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# REVISED SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY

Summary and recommendations for Civil Society by EPDN



Social Protection Policy 2021-2030 CABINET DECISION NO. 4th/23.03.21/009 • MARCH 2021



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## Vision

*"To be a prosperous nation with a comprehensive and shock responsive social protection system that is efficient and effective in addressing risks and vulnerabilities faced by all Namibians across the life cycle."*

## Mission

*"To provide social protection for all people, particularly the poor and vulnerable."*

## Goal

*"To reduce poverty and inequalities in order to improve the livelihoods of the people, particularly the poor and vulnerable."*

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

In Namibia, a host of OMAS work on and have various responsibilities around social protection. With regards to the **Social Protection Policy 2021-2030 (SPP)** the **Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (MGEPEWSW)** has the mandate to coordinate the implementation of the policy.

Furthermore, the **National Planning Commission (NPC)** in collaboration with the **MGEPEWSW**, is responsible for coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the **SPP**.

## What does the policy say about responsible bodies?

The implementation of the **SPP** will be overseen and administrated **by two permanent coordination mechanisms. The Steering Committee of Social Protection is tasked with supervising the implementation of the SPP and its implementation plan.** The steering committee will furthermore provide guidance on the development of sector policies and strategies in line with the **SPP**.

The committee will be **co-chaired by the Executive Directors of MGEPEWSW and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and include the Executive Directors of Office of the Vice President, Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (MLIREC), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MEAC) and the Ministry of Sports, Youth and National Services (MSYNS)** among other line ministries.

The **second coordination mechanism stipulated by the SPP is the National Core Team** which also falls under the leadership of the **MGEPEWSW**. The **National Core Team** is made up of **technical experts from OMAS represented on the steering committee** as well as additional institutions such as the **Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MDVA) and the Social Security Commission (SSC)**.

According to the **SPP**, the **Core Team will monitor and evaluate policy progress as outlined by the objectives – ensuring that OMAS are held accountable.** Furthermore, the National Core Team is tasked with **coordinating multi-sectoral social protection interventions, conducting reviews, providing guidance on regulatory frameworks and giving feedback to the steering committee.** Finally, provision is made by the **SPP to include development partners, civil society and private sector representatives on the Core Team "as and when necessary."**



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

The policy defines social protection **“as a set of policies and strategies that enable people to cope with risks and shock vulnerability throughout their life cycle.”** Therefore, social protection includes a broad number of **strategies and systems to help citizens experiencing poverty, illness, hunger and other vulnerabilities** including those **caused by inequality and natural disaster.**

**Social protection systems include social assistance, social insurance, social welfare services, labour market policies** and a range of **instruments to eradicate poverty, address vulnerability and counter social exclusion.**

Namibia has established a number of social protection measures in an effort to address poverty and inequality

since independence. Such measures include for example **a universal old-age pension, child maintenance and war veterans’ grants.** These social programmes have **been impactful in reducing poverty and inequality among citizens.** However, social protection programmes face **a number of challenges such as poor coordination between OMAs responsible for different programmes, lack of a national, digital and integrated database, limited coverage and funding limits.**

The *SPP*’s overarching goal is to provide a framework **“for improving harmonisation of social protection, coordination, efficiency and effectiveness.”** In addition, the policy seeks to encourage the development of **an integrated, information database, strengthen institutional response to sudden external shocks, improve transparency as well as monitoring and evaluation of social protection systems.** Notably, the policy includes a detailed **implementation plan** which outlines **strategies, activities, outputs and quantifiable targets.**

Hence, **the implementation plan enables the tracking of progress** for each policy objective, on a regular basis against set targets.





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## Policy Objectives & Benefits

The SPP sets out five core objectives which are:

### Objective 1

Increase coverage and access to social protection services by all Namibians;

### Objective 2

Improve coordination and integration mechanisms to strengthen and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection interventions;

### Objective 3

Enhance the institutional framework for the delivery of social protection;

### Objective 4

Improve government's ability to respond to sudden/severe shocks that may affect many households simultaneously, and ensure food security; and

### Objective 5

Improve monitoring and evaluation of social protection.

The long-term benefit of successfully implementing the policy is **to harmonise and improve social protection measures and in so doing "reducing inequalities, poverty and ensuring equitable opportunities for all Namibians."**



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

The current *SPP* grew out of **the blueprint for wealth redistribution and poverty eradication formulated in 2016** under the guidance of former Minister Hon. Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta. The development of the policy was undertaken by the Core Team on Social Protection lead by the *MGEPE*SW. This core team included representatives of various OMA's who undertook an **extensive review of relevant data and conducted consultations with key stakeholders including experts, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs).**

**Although it was requested, CSOs were not part of the core team.**

The review of the *SPP*'s implementation and impact is the **responsibility of the National Core Team**. The policy stipulates that the Core Team is **tasked with conducting quarterly reviews and preparing reports on implementation progress.**

The implementation plan makes specific reference to **"remedial actions"** under objective three of the policy – meaning that **institutional challenges encountered during the *SPP*'s implementation can be addressed quickly.**

The policy makes no reference to **its eventual revision.**

In addition, the *SPP* does not make reference **to any participation mechanism or activities.**

However, it does call for communication efforts to raise awareness and encourage active engagement among stakeholders of the *SPP*.



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## Associated costs / budget assigned to the policy?

The SPP's implementation **plan a five-year budget from 2021/22 – 2025/26, allocating specified funds for each objective and strategy.** The total cost per annum for the policy's implementation ranges between NAD eight and almost 10 billion.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What does the policy say about its enforcement?

The policy does not specify any enforcement mechanism. According, to the policy the **National Core Team "will ensure the different OMA's are held accountable for executing policy activities."**

### What does the policy foresee about its evaluation?

Improving the **monitoring and evaluation of social protection measures is objective five of the SPP.**

Under this objective are a number of strategies for evaluation-linked activities. Evaluation of the policy is the **role of MGEPEW with the support of NPC.**

The policy itself states that an impact evaluation should be conducted every five years – to assess the SPP's implementation to date.

### What does the policy need to succeed?

As outlined in the policy document itself, while **significant progress has been made, Namibia's social protection programmes face a number of challenges, such as**

**fragmentation, poor coordination, limited coverage and inadequacy of benefits as well as the lack of integrated management information systems for social protection.**

The SPP will need to address these identified challenges.

This will require **consistent and dedicated commitment from all stakeholders to coordinate their social protection measures.** The Steering Committee of Social Protection and in particular the **National Core Team have crucial roles to play and will need to carry out their responsibilities more effectively and efficiently.**

Finally, the policy will also require **sizable financial budget allocations from government to succeed.**

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

Civil society would have liked to **see more ambitious and extensive social protection** programmes than outlined in the SPP.

However, the policy remains relevant to CSOs daily work around social protection issues.

Crucially, the policy stipulates **important principals and provisions underlining and justifying strong social protection systems,** which can be used as an effective lobby tool by CSOs and to engage other stakeholders.



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

The *SPP* can serve as a **useful starting point for CSOs to call attention to important social issues, inefficiencies and oversights plaguing the social protection system.** Hence for example **CSOs could lobby for additional measures such as for example a universal child grant** – given the **policy’s explicit strategy to expand social protection coverage.** Furthermore, **civil society stakeholders can use the policy’s provisions on marginalised communities, youth, women and so forth to identify gaps in the current social protection measures and call for more budgetary commitments to address these.**

Finally, the *SPP*’s strong emphasis **on regular review, monitoring and evaluation of implementation progress should give CSOs opportunities to actively engage with fellow stakeholders, share information and possible solutions.**

## Contact Details

**The Executive Director**

**Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare**

Juvenis Building, Independence Avenue Street  
Private Bag 13359  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Phone: +264 61 283 3111

E-mail: [genderequality@mgepesw.gov.na](mailto:genderequality@mgepesw.gov.na)

**You can find a copy of the policy here:**

Downloads - MGEPEWSW - GRN Portal



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