ownership and in ensuring that in-situ expertise is available. Transferring FAO's conceptual expertise to national-level policy analysts is not automatic. This requires developing guidance material and setting up technical assistance arrangements that are characterized by sustained support and a clear definition of roles such that national counterparts are responsible for carrying-out important methodological steps from analysis to report-writing and technical experts are responsible for training and technical backstopping/mentoring during and in between missions.

□ **Mobilizing broad-based support for food security**

A multi-sectoral approach to food security has so far received relatively little attention within the RGoB and among UN agencies and donors working in Bhutan. In addition to technical assistance, activities to sensitize and mobilize the support of a wide range of state and non-state actors are also necessary. Bhutan's recent transition to a parliamentary democracy makes it ever more important to mobilize support from the general public, the media and parliamentarians in favour of food security.

□ **Identifying and exploiting windows of opportunity**

Even in Bhutan, where planning processes are structured around five-year plans, policy making and implementation are not linear but are made-up of a host of different policy processes that take place around, and make up, the five-year plan. It is therefore important not to focus exclusively on mainstreaming food security into one overarching policy document (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 10th FYP) at the cost of losing sight of the other "smaller" policy processes that make-up the five-year plan and that are relevant to food security (e.g. horticultural development policy). Given the multi-sectoral nature of food security, the range of relevant policy process in which food security needs to be mainstreamed is fairly broad. A food security champion is needed to identify the different relevant policy and planning processes and negotiate for food security mainstreaming within them.

□ **Demonstrating the value-added of a food security focus**

Analytical work and communication campaigns for raising awareness of the need for a specific food security focus are required. These initiatives will help show how a poverty approach alone will not be able to address food insecurity. They should include informing policy makers on the different operational implications of poverty and food security in terms of: i) who is food-insecure and who is poor; ii) where poor people are located and where the food-insecure are located; iii) how many people are poor and how many are food-insecure; iv) the causes of poverty and food-insecurity; and v) what can be done to reduce poverty and food insecurity.

□ **Engaging actors across sectors**

Facilitating a multi-sectoral approach to food security planning involves including food security responsibilities as part of the mandates of sectors beyond the MoA (e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade and Industry, GNHC) and introducing incentives for fulfilling sectoral food security targets. Although cross-sectoral co-ordination may be overly ambitious in the early stages, an RGoB entity with a cross-sectoral mandate should be made responsible for ensuring that food security is effectively addressed in the relevant policies and plans across sectors.

□ **Selecting the appropriate institutional partners**

The choice of institutional partners for formulating a food security strategy needs to take into account the scope of the food security strategy as well as institutional capacities and incentives for food security planning. Where the objective is to mainstream food security into a sectoral planning (e.g. into the plan of the MoA), a single sectoral partner may be appropriate. Where the objective is to mainstream food security into multi-sectoral planning, such as the national five-year plan, institutional partners across sectors and/or partners with a mandate for cross-sectoral co-ordination should be selected. While this choice may seem fairly straight-forward, in practice the selection of institutional partners is more complex since it is also important to consider the capacities and incentives for food security planning among the concerned institutions. Although an institution may have a mandate for cross-sectoral planning this is not sufficient guarantee that it is the most suitable partner since it may not have the capacities and/or incentives for food security planning.

□ **Coordinating among UN agencies and donors**

Coordination and collaboration among the UN agencies (e.g. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP) and donors working in Bhutan are still weak and need to be dramatically improved since they can help ensure that an important source of in-country policy assistance is available to the RGoB. This will involve strengthening the capacities of the FAO representation in Bhutan and developing a medium- to long-term programming framework for FAO in the country to facilitate partnerships.

□ **Making food security data available**

One of the greatest technical difficulties in formulating the BNFSSP was the lack of data on food security status and causality. Whilst initiating household surveys may be overly ambitious, it is important to ensure that policy assistance includes strong analytical support to make use of existing household survey data.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CASE OF CAMBODIA

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2.1 Introduction

Although the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals, its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and other national development plans focused on poverty reduction, food security issues were not well articulated or integrated in these plans. With the formulation of the current NSDP 2006-10, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) decided to ensure its systematic implementation by translating the development goals into sectoral strategies and programmes, with support of external development partners. To this end, 19 technical working groups (TWGs) were established, with participation by relevant ministries and interested external development partners. Two TWGs have focused on food security and related issues: one group is led by the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) for food security and nutrition (FSN); the other is led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM) and focuses on agriculture and water issues. Together with the World Food Programme, FAO has been a co-facilitator of the first group and, since March 2008, of the second group.

From 1997 to 2006, FAO had assisted MAFF in developing a national approach to food security in Cambodia through the Special Programme on Food Security. Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) also assisted the Ministry of Planning, CARD and relevant line ministries in enhancing their capacity to mainstream FSN objectives and issues into the national development policy and sector-specific strategies and programmes.² However, when sector strategy planning for agriculture and water began earnestly, these support projects were terminated. FAO decided to support, under the FNPP food security theme, the integration of food security through the ongoing NSDP strategy planning process. During the first phase of the policy assistance (February 2006-December 2007) the focus was on strengthening the capacity of CARD, the lead agency for FSN mainstreaming, and providing technical support to the FSN working group in the preparation of a national policy strategy document on food security.

The second phase was comprised of support (January-October 2008) in the preparation of a food security programme as one of the five programmes in the agriculture and water sectors. The assistance represented a logical extension of the first phase of support to strategic development planning, namely integrating a FSN agenda explicitly and systematically into a priority sector plan for agriculture and water. The National Programme for Household Food Security and Poverty Reduction,

¹ Masa Kato served as team leader for the Food Security Support Programme design under Phase Two. Kosal Oum was the national programme coordinator under Phase One. Günther Feiler served as FAO's primary technical backstopping officer, especially for Phase One. The authors gratefully acknowledge the useful comments from Mr. Peter Kaufmann and Jean Balié.

² Food Security and Nutrition Policy Support Project-FSNPSP, January 2003- December 2005.

formulated by MAFF with FAO support, formed the conceptual basis for a food security programme in agriculture and water.

The overall objective of the FNPP policy assistance in Cambodia was to integrate the policy objectives and FSN concepts into the strategies to implement the NSDP 2006-10, particularly the strategy for the agriculture and water sectors. This was to be accomplished by providing technical support during the formulation of basic policy framework and strategy for FSN mainstreaming and the formulation of an operational food security programme for agriculture and water.

- The policy assistance during each phase had distinct objectives and aims. During the first phase, the aims were to: prepare a national policy framework as a basis for integrating improved FSN as priority objectives into sector-specific approaches under the NSDP 2006-10;
- upgrade the technical capacity of CARD staff and the “core mainstreaming team” comprised of staff from various line ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to integrate FSN in various sector programmes and projects; and
- strengthen existing coordination mechanisms and information systems at national level to mainstream FSN.

The strengthening of coordination mechanisms involved setting up coordination structures across sectors (Food Security Forum, TWG-FSN) and a pilot exercise to integrate FSN at sub-national levels in Takeo Province. Various FSN information and data systems located in separate ministries and agencies were to be strengthened, including CARD’s Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS), for use by development planners and decision makers at various levels.

The aim during the second phase was to assist with formulating a Food Security Support Programme (FSSP) that would guide the implementation actions of MAFF and MOWRAM. The FSSP is one of five programmes³ to be formulated as integral parts of an agriculture and water sector (SAW) strategy. The formulation work is led by a MAFF/MOWRAM task force under the overall direction of the TWG/SAW chaired by the vice-ministers and supported by two co-facilitators from the interested external development partners (EDPs).

FNPP provided the MAFF/MOWRAM task force with technical support through a team of consultants in developing the programme. During this phase a draft FSSP programme document was produced, for approval by the TWG on agriculture and water, which is to the guide formulation and implementation of food security projects in the agriculture and water sectors. Finalization of this document is scheduled for later in 2008. Through close coordination among the task forces of the five SAW programmes, it is expected that food security as a cross-cutting issue will be integrated in all five programmes.

2.2 Main Results Achieved

2.2.1 Phase One: Support to CARD and the mainstreaming arrangements under TWG-FSN (2006-07)

The first phase produced all the planned key outputs as follows:

Preparation of a national policy framework for integrating FSN – the FSN strategy paper prepared earlier with GTZ assistance under the TWG-FSN⁴ was developed into the Strategic Framework for FSN (SFFSN). This was to serve as the main policy guide for integrating FSN objectives and concepts into the NSDP 2006-10 by providing more operational guidelines for addressing FSN in national

³ These five SAW programmes: Policies and Institution Building (Programme 1), Food Security Support Programme - FSSP (Programme 2), Agriculture and Agri-business Development (Programme 3), Land and Water Resources Development (Programme 4) and Extension, Research and Education (Programme 5).

⁴ Member of the TWG are: (i) government ministries: Council for Agricultural and Rural development (co-chair), Ministry of Planning (co-chair), MAFF, Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and Ministry of Rural Development (MRD). (ii) Donors: AusAID, CIDA, DFID, EU, JICA, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO (co-facilitator) and WFP (co-facilitator). (iii) NGOs: CCC, HKI, Oxfam GB, Medicam, and PFD.

development strategies and in sector-specific strategies and programmes. The process entailed close consultations with various TWGs, key line ministries and NGOs through the core coordination team (the officially nominated focal points). The draft SFFSN was reviewed by the government in 2007 and launched officially in June 2008.

Upgrading the technical capacity of CARD and the core mainstreaming team – the FNPP project worked closely with the German-funded food security and rural livelihood adviser to CARD. The capacity building used a cascade approach, with training of trainers (trainer pool) and subsequently training of policy makers and planners in the key ministries and agencies at national and provincial levels. The training emphasized skills for policy analysis and formulation, programme design as well as FSN concepts, objectives and issues. Specifically:

- some 210 government and NGO officers at national and sub-national levels were trained;
- an officially recognized¹⁷ team of trainers on mainstreaming FSN (a “national trainer pool” of 15 persons from the government agencies and NGOs) was established, together with standard curricula for sensitization on FSN at various levels;
- tools and materials were developed and produced for FSN mainstreaming and training, including the SFFSN, FSN mainstreaming tools, technical guidelines for FSN sensitization and programme analysis/formulation, and the training manuals. The specialized website “FSN Information System” (FSNIS), managed by a CARD unit, was strengthened, containing all the relevant materials and national information/data on FSN, including training materials developed through the FAO/FNPP assistance;
- 76 officers at provincial (25) and district (51) levels were trained in Takeo province.

The coordinated training under GTZ/WFP and FNPP assistance has created a pool of policy/programme planners and analysts trained in addressing FSN concerns and issues for integrating these aspects in national agencies and ministries. They now fully appreciate the importance of the FSN concepts and objectives in the development context, and have been playing an important role in their respective offices in facilitating the integration of FSN in various sectoral strategies and implementation programmes. In particular, CARD has been strengthened to play its lead role in promoting the mainstreaming of FSN issues through its preparation of the SFFSN, its leadership in FSN training and as manager of the FSNIS. The training team has also been engaged by some international donors and NGOs to train national officers, including some NGO staffs both at national and local levels. CARD has been a leading member of TWG/FSN and the task force for developing the food security support programme under TWG/SAW.

Strengthening coordination mechanisms at national and sub-national levels – this addressed reinforcing existing mechanisms and initiating new ones. In this regard, CARD achieved with greater credibility as chief advocate of FSN in the on-going strategic planning process (including as manager of FSNIS). The national mainstreaming team on FSN had stronger links with the main ministries and agencies involved. In addition, partnerships were strengthened with NGOs active in FSN, including the Cambodia Committee for Cooperation (NGO umbrella organization) and main NGOs.¹⁸ Collaborative networks were also established between CARD and 19 TWGs in the NSDP strategic planning process. At the sub-national level, the pilot in Takeo province helped form a collaborative network among the provincial and district offices in integrating FSN in their development plans in six selected communes in two districts, thus providing useful experience in FSN mainstreaming at sub-national levels. At the national level, the results of this phase provided some critical inputs into the preparation of the Food Security Support Programme (FSSP) under the SAW process (see section on the second phase below). The contacts developed with the concerned ministries and external partners during this process have facilitated coordination of the preparatory work with these agencies, and similarly pooled information in the FSNIS has been most useful, especially for situation analysis, in designing the FSSP programme.

Development of integrated FSN information and data systems – the FSNIS has been established as the nationally integrated information system at CARD, and cooperation improved among other

¹⁷ The government issued an official declaration No. 322 SCN>SR dated 05 March 2008 stating that it supports activities of Food Security and Nutrition Website (FSNIS) and establishment of the national trainer pool.

¹⁸ Including Helen Keller International (HKI), PADEK, GAA, CCC, PADEK, CEDAC, VBNK, Srer Khmer Organization, Lutheran World Service (LWS), World Vision-Cambodia, etc.

systems operated by several agencies¹⁹. In particular, FSNIS has been supporting TWG-FSNs in building coordinated national information on FSN, including support to the FS Forum in knowledge management on FSN lessons learnt and best practices.

Notwithstanding these important contributions, it must be accepted that they represent, at best, only the beginning of real mainstreaming, with actual implementation at the field level yet to be addressed through operational programmes and projects (for example, through the SAW strategic programme design process assisted during Phase Two).

2.2.2 Phase Two: Preparation of FSSP design document under SAW

The FSSP is expected to contribute to achieving one of the main strategic objectives of the SAW: improved food security among the poor. The Programme's "development goal" is given as "Agricultural systems and community arrangements that enable poor and food-insecure Cambodians to have substantially improved physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food at all times to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". The Terms of Reference for programme design stressed: (i) a focus on substantially improving the access of the poor and food-insecure to food, thus enhancing their nutritional status; (ii) an emphasis on the target group's improved capacity for agricultural production and income generation as well as for community participation and solidarity; and (iii) an indicative programme scope covering the proposed National Programme for Household Food Security and Poverty reduction (NPHFSPR) and elements for preparing and mitigating against droughts and other natural disasters, small-scale irrigation and infrastructure, and strengthening of FSN information and its coordinated use for improved policy and programming processes; and (iv) a design based on a log-frame structure.

A third draft of the FSSP design was completed during September/October 2008 and was reviewed at the national stakeholders' workshop in October 2008. The final draft programme design reflecting the workshop comments is to be submitted to the TWG/SAW in December 2008. The proposed FSSP, with a budget of US\$ 50 million for implementation during 2009-13, consists of two main components:

Component I: Community Self-reliance for Food Security and Poverty Reduction – to improve the food security of some 2.1 million rural food-insecure and poor people in 240,000 households in 4,000 selected villages through: (i) increased food and agricultural productivity; (ii) improved and diversified incomes (especially those without agricultural production capacity); (iii) better awareness on nutrition and food safety, especially among women and disadvantaged; and (iv) empowerment for greater self-reliance and mutual help for food security and community development.

Component II: Enhancing Institutional and Policy Environment for FSN and Improving Information Base (indicative budget US\$ 4.4 million) – through: (i) strengthened coordination for mainstreaming FSN among the key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels; (ii) improved capacity of commune councils and farmer communities in integrating FSN in their development activities; and (iii) enhanced coordination in information and data systems, including improved information quality and availability.

The preparation of the programme also provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of FSN issues as well as to systematically integrate FSN considerations in the SAW programming process. However, only limited progress has been achieved in this respect. The FSSP design team made efforts to promote close coordination among the five design teams, which was seen as essential for ensuring not only the effectiveness of the FSSP itself but also the coherence and effectiveness of SAW programmes as a whole. Coordination efforts included attempts to interact with other design teams through several workshops, and informal consultations with selected EDPs involved in designing other programmes. The main obstacles were the lack of appreciation of FSN among national and EDP staff, and the absence of built-in opportunities for coordination among the teams. Thus, coordinated planning among the five SAW programmes for systematic integration of food security aspects remains a serious issue.

¹⁹ Such as Asia FIVIMS (MAFF), CAMInfo (MoP), Food Security Atlas (MoP), AIDOC, etc.

The overall SAW process revealed a number of other shortcomings:

Significant delays – as of 31 August 2008 none of the five programmes have been completed, with the most advanced being Programme 4 (water and land resources) and FSSP. The preparatory actions for Programme 5 (agriculture extension, research and education) have not yet begun due to lack of EDP support and funding. FAO has indicated its willingness to provide some funding for this programme. It is now hoped that design work may be completed for all five programmes towards the end of 2008.

Lack of coordination among the programme design teams – the SAW process has remained formal, dominated by TWG and Task Management Support Group (TMSG) meetings and with actual design work carried out in relative isolation, even among the EDPs. Probably this is largely due to that fact everyone is busy and the procedures established are very time-consuming. In view of this, there is a need to review all five individual draft programmes for reconciliation and harmonization to ensure the coherence and synergy among them.

Lack of understanding and sharing of the purpose and approach of the process – this is the case for the TMSGs and design teams, including TMSG managers. For example, the TMSG/FSSP members did not share same understanding on the nature of the FSSP programme (i.e. as a programme framework).

Low level of participation in design – within TMSG/FSSP, both the speed and quality of design work have been negatively affected by a very low level of participation by its members, including those of the MAFF/MOWRAM design team. For example, one of the co-chairs has attended only a few of TMSG/FSSP meetings, and inputs from the MAFF/MOWRAM design team members have been limited. Among the EDPs, only the World Food Programme has participated routinely in FSSP workshops. The sense of ownership of the process has been remarkably low, especially among the government officials.

Within FAO, the process has worked generally smoothly, facilitated by pro-active involvement of the technical officers concerned and the flexibility with which FNPP has been managed. In particular, the national team leader of the FNPP/Phase One provided valuable technical inputs to the design work – two national consultants employed by FAOR also have played useful roles. However, there could have been broader, multi-disciplinary inputs from FAO specialists. In particular, with the technical capacity of country FAO office very limited, there is an urgent need to ensure adequate technical backstopping, especially among FAOR, and headquarters and Regional Office for Asia the Pacific (RAP).

2.3 Key Factors Affecting Implementation and Results

2.3.1 Factors affecting the implementation of policy assistance

The implementation of the policy assistance project during Phase One was affected by the following factors:

Assistance was deemed appropriate in terms of the progress in policy work process and institutional arrangements:

- The RGC had contextualized the MDGs for Cambodia, with heavy emphasis on poverty reduction and food security, although without a specific strategy for the latter. This provided a suitable entry point for integration of FSN through participatory development of policy objectives and implementation strategy for the NSDP among the national stakeholders.
- The assistance was initiated at the beginning of strategic planning process for the NSDP 2006-10, with a cross-sector approach and procedures, and supported by external partners. As the lead national coordinator on FSN at policy level, CARD provided ready access to the institutional arrangements established for the planning process, including the TWGs and the member ministries and EDPs. Similarly, FAO was also member of several TWGs and served as one of two co-facilitators for FSN, and later for SAW.
- CARD was not only logical partner for the FAO/FNPP intervention but also had already benefited from the technical support from GTZ and WFP in strengthening its technical and institutional

capacity for coordination with other key ministries and agencies. Thus, the FAO/FNPP policy assistance did not have to begin from the scratch.

The intervention design, although optimistic in terms of time frame, was generally appropriate. The four key outputs were valuable for mainstreaming FSN at various levels, from awareness-raising to policy analysis to strategy/programme formulation.

The intervention approach stressed participatory planning and coordination of main activities. Consultative and interactive methods, like stakeholder consultations and lesson-learning workshops, allowed more participation by the numerous and different stakeholders who brought a wide range of policy and technical backgrounds. This contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation process. Involvement of NGOs in coordination, strategy development and information management proved to be very useful to link the policy and grassroots levels. In particular, NGOs collaborated with line ministry representatives in formulating the common approach to mainstreaming FSN as well as in developing common training materials for various sectors.

Implementation was characterized by well-organized technical backstopping, through the subject-matter FAO officers (in FAO Divisions, ESA and TCA) and several monitoring visits. Technical backstopping visits not only made substantive contribution to the project work but also helped in raising the status of the national teams working with the project. This situation contrasted with the relative inadequacy in FAO backstopping during Phase Two in formulating the FSSP and with the support that FAO should be providing to the entire SAW process.

The implementation of the policy assistance project during Phase Two was affected by following factors:

- The decision to support the FSSP programme process was made by the FNPP mission (FNPP Coordinator and ESA theme coordinator) visiting the country in November 2007 in consultation with the FAOR. While this was appropriate timing, it was somewhat fortuitous in that it was due to the mission's visit rather than forward planning, which should have been initiated by the FAOR. This mode of engagement was accompanied by an inadequate assessment of the SAW process due to a lack of information, including the purpose and nature of the process itself.
- The design of FAO support was inadequate. Originally, the main aim of the assistance was seen narrowly as preparing an FSSP by reformulating the NPHFSPR as a revised project under the SAW process through the provision of an international consultant and two national consultants. In retrospect, this form of support was less than adequate for formulating a broader programmatic framework, especially for assessing requirements for poor smallholder development in various agro-ecological conditions, including needs for irrigation and rural infrastructure. Such technical inputs have not been forthcoming from the MAFF/MOWRAM members of the design team, probably due to lack of time or interest.

Participation/commitment of stakeholders has been limited:

MAFF/MAWRM officials participated in formal meetings (TMSG and TWG), but it tended to be a formality rather than substantive. The basic constraints seem to be lack of time and interest.

EDP representatives are available for private meetings, but very few have been able to attend the workshops organized by TMSG/FSSP. WFP has been the only regular. This is partly due to the lack of time and partly due to inadequate interest or understanding of FSN issues. It was also notable that in most donor offices, seniors level international staff do not seem to delegate enough authority to the national staff who actually participate in the SAW process.

The SAW strategy planning process has been flawed because it has not been shared adequately with the national stakeholders. In addition, its process and methodology have been too ambitious and complex, and beyond the capacity of the national counterparts. Furthermore, many EDPs have not been committed to the process.

Continuity and quality of FAO support is uneven. In terms of providing inputs for designing the FSSP, FAO has been able to take timely actions, largely thanks to flexibility of programming in the FNPP. However, more fundamentally, FAO does not have in place clear institutional/financial mechanisms for

providing substantive support through FAOR to key strategic planning for agriculture sector. Thus, the continuity of this support and provision of technical backstopping in the future remain major issues.

2.3.2 Factors affecting the achievement of results

Many factors affecting implementation also positively or negatively influenced the achievement of planned results.

- For **Phase One**, key factors that affected results achieved include the following:

The built-in flexibility in the design permitted a timely response to emerging opportunities. For example, the pilot exercise for mainstreaming at sub-national level in Takeo Province was considerably expanded at the initiative of the national team leader. Similarly, technical backstopping visits could be arranged in a timelier manner than other FAO-operated projects, requiring agreement of the FAO technical officers concerned to meet the needs identified by the national team leader.

The project duration was too short for results to be fully realized. To achieve the objective of mainstreaming FSN in policies, strategies and programmes, it was essential to change perceptions about the significance of FSN and its implications on policies and strategies for various sectors. Changing perception among a wide range of the key policy makers and planners with different backgrounds, takes time, especially for a cross-sectoral subject like FSN.

Although the intervention enjoyed many advantages of the existing institutional setup for the NSDP planning process, this also had some important limitations. One was that while CARD provided a central forum for coordination at policy level, its coordination authority did not include power to enforce the mainstreaming of FSN among the line ministries, nor was CARD empowered to work effectively at sub-national level. Another related limitation was that FSN, as a cross-sectoral subject, involved several ministries with overlapping mandates, making it difficult to reach agreement on their respective roles. In retrospect, it would have been desirable to have clarified beforehand the roles and functions of the concerned agencies, and to have had greater visibility, resources and time, and with more authority for mainstreaming among these ministries and agencies, including possible joint undertaking with other donors.

Although the pilot in Takeo Province provided a pioneering case for drawing lessons for future mainstreaming at decentralized levels, there was no provision for systematic monitoring and evaluation. This could have provided an empirical base for formulating future plans/approaches. Given the importance of future action at decentralized levels, this represents a serious weakness.

Project implementation was hindered by inadequate levels of understanding of FSN as an important cross cutting issue for achieving the MDGs. This lack of understanding was present among national actors and representatives of external partner organizations. Important development partners tended to have an exclusive sector or area focus on which to target their development aid and did not regard FSN as high priority.

- The key factors influencing results of **Phase Two** included:

Some negative implication factors also had serious effects on the achievement of results, particularly the SAW process and mobilization of FAO staff.

There was a lack of reliable information. FSSP design needs to be supported by reliable information and data, especially disaggregated information on the socio-economic characteristics of the target groups, including their main farming systems. While it was relatively easy to access the experience of SPFS projects, it was much more difficult to access more general information, including the experience of other Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. More specifically:

There is very little household level information on the socio-economic characteristics of "poor" or "food insecure" households. The Ministry of Planning 2003 household survey data are valuable but are not disaggregated below province level.

Apart from anecdotal information, it was difficult to locate systematic information on farming systems of the poor and food-insecure smallholders, especially in terms of their agro-ecological conditions.

TWG/SAW has only recently begun to collect information on food security-related projects supported by donors. For FSSP, there is a particular problem of structuring information as FSN had not been included in the classification of such projects. Therefore, experiences of ODA-supported projects that are relevant to the design of FSSP had to be identified through selected cases, and it was difficult to gauge the range and variation in scope of various interventions targeted at improving food security.

2.4 Lessons Learned

The policy assistance process provided a number of valuable lessons, both overarching and specific to different phases of the process. The key lessons are summarized below.

Awareness raising among key stakeholders of FSN concepts and their relevance to policy formulation. FSN are key concerns within FAO. But it can not be taken for granted that other partners, both national and international, share the same appreciation of and commitment to this subject. Therefore, it is essential to build from the beginning a good consensus on the policy issues, objectives and strategies among the key partners, and FAO should be prepared to play an advocacy role in the process.

Capacity building as an essential ingredient for policy assistance. FSN is a cross-cutting and multi-dimensional issue that is difficult to address. It requires a sustained effort to create an understanding among stakeholders of the concept and all its dimensions, including their implications in practical terms. Apart from awareness raising, technical and institutional capacity building of the key national counterparts is fundamental. In particular, a ministry of agriculture can have a rather narrow concept of FSN (i.e. food production and commercialization), may be relatively weak in policy planning and analysis, and have an inadequate capacity to deal with other ministries and international agencies on policy matters. Therefore, capacity building should include developing communication skills on policy issues, as well as analytical and data dissemination skills. In addition, as the interaction between stakeholders at national and local levels is fundamental, capacity building should target implementing staff as well as decision makers. Capacity building should take place through coordinated assistance by development partners and by mobilizing in-country training capacity.

Mobilizing national champions for advocacy of policy messages. Policy work is particularly a national affair, and it is critical to have effective national policy advocates, especially when it involves changes or reforms in thinking – and raising priority of FSN normally entails such changes. For a cross-sectoral subject like FSN, it is important to have such a champion outside the ministry of agriculture, although the latter's collaboration would be essential.

Timing of entry based on the national policy context. The relevance/effectiveness of FAO assistance is likely to be optimal if it is provided at the beginning of the process. For this purpose, FAO needs to have the capacity to monitor, at country level, windows of opportunities in priority countries. This kind of policy intelligence activity also includes the monitoring of actions of the national actors and external agencies (Balié and Maetz, forthcoming). The policy assistance needs to be defined based on a sound understanding of the overall situation, especially the interests and concerns of the national policy makers.

Donor collaboration for policy work at country level. As FAO does not have adequate funds for policy assistance at a significant scale, it must have good partners to jointly contribute human and financial resources. At the same time, care should be taken that such collaboration, in the name of donor harmonization, is not detrimental to ensuring national ownership and effective integration of external support, especially in countries where national capacity is generally weak. In such situation, FAO should take a pro-active role to ensure that the aims and approach of the inter-agency partnership are understood and shared by the national counterparts, and that the process provides for capacity building and full participation of the national stakeholders in the planning. Otherwise, it can result in imposing donor will. Donor collaboration contains many pitfalls, and these must clearly be recognized. Remedial measures need to be identified, especially to keep the approach simple, securing a shared understanding of the purpose and approaches. To be realistic and sustainable, donor collaboration must be built on open and transparent dialogue, and cover planning,

programming, funding and implementation. FAO can play a key role in providing policy assistance to many countries, but its role and functions need to be positioned within the constellation of various donors that operate at country level. Apart from ensuring adequate internal capacity for this role, it would be important for FAO to secure key allies by demonstrating its technical capacity and policy integrity.

A coherent and active policy assistance programme, with a clear mandate for food security. Mainstreaming food security in policy needs an operational strategy and specific programme. Otherwise, the risk is high that FSN remains vague talk with little likelihood of any significant results. From a policy viewpoint, a coherent framework needs to be articulated in a reference document in order to provide clear definition of the national programme and its implementation approach and process and to ensure consistency of interventions. In addition, the institutional mandate is often not well defined, with overlapping roles and functions among several concerned ministries. Clarifying roles and responsibilities among them is essential.

Institutional setting and coordination. A national programme for FSN mainstreaming in policy should be hosted in an adequate institutional structure. The authority and credibility of the structure (institutional seniority, and staff capacity and achievements) are critical for effective coordination of policies and programmes/actions of line ministries and agencies. This entails recognition and authority to assume the coordination function by a clearly designated institution, which may be based on a high-level position in the governmental hierarchy. To effectively implement the coordination role, the institution needs to have competent staff capacity and adequate resources.

Broad and active participation. Involvement of stakeholders at an early stage of the policy formulation process is essential for them to share objectives and approach as well as to ensure their sustained commitment to the policy work. Giving priority to capacity building from the start of the programme is a good way to promote stakeholders' participation and their sense of ownership.

Long-term commitment. The policy development process is time-consuming, especially mainstreaming a particular agenda into policies and programmes, primarily because it requires understanding and trust among stakeholders with differing interests and perspectives to reach agreement.

Quality and availability of information. Policy formulation must be based on adequate information, including high-quality data. Reliable information, such as food security indicators and accurate knowledge of household nutrition status, is essential to designing well targeted FSN strategies and interventions. Thus, policy assistance must promote efforts to strengthen and improve data collection, analysis and dissemination, and promote the use of information for action.

Efficient support from FAO combined with a flexible approach. An efficient and service-oriented staff in the FAO Representation was shown to be indispensable to the success of the project. In addition, the FNPP's flexible approach to planning and implementation has shown how efficiently projects can be run in the absence of rigid adherence to administrative rules – this has been an exception to “conventional” FAO administrative and operational environment. Technical flexibility flows from the fact that the decision-making was concentrated in one service and was exercised in a decentralized manner. Administrative flexibility relates to the fact that decisions can be made by technical officers and FAOR as long as it is part of the programme and money has been allocated. It is also significant that reserve funds managed by the FNPP Programme Coordinator allowed additional funding of related priority activities without waiting for another funding source or new project agreement.

Adequate financial and human resources for sustained policy assistance. FAO needs to depend on extra-budgetary funds to provide substantial technical support to countries. Efforts should be made to mobilize resources to provide technical support for a sustained period. In addition, within the constraints and feasibility of the existing organizational capacity, it is important to ensure adequate staff capacity for sustained support. Again, it becomes important to target the key countries and concentrate staff resources on these countries, probably the minimum being FAOR office and regional units.

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CHAPTER 3

THE CASE OF KENYA

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3.1 Introduction

All three themes (agro-biodiversity, food security and forestry) of the FAO Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) are being implemented in Kenya. Kenya was selected because several actions and experiences were already on the ground and opportunities were identified to make a significant policy impact through the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Employment Creation and Wealth, the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA), the Kenya Forestry Act 2005, and the on-going MDGs processes. Implementation of FNPP activities was designed to involve key partners from public, private and development institutions and civil society.

The Kenyan FNPP focuses on policy dialogue, harmonization and strategic advice, and information sharing and capacity building. Under the Food Security theme, the objective is to ensure that food security and nutrition (FSN) objectives, policies, programmes and monitoring mechanisms are well reflected in national and sectoral plans, most notably the ERS and SRA. The ERS (2003-2007) ranked agriculture and rural development as the topmost government priorities, with food security listed as one of the key five sub-sectors. The ERS is supported by the SRA (2004-2015), which aims to accelerate agricultural sector growth, with a focus on the role of the private sector and markets. One of the six 'fast-track' actions identified by the SRA is to formulate a food security policy and associated strategies. In 2007, the Government of Kenya announced its intention to replace the ERS with a new long-term plan known as the Vision 2030 to guide national and sectoral development policies and strategies. The Vision 2030 emphasizes the enhancement of FSN as one of its strategic objectives under the economic and social pillars.

The immediate objectives of the Kenyan FNPP Food Security Theme were thus to support:

A revised food policy for Kenya, known as the 'National Food and Nutrition Policy' (NFNP), later changed to the Food Security and Nutrition Policy (FSNP), formulated through a multi-sectoral consultative process and approved by the Cabinet.

A Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (FSNS) which integrates the major goals, policies and actions related to food security and nutrition into a cohesive whole, and provides a mechanism for coordinated implementation by all concerned sectors.

²⁰ The views expressed in this paper are strictly personal and in no way represent the views of the Kenyan Government or of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. I am very grateful to Maarten Immink and Jean Balié for their valuable comments and suggestions, and to Sunya Orre for sharing useful documents but take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

A revised ERS (or Vision 2030) and SRA to address broad FSN concerns with better linkage between food and nutrition, between FSNP and country-level goals and targets (including MDGs), and between development and emergency responses²¹ by finalizing the FSNP.

Among the major outcomes expected from the support were:

Food security objectives and related policies and programmes are more clearly elaborated and incorporated into the national (ERS/ Vision 2030) and sectoral (e.g. SRA) planning and prioritization processes in Kenya.

Key stakeholders within the Government of Kenya, as well as in the private sector, civil society and the donor community, participate in the preparation and/or revision of food security-related policy and programme documents.

Concerns of food insecurity and vulnerability, and their linkages with poverty and hunger reduction, are better understood by all stakeholders, and institutional capacity and coordination mechanisms to address these concerns are established.

The FNPP has made a substantial investment in facilitating the formulation of a nationally owned FSNP with a strategy and proposal of institutional arrangements for its implementation. As shown in this paper, important lessons can be drawn from this policy assistance experience.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a historical perspective by looking at the challenges of mainstreaming food and nutrition policy. Section 3 describes the process of reformulating and implementing a multi-sectoral food and nutrition policy and FAO's technical assistance. Achievements and challenges, and conclusions and lessons to be learnt, are discussed in sections 4 and 5, respectively.

3.2 The challenges of mainstreaming the food and nutrition policy

The ERS for Wealth and Employment Creation represented the most important policy statement of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which won election and formed the Government of Kenya in 2002. The document was based on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Kenya Rural Development Strategy (KRDS) developed by the previous government during the late 1990s and in 2000-02. Among the development objectives of the ERS are employment creation and poverty reduction through: (i) rapid economic growth; (ii) strengthening of institutions of governance; (iii) rehabilitation and expansion of physical infrastructure; and (iv) investment in human capital of the poor. Achievement of food security and good nutritional status were described as critical in enhancing human development and overall productivity in the ERS as well as the Vision 2030. However, the ERS/Vision 2030 failed to identify any specific intervention to attain this particular objective at national level. The task of translating the goals of agriculture and achieving food and nutrition security were left to the agricultural sector strategy, the SRA.

The SRA is a long-term and a comprehensive logical framework aimed at boosting agricultural growth to 4.7 percent per annum during the period 2004 to 2015. This is in line with the World Food Summit (WFS) of 1996 Declaration that the food-insecure population be reduced to half by 2015 (WFS, 1996). The SRA did not provide any specific food and nutrition strategy but instead identified six priority areas for a special fast-track procedure; one of these was formulating food security policy and programmes.²² However, the initial approach of formulating the National Food and Nutrition Policy was

²¹ Emergency responses in arid and semi-arid areas are addressed in the Kenyan Food Security Program (KFSP). These relief responses are not integrated with development interventions aimed at addressing the root cause of vulnerability.

²² The six thematic areas selected for fast-tracking are: (i) Reviewing and harmonizing the legal, regulatory and institutional framework; (ii) Improving delivery of research, extension and advisory support services; (iii) restructuring and privatizing non-core functions of parastatals and ministries to bring about efficiency, accountability and effectiveness; (iv) Increasing access to quality farm inputs and financial services; (v) formulating food security policy and programmes; and (vi) Taking measures to improve market access and value addition.

not very different from previous attempts to formulate food policy.²³ Food and nutrition were considered as agricultural issues rather than an integral part of the national policy and strategy. Food and nutrition insecurity was mainly perceived as a problem of inadequate food supply which was to be solved by increasing agricultural production. Other dimensions of food security such as food access, entitlement, nutrition and food safety issues were thus given inadequate attention.

There has also been a strong temptation to compartmentalize food and nutrition issues in Kenya. The Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Food and Nutrition (ICCFN) was created in the early 2000s under the Ministry of Planning and National Development to develop a stand-alone nutrition policy that is more closely linked to health care rather than food security issues. It was thought that a nutrition policy embedded in food policy was likely to overemphasize household food security.²⁴ In fact, mainstreaming of food and nutrition into the plans of other ministries has not materialized because high-level authorities have yet to be convinced of the purpose of mainstreaming. On the contrary, the Ministry of Health, for instance, has recently proposed formulating its own nutrition policy and strategy,²⁵ despite the fact that nutrition has already been addressed fully in the FSNP as well the FSNS in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Mainstreaming at national level should also be accompanied by revision of local-level plans and strategies to reflect the FSNP and FSNS. This is particularly important for the implementation phase. Unfortunately, the policy formulation exercise has not progressed to this phase for two main reasons. First, it has not been possible to talk about implementation at local level when the policy has not been approved at national level. Second, the effort to decentralize governance has stalled in Kenya with the rejection of the new constitution in November 2005. The new constitution was charged with the task of creating a framework that will protect the country's competing ethnic interests, increase government transparency and accountability, and thereby promote government efficiency. Those who voted 'No' during the referendum successfully argued that the new constitution concentrated power in the hands of the President.

The attitude of treating relief and development as separate activities has also been very strong in Kenya. The ERS gave special attention to Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASALs) and emphasized policies such as strengthening food distribution, developing and implementing a disaster management policy, and establishing community-based drought early warning systems. On the other hand, the SRA proposed measures such as improved animal disease control, increased water harvesting and improved access to markets to increase the productivity of rangelands in the ASALs. Not only are emergency operations disconnected from long-term development priorities, but a substantial amount of resources is diverted to relief activities through the Kenya Food Security Meeting (KFSM), which coordinates and brings together a number government and non-government stakeholders under the Office of the President (OP). Relief is often incorrectly viewed and managed as an unpredictable event, when, in fact, major disasters such as drought are predictable and require predictable responses. As in many other poor countries, the synergy between relief, rehabilitation and development efforts has yet to be exploited in Kenya. KFSM still operates independently of sector ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

In short, Kenya has not been able to mainstream food and nutrition policies into its national and sectoral plans. Achieving FSN has not been viewed as a multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral goal that requires the coordinated effort of all concerned at national and local levels. A segmented view of food and nutrition has given rise to a situation in which agriculture, nutrition and relief institutions compete against each other, thus missing opportunities for collaboration and synergy.

²³ Kenya first developed its Food Policy in 1981 (Session Paper No. 4 of 1981). Its major objective was to maintain a position of broad self-sufficiency in the major foodstuffs and ensure equitable distribution of food of nutritional value to all citizens mostly through government interventions, including the setting of grain prices, state monopoly of input distribution and across the board fertilizer subsidy. Following the 1991-94 drought, the policy was reviewed and attempts were made to achieve the same objectives based on some principles of a market economy.

²⁴ The National Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Nutrition, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Concept paper on National Nutrition Policy, July 2004.

²⁵ Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and Ministry of Medical Services, Reversing the Trends: The Second National Health Sector Strategic Plan, Annual Operation Plan 4, July 2008 – June 2009, Nairobi, Kenya.

3.3 Re-formulating and implementing a multi-sectoral NFNP with FAO's Assistance

3.3.1 *The reformulation process*

The process of preparing a comprehensive and integrated NFNP began with the establishment of a multi-sectoral Taskforce in September-November 2004. The first assignment of the Taskforce was to prepare the Food and Nutrition Policy Concept Note. FAO assisted in reviewing and finalizing the Concept Note, which was presented in December 2004 at a senior-level multi-sectoral meeting that included representatives from nine key ministries (represented by ministers and Permanent Secretaries (PSs)) and was chaired by the MoA. An ambitious work plan of completing the policy document within a timeframe of nine months was proposed at this meeting.

FAO's assistance to the formulation process started with the commissioning of two studies in order to provide background information on the situation of food security and nutrition at household level and review past and existing policies on food and nutrition. Unfortunately, the studies took more time than expected to complete, and the first drafts were made available only in October and December 2005, after the zero draft of the NFNP/ FSNP was circulated in July 2005.

FAO's initial observations were shared with the Taskforce in December 2005. A written comment was also provided (11 October 2005), stressing the need to align the policy document with the SRA as well as the broader framework of the ERS, and achieve the 2015 targets of MDGs. The comment also indicated that disproportionate attention to agricultural issues, most of which has already been addressed in the SRA, needed to be avoided while issues related to access, stability and utilization be more explicitly tackled.

Several fact-finding missions supported by FNPP in early 2006 also identified the following major problems in consultation with national stakeholders:

- The drafting process was dominated by the MoA, which approached food security from a very narrow agricultural sector perspective, focusing mainly on the supply side, and food security was viewed as an issue of maize supplies; issues of household food access and poverty were not adequately considered by the Taskforce.
- The participation by Ministry of Health (MoH) staff in the Taskforce was not effective, and as a result the articulation of nutrition issues in the document was inadequate; MoH is willing to collaborate, but would like to see food and nutrition treated on an equal footing.
- A well-balanced policy addressing food and nutrition requires commitment at both senior management (Permanent Secretaries) and technical levels in all key ministries.
- The NFNP/FSNP needs to be grounded in firm evidence, and reflect the views of the stakeholders, rather than be a desktop exercise; the process to redraft the policy should go ahead only if it leads to concrete action and change; the NFNP/ FSNP process must have a clear follow-up strategy to link it to the formulation of laws and the reform of the legal framework.
- The effectiveness of the NFNP/ FSNP rests with implementation and institutional coordination issues. In particular, it was noted that while there is an effective mechanism for decisions and implementation of emergency measures (the Kenya Food Security Meeting in the Office of the President) no similar mechanism exists to address chronic food and nutrition insecurity issues.

However, the Taskforce was unable to revise the draft and proceed due to lack of financial and human resources. A new approach was adopted by the Thematic Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition (TWG – FSN) of the Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit (ASCU)²⁶ in its meeting held on 28 February 2006²⁷. The TWG emphasized the need for wider participation and a more integrated approach. It also established a new Drafting Committee consisting of five teams and a coordinating team that included an FAO international consultant. The five teams represent five thematic areas which were identified as: (i) Food availability (supply issues); (ii) Food access; (iii) Nutrition and

²⁶ ASCU was established in late 2004 as an inter-ministerial coordination unit for spearheading implementation of the SRA. Its role is to coordinate and guide the activities of sector ministries within agriculture and other stakeholders in the implementation of the SRA vision, specifically the six fast-track priority areas. ASCU has a Thematic Working Group for each of the six areas and has the support of most major donors in Kenya.

²⁷ ASCU has established six Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), corresponding to the six fast-track areas.

primary health; (iv) Emergency relief and safety nets; and (v) Information for food and nutrition security.

Each team nominated a chairperson, a drafter responsible for the write-up, and the other members of the team. The Nutrition and Primary Health Team, for instance, included senior nutrition experts from the MoH, UNICEF, universities, the Standards Authority and consumer associations, among others. The team was also assisted by an international consultant from UNICEF at a later stage. Similarly, members of the Emergency Relief and Safety Net Team were drawn from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Office of the President and other relevant institutions, including universities. Frequent consultations were also held with the Chairman of the KFSM and the World Food Programme (WFP) staff to ensure that relevant policy issues related to emergencies was captured.

Subsequent missions supported by FNPP centred on: (i) providing feedback and guidance to the different teams; (ii) distributing relevant materials on FSN and empirical literature on Kenya; (iii) identifying areas that required further analysis and technical support; and (iv) synthesizing and consolidating the output of the different teams. This was followed by distribution of the preliminary draft for comments to various stakeholders, presentations to high level meetings (involving PSs and heads of departments) and conducting several retreat meetings to revise the document.

Regional/provincial workshops were also held to incorporate the views of stakeholders at the grassroots level. The consultation process culminated in a one-day national Food and Nutrition Policy Symposium which was held on 30 March 2007. The Symposium stressed the importance of making grain prices affordable to the poor, integrating the nutrition and primary health care activities of MoH with MoA, ensuring the safety of food produced, making sure that responses to emergency are not reactive, enhancing community participation in school feeding, and putting in place an inter-sector coordination mechanism (as some 18 of the 31 ministries are concerned with FSN). The policy document was revised accordingly and the final version included the following eight major components and associated policy objectives:

- Food availability and access: Ensure that all Kenyans have an adequate, diverse and healthy diet, which will be achieved through sustainable production increases, better storage and processing, well managed strategic reserves comprised of food and cash stocks, and well functioning rural and urban markets, among others.
- Food safety and quality control: Ensure safe, high-quality food by creating public awareness on relevant issues, and by establishing, promoting and enforcing appropriate guidelines, standards and a regulatory framework.
- Nutrition improvement: Achieve good nutrition for optimum health by enhancing food access, providing special nutrition interventions for specific groups with high-risk of malnutrition, creating awareness and skills to provide nutritious foods to all family members and especially children, and promoting healthy lifestyles throughout the life cycle.
- School nutrition and nutrition awareness: Ensure that all Kenyans are knowledgeable about good basic nutrition through improving nutrition and nutrition education in schools, building capacity amongst service providers and stakeholders, and enhancing nutrition-related adult education among the general population.
- FSN information: Build capacity and ensure the availability of quality and timely FSN data, information and analysis for better formulation and management of integrated food security and nutrition policies, programmes and actions.
- Early warning and emergency management: Protect vulnerable populations and address food insecurity concerns in developing capacity for purposes of early warning and emergency management using innovative and cost-effective safety nets and emergency relief programmes linked to long-term development.
- Institutional legal and financing framework: Ensure an adequate institutional and legal framework, and mobilize sufficient resources in order to achieve the objectives of the FSNP.
- Strategic approaches for policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation: Ensure a strong, logical and realistic strategic framework, with associated programmes and action plans developed as a FSNS.

Reformulating the FSNP has taken a lot of time and considerable consultations with stakeholders. The various group discussions, retreat meetings and workshops have contributed towards capacity

building (at least for those who participated at various stages) and in formulating a very comprehensive and integrated policy on food and nutrition. The challenge for Kenya is to ensure ownership of the policy at the highest political level and forge collaboration among all stakeholders for its effective implementation.

3.3.2 Implementing the FSNP

A strategic implementation framework, with associated programmes and action plans, is required to translate the FSNP into practical interventions on the ground. Following the finalization of the policy document, the TWG – FSN shifted its focus to designing the FSN Strategy (FSNS) as an essential element of the implementation arrangement. The TWG agreed to hold a three-day National Workshop (26-29 March 2007) to identify key strategic areas and give guidance to the development of the FSNS. Workshop participants showed particular interest in issues such as food and nutrition in schools and integration between food production and nutrition activities to increase protein and vitamin production and ensure more diverse family diets. It was felt that the quality of food produced and distributed and its implication for nutrition should be of major interest to stakeholders on the supply side of the food chain. Similarly, health professionals should look beyond food utilization and work closely with agriculturalists to overcome the ill-health effects of crop protection, preservation and marketing methods. It was also recommended that the private sector be given a greater role in enhancing food production and improving accessibility.

The FSNS was thus developed taking into account the feedback of the Workshop and with the provision that the responsibility for further elaboration and actual implementation lies with various sector ministries. Eight programme areas were broadly specified:

- Household resource productivity
- National food availability
- Food accessibility
- Food safety and quality control
- Nutrition improvement in public institutions, and among partners and consumers
- Food and nutrition in schools
- Food and nutrition in emergency and crisis situations
- Food and nutrition and information and communication

An implementation matrix with objectives, outputs, interventions, cost estimate, tentative timeframe and responsible institutions, has been indicated for each programme area. Many of the cross-sectoral programmes and sub-programmes are either on-going and require continued support and strengthening, or are new and need to be developed further and implemented. The strategy has also proposed the institutional and legal arrangements, monitoring and evaluation systems, and risk analysis and evaluation matrix.

A proposal has also been prepared for the establishment of the Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat (FSNSec) as an inter-ministerial body to provide a framework for coordinated engagement of all actors at national and sub-national levels. The Secretariat is to be composed of four programme desks, which represent the four major pillars of the FSNP: Food Availability and Access, Food and Nutrition, Food Safety and Quality, and Emergency and Safety Nets.

The FSNSec will report to a high-level coordinating body, the National Food Security Steering Committee, which in turn reports to the National Food Security Executive Committee. The National Food Security Steering Committee will be composed of Cabinet ministers. The proposal states that district- and division-level authorities, local communities and other stakeholders will be actively involved in implementing the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy. Each district and division will have its own Food and Nutrition Committee. Nonetheless, the Secretariat has not been established, and the different ministries have not started implementing elements of the various programme areas. The establishment of the Secretariat has been delayed partly because no decision has been made on whether to place the coordination structure under the MoA or the OP or the newly established Office of the Prime Minister. The uncertainty before the general election and the instability after the election have greatly undermined the effort to implement the FSNP in Kenya. With neither a Secretariat nor a

loose coordination structure, it has not been possible to secure the necessary financial resources for the different line ministries through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

3.4 Achievements and challenges

The Kenyan experience of policy assistance has shown mixed results. There have been significant achievements in designing one of the most comprehensive food security and nutrition policies in Africa, using participatory and consultative approaches. However, approval and implementation of the policy have taken more time than expected. This section describes the achievements and the challenges faced in formulating and implementing the Kenyan FSNP.

3.4.1 Achievements

One of the major achievements of the policy assistance in re-formulating the FSNP has been the effort made to ensure active participation of professionals from different institutions. Members of the different teams that assisted in drafting the policy were drawn from relevant government institutions, civil society organizations, universities and research institutions as well as United Nations agencies, among others. Consultations were also held with local communities and the private sector. The approach adopted has enabled participants to recognize the importance of building trust and forging partnership among stakeholders. The fact that the chairperson of the TWG is from the NGO sector is considered as unprecedented. Extensive consultation has also allowed the preparation of a policy document that captures all key food and nutrition concerns of Kenyans, including cultural, social and political factors in accessing food. The policy recognized the food security implications of political or ethnic conflicts and recommended that the government should 'Address root causes of insecurity and enhance capacity of communities to resist incitement to conflicts and promote public security'. It is important to note that this recommendation was given long before the destructive violence following the December 2007 political crisis.

The policy was formulated with the objective that concerns of food insecurity and vulnerability, and their linkages with poverty and hunger reduction, are better understood by all stakeholders. A number of useful programme and project ideas have been identified as reflected in the main document: Sessional Paper 2007 on National Food Security and Nutrition Policy, May 2007. For example, the first (out of eight) policy component alone, Food Availability and Access, identified nine different areas of policy intervention: (i) domestic production; (ii) storage and agro-processing; (iii) strategic food reserves; (iv) access to and quality of markets; (v) food trade; (vi) on-farm and off-farm employment; (vii) food accessibility for the urban and peri-urban poor; and (viii) cultural, social and political factors in accessing food. Two to eleven specific policy recommendations and/or project ideas were specified for each intervention area, ranging from targeted subsidization of critical production inputs to increase domestic production, to the promotion of traditional crops to address cultural, social and political impediments to food security and nutrition. The Sessional Paper was also summarized into a brochure (Food and Nutrition for All Kenyans – Make it Happen, Kenya's National Food and Nutrition Policy, May 2008) for wider dissemination and advocacy.

The policy instruments are identified through a comprehensive assessment of the factors behind Kenya's failure to ensure food availability, accessibility and stability as well as its inability to meet nutritional requirements. Important stakeholders have been involved and the importance of a multi-sector approach has been recognized. The policy has established the overall framework, and the strategy has outlined the broad areas of intervention to enable various concerned sector ministries and other actors to target and mainstream the most vulnerable when defining their priorities and implementation strategies. The FSNSec has been proposed to coordinate, guide and monitor the various food and nutrition activities in Kenya.

Members of the different teams that drafted the policy and the TWG – FSN of ASCU that oversaw the whole process have been debating key issues of food and nutrition in a number of fora and have thus improved their understanding of the causes of and possible solutions to food insecurity and vulnerability. This was clearly reflected in developing the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy, which was largely drafted in the three-day workshop and then improved by local consultants. The involvement of university professors has also created better opportunities for future research and training related to food security and nutrition.

Key members of the TWG and staff of ASCU have confirmed that the methodology and approach used by the policy assistance in guiding the process have been empowering. Team members were encouraged to look at alternative experiences of different countries and policy options before they decided on the most appropriate measures to take under Kenyan conditions. No policy recommendation was given on issues such as land tenure, not only because of disagreement among team members but also because the Ministry of Lands is in the process of developing a land tenure policy for the country. The opportunity to hold informed debates on all critical issues has also enhanced ownership of the policy among the experts involved. Key members have effectively defended the policy in the National Symposium as well as in various high-level meetings. Public ownership and awareness of the policy are also expected to improve with the publication of the brochure and printing key elements of the policy in the print media. The plan to undertake awareness campaigns using appropriate media and promote formal and informal lessons on nutrition-related topics is also going to have a major impact on the population.

The comprehensive and participatory approach adopted in formulating the FSNP has been applied in drafting the National Food Safety Policy. The objective of the draft policy is to develop an integrated farm-to-fork food safety policy that harmonizes inter-agency efforts and minimizes inter-agency conflicts and overlaps²⁸. The policy Horn of Africa food security initiative was also developed for Kenya in 2007 using the principles and approaches of the FSNP.²⁹

3.4.2 Challenges

The main challenges of the policy assistance in Kenya's FSNP relate to implementation, mainstreaming in national and sectoral plans, and institutional coordination issues. First, moving beyond editing and finalization of the policy and strategy document has proved to be challenging in Kenya. Cabinet and Parliament approval has yet to be granted to implement the FSNP and FSNS. The process that started with the establishment of a taskforce in September – November 2004 and was followed by the formation of the TWG in February 2006 to redraft the policy has not moved beyond the formulation stage. This can be attributed to two main problems: misunderstanding between key ministries and political uncertainty. There is a strong perception among senior officials of the MoH that the MoA is attempting to play a leading role on nutrition issues which do not fall within its remit. On their part, MoA officials believe that food production, processing and distribution activities are guided by nutrition concerns and there is a natural link between food supply and food utilization. They also claim that their Ministry has been working on nutrition and has a government mandate to work on nutrition. Attempts to resolve these differences at senior management levels have not succeeded.³⁰ The approval process is likely to remain pending until the two ministries agree to jointly sponsor the food and nutrition policy proposal. It was hoped that the establishment of the Office of the Prime Minister (in April 2008) would bring an end to the problem, but as indicated in section 2 above, the MoH seems to be moving in the direction of formulating its own stand-alone nutrition policy and strategy (according to the Annual Operational Plan of July 2008 – June 2009, cited above). This is inconsistent with the spirit of the FSNP or FSNS. The delay and infighting is also compounded by the overall political uncertainty before the elections and the instability after the elections. Politicians seem to be more preoccupied with the elections and related issues than with food and nutrition insecurity.

Although one of the immediate objectives of the Kenyan FNPP Food Security Theme was a revised ERS and SRA to address broad food security and nutrition concerns, it has not been possible to mainstream food and nutrition into the overall policy framework (ERS) and the sectoral plan (SRA) for a number of reasons. As the Government opted for Vision 2030, which plans to transform Kenya into a middle-income country by 2030, the initial plan to revise the ERS has changed to aligning the ERS with the Vision. The Government was still developing the Vision 2030 in 2007. The new Government

²⁸ MoH and the different ministries within agriculture are key players, with MoH proposed to serve as the Secretariat of the Coordination Committee. See Kenya National Food Safety Coordination Committee (NFSCC) Draft National Food Safety Policy, August 2007.

²⁹ See OSRO/RAF/801/EC - Regional Support Programme for the coordination and capacity strengthening for disaster and drought preparedness in the Horn of Africa.

³⁰ It is important to note that there is no such problem among nutrition professionals of the MoH and agricultural professionals who drafted the policy. More importantly, nutrition workers of both ministries work together at field or village level.

could give greater emphasis to FSN in its overall policy framework (which is a revised version of Vision 2030³¹) because of the food crisis that is still affecting the majority of the Kenyan population.

The plan to revise the SRA and incorporate food and nutrition policies has also faltered because the TWGs of ASCU, with the exception of the TWG – FSN, failed to complete their task of developing policies and strategies in their respective fast-track areas mainly due to resource limitations. (The TWG – FSN succeeded because of the FNPP support). In 2007, ASCU submitted a work plan and budget to complete the task of revising the SRA and making itself the technical arm of the MTEF to ensure SRA compliance across ministries within agriculture and rural development.³² Hence, the different line ministries within agriculture and rural development are likely to continue with their respective sectoral plans, which comprise little if any elements of the food and nutrition policy, until ASCU revises the SRA and acquires the authority and the resources to initiate the process of mainstreaming the SRA into the Public Expenditure Review and the MTEF.³³ By the same token, non-agricultural sectoral ministries such as the MoH are not expected to incorporate food and nutrition issues (identified in the FSNP) in their plans until an institutional coordination mechanism, which is broader than ASCU, is created to oversee and coordinate activities related to food and nutrition.

Recognizing the multi-sectoral and cross-cutting nature of both food security and nutrition and knowing that existing coordination systems are fragmented, the policy formulation process included the establishment of a national coordination mechanism as one of its priority outcomes. However, bringing together existing structures into a single system of institutional coordination (as proposed in the policy document) has not been easy. Apart from the delay in the approval process, the Government policy of discouraging the formation of a new institution has been a major stumbling block. Among the existing institutions, the KFSM of the OP, which coordinates emergency operations, has a better profile than other coordinating bodies to serve as FSN Secretariat and coordinate food and nutrition operations and combine development with relief activities. The challenge for KFSM, however, is to reorganize itself and build sufficient capacity at national and local levels to provide guidance and support to government and non-government organizations on an integrated approach to ensure FSN. Most NGOs in Kenya focus on relief activities and need to develop capacity to address long-term and sustainable development needs of the rural poor. Many civil society organizations are also urban-based, with limited outreach to the poor and rural areas. Grassroots organizations that represent the rural poor need the support of a coordinating body and the government to have representation at national level and start influencing government policy in favour of FSN. The role of a coordinating institution is also very important in maximizing the contribution of the private sector to FSN in the area of marketing services, price stabilization, and food supplementation and fortification, among others.

3.5 Conclusions and lessons learnt

The policy assistance project in Kenya was set out to develop a comprehensive food and nutrition policy, contribute to the revision of the ERS and the SRA to address broad FSN concerns, ensure that concerns of food insecurity and vulnerability and their linkages to poverty and hunger reduction are better understood, make sure that institutional coordination mechanisms are streamlined, support the implementation of major recommendations by targeted stakeholders including national and local governments, and ensure self-sustaining capacity for change is strengthened.

Because of the participatory and consultative approach, capacity has been built in identifying key policy options and designing policy in a participatory manner. All those who participated in the formulation and deliberations of the policy appreciate that a coordinated and integrated approach is essential to achieve the objectives of the FSNP. As reflected in the policy document, the experts involved believed that food and nutrition issues cannot be separated and recommended that all concerned ministries (including MoA and MoH) should work together. The experts also suggested that

³¹ The creation of the Ministry of State for Planning National Development and Vision 2030 has meant that the new coalition government has given more attention to Vision 2030.

³² These comprise Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries, Cooperatives, Environment, Lands, and Regional Development.

³³ Development Associates A/S, Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture: The Way Forward, Findings of the Joint Review, no date. See also, ASCU, Draft Final Report, Multi-Donor Support Program for SAR Implementation and Support to the Agriculture Sector Coordination Unit, 2007 – 2014, March 2007.

government support for all those experiencing food insecurity through targeted subsidization of critical production inputs is necessary. A strategic reserve comprised of both food and cash stock was also considered as critical to ensure rapid response to emergencies.

Nevertheless, translating the policy into actions and addressing the pressing FSN problems of Kenyans were objectives that were met with procrastination and bureaucratic delays. The process that started in September–November 2004 is still in the formulation or reformulation phase. There is no accepted structure to guide, coordinate and monitor the activities of over 18 ministries that are expected to participate in the implementation of the FSN policy.

At the root of the slow pace and the limited sense of urgency in implementing the policy is lack of commitment at highest level. The political economy and governance of Kenya are historically characterized by patronage, with the poor at the bottom end of the patron-client networks. Power has yet to be devolved to local levels and elections are often marred by political violence.³⁴ However, the improvements in the political environment since the 2002 elections and the recent compromise among the major political parties to address the root causes of the election violence and form a grand coalition government give reasons for optimism. The recent crisis of high food prices has also improved the prospect of approval of the FSNP by the Government. It would help if the policy assistance takes advantage of the current environment and focuses on supporting real champions of food and nutrition security at the highest level of political authority.³⁵

The MoA, through its Permanent Secretary, has been actively supporting the FSNP, but this has not been perceived as positive by other ministries. In particular, the MoH has questioned the MoA's attempt to coordinate actions on nutrition issues that fall within the remit of its ministry and challenged the capacity of the Ministry to call in collaborations. With advances in the formulation of the FSNP, coordination and implementation mechanisms have become one of the most sticking points. Sector ministries have been operating independently of each other in Kenya. The new Office of the Prime Minister could force ministries to cooperate and mainstream cross-cutting issues such as food and nutrition.

A number of lessons can be drawn from the Kenyan experience:

First, policy assistance should be directed at winning commitment of not just lower-level experts but also higher level of policy-makers. Given its multi-sectoral dimensions, the FSN policy has a high chance of being mainstreamed into national, regional and sectoral plans only if there is a strong support and direct participation at the level of a president or a prime minister or an influential minister. *The task of creating national champions of FSN needs to be given particular attention in policy assistance.*³⁶

Second, traditions and mindsets often favour a compartmentalized approach to FSN. In particular, support for a stand-alone nutrition policy framework can be strong within ministries of health and nutrition-related institutions. A coordinated and integrated approach may thus be viewed with suspicion, especially when one ministry (e.g. MoA) takes the initiative and tries to call in others to collaborate. *An appropriate approach to address this problem should be part of the policy assistance from the very beginning.*

Third, emergency operations attract more attention than chronic food insecurity and malnutrition by politicians as well as civil society organizations. There can be some support to linking relief to rehabilitation and development, but a comprehensive and integrated approach could also be perceived as eventually leading to reduction or even termination of relief activities, and this could be considered as a threat rather than an opportunity by some relief organizations. Addressing this challenge requires policy direction at the highest level. *Therefore, policy assistance should include support to make informed decision on linking relief, rehabilitation and development.*

³⁴ Njuguna Ng'ethe, Musambayi Katumanga and Gareth Williams, Strengthening the Incentives for Pro-Poor Policy Change: An analysis of drivers of change in Kenya, A Summary Report, for DFID/ Kenya, May 2004.

³⁵ One means of achieving this objective is to send a high-level FAO Food and Nutrition mission to the country.

³⁶ Kenya may need to draw lesson from Brazil, where President Lula made Zero Hunger his government's number-one priority and successfully mobilized all relevant ministries, civil societies and the private sector for its implementation.

Fourth, a participatory approach to the formulation and implementation of food and nutrition should pay particular attention to the involvement of beneficiaries and their organizations. This is particularly important in the implementation phase of the policy. Enabling the food-insecure and the poor to participate can empower them and ensure implementation and allocation of a budget for food and nutrition policy. *Policy assistance should find more appropriate ways of involving the real beneficiaries in the entire process.*

Fifth, mainstreaming FSN policies into local plans and programmes is the surest way to reach real beneficiaries. However, this can be very difficult if there is no clear decentralization policy (as it is the case in Kenya) or if local capacity is limited. *Policy assistance needs to give particular attention to building capacity for local-level mainstreaming of FSN.*

Sixth, the role of the private sector in attaining FSN has increased (with liberalization and privatization policies) and this is clearly reflected in the FSNP. *Policy assistance should give particular support to private-sector support measures that enhance FSN.*

Seventh, civil society organizations have the potential to make significant contributions by mainstreaming FSN issues in their programmes. Lack of awareness and inadequate capacity is often the main constraining factor. *Policy assistance should include building the capacity of civil society organizations to develop FSN programmes that are more integrated with national orientations and that empower the stakeholders.*

Finally, without a coordinating structure (like the FSN Secretariat in Kenya), it is impossible to fully implement all the policy recommendations. Such a structure is essential to:

- Enhance cooperation between government, civil society and NGOs, private sector and development partners.
- Integrate FSN issues into national and sector development plans and strategies, and establish linkage between short-term relief responses and long-term development activities.
- Empower local governments and communities to participate in the formulation and implementation of FSN policies.
- Ensure a clear distinction between coordination and monitoring activities by the Secretariat.

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CHAPTER 4

THE CASE OF MOZAMBIQUE

By Frank Mischler³⁷

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4.1 Description of the policy assistance project

The FAO-Netherlands Partnership Programme (FNPP) Mozambique started in November 2004. Most of the project implementation finished in December 2007. The overall trust of the project was to mainstream food security and nutrition (FSN) in Government plans at different levels and to develop material that would enable Government counterparts to maintain this focus in the future. The project was divided into two phases:

- Phase 1 (November 2004 through June 2006): Mainstreaming food security and nutrition in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PARPA in the Portuguese acronym).
- Phase 2 (June 2006 through December 2007): Up-scaling of activities. The project provided support to:
 - Ministry of Planning and Development -MPD (responsible for implementation of the PARPA).
 - Technical Secretariat of Food Security and Nutrition - SETSAN (revision to the food security strategy – ESAN II, in the Portuguese acronym).
 - Governor of the province of Gaza (mainstreaming FSN in district development plans); and
 - Fisheries at national and provincial level (integrate FSN in the Artisanal Fisheries strategy and programme³⁸).
 - In 2007, unallocated FNPP funds were used to finance an international workshop on integrating food security and the right to food into district development plans. Participants from Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Uganda and Mozambique shared experiences.

³⁷ The author of this case study report conducted one-hour interviews with many of the FAO staff involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the policy assistance project: Peter Vandor (ex FAOR), Kostas Stamoulis (Coordinator FNPP food security theme), Margarida Davide Silva (Programme Coordinator FAO Mozambique), Lori Bell (ex CTA of a food security project based in Mozambique), Frans van de Ven, Alejandro Acosta (both FAO Mozambique), Angela Abdula, Raul Varela, Santiago Goicoechea, and Theodosio Bule (all FNPP staff). The author attended a lessons learnt workshop in Bilene/Mozambique in May 2008. Many of the findings extracted at this event were included in this case study report. In addition, comments on earlier drafts of this paper were received from: Alejandro Acosta, Maarten Immink, Frans van de Ven, Margarida Davide in addition to editorial suggestions received from Anna Ricoy and Jean Balié.

³⁸ Issues related to FNPP activities on fisheries and forestry are not discussed here.

- The time until 30 June 2008, the formal NTE date of the project, was used to refine some of the outputs and conduct a lessons learnt workshop. The present document builds on the lessons learnt workshop held in May 2008. However, the emphasis is placed on findings related to internal management and coordination of FNPP.

4.1.1 *Expected outcome – national level*

The initial expression of interest to offer FNPP-support to Mozambique was raised by the then Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) of an EU-funded project in support of SETSAN. While her project supported the information gathering arm of SETSAN, no outside-support was given to the policy unit of the agency. This unit consisted of only one individual with limited technical capacity. As the revision of PARPA II presented a window of opportunity to mainstream FSN in the highest policy paper of the country, SETSAN's policy unit needed to be strengthened to play a decisive role. The PARPA is Mozambique's overarching economic and social development strategy. All sector-strategies should be aligned with the objectives and major outcomes of this strategy. The Ministry of Agriculture during a tripartite evaluation of the EU-funded project recognized the importance of emphasizing concerns of food insecurity and malnutrition in the PARPA and thus officially requested a FAO-intervention to support SETSAN's policy unit to play a stronger role in policy development processes.

The period for policy support (phase 1) deliberately was kept short. The rationale was to first wait for the adoption of the PARPA II and examine to what extent further technical support was needed to implement measures related to food security and nutrition in the PARPA II.

During this first phase, the expected outcome at national level was to include food security and nutrition as cross-cutting issues into PARPA II. In addition, fishery concerns were highlighted given the multi-thematic set-up of FNPP Mozambique. This included:

- Facilitate an ad hoc, multi-sectoral food security working group.
- Provide technical support to this working group on how to integrate food security into national plans in practice.
- Conduct analytical work to support the work of the ad hoc working group.
- Ensure that fisheries and forestry concerns are adequately covered by PARPA II.
- Support the development of the Artisanal Fisheries Strategy in harmony with PARPA II.

In the second phase, with food security integrated in PARPA II, FNPP support to SETSAN and MPD changed:

- Ensure that food security is included in the periodic monitoring of PARPA and the inclusion in the annual economic and social plans.
- Conduct analytical studies to support revision of the food security strategy.

4.1.2 *Expected outcome – provincial level*

FAO Mozambique designed an FAO-wide response to the structural food security problems of the southern province of Gaza³⁹, a semi-arid province in Southern Mozambique. The then FAO Representative (FAOR) was convinced that by using a structural approach to food security and by making full use of the potential of the province, the regular food shortages could be prevented. Given the successful first phase of FNPP of mainstreaming food security in the PRSP, it was very appealing to extent the policy assistance to the sub-national level and help the provincial and district officials to implement the well-crafted strategies and programmes of the country.

The decentralization agenda of the Government of Mozambique regards the districts as the motor of development. In order to address poverty in a more systematic manner, districts are requested to prepare 5-year development plans. Only in 2009, food security became a mandatory part in these plans yet. Until then, food security concerns were very poorly integrated. At the same time,

³⁹ Unfortunately, FNPP and an Emergency programme remained the only FAO-activities contributing to this programme that never took off.

Mozambique suffers from persistent high prevalence of malnutrition. While absolute poverty was reduced from 69% in 1997 to 54% in 2005, prevalence of hunger went up. In the same period, chronic Malnutrition increased from 31% to 46%⁴⁰. With 34% chronic malnutrition, the province of Gaza is better off. This is mainly thanks to food aid (after natural disasters) and remittances but not due to a structural approach to food security.

FNPP Mozambique piloted a new methodology for integrating food security in the Districts Development Plans (PDDs as abbreviated in Portuguese) by addressing the underlying causes of hunger and by empowering civil society to actively participate in the design of solutions to the multiple problems. The current process of preparing PDDs only foresees punctual consultations at village level. The rationale of the new methodology was that a well-informed, pro-active civil society at lowest administrative levels could play a stronger role in identifying the development problems and solution to overcome them. These proposals would be manifested in so-called Community Action Plans – activities that can be carried out by the community itself without outside support – and feed into the PDDs.

Expected results of the sub-national activities were as follows:

- Integrate FSN in provincial development strategy (together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)).
- Familiarize provincial Government with FSN, fisheries and forestry relevant national strategies and policies.
- Conduct a participatory planning exercise in five pilot districts in Gaza with a view to integrate FSN in the plans.
- Suggest a methodology for assessing the underlying causes of food insecurity at district level and below, and explain how to link this information to policy decisions.
- Train Government and other stakeholder on the food security concept.
- Document methodology used and lessons for potential replication.

4.2 Assessment of factors that influenced the formulation and implementation of the policy assistance project

4.2.1 Endogenous strengths and weaknesses

The difficult task to adjust agency capacities to the institutional context

Despite huge and time-consuming efforts to formulate a precise project document with clear description of roles and responsibilities, FNPP team members had different views on how the project should be implemented. This disagreement on the priority issues and implementation process led to a disconnect between the national and sub-national level component – the very heart of the programme itself. In effect, towards the end of the programme, the two components acted as if they were stand-alone projects and did not try to find synergies.

In both phases the Government (Ministry of Agriculture and Governor of Gaza respectively) officially requested a FNPP programme. The formulation of the programme itself was done by FAO-staff. Inputs to project design were provided mainly by the FNPP team itself and the FAO-officer supporting SETSAN on capacity building and tool development (later FNPP CTA for Gaza activities). Contributions came from all national counterparts: MPD, SETSAN, the Institute for Development of Small-Scale Fishing (IDPPE), Governor of Gaza and Ministry of Tourism. A big difference between phase one and two were the people involved in the project formulation. The first phase was drafted by FAO-staff that had no stake in the programme itself (i.e. CTAs of Mozambique based programme, FAO HQ staff). The second phase though received huge inputs from individuals that were later hired as FNPP staff (namely the two FAO coordinators at national and provincial level). This had advantages as both future coordinators held valuable inside knowledge and could strengthen the project document. At the same time, the project turned out to be highly personalized and not necessarily the, objectively, best project design.

⁴⁰ According to SETSAN.

Selection of programme personnel: An essential but sensitive issue

The programme design foresaw the following staff needs:

- Policy advisor to be seconded to MPD (knowledge of FAO and FSN required, good negotiation and communication skills).
- Policy assistant, based in SETSAN's policy unit (knowledge of FSN, analytical skills).
- Manager of Gaza sub-programme (high knowledge of FAO and FSN, awareness of specific needs of Gaza).
- Pluri-disciplinary team for Gaza (forestry, fisheries, economist, agronomist).

The FNPP team consisted of a mix of national and international experts. The coordinators at national and sub-national level were respected and trusted by their respective Government counterparts. In hindsight, a better food security analyst would have been beneficial for national level activities. At central level, the policy advisor was a good communicator, but lacked analytical skills. This led to a policy assistance that was strong on rhetoric interventions and liaison with key partners, but weak on analytical underpinning. A gap in the Gaza-team was surely a senior-level respected economist. The coordinator was a good communicator and had a good oversight of the different issues to be tackled simultaneously to improve the food insecurity situation in the province. He lacked ability to provide sound food security analysis. An individual who is versed in economic analysis and drafting of manuals and other tools was dearly missed. Difficulties in finding the right people for Gaza programme led to some delays.

The staff selected fulfilled the basic (technical) requirements though with little attention paid to soft skills. FNPP, maybe FAO in general, should apply a more vigorous selection process to capture also personal abilities of an individual. In this respect, much can be learnt from the selection process the private sector applies.

Complex programme management, difficult coordination and poor communication

The deployment of the policy advisor in the offices of MPD was a good decision as this facilitated enormously the integration of FSN into PARPA II. In the second phase of the programme it was also decided to place a food security expert in SETSAN to strengthen its analytical capacity and reinforce the relation with MPD. This however was less successful. SETSAN misused well-trained food security experts mainly due to the institution's limited absorption capacity for analytical work.

Moreover, the coordination and reporting mechanism of FNPP Mozambique was rather complex:

- HQ coordination: Theme coordinators for food security and forestry respectively, one overall FNPP HQ country focal point and answerable to technical issues related to food security, thematic focal points for forestry and fisheries respectively;
- FAO Mozambique: FAOR (overall country level responsibility), the Programme coordinator in FAO Mozambique and an FAO Mozambique focal point for FNPP/food security; and
- FNPP Mozambique coordinators for national and sub-national level.

In addition to that, from late 2006 until the end of the programme, a young professional, supervised by FAO HQ, acted as FAO Mozambique focal point for FNPP. Due to lack of clarity in defining task and responsibilities a field level, the role of this additional work force was misinterpreted by the staff already in place.

The set-up of the programme and the communication and reporting channels were complex: Although, on paper, the roles and responsibilities of the different coordinators and focal points at different levels were clear, in practice the interaction between staff involved was often dysfunctional.

Most of the frictions happened among FNPP and FAO staff as a result of poor communication. Among the various factors that led to communication failure, cultural issues, for example, could explain why senior and junior personnel encountered problems in interacting positively.

The communication between FNPP country team and its counterparts was much smoother than the internal communication. Counterpart agencies had one assigned FNPP staff for all contacts. Therefore, despite the fact that FNPP Mozambique as a whole had many counterparts, no communication problems arose:

Issue	Counterpart
<i>Mainstreaming FNS in PARPA</i>	<i>MDS</i>
<i>Strengthening SETSAN Policy unit</i>	<i>SETSAN</i>
<i>Mainstreaming FSN in artisanal fisheries strategy</i>	<i>IDPPE</i>
<i>Policy for community involvement in the management of forests, wildlife and protected areas</i>	<i>Ministry of Tourism</i>
<i>Mainstreaming FSN in PDDs</i>	<i>Governor of Gaza</i>

In addition to these official counterparts, FNPP had many partners (listed under exogenous factors). The institutional capacity of these partners to interact with FNPP and absorb the policy assistance varied greatly. For a future project, the capacity of the counterpart agencies has to be assessed in order to provide the technical support needed.

The counterparts trusted FNPP-staff. Both coordinators had access to the highest ranking official of their Government entity (Governor of Gaza and Minister of MPD respectively) and regular work relationship with medium-level staff of the two Government agencies. The national consultant located in the office of MPD was fully embedded in internal Government processes. This accessibility and the inside knowledge gained by using the good relationships with senior Government officials, facilitated FNPP's work considerably. The secondment of the policy advisor to the office of MPD was widely viewed as the main factor of a successful first FNPP phase.

Establishing links with in-country institutions and stakeholders

Joining forces with UNDP in providing technical support to Governor of Gaza in district development planning was perceived at the outset as a good move to ensure sustainability. UNDP and FAO also presented a scheme that illustrated how the two organizations will share the workload and interact. Although, FAO and UNDP had different understanding of the priority issues of PDD-support after a good dialogue UNDP co-funded FNPP in the latter half of 2007. For 2008 and beyond, UNDP provided funds through the One-UN scheme to FAO to continue working on integrating FSN in district plans.

Partnerships of this sort have to be made explicit in writing. It was both unclear who was responsible for which element of the district development planning and what the financial contributions of each agency were. The different methodologies of the two agencies led to an everlasting quarrel that could not be resolved. The lesson from this situation is that prior to implementation, the methodology has to be discussed with and approved by the Government counterpart and key partners.

4.2.2 Exogenous opportunities and constraints

Analyzing policy and political climate to identify a policy window

FAO Mozambique in 2004 had a number of international staff that was very perceptive of opportunities to integrate food security and nutrition in the country's policies and strategies. FNPP reacted to at least four opportunities for providing policy assistance that were identified by experienced staff of the country office: Mainstreaming FSN into PARPA II, integrating FSN in district development plans; integrating FSN in the artisanal fisheries strategy and supporting SETSAN in the elaboration of ESAN II. The policy opportunities did not come out of a structured and systematic policy climate assessment. Informally though, FAO Mozambique did some of this work. A weaker FAO-office might have failed to notice the opportunity and act upon it, therefore having an experienced policy advisor to the FAOR is recommended.

The preparation of PARPA II was a priority for MPD and the country. Helping SETSAN and MPD integrating FSN in that document was a useful and well perceived support. After adoption of PARPA II though, the political will to mainstream FSN decreased. This can be explained by the anti-climax after

approval of PARPA II and the huge workload of all actors involved who had to follow their regular tasks that were left pending during the peak of the PARPA-process.

Within its Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund granted debt relief provided that the freed resources are used for poverty alleviation. Interested HIPC-eligible countries had to present a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prior to funds being released.

In Mozambique, this conditional situation led to the preparation of the first Poverty Reduction Action Plan (PARPA I). In 2000, the Government of Mozambique adopted the PARPA I 2001-2005 as a strategy to minimize the negative impact of the structural readjustment programmes defended in the eighties. The main objective of this strategy was “the substantial reduction of absolute poverty levels in Mozambique, through measures aimed at improving the capacities and opportunities of all Mozambicans, in particular the poor” (Government of Mozambique, 2005).

Although food security was integrated in PARPA I, it was argued that the concepts of food access, food availability and food utilization were addressed in a disperse manner and that food security was conceived mainly from a food production angle. Food security was referred to in some key sectors, such as health, agriculture and emergencies, but not in a holistic manner. This shortcoming in PARPA I can be explained by the then still weak Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) at its early stage of existence. The un-participatory formulation process of PARPA I was an additional obstacle.

Late 2004 Government of Mozambique began the process of revising PARPA I, calling for the support of the different sectors and ministries, the donor community, the civil society and the international organizations. It was decided that PARPA II should be based on the pillars of the Agenda 2025, a visionary document on the future of Mozambique, and be in harmony with the Five Year Plan of the Government and the MDGs.

Provincial strategy of Gaza and PDDs were priorities for the Governor of Gaza. With more autonomy given to the districts, district development plans gain in importance. The Governor of Gaza was also concerned with the regular natural disasters in his province that led to food crisis. FAO's proposal to help integrate FSN into the district development plans thus fell on fertile ground. The Governor's commitment manifested itself for example in the rapid provision of state officials for district development training and conduct.

Food security rather well understood as a policy issue but not effectively communicated

The fact that SETSAN has been working for a long time in food security information work linked to planning was a facilitating factor for success. The agency has a good understanding of the food security concept, but was less able to communicate it adequately and to include food security in the policy process. Mainstreaming food security and nutrition was mainly possible thanks to the FNPP support.

The Governor of Gaza ill-understood the concept of food security but was aware of the problem of food insecurity as such. During project implementation and thanks to numerous briefings by the FNPP coordinator he saw the merits of careful planning and supported the integration of food security in the PDDs.

In a nutshell, understanding of food security and nutrition varied considerably between national and sub-national levels and between actors. It can be generalized that national level actors have a broader perception of the concept and understand better how the cross-cutting nature of food security can be put into practice. Such understanding is virtually absent at sub-national level. This sectoral thinking at lower administrative level impedes that national level policies and plans (e.g. PARPA II) that acknowledge food security as a cross-cutting issue are implemented adequately. The importance of capacity building cannot be stressed too much.

Good participation for a supportive policy dialogue

A successful feature of the integration of food security into PARPA was the establishment of a working group under the leadership of SETSAN that encompassed Government actors, NGOs, civil society and UN agencies. This group benefited from an evaluation of the level of integration of food security in policies and a strong link to the lead-agency of the PRSP MPD. The evaluation was conducted by SETSAN and supported by FAO with the revision of the 1998 food security strategy in mind and provided more and better arguments for integrating FSN into the highest Government policy, the PRSP.

There was a certain tendency at national level of replacing Government functions without ensuring that Government staff is adequately trained to internalize these functions once the FNPP-support has finished. SETSAN thus rightly pointed out that in a future occasion preference should be given to second a Government staff to MPD for liaison between the two institutions. This would hopefully lead to the same successful outcome and increase the institutional capacity.

The support to district plans by developing first plans at community and administrative post level (PACs and PEPAs) that according to project design should feed into the district plan, was outside the agreed Government process. In addition, the community members that actually produced the PACs and PEPAs should have received more and better information about the rationale behind the new proposal, the implementation of the plans and the way it should feed into the PDD. The short timeframe of the programme and the perceived need to rush activities led to a serious disconnect with the usual process and pace of formulating and implementing programmes and plans. This also points to another lesson: The timing of programme activities in relation to the normal planning cycle.

A long list of players and institutions involved

FNPP worked in partnership with several international partners while providing support to MPD in elaboration of the PARPA II: UNDP, UK Department for International Development (DFID), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), G19 (group of donors to Mozambique). In its support to SETSAN, FNPP collaborated with Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Fewnet, DFID, World Food Programme (WFP), University Eduardo Mondlane and Wageningen University. At provincial level (Gaza) international and national partners included: UNDP-Programme (Institutional Capacity Building in District development Planning and Financing), Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), GTZ, World Vision, FONGA (a network of more than 120 civil society organization, including NGOs, farmer association, women organization, and religious organizations). Given the sheer number of partners, it is impossible to describe the role and responsibility of all of them. Some general remarks can be made though.

During PARPA II formulation, most national actors participated in the PARPA food security working group established by SETSAN. There was thus little direct relations between FAO/FNPP and any of the food security stakeholders but more so with the conglomerate of actors. However, all actors listed above appreciated the facilitating role played by FNPP's policy advisor.

At Gaza-level, SETSAN, FONGA and some district representatives appreciated the attempt of the project to introduce an empowerment component to district development planning. Instead of "only" asking community members for their inputs to a PDD (consultation), the focus was on a problem and solution oriented planning that put emphasis on self-determination (joint learning).

FNPP at subnational level complained about the administrative burden that consumed too much staff time. The FAO rules and regulations for field project accounting can be regarded as an exogenous factor to the FNPP as programme designers can't change it. According to the FAOR, and echoed by the then Gaza coordinator, FAO is not up for large field projects. All activities have to be accounted for in advance. For a workshop, this implied submitting a complete list of participants (names, ID-number) and cost of venue, catering, stationery, facilitator etc. to the national FAO office at least three days in advance. The impossibility of releasing a lump sum before the workshop and account for all costs afterwards (i.e. have the accountability after the event and not before) seriously hindered a smooth implementation of activities at Gaza level.

4.3 Assessment of policy/strategy outcomes

Mozambique was selected as one of the FNPP countries for the Food Security theme for a combination of reasons including the good timing in regard to ongoing poverty reduction and food and nutrition security policy formulation processes, and the presence of a strong FAO office. FAO Mozambique had good access to the policy process and an extensive food security programme for which clearly identified gaps needed to be addressed. In particular, an EC-funded project implemented by FAO in support of the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) was deemed ideal for undertaking joint activities given the complementarities of the two programmes. Whereas the pre-existing FAO project worked on the information gathering and analysis side of the work of SETSAN, FNPP was to strengthen the policy dimension and relevance of SETSAN work, at both national and provincial levels.

Without doubt, integration of FSN in the PARPA II and later in the periodic reviews is regarded as a clear outcome and success of FNPP. Also the support given to SETSAN to develop ESAN II is, at least partially, attributed to FNPP support. Less clarity is the impact of FNPP at Gaza level.

All key actors unanimously report that food security is integrated much stronger in PARPA II than in PARPA I. The food security is defined in all its dimensions and the two-way relationship with poverty – as both a cause and an effect – is mentioned. Food security is no longer only mentioned within the agriculture, health and emergency part. Food security as a cross-cutting issue gained a more prominent place. Some officials of FAO Mozambique however state that more could have been done to ensure that food security is more thoroughly mainstreamed. For example, the fact that PARPA II includes only two generic food security indicators was mentioned as a setback as this would not allow monitoring the implementation of food security as a cross-cutting issue.

There is a huge discrepancy between the perception of FAO Mozambique and some of the Government counterparts about the impact of the programme at Gaza-level. Those who criticize the programme mention the lack of documentation. Indeed, FNPP Gaza did not produce the most important output: A methodology for integrating FSN in district plans. A draft exists, but has shortcomings and was only submitted after the programme ended (i.e. in January 2008). The lessons learnt workshop in May 2008 could rectify this situation and allowed FAO to learn from this pilot and extract findings for a more successful replication in other provinces and districts.

On the positive side, all partners of FNPP at provincial level have an increased awareness of the food security concern. The coordinator for sure played a decisive role in motivating SETSAN (central and provincial) to use the district level for food security advocacy. SETSAN included the decentralization focus in the food security strategy and in its work plan. The new person hired for the policy unit is tasked to follow-up the decentralization agenda. SETSAN acknowledges that working with communities and at administrative post level is not feasible in practice. However, this does not undermine their appreciation for the programme.

The main criticism is that documentation has been extremely weak, making it very difficult to have a focused discussion on certain elements of the programme. A workshop on lessons learnt held in May 2008 to some extent compensated this shortcoming but could not provide the systematic analysis of the pilot experience expected.

4.4 Assessment of policy assistance effectiveness

FNPP Mozambique was huge and diverse. Quality of results varied.

Support to the different policy processes described above (PARPA II, IDPPE, Gaza Provincial Strategy, ESAN II) was timely. FNPP support was provided at the appropriate time to allow for adequate preparation and implementation of the policy assistance. However, not enough time was given to finalize Gaza programme adequately and prepare a sound hand-over to the provincial Government to ensure sustainability. This was mainly due to the short programme duration. When the programme started, the FNPP food security coordinator, the FAO HQ focal point and the then FAOR Mozambique took the informed risk of starting a process that most probably would not be concluded by the end of the programme. The province of Gaza presented itself as an ideal case for a programmatic approach of FAO, encompassing many of FAO projects and programmes active in

Mozambique at the time, addressing food insecurity from a multi-dimensional perspective and targeting the root causes of malnutrition. At the time of design, the FAOR was reasonably optimistic to receive additional funds, be it tied to emergency⁴¹ or a follow up of FNPP. The partnership with UNDP was also meant to guarantee some sustainability. As it turns out now, none of the expected options materialized, despite the FAOR and his successor trying their best to attract funds.

The lesson is that one should only start a programme that can be finished in the given time, even if the probability of a programme extension is high. The design of the programme was not for an 18 months intervention but for a much longer. The pace by which the programme could have been implemented was underestimated. For example, the programme depended heavily on the provincial technical team⁴² but did not consider their availability. From May to July each year, for example, priority is given to the formulation of the socio-economic plans and budgets. No work on PDDs can happen simultaneously. As a result, the PDDs of the three districts where work started in November 2006 were not finalized until June 2008.

Capacity building at national level was mainly on the job training but in an unorganized way, only the course on applied statistics for food security was training in the real sense. The lack of training at the national level can be explained by the profile of the policy advisor. A capacity gap analysis early on could have contributed to defining specific training activities as part of the programme implementation process.

Gaza did a lot of training on technical skills but no training on soft skills, e.g. communication and management skills. That's curious given that mainstreaming FSN in policies is both a matter of knowing the subject and knowing how to communicate and interact. Our own success of mainstreaming FSN in the PARPA was mainly thanks to the soft skills of the policy advisor.

4.5 Conclusions and main findings

4.5.1 *An in-depth analysis and understanding of the policy context and the policy climate*

Detecting windows of opportunities: FAO Mozambique recognized policy assistance opportunities in time and, with FNPP's support, had interventions readily available to respond to these opportunities. That was possible due to the fortunate degree of sensitiveness of the FAO Representation's staff and international CTAs in the country. FAO should not be forced to rely on lucky circumstances. The FAO office should permanently assess policy climate and national capacity as part of its policy intelligence activities. If necessary, an experienced policy advisor should be hired for such a purpose.

Food security coordination body needs a strong platform: SETSAN, the FSN coordinating body of Mozambique, struggles with its institutional placement within a department in the Ministry of Agriculture. From this location it is very difficult to coordinate the FSN activities of the ministries. Such institution should be under the Ministry of Planning and Development or linked to the presidency or prime minister.

FSN in PRSP has catalytic effects: With FSN having been mainstreamed in PARPA II and with the new food security strategy (ESAN II) being approved, SETSAN has strong tools at hand to foster the integration of FSN in other policies and programmes. This is also true for sectoral policy. Especially PARPA II increases SETSAN authority. More and more actors acknowledge SETSAN as the leader for food security and recognize the importance of the topic.

More emphasis on result based indicators: PARPA II has considerably limited the number of indicators and foresees only two FSN indicators. In the future, the importance of monitoring through adequate indicators has to be stressed and carefully explained.

⁴¹ Apparently Gaza usually receives considerably emergency funds. The hope was to get some of these funds for FNPP-type work

⁴² An ad hoc team assigned to support district administrators in formulating their PDDs.

4.5.2 A careful design of process of policy assistance

Formulating the policy assistance response: FAO should invest considerable time in scoping, assessing and designing country-level interventions. This should include a mandatory stakeholder workshop to verify that all actors involved share the same view on purpose and process of policy assistance. Such preparatory work could imply fielding a two person mission for a minimum of two weeks at the very beginning of a project to get a good understanding of the country and the policy assistance needs. HQ coordinators should also be present when the national consultant team is interviewed and hired, and ideally work with the team for 2-3 weeks. This intensive support at the beginning of the project is worth-while as it can ensure a smooth and harmonized project implementation.

Preparing the project document: FAO and its Government counterpart should be the lead authors of a project document. Consultants should not be included in the design of a country programme. The case of Mozambique showed the detrimental effect of a too personalized programme design.

Be realistic: Be mindful of the time horizon and what can possibly be achieved in a given time. FNPP Mozambique invested a lot of money in a first phase of a programme (i.e. Gaza intervention) without being sure of new resources to continue.

Be concrete: Policy assistance is very complex and sometimes vague (what do we actually understand of food security being “mainstreamed” in a policy?). We need to be crystal clear what we try to achieve. This is even more so the case if programmes are large, operate on two different levels and encompass different topics.

Provide a platform for inter-sectoral consultations: When SETSAN was assigned to lead the discussions on the food security chapter of PARPA II it created an ad hoc working group that encompassed all ministries, civil society and NGO representatives, international partners and donors. This resulted in strong statements, based on a broad consensus and buy-in of many actors. Likewise, at district level and below, it is important that representatives of most disadvantaged group are included.

Be close to the power centre: PARPA II was managed by the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD). FNPP has been instrumental in strengthening SETSAN by placing a FAO-officer in the offices of MPD. This link allowed SETSAN to contribute to PARPA II formulation at the right time with the right product. In a future occasion one should consider seconding a SETSAN staff to perform this function (trained by FAO if needed). This could strengthen the institutional capacity of SETSAN.

Provide sound information I: SETSAN made good use of the results of an evaluation of integration of FSN in policies and strategies (among them PARPA I) and a baseline assessment of the prevalence of food insecurity in the country.

Provide sound information II: At district level, sufficient resources have to be allocated for conducting a food security diagnostic. It should have a wide coverage to better understand all the factors that influence FSN status and the linkages with other development goals like poverty, education, health, etc.

Seek ex-ante Government approval for better ownership: Government is the main responsible of the FSN process. Therefore the Government at all administrative levels should endorse FNPP approach and methodology before implementation. This process of interaction leading to endorsement should be taken care of by a senior officer, preferably the FAOR. This point refers mainly to FNPP Gaza that piloted a new methodology without properly communicating it with the Governor.

Ensure consistency of approaches: FAO should be mindful about the methodologies used for policy assistance (e.g. integrating food security into district plans) and ensure that the Government counterpart fully understands and supports the use a specific methodology. In addition, FAO needs to ensure that a certain methodology does not compete with an agreed framework established by the host Government. In Mozambique for example, the process by which to prepare district development plans is pre-defined to ensure consistency.

Facilitate exchange: Coordination is important among institutions but also among districts at provincial level since complementarities on the causes of and opportunities on the option to fight food insecurity can be found.

4.5.3 A well composed and clearly managed team of experts

Document policy assistance: Policy assistance relies on tangible (studies, written inputs) and intangible outputs (verbal interventions). All country programmes should have a system for documenting all interventions and inputs made in the name of the project of policy assistance.

Put emphasis on targeted capacity building: The knowledge of food security and nutrition has varied considerably among the stakeholders. FAO should allocate sufficient time and resources to capacity building, bearing in mind the training needs of all actors. Some of the areas identified have been listed hereafter:

- Skills to analyze data and communicate the main findings appropriately (national level, SETSAN, FSN focal points of the ministries).
- Advocacy and communication skills (required at all levels, SETSAN central and provincial).
- Skills to analyze the underlying causes of food insecurity (for all levels, but most prevalent at district level. Actors didn't seem to have grasped how food security should be mainstreamed in a PDD).
- Administrative management, financial management (national level).
- Strategic planning to translate objectives into action and budget allocation (all levels).
- Easy to use instruments to assess, implement and monitor FSN policy and programmes (mainly district level).
- Acknowledgment of cultural aspects, like taboos and beliefs and how they influence the approach to FSN (district level actors).
- Work towards a mindset change aiming at empowerment of civil society, country-led development, less donor-dependency, strengthening of individuals to find solutions for local problems etc.

Be mindful of training method: An essential part of FNPP Gaza was to test a new methodology for integrating food security into PDDs. For this, the consent of the provincial Government and the district administrators was crucial. Enough time has to be reserved to familiarize these key individuals with the new methodology. Offering the same training to the district technical teams and the Government senior level is not the best option. Face to face coaching for the latter group would probably render better results.

Strengthen soft skills of FAO staff/FNPP personnel: Equal focus on technical skills and competencies (incl. soft skills) during staff selection. This could include the following:

- Competences: Persuasion and negotiation capacity; ability to work in team; ability to facilitate a process; capacity to be a leader.
- Knowledge: Food security and nutrition; quantitative and qualitative data analysis; policy assistance; capacity building for adults.
- Management: Supervision and guidance of multisectoral teams; programme management techniques; project finance and budgeting

Establish clear mechanisms for arbitrating disputes: When problems occur or tensions arise (with one consultant, on project management or coordination) a mechanism should exist to mediate or arbitrate disputes.

Be aware of bureaucratic limitations: FAO administration in the field is not simple. Having administrative support unfamiliar with procedures can put a serious constraint on programme implementation. a) be aware of these difficulties and factor them in; b) hire good person; and c) train personnel well.

Monitor performance: All country level programmes must include a sound monitoring and quality control system. Sufficient time has to be allocated for monitoring and evaluation and writing-up experiences. This could include a country level retreat (which may or may not include counterpart

representatives) to take stock of achievements after the first phase and, if needed, re-adjust the programme for the remainder of its duration.

- Role of FAO office (Country vs. HQ): Depending on the strengths of the national FAO office, operational and administrative guidance should be given locally. HQ should take the lead in providing technical support but should not be involved in administrative issues. The national FAO office should coordinate budgetary issues directly with FNPP HQ.
- HQ-based country focal points: Programme should be accompanied much closer by FAO HQ-staff. The set-up of the last FNPP, when HQ-focal points volunteered to look after a country is not feasible for bigger investments. Compare relative small project in Zanzibar (APO fielded with FNPP as main task and paid HQ-staff providing assistance) with huge programme in Mozambique (only national consultants fielded, HQ assistance on top of 100% job for different unit, APO fielded towards the end of the programme). Ideally, HQ focal points should be dedicated full time to the programme and provide technical support to 2-3 countries.