



Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs

The Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021)

Mid Term Evaluation

Final Report

March 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Development Plan (NDP) is The Gambia's medium term development blueprint for the period 2018 to 2021. It was launched in February 2018 by H.E President Adama Barrow and succeeds Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). The NDP accommodates regional and international commitments that the government seeks to implement including the Africa Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The goal of the NDP is to *“Deliver good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalised and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians”* through eight Strategic Priorities (SPs) and seven Critical Enablers (CEs).

Midway into its implementation, the Directorate of Development Planning (DDP) through the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), both of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned a consultancy to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the NDP. This MTE was commissioned to assess the appropriateness of the plan, its institutional arrangements, its financing and technical strategies, to track and report on the level of attainment of set target as well as identify the factors that affected progress including the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation with a view to suggesting ways and means of improving both the plan and its means of delivery for the remaining years.

We put on record our appreciation and thanks to the UNDP for providing financial and technical assistance for this assignment through the Economic Management Project. We thank the consultants, Messrs Abdou Kolley and Mustapha S. Yarbo, the Director and staff of the DDP and PCU of MoFEA, and Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) for the successful completion of the MTE process and the production of the report. Also, special thanks and appreciation also go to the members of the various sector or technical working groups for their time and effort in providing data and input that facilitated the conduct of the evaluation. Thanks and appreciation also go to all those who participated in the validation workshop as well as those whose written work were consulted in the course of the exercise. All these inputs have contributed in one way or the other to ensuring timely and successful completion of the assignment.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRS	Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat
APR	Annual Progress Report
BEmONC	Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
CBG	Central Bank of The Gambia
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEs	Critical Enablers
CEmONC	Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Civil Service Reform
DDP	Directorate of Development Planning
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FSPs	Flagship Projects
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDQAF	Gambia Data Quality Assessment Framework
GIEPA	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MNOs	Mobile Network Operators
MoBSE	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
MoFEA	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MoTIE	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MSMEs	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
MTDS	Medium Term Debt Strategy
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
NAATIP	National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons
NALA	National Agency for Legal Aid
NAO	National Audit Office
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NCCE	National Council for Civic Education
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NSS	National Statistical System
PAGE	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PHC	Primary Health Care
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
PMO	Personnel Management Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SOEs	State Owned Enterprises
SPs	Strategic Priorities
SSHFC	Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TOC	Theory of Change

TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NDP is The Gambia's medium term development blueprint for the period 2018 to 2021. It was launched in February 2018 by H.E President Adama Barrow and succeeds PAGE. The NDP accommodates regional and international commitments that the government seeks to implement including the Africa Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The goal of the NDP is to *“Deliver good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalised and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians”* through eight Strategic Priorities (SPs) and seven Critical Enablers (CEs).

This midterm evaluation was commissioned to assess the appropriateness of the plan, its institutional arrangements, its financing and technical strategies, to track and report on the level of attainment of set target as well as identify the factors that affected progress including the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation with a view to suggesting ways and means of improving both the plan and its means of delivery for the remaining two years

During the evaluation exercise, documents and materials associated with the NDP were reviewed, key informants and other stakeholders were interviewed. The following were the findings of the evaluation exercise:

Relevance of NDP. With respect to relevance, the design of the plan, appropriateness and comprehensiveness of identified SPs and CEs, and integration of the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 were assessed. While largely relevant, the evaluation found some elements across the three areas assessed that could be improved to enhance the overall performance of the plan. These include:

- The process of NDP design was consultative but not sufficiently interactive partly due to the silo approach to identifying the priorities. This led to limited cross sectoral work and multiplicity of outcomes (63 for a four year plan). As a result, the coordination challenge was amplified by the need to streamline fragmented intervention strategies.
- The SPs/CEs are defined broadly to accommodate almost every development challenge the nation faced and in some instances not guided by a comprehensive TOC analysis. This has made it difficult to prioritise the development.
- NDP is found to be strongly aligned to both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 representing a strong foundation for their effective implementation. This alignment could improve with improvement in data collection quality and coverage.

Effectiveness of NDP. In assessing effectiveness of the NDP, the evaluation exercise looked completeness of the definition of the identified results and appropriateness of the strategies for their realisation. At three years of implementation, NDP has already achieved some significant milestones across several SPs and CEs. Notable among these are the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the drafting of a new constitution; the reduction of domestic borrowing and the total debt stock; increased access to Early Childhood Development (ECD), improving quality of learning, improved access to WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) services and improved nutrition for mothers and children.

The accomplishments are undermined partly by the reliance on Flagship Project (FSP) financing as opposed to regular national budgetary processes. Another factor that affected effectiveness is that sometimes defined interventions were not comprehensive and or were more guided by what Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) do, instead of focusing on addressing those issues that prevented achievement of result or needed to be addressed to achieve the goals.

Non implementation of prescribed NDP actions specifically ‘prioritisation and sequencing of actions’ and the non-implementation of the capacity building plan and many legal and regulatory reforms minimised the effective implementation of NDP. Other challenges have been the COVID-19 pandemic, limited cross-sectoral coordination of implementation, weak engagement of partners, largely non-functional coordination arrangement, less than optimal use of resources and limited availability of data.

Efficiency of the NDP. NDP, could have been more efficiently implemented despite significant progress registered in terms of achievement of some objectives. This means that the gains recorded could have been much more, if some results pursued were objectively prioritised; if the cost of some of the identified priorities were directly estimated using the outcome and the expected effort and if the national budget was trained to financing implementation; if the implementation and accountability framework was made to function as planned; if partners were sufficiently engaged to make sure their efforts complement each other; and if COVID-19 has not emerged. These issues must be addressed to improve efficiency over the remaining period of plan implementation.

The NDP implementation period is extended to end 2022. This will enable the Government to redefine the strategies of the NDP considering the new challenges the country is facing given the context of COVID-19 pandemic. This will also give the Government time to prepare and finalize a new medium term development plan informed by a new long term vision in time for the start of the

2023 budgetary process.

Sustainability. From the review, it has become clear that though the government led the identification of the prioritisation and articulation of the plan, the development expenditure from the budget could have been enhanced. Further enhancing the participation of senior policy officials in the implementation of the plan will significantly improve national ownership. Proposed institutional arrangement, capacity building and engagement of partners have not been implemented as planned. Thus even though significant gains have already been registered from NDP implementation, these may not be sustained in the long run unless measures are taken to correct the slippages mentioned above.

Policy funding and disbursement. From the available data, a total of US\$1.3 billion was committed to FSPs related to SPs and of this amount, 34.6% are loans and 65.4% are grants. So far, 42.1% of this amount has been disbursed. With respect to CEs, a total of US\$48.7 million is committed and of this amount which is a 100% grant, only 36.1% was disbursed. In total therefore, approximately US\$1.4 billion was committed and so far 41.9% has been disbursed.

Performance - Achievements Results. NDP is being implemented through 8 strategic priorities and 7 critical enablers further broken down into 63 outcomes which are tracked by a total of 287 indicators including in some cases their disaggregation. 45 of these indicators were either not sufficiently defined or were not reported upon and so were considered constrained. In the assessment of progress of implementation, an outcome by outcome approach was taken where outcomes are rated under three categories namely **achieved, on track** and **constrained**.

After three years of implementation, 60.0% of all outcomes are already achieved or are on track and are expected to be achieved by end of the plan December 2021. The rest are constrained and are not expected to be achieved. Of the total indicators therefore, 54.0% are on track to be achieved while 46.0% are constrained.

Recommendations. On the basis of the above findings, the following recommendations are proffered for consideration and adoption:

- a. Formulation of a long term vision (now that vision 2020 has formally lapsed) to provide a contextual framework for upcoming NDPs.
- b. Adopt a more judicious allocation of resources for plan implementation. Whatever activity is being undertaken to achieve an NDP results should be specified (in relation to the results) and

provisioned for in terms of required resource for its accomplishment to ensure alignment of plan financing to budget.

- c. Redefine the strategies of the NDP considering the new challenges the country is facing including the COVID-19 pandemic and set targets that are consistent with maintaining fiscal and debt sustainability.
- d. Promote coordination and collaboration – sectors working together and donor forums to align every stakeholders’ energy and resources to the implementation of the plan.
- e. Too many MDAs distracts, duplicates and makes coordination difficult. As part of its proposed CSR agenda, government should rationalize and streamline the functions, organization and staffing of the public sector in pursuit of efficient and effective delivery of services.
- f. Participation of Heads of MDAs should be further strengthened in the implementation of the plan to enhance ownership and complement the efforts of technical staff. This will help the government to enhance leadership for effectiveness and sustainability.
- g. It is also important that information quoted in national documents are standardised. Government must adopt a policy that requires that all surveys and survey reports are endorsed by GBoS before they can be quoted in national or sectoral policies, strategies and reports.
- h. DDP assigned with responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the NDP, should be elevated to a Department, headed by a Director General with authority to follow up on plan formulation, resource allocation, implementation strategy and reporting, similar to a National Planning Commission set up.
- i. Review the capacity building plan referred to in the NDP document to accommodate new capacity needs and implement.
- j. Implementation of NDP must not be left to the voluntary wishes of MDAs. Government should introduce performance management systems to properly reorient MDAs to delivering development.
- k. Government should enhance its leadership role and senior MDAs officials lead NDP processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Gambia Context and National Development Priorities

The development process of a new National Development Plan (NDP) to succeed the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) 2012-2015 began in 2015 with the conduct of a nationwide situational analysis anchored on Vision 2020¹. The situational analysis which was jointly conducted with the United Nations System in the country in the form of an expanded Common Country Assessment (CCA) provided the essential information that guided the identification of the strategic interventions for the NDP to succeed the PAGE which was to end in 2015 but extended to 2016. The main areas requiring attention included macroeconomic management, strengthening the public sector to deliver the plan, promoting inclusive and sustained growth through investments in agriculture, tourism, energy, trade and related sectors and developing the human capital through investments in education, health and social protection².

The process of formulating the NDP once dubbed PAGE II was well advanced when the presidential elections were held in December 2016. The outcome of the election changed the whole outlook of the country in a way that warranted a total review of the plan to (a) accommodate emerging issues, which hitherto were not priorities for the outgoing government and (b) to reflect the aims and aspirations of the new government as expressed in the coalition manifesto and Cabinet/Government COMPACT document³.

This new process, like the former, used similar structures such as the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) formed along sectors to accomplish the work. In addition to the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the PAGE, the NDP 2018-2021 prioritisation was also informed by the coalition manifesto, government COMPACT and several development partner scoping mission reports thereby significantly changing the scope of the NDP when compared to draft PAGE II especially in terms of its emphasis on good governance and human rights.

¹ Vision 2020: The long term objectives of Vision 2020 are to address poor savings through improvements in output from the real sectors and enhancing financial intermediation. A liberal market economy with undue administrative interference shall improve the overall efficiency and competitiveness of the Gambian economy. The role of Government shall be limited strictly to the production of public goods which cannot be produced by the private sector while conducting a vigorous decentralisation drive to ensure a more democratic process in the allocation, management and control of resources.

² Draft PAGE II, p7-8

³ The outcome document following the first Cabinet Retreat of the Coalition government (5th-7th May, 2017)

1.2. The Gambia NDP 2018-2021

The NDP is The Gambia's medium term development blueprint for the period 2018 to 2021. It was launched in February 2018 by H.E President Adama Barrow and succeeds PAGE. The NDP mainstreamed regional and international commitments that the government seeks to implement. At regional level, African countries in January 2015 adopted Agenda 2063 and in July of the same year adopted its First Ten Year Implementation Plan. The United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 also adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Many countries, including The Gambia, have since embarked upon integrating the SDGs into their national plans, with assistance mainly from the United Nations Development System.

The goal of the NDP is to “*Deliver good governance and accountability, social cohesion, and national reconciliation and a revitalised and transformed economy for the wellbeing of all Gambians*”. To achieve this goal, the NDP has the following Strategic Priorities (SPs) and Critical Enablers (CEs) respectively:

Strategic Priorities

1. Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance;
2. Stabilising our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy;
3. Modernising our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction;
4. Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society;
5. Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy;
6. Promoting an inclusive and culture-centered tourism for sustainable growth;
7. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and
8. Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation.

Critical Enablers:

1. A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry;
2. Empowering the Gambian Woman to realise her full potential;

3. Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development;
4. Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use;
5. Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society;
6. A civil society that is engaged and is a valued partner in national development; and
7. Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making.

Over three years of implementation, many major significant events have been experienced affecting the environment within which NDP is being implemented. While these may not necessitate the revision of the SPs/CEs owing to their broad definition, it has made it necessary to review the strategies to guarantee their continued relevance and effectiveness. These events included the following:

The frequent movement of senior civil servants across ministries affected NDP execution through its effect on institutional memory and its attendant efficiencies including the pace of decision making. A good example is the security sector reform agenda, which suffered both fund flow problems and staff movement⁴ Another example is the rejection of the draft new constitution by the National Assembly in September of 2020, a key reform agenda upon which some other reforms depend on, such as the amendment of the Ombudsman's Act.

The Brussels Donor Conference and its aftermath: there was such international good will for The Gambia at the time of the conference that it raised more resources than targeted. Pledges of resources continued even after the conference. The follow up was not as energetic and over time, many opportunities for partnerships were not fully exploited. The emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) later diverted resources from their earmarked sectors and budget lines.

COVID-19 has impacted on the implementation and attainment of NDP objectives through its effects on people/groups and on the economic and services sectors including the operations of government. Its response has orchestrated drastic measures and decisions which have led to a significant slowdown in economic activity and huge movement of resources – money and materials, to activities which hitherto were not planned. This has far reaching consequences on overall development especially as the pandemic lingers on with no end in sight.

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1.3. The Gambia NDP Midterm Evaluation

Having implemented NDP for two years (as at the end of December 2019) which is half of its four year life span, this midterm evaluation is commissioned to assess the appropriateness of the plan, its institutional arrangements, its financing and technical strategies, to track and report on the level of attainment of set targets as well as identify the factors that affected progress with a view to suggesting ways and means of improving both the plan and its means of delivery for the remaining two years. The coverage of the assessment was later increased to include end December 2020 in order to adequately reflect the impact of COVID-19 on NDP implementation.

1.4. Evaluation Objectives and Deliverables

According to the Terms of Reference (TOR), the evaluation will cover all the eight strategic priorities and seven critical enablers of the NDP and will take into consideration their alignment to the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063; be all-inclusive, incorporating the views of; government, development partners, private sector, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Gambia Federation of the Disabled (GFD) and the academia on post-midterm implementation of the NDP; and specifically address the following objectives:

- a. Establish the level of attainment of strategic priorities and critical enablers of the NDP in consideration of their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability;
- b. Assess the initial impact of COVID-19 on the implementation and attainment of the NDP objectives;
- c. Identify the opportunities to quickly respond to any identified challenges and shortfalls to enhance COVID-19 recovery and NDP implementation performance;
- d. Examine the institutional arrangements put in place for the NDP implementations; and
- e. Examine the financing of the NDP to-date (December 2020), detailing associated weaknesses and opportunities of adopted resource mobilisation approaches.

1.5. Evaluation Methodologies and Approach

The evaluation was accomplished through the gathering and review of quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. Specifically the consultants undertook:

Secondary Data Collection through review of background documents and materials associated with the NDP including but not limited to NDP, SDG and Agenda 2063 documents, NDP Annual Progress Report (APR) and other programme and project planning and monitoring reports, development partner country programmes, routine review and evaluation documents, and other relevant materials.

Primary Data Collection: Based on a stakeholder mapping (government, development partners, private sector, CSOs, GFD and the academia), the consultants met and interviewed a selection of informants who were available through:

Key Informant Interview using broad-based questions to give respondents the chance to give as much detail as possible without being aided.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) using more specific questions especially as it relates to assessing progress towards NDP targets and how this has been affected by COVID-19 and its response using such tools as a **Result Matrix Checklist (RMC)**. This required respondents to rate implementation progress of each outcome and completion levels based on NDP current delivery level and highlight the challenges encountered among others. Another checklist - **Institutional Arrangements, Finance and Reporting Checklist** were also administered to assess the existence or non-existence and functionality of supportive institutional arrangements, proposed programme processes and procedures etc. The aim was to establish if institutional arrangements and budgets planned for the successful implementation of NDP were provided and available to shed light on how efficiently NDP was implemented. This discussion was targeted at the Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) who worked over five long days to generate the data that helped the consultants make judgment on performance and on the dimensions of the programme:

Relevance – by finding answers to such questions like is the NDP the appropriate response to the development aspirations and does the programme strategies address the priorities of The Gambia?

Effectiveness: the extent to which the NDP implementation is achieving its planned results (outputs, outcomes and impacts).

Efficiency: In the first three years of implementation were inputs utilised or transformed into outputs in the most optimal or cost efficient way. Could the same results be produced by utilising fewer resources?

Sustainability: Is the NDP implementation creating conditions that will ensure that benefits continue beyond its life?

1.6. Constraints and Limitation of the Evaluation

The evaluation is challenged in three ways namely:

1. Data inadequacy – some data were not available/collected, as a result, relevant indicators could not be reported on.
2. Capacity of reporters - some of the staff charged with the reporting obligation do not seem to have the requisite (strategic planning) skills, or were not adequately involved in the programming at the level of the MDA to clearly report on progress. This has slowed the rate of data collection and processing of the report.
3. Inadequate definition of the results and realism of the set targets.

In view of these challenges, the evaluation approach used a count of result indicators as a means to classifying outcomes as **achieved, on track** or **constrained**. The threshold for achievement is set at least 50.0% so that if half of the indicators of a particular outcome are met, the outcome is considered to be on track, and if at least half of the outcomes in a particular SP/CE are met, the SP/CE is considered to be on track. The 50.0% threshold is arbitrary⁵ but took into account the almost one year duration it took to capitalise the plans after its launch in 2018 and limited activities for the best part of 2020 as a result of COVID–19 restrictions. The threshold is meant to standardise the assessment from one SP/CE to another and ensure consistency.

The challenge with this indicator-based approach to measuring progress and performance is the limited articulation of the results and definition of its strategic interventions in some cases. This has led to a situation where the goal may not be achieved even if all the indicators are met. An example is CE1 - a public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry. This CE is defined by a single outcome – Appropriately remunerated and well managed public service, and four indicators⁶. Thus, according to the articulation of this result, if the civil service is remunerated well, the public sector institutions will become efficient and responsive. This is obviously not correct. It is true that appropriate pay package is essential for an efficient public sector, but this is not sufficient.

⁵ It is also significant, for if the threshold were to be raised to 75%, a lower performance will immediately be noticed.

⁶ Namely: % increase in salaries and pension payment, Number of MDAs inspected, Number of staff audit Exercises and Existence of a pay and pension policy.

2. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE NDP MIDTERM EVALUATION

2.1. *Relevance of NDP*

2.1.1. NDP Design

The way results are designed either enhances or constrains joint work. The more silo-like the defined results, the more likely sectors work alone and constrain achievement. Too many outcomes of the NDP (63, over four years) and the absence of strong coordination have not made it any easier to focus – fragmented strategies.

When CEs are made to stand alone, they attract standalone strategies, not ones that take into account the environment of the SP had they been considered in that context. For example, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) reported that in addition to building schools, they also have to figure out energy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) access of such schools. Ideally, in a consistent NDP, the energy and ICT needs of new schools, should have been catered for in an integrated manner. This deficiency is being tackled in the energy sector with the EUR142 million renewable energy programme signed in 2019 and backed by the European Investment Bank, World Bank and European Union, to provide rural schools and health facilities with uninterrupted electricity supply using solar energy⁷.

NDP has assigned leadership responsibility for every outcome in an SP/CE to an institution. This is good in terms of ensuring division of labour but it also created room for leaders to take control, dominate and create silos during implementation. Some of the interventions adopted could have benefitted more from the active involvement of other sectors that are relevant to the SP.

It emerged from the consultations that the plan was somehow over-ambitious, perhaps influenced by the emergence of a new government, increased expectations from the citizens, and a rush of Development Partner (DP) interest in the Gambia. If one considers the lifespan of the plan, capacity of public institutions and even CSOs - human resources need for implementation especially, and recognising that partnerships with other stakeholders (CSOs, private sector and diaspora) remain informal and weak, this over-ambition becomes clearer. Consultations with Development partners and private sector revealed that they have not been sufficiently engaged in a coordinated and sustained manner during implementation. The plan is also affected by weaknesses in government leadership, evidenced by the non-establishment or full functionality of the NDP implementation and

⁷ <https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2019-067-european-backing-for-eur-142-million-gambia-renewable-energy-programme>

coordination structures. Similarly, government leadership in terms of providing resources for NDP could be enhanced through increased capital expenditure from the budget.

2.1.2. Responsiveness to National Development Challenges

The majority view is that NDP priorities remain largely relevant in terms of their strategic focus as they draw from the strategy documents of the various Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). It still remains relevant as the environment that informed some of the priorities remains unchanged partly as a result of the non-implementation of identified NDP interventions.

The definition of SPs/CEs is wide enough to accommodate every development challenge across the spectrum, and so does not exclude any sector. This, as a result, has complicated the identification of priority interventions. According to SDG Roadmap report ‘it is sometimes difficult to see how overarching development challenges such as poverty reduction, youth unemployment and sustainable development are addressed across the span of the NDP⁸’. Where every development aspiration is a priority, it is not possible to mobilise all of the resources (human, material and time) to do everything. It is true that as a state, some services cannot be stopped because they are not priorities, but what increases the chances of development success is to identify some services as priorities, and to address others as they relate to the successful implementation of the priorities. Over time, the priorities will shift as more and more of the initially identified priorities are addressed.

The programme development approach adopted for the formulation of NDP seems to encourage compilation of sector strategies – each sector brings the result they planned to achieve and the proposed interventions. These are then compiled to form the interventions under the SP. This is probably because of the notion that whatever is not in the NDP, will not be supported by the budget.

2.1.3. Integration of the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 in the NDP

The Government of The Gambia is committed to the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and other international agreements such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Istanbul Programme of Action and have made concerted effort to integrate them into the NDP as a medium for the realisation of these goals. A UN Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission conducted an assessment in 2017 to determine the extent to which the NDP is aligned to SDGs and Agenda 2063 by looking at results indicators between NDP and each of the latter. The assessment found that 42%

⁸ Gambia SDG Road Map, p28. It is important to note however that this Roadmap study only reviewed the draft NDP.

of the NDP indicators are fully or partially aligned with the SDGs and 35% with Agenda 2063⁹. This assessment is limited by the coverage of national data and the term of the NDP (a four year plan) when compared to long term SDG and even longer term Agenda 2063. This result therefore reflects strong alignment representing a strong foundation for the effective implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.

It is pertinent to mention that since this mission and assessment, an exercise designed to among others¹⁰ align NDP indicators to SDGs and Agenda 2063 was conducted in October 2018. The intention was to achieve such a level of alignment that an NDP progress report would suffice as an update on the state of accomplishment of both SDGs and Agenda 2063, and avoid the separate reporting that characterised the MDG era. This exercise and the increase in the number of indicators tracking NDP to 287 (from 163 used by MAPS mission) have without doubt increased the alignment.

2.2. Effectiveness of NDP

Effectiveness defines the extent to which implementation of strategies lead to set of objectives and goals. The assumption is that if the intervention strategies are appropriate and comprehensive, their complete implementation will lead to results. Thus, this evaluation looked at the completeness of the identified results and the appropriateness of the adopted strategies.

Three years of implementation of NDP has already yielded some significant achievement across several SPs and CEs. Notable among these are:

- a. The establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the drafting of a revised constitution (until its rejection by the National Assembly in September 2020). These have begun the process of national healing and reconciliation and the laying of the foundation for accountable and democratic governance.
- b. The reduction of domestic borrowing and the total debt stock as a percentage of GDP attributed to the implementation of the Medium Term Debt Strategy (MTDS).
- c. Establishment of the suitable policy environment for a modern and a market oriented agriculture.

⁹ The Gambia SDG Roadmap report, p26. Mission reviewed draft NDP.

¹⁰ determining the SDGs baselines; identifying data sources; developing and agreeing on a mechanism for SDG monitoring and reporting – APR 2018

- d. Increased access to early childhood education, improving quality of learning, improved access to WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) services and improved nutrition for mothers and children.
- e. Improved policy and regulatory environment for energy and infrastructure development, access to electricity and other energy services.
- f. Expansion of public works through construction of the international conference centre, ongoing construction of 40Km of roads and bridges in the Upper River Region (URR) and the expansion of the feeder road network by 265Km.
- g. The increase in broadband penetration has led to the proliferation of e-services across all sectors.
- h. The improvement in data quality and accessibility.
- i. Completion of 2018 Annual Progress Report (APR)

These accomplishments though impressive, could have been surpassed had the NDP been strongly aligned through regular national budgetary processes. The NDP is being implemented mainly through its flagship projects. While FSPs are critical to triggering NDP operationalisation, they are not extensive enough to ensure the delivery of all SPs and CEs. Sectors that do not have FSPs and or were not funded, registered only limited progress if any. The FSP approach to financing the implementation of NDP is inadequate and unsustainable. The NDP should be strongly linked to the national budget and be adequately implemented through it.

While the plan identified development challenges clearly, its expressed focus in some instances are not adequately tailored to addressing those issues that prevented or are needed to accelerate the advancement of wellbeing. The formulated results statements such as (CE1, CE2 and CE5) are difficult to implement without a detailed and exhaustive theory of change (TOC) analysis. In the absence of a rigorous TOC analysis, the interventions that are identified are not comprehensive and as such cannot return adequate results. One example of this is CE1 --- *Public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry*. The only outcome formulated to achieve this CE is ‘Appropriately remunerated, motivated, and well managed public service. A further look at the indicators reveals that while staff audits and inspections are planned, the main focus is on pay and pension reforms. While necessary, pay and pension reforms by themselves cannot bring about an efficient public sector.

In addition, the NDP identified some initial activities for its implementation including ‘prioritisation and sequencing of actions’¹¹. There is no evidence that this was done. Also lined-up for initial action, was the need to address the human resource capacity gap. While important across the board, this was specifically needed in Foreign Service to match the heavy reliance of NDP on external funding and the need to follow this up; and in the justice system especially as it relates to legislative drafting given the many legal and regulatory reforms proposed in the NDP. Similarly, there is no evidence that this too was done, even though a capacity needs assessment was supported by Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to support the implementation of the NDP. For effectiveness, there must be consistency between programme prescription and follow up action.

COVID-19 has also affected the implementation of NDP largely, negatively. This was through mainly its slowing down of economic activity leading to loss of government revenue, loss of jobs and private income. It has also occasioned fund transfers from planned to unplanned interventions. This affected all funds – local and international and Development Partners (DPs) funds. On the other hand, one may be tempted to claim that the sudden and huge investment into the health system have helped strengthened health system capacity to deal with public health emergencies.

NDP was formulated using thematic working groups which include government, development partners, CSOs and the private sectors. However, the involvement of sectors in sectors during implementation could be further strengthened. This way the economies of scale derivable from working together are lost. An example is the export promotion objective under SP8¹² and an intervention making reference to an aquaculture policy which is separate from the fisheries policy could have benefitted from more synergies. Fragmentation spreads implementation capacity thinly so that none of the sectors affected gets enough. This is especially pronounced in a situation where coordination or a culture of collaboration among sectors is weak. In this case, treatment of cross cutting issues as separate priorities undermines the effectiveness of their implementation.

Weak coordination was found to be a huge challenge to NDP implementation. Given the many outcomes being pursued, strong coordination is needed to ensure adherence to the plan and complementarity. Similarly, given the many stakeholders including DPs and the heavy reliance of NDP on external funding, it is unfortunate that the forum proposed to enhance interaction among partners is still not established. Coordination however has not been made easy by the non-functioning of NDP implementation oversight bodies and establishment of supporting structures.

¹¹ NDP, p140

¹² Formulation of result to promote export of agricultural produce was done without adequate involvement of the relevant ministry.

Weak prioritisation - it is noticeable that some of the strategic interventions are guided by the role /mandate of the institution as opposed to what is required to address a development challenge. Priority connotes some ranking based on need and urgency. It is preferred that a strategic plan is jointly developed by all the stakeholders and sections assigned to individual sectors as relevant.

Another obstacle to effective implementation of NDP is the inadequacy of resources and the absence of fully blown programme based budgeting¹³ that would have enhanced the implementation of the plan. Due to limited development allocation to programmes from the national budget, some sectors have relied on resource mobilisation of project funds to implement programmes. While this project approach could secure some immediate gains, it weakens leadership as project funders drive their agenda and in the process ownership is not enhanced. Project approach is also prone to sustainability challenges as projects phase out with their implementation units. This would not have been the case if MDAs are assigned this responsibility.

Also important to ensuring effectiveness through evidence-based planning and highlighting of successes based on evidence is the availability of data. Limited data has challenged reporting of some indicators. This is particularly prominent in the agriculture and fisheries SP.

2.2.1. Overall Assessment including impact of COVID-19 on the NDP

COVID-19 has impacted the successful implementation of NDP broadly in three ways: 1) the restrictions including travel freezes introduced to control the spread of the disease slowed down all activities including but not limited to enactment of bills, meaning all results that depend on these activities for their accomplishment (for example, tourism depends on air transportation and travellers) are either seriously delayed or totally derailed; 2) the huge resource need to respond to the outbreak have also witnessed resources being moved from their initially programmed areas (including other health related issues¹⁴), as a result such programmes could not be implemented, and this is compounded by the fact that lower economic activity means less tax revenues to finance government operations¹⁵; and 3) the increased investment into the health sector to strengthen the response to COVID-19, might have permanently enhanced the capacity of the sector to respond to other public health emergencies¹⁶. Another positive effect of COVID-19 has been the increased use of Information Communication Technology (ICT). These trends need to be further nurtured to enhance efficiencies in delivering development¹⁷. According to the European Union (EU), some

¹³ This process started in 2012 and was anticipated to be fully functional by 2018 according to *Implementation Progress Report and indicative Work plan for 2016*

¹⁴ Gambia Voluntary National Review (VNR) p15.

¹⁵ The decline in tax revenue to government is estimated at GMD2.7 billion (2.8% of GDP) –VNR p15.

¹⁶ Socioeconomic-Impact-Assessment-of-COVID-19-in-The-Gambia, p30.

¹⁷ VRN, p15

unused project funds that ordinarily would not have been used, were activated and allocated to COVID-19 response. This has improved total disbursement.

Overall, the economy grew by 0.5% (provisional) in 2020 from the projected rate of 6.2%¹⁸ driven by contractions in tourism and related activities, private investment and trade among others. Specific sector impacts include loss of (teaching) contact hours for schools, delay in turning out qualified teachers and delivery of school buildings; loss of jobs and income for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, lower economic activity means loss of jobs and delay in completion of labour intensive projects and its wider social and economic ramification; the transport sector was also deeply affected especially with flights grounded, no ground operation, no pilgrimage to the Holy Sites. Travel agencies were specifically hard hit.

Overall, COVID-19 has affected the economy and the implementation of the NDP. Therefore, there is the need to redefine the priorities of the NDP considering the new challenges. There is also need to adjust existing strategies to counter COVID-19 effects.

2.2.2. Key Achievements by Strategic Priority and Critical Enabler

Overall Summary

NDP is being implemented through 8 strategic priorities and 7 critical enablers further broken down into 63 outcomes which are tracked by a total of 287 indicators including in some cases their disaggregation. 45¹⁹ of these indicators were either not sufficiently defined or were not reported upon and so were considered constrained. In the assessment of progress of implementation, an outcome by outcome approach was taken where outcomes are rated under three categories namely **achieved**, **on track** and **constrained**.

At three years of implementation, 60.0% of all outcomes are already achieved or are on track and are expected to be achieved by end of the plan December 2021. The rest are constrained and are not expected to be achieved. This categorisation is illustrated in the table below:

SP/CE	Total # of outcomes	# of Outcomes		Total # of indicators	# of Indicators		
		Achieved and on track	Constrained		Achieved	on track	constrained

¹⁸ FINAL_GCCI's Online Survey of the Impact of Covid-19 on Business in The Gambia By 3A's Solutions_15 July 2020 p31.

¹⁹ 31 of these indicator are found under Human Capital Development (HCD) and the agriculture and fisheries SPs.

Governance and Human Rights (SP1)	7	6	1	35	11	15	9
Macroeconomics (SP2)	4	3	1	13	5	4	4
Agriculture and Fisheries (SP3)	6	4	2	30	7	4	19
Human Capital Development (SP4)	11	4	7	92	25	27	40
Infrastructure and Energy (SP5)	5	3	2	22	3	8	11
Tourism (SP6)	2	1	1	5	2	0	3
Youth Empowerment (SP7)	4	4	0	16	3	9	4
Private Sector (SP8)	5	1	4	16	1	4	11
Public Sector (CE1)	1	1	0	4	1	2	1
Gender Empowerment (CE2)	3	3	0	8	3	3	2
Environment (CE3)	3	3	0	7	2	3	2
ICT (CE4)	1	1	0	4	2	2	0
Evidence based (CE5)	4	2	2	12	2	2	8
Civil Society Organisations (CE6)	3	2	1	8	0	5	3
Gambian Diaspora (CE7)	4	0	4	15	0	1	14
Total	63	38	25	287	67	89	131

The Technical Working Groups of the different MDAs provided information and the initial rating (according to the three categories - achieved, on track and constrained). An SP/CE is classified on track to be achieved where 50.0% or more of its relevant outcomes are achieved or on track to be achieved. On the other hand, an outcome is classified as achieved or on track to be achieved where 50.0% or more of its relevant indicators are achieved or are on track to be achieved²⁰. Based on this

²⁰ Just using the indicator count to classify outcomes and SP/CE, could unduly influence the classification of the SPs especially where the indicators are severally disaggregated. By limiting indicator consideration to the outcome level, this influence is contained.

approach, 2 SPs and 1 CE are considered constrained while the remaining SPs and CEs representing 75.0% are on track to be achieved. With regards to the outcomes, 60.0% are on track while the rest are constrained. In total 287 indicators are used to track NDP results (outcomes). 45 of these indicators are not reported on for reason of incomplete definition of the results (no baseline data specified) or lack of data to provide status update and are considered constrained. Of the total indicators therefore, 54.0% are on track to be achieved while 46% are constrained. The table below summarises the status:

Results Parameter	# Achieved or On Track	# Constrained	Remarks
Strategic priorities (out of 8)	6	2	
Critical enablers (out of 7)	6	1	
Outcomes (out of 63)	38	25	
Individual Indicators (out of 287)	156	131	45 indicators are void and considered constrained

Individual Strategic Priority Assessment

SP1: Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance

This strategic priority is focused on promoting human rights and the rule of law, decentralisation and reform of the security sector to promote prosperity and safeguard freedoms and wellbeing.

The challenges²¹ to be addressed in this area include:

- a. The existence of weak legislations, several revisions to the constitution and enactment of laws that undermined their reliability as a guarantor of human rights and a balanced source of public authority;
- b. Excessive concentration of public administration and control at the centre;
- c. The less than optimal performance of the Judiciary, Office of the Ombudsman, the Alternate Dispute Resolution Secretariat (ADRS), National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA), National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), Independent Electoral Commission (IEC),

²¹ These challenges and proposed interventions below were extracted from the NDP.

and the National Council for Civic Education (NCCE) limiting citizens' access to human rights and justice. The judiciary was plagued by limited capacity of staff, over reliance on foreign judges and questionable independence of judges orchestrated by the insecurity of tenure and the slow pace of court proceedings. Office of the Ombudsman, ADRS and NALA are limited among others by the capacity of staff and outreach in terms of their physical presence in all the regions in the country;

- d. The violation of rights committed during the past regime and the need to reconcile to build a peaceful country.

Across the seven outcomes, the proposed interventions included:

- a. Revision and amendment of laws²² to meet the standards and achieve harmonisation across the board;
- b. Capacity strengthening of existing stakeholder institutions²³ including staff training, expansion of service outreach and strengthening of process through modernisation and innovation especially as it relates to recording of court proceedings, their storage and retrieval;
- c. Establishment of new²⁴ regulatory institutions to further safeguard rights;
- d. Establishment of TRRC and reform of the security service institutions and personnel.

For measuring progress, this SP is tracked by 35 indicators across 7 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 31% of these indicators are achieved, 43% are on track and 26% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 74% of all indicators and 6 out of the 7 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcomes	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1. Enhance good governance and freedom of expression	1	1	2	50%, on track to be achieved

²² The constitution, Criminal code, Public Order Act, Communication Act, women's Act, Children's Act, District Tribunal and Elections Acts.

²³ Judiciary, Ombudsman's Office, ADRS, NALA, NAATIP, State Law Office, IEC, NCCE and the National Assembly.

²⁴ Judicial service commission, human rights commission, anti-corruption commission, decentralisation and local government Act,

2.	Human rights and democratic institutions established and strengthened	3	1	1	80%, on track to be achieved
3.	Improved access to quality justice services (including ADRS, NALA and Ombudsman) without undue delay by an independent and efficient judiciary	1	9	2	83%, on track to be achieved
4.	A reformed security sector and establishment of civilian and democratic oversight mechanism for non-recurrence of serious human rights violations by the security forces	4	0	1	80%, on track to be achieved
5.	Effective and harmonised policy and regulatory frameworks for enhanced coordination of decentralisation programme	0	1	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
6.	Strengthened human and institutional capacities for decentralisation	0	3	0	100%, on track to be achieved
7.	Expanded revenue bases of councils supported by standardised financial management and accounting systems	2	0	1	66%, on track to be achieved

All of the outcomes under this SP are on track to be achieved with the exception of outcome 5. Significant progress has already be registered in establishing democratic and human rights institutions, improving access to justice and in accelerating the decentralisation process among others.

Key drivers of successful implementation of this SP were identified as national ownership of the processes, strong political will that helped create the conducive environment for the establishment of Transitional Justice institutions and their day-to-day functioning and the sustained support of the international community.

Despite the progress recorded, some challenges were encountered that either slowed down the pace of implementation or prevented the achievement of defined results. These challenges included inadequate funding for example to fund the plan of NHRC, poor working conditions for the members of the judiciary, delayed amendment of the Ombudsman Act, non-conduct of extensive sensitisation on the SSR process and limited capacity building of security sector personnel including establishment of a laboratory for specimen analysis. Also identified is the commitment to move some of the processes especially as it related to passing bills through the National Assembly – the disability

bill is cited as example. Other challenges included weak leadership, poor coordination of the various stakeholders and the weak follow up on the recommendations of various commissions of inquiry²⁵.

It is observed that relying heavily on donors for programme funding can compromise both ownership and leadership of the government; it is also learnt that communication and regular engagement of stakeholders enhances collaboration and successful implementation of projects.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended government heighten dialogue and consultations with stakeholders; find innovative and sustained ways of financing the reform through the budget; improve infrastructure and the working condition of the Judges; and to continuously supervise the councils to ensure compliance with regulations.

SP2: Stabilising our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy

The objective is to stabilise the economy, free resources to be applied to development. The goal of this SP is to enhance macroeconomic management for sustainable, inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.

The challenges identified to be addressed included

- a. Poor management and misuse of the finances leading to persistent overall fiscal deficit and debts;
- b. Weak adherence to the national budget as a guide of government spending;
- c. Weak adherence to the national procurement guidelines;
- d. Poor performing State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) sector that has become a liability on the national budget.

Across the four outcomes, the proposed interventions included:

- a. Strengthening of economic sector management institutions²⁶;
- a. Aligning strategic plans and expenditure frameworks to the national resource envelope to reduce the deficit and resulting debt;

²⁵ Jannah Commission, Faraba Banta Commission

²⁶ SOEs, CBG, NAO, Internal Audit directorate, financial market

- b. Addressing fiscal indiscipline through rationalisation and strengthening of government institutions and diplomatic missions;
- c. Improving revenue performance through SOE sector and tax reforms, utilisation of remittances and strengthening partnership for development;
- d. Strengthening the link between the national budget and the National Development Plan;
- e. Strengthening recording, auditing and reporting of public finances to check the non-adherence to rules;
- f. Deployment of prudent monetary policy to make available resources for development finance, maintain price stability, competitive foreign exchange rate and build the international reserves.

Progress to the specific results of this SP is tracked by 13 indicators across 4 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 38% of these indicators are achieved, 31% are on track to be achieved and 31% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 69% of all indicators and 3 out of the 4 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Prudential fiscal management for debt sustainability and enhanced resource alignment	3	0	2	60%, on track to be achieved
2.	Transparent and accountable public financial management	0	1	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
3.	Sound monetary policies for price and exchange rate stability	1	1	0	100%, on track to be achieved
4.	Well-governed and financially viable SOEs for enhanced macroeconomic stability and service delivery	1	2	0	100%, on track to be achieved

Three out of the four outcomes of this SP are on track to be achieved. Notable accomplishments in this area include the reduction of domestic borrowing and the total debt stock attributed to the implementation of the MTDS. Reduction in domestic borrowing is specifically important as it

relieves the cost of borrowing²⁷ locally giving room to the private sector to expand. Also worthy of mention are improvements registered in the area of revenue administration capabilities and capacities. These have yielded a 0.8% of GDP increase in 2019 over 2018. Tax revenues held up quite strongly in 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, coming close to the pre-COVID annual target (95% collection)²⁸. Relatively stable prices driven mainly by the independence of the Central Bank of The Gambia (CBG), lower global oil prices and stable exchange rate have been observed. The slowing down in general economic activity associated with Covid-19 and its attendant relief measures have also dampened inflationary pressures.

In achieving this objective, key challenges to be addressed include curbing increases in government expenditure, improving performance of SOE sector and increasing domestic revenue.

Comparing proposed interventions at the time of the design to those that were reported on shows huge differences pointing to inconsistency between planned and actual interventions; and the inadequacy of the TOC analysis exercise. Proposed inventions like strengthening of economic sector management institutions only focused on SOEs and CBG and had not given due attention to the National Audit Office (NAO), internal audit, financial markets which were also proposed. Rationalisation and strengthening of government institutions and diplomatic missions and strengthening the link between the national budget and the NDP remain a challenge.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended that government:

- Continue in its fiscal consolidation, prioritise expenditure and increase domestic resource mobilisation efforts;
- Expedite the finalisation of the policy on the rationalisation of tax expenditure being worked on by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) which, when implemented, is expected lead to a 0.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase in tax revenue in the short term and 0.3% over the medium term; broaden the domestic tax revenue base; improve tax administration;
- Rationalise the dependence of the country on international trade revenues, there is need at the policy level to create the enabling environment for domestic businesses to flourish and grow;
- Strengthen steps aimed at improving SOE governance to ease pressure on the budget. In

²⁷ TBill rate is now at 10 on December 3rd 2020 having dropped from 15 on 1st March 2018 - <https://www.cbg.gm/policy-rate-decisions>

²⁸ World Bank

2020, subsidies/transfers to SOEs amounted to 1% of GDP as per preliminary data²⁹. Some of these subsidies/transfers were associated to the advent of COVID-19 which impacted negatively on their operations.

- Review the results again with a view to identifying those other interventions that are essential for achievement of the results and including these in the strategies to be pursued.

SP3: Modernising our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction

The objective of this priority is to transform the way agriculture is practiced in this country to enhance production, incomes, food, nutrition and income security and boost overall growth. The goals are to develop a ‘modern, sustainable and market oriented agriculture and livestock sector for increased food and nutrition security, income and employment generation, poverty reduction and economic transformation’; and to ‘promote a vibrant fisheries and aquaculture sector through research, sustainable management and utilisation of the fisheries resources to enhance employment and livelihood opportunities, income and foreign exchange earnings, food and nutrition security.’³⁰

The challenges to this drive include high level of poverty among rural folks who rely on agriculture from low production to poor post-harvest management; under exploitation of sector resources; unfavourable policy environment; and weak public sector institutions.

Across the five outcomes, the proposed interventions included:

- a. Increasing crop and animal production and related product processing guided by research and innovation.
- b. Promotion of climate smart agriculture and sustainable fishing techniques - fish aquaculture.
- c. Establishing value-chains in small ruminants, poultry and crops and revitalising agricultural markets.
- d. Introduction of laws and policies to encourage commercialisation and private capital.

This SP is tracked by 30 indicators across 6 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 23% of these indicators are achieved, 13% are on track and 63% constrained to the

²⁹ World Bank.

³⁰ NDP Document, p31

extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 36% of all indicators and 4 out of the 6 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Void	Remarks
1. Modern and market led agricultural sector policy with appropriate sub-sector policies	1	2	0	0	100%, on track to be achieved
2. Value chain enhanced for agriculture and livestock transformation	0	0	1	6	0%, not on track to be achieved
3. Increased production of basic agricultural commodities for enhanced food and nutrition security	4	1	3	2	50%, on track to be achieved
4. Increased livestock production for food self-sufficiency in animal and animal products	0	0	0	6	0%, not on track to be achieved
5. Enhanced institutional efficiency and effectiveness in the fisheries sector	1	1	0	0	100%, on track to be achieved
6. Improved value chain for fisheries and aquaculture transformation	1	0	1	0	50%, on track to be achieved

Four out of the six outcomes are on track to be achieved including the establishment of the suitable policy environment for a modern and a market oriented agriculture, increased production for income, food and nutrition security; and an enhanced contribution of fisheries sector through improvement of relevant value chains.

The success across the various areas – crops, animal husbandry, fisheries and nutrition was aided by annual work planning that provided focus and guidance, increase in productivity and overall production, good rains for 2020, input support to farmers and training of artisanal fishermen. All these were made possible through cooperation and support of partners.

Overall performance of the sector is challenged by among others the absence of a sector strategy, silting of the canals to the rice fields, disease among livestock, lower use of fertilisers, inadequate

funds to conduct more trials and livestock schemes and inadequate fish landing sites. A key challenge to commercialisation of agriculture which is generally agreed as the way forward is the land tenure system which is limiting access to cultivable land, particularly for women.

Measures recommended to further improve performance of this SP include formulation of a sector strategic plan, continuous support to increase production and productivity, provision of facilities to enable fishing vessels to land their catches in The Gambia and encouragement of private sector to invest in the fisheries sector. Government should also review the land tenure system and devise ways to make land available for commercial investment. There is concern that whereas rice cultivation is being promoted as an import substitution strategy, the sector may never achieve the efficiency of Asian producers. As such it may be more rewarding to channel some of the rice-related investment into food fortification to strengthen nutritional value. Considering The Gambia imports a larger portion of her food, it will be valuable to introduce and strengthen norms and quality check of imported food.

SP4: Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society

The objective of this priority is addressing the education and health needs of the population as means to powering the economic transformation of this country. The goal is to establish ‘quality health, education and basic social services accessible and affordable to all, improving the nutritional wellbeing for all Gambians particularly mothers and children and improved social and child protection system in place for the most vulnerable.’³¹

The challenges highlighted included:

- a. Poor quality and limited relevance of the education curricula;
- b. Low transition rate from secondary to post-secondary level and poor performance particularly in math and science;
- c. Misalignment between skills development and labour market demands as well as the weak linkage between industry and education institutions;

³¹ NDP Document p44

- d. Limited number of highly qualified instructors, especially at post-secondary institutions, coupled with inadequate and sometimes very old learning materials (including workshop/laboratories equipment);
- e. Low access to early childhood education (ECD)
- f. Deterioration in primary health care (PHC) services
- g. Growth of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
- h. High out-of-pocket health spending
- i. Maternal and women's health
- j. Limited skilled health personnel
- k. Weak health governance and partnership frameworks
- l. Poor access to water and nutrition services
- m. Poor nutrition
- n. Inclusion of persons with disability in national development.

Across the eleven outcomes, the objectives of proposed interventions included:

- a. Enhancing access to ECD and non-formal education;
- b. Improving quality and relevant learning with special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM);
- c. Skills development for a more productive work force;
- d. Revitalise PHC system as a means to providing universal health coverage (UHC);
- e. Improve affordability of health care including maternal care for vulnerable population;
- f. Improve access to water, sanitation and nutrition support services;
- g. Building resilience and providing safety nets to address vulnerabilities³².

This SP is tracked by 92 indicators across 11 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 27% of these indicators are achieved, 29% are on track and 44% constrained to the

³² NDP document p45

extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 66% of all indicators and 4 out of the 11 outcomes by the end of programme period.

It should be noted that 34% of the indicators are void (indeterminate) either because they are not fully defined (baseline or target not specified) or there were no updates.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Void	Remarks
1. Enhanced access to quality and affordable early childhood education nationwide	3	1	0	0	100%, on track to be achieved
2. Improved quality learning and relevant life and livelihood skills	16	17	5	7	73%, on track to be achieved
3. Improve access to non-formal education and literacy programmes for out of school children, youth and non-lettered adults	0	0	0	3	0%, not on track to be achieved
4. Strengthened quality health service delivery for reduction of maternal, new-born and adolescent morbidity and mortality	2	0	2	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
5. Reduced burden of communicable and non-communicable disease and enhance capacity to respond to public health emergencies	1	0	0	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
6. Improved equitable access to safe and affordable water and sanitation, good hygiene practices and environmental protection promoted for all	0	3	0	3	50%, on track to be achieved
7. Improved nutritional wellbeing for all Gambians particularly mothers and children	2	6	0	0	100%, on track to be achieved
8. The poor and vulnerable benefit from improved social safety nets and social security	1	0	1	4	16%, not on track to be achieved

9.	Enhanced inclusiveness and participation of persons with disabilities in the national development agenda	0	0	0	5	0%, not on track to be achieved
10.	Highly skilled and well-motivated human resources available and retained for the health sector	0	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved
11.	The child protection system in The Gambia strengthened to respond reduce violence, abuse and exploitation of children	0	0	1	3	0%, not on track to be achieved

The outcomes achieved or are on track to be achieved include access to early childhood education, improving quality of learning, improved access to WASH services and improved nutrition for mothers and children. Most of the outcomes from the health, higher education and social protection area are seriously constrained. The successes especially in basic education were partly driven by donor support following a history of successful implementation of projects, operation of a school feeding programme, introduction of a Donkey Cart initiative that eased transportation to schools and School Improvement Grants (SIG) that reduced the cost associated with education on the households, provision of additional physical infrastructure and increase in qualified teachers. Other success drivers include sustained funding for nutrition related programmes like WASH, immunisation, social safety net, breastfeeding, integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM), vitamin A supplementation, deworming and improved coordination.

This is one of the SPs that is constrained and so is beset by a lot of challenges. These include the limited coverage of the school feeding programme, high household expenditure associated to education especially in the rural settlements (while the SIG took care of school fees, other costs such as books, uniforms, shoes, etc remain) and the continuing shortage of qualified teachers in some schools particularly in remote and deprived communities. The health sector has experienced high attrition among skilled personnel leading to inadequate human resources for the provision of services, inadequate properly equipped medical facilities and limited awareness on health danger signs in communities. Higher education STEM programmes suffer from limited resources and coordination challenges.

To improve performance of this SP, it is recommended that the infrastructure and initiatives introduced to incentivise increased enrolment - donkey cart, school feeding, cash transfers are expanded. The STEM could benefit from provision of more scholarships and appropriate teaching

and learning materials, while incentives to attract skilled healthcare providers could be used to expand Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (CEmONC) and Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (BEmONC) services across the country. There is therefore need to pursue resources mobilisation to be able achieve increased results in this SP. The SP could also benefit from the establishment of delivery systems for social protection, including the establishment of the social registry to enable better targeted social protection interventions including Nafa³³ in future.

SP5: Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy

The main focus in this strategic area is ensuring the availability of relevant infrastructure to support the economic development agenda. The goal is to provide sustained and improved energy, petroleum and transport services and products for a revitalised economy and well-being.

The challenges highlighted included:

- a. Inadequate policy environment in infrastructure and energy;
- b. Energy crisis (*limited supply and high cost*);
- c. A dysfunctional policy environment that is poorly adapted to attract private sector investment
- d. A deeply indebted power and water supply management corporation
- e. Limited value addition to petroleum resources and products;
- f. Formulate and implement a sound petroleum exploration programme
- g. Absence of a transport sector-wide master plan

Across the five outcomes, the objectives of proposed interventions included:

- a. Improving the policy and regulatory environment to improve investment and access to electricity, petroleum and transport sectors;
- b. Improve and expand road network and enhance land, air and sea/river transportation;
- c. Improving the human resource capacity for the management of the sectors³⁴.

³³ Nafa is a social protection programme that will provide regular cash transfer to the poorest and most vulnerable.

³⁴ Energy (electricity, petroleum), roads, transport

This SP is tracked by 22 indicators across 5 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 14% of these indicators are achieved, 36% are on track and 50% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 50% of all indicators and 3 out of the 5 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Improved policy and regulatory frame works and enhanced capacities for sustainable energy and petroleum infrastructure	1	1	1	66.6%, on track to be achieved
2.	Improved access to electricity and enhanced household energy security for sustained socioeconomic development	0	2	2	50%, on track to be achieved
3.	Petroleum resources and products developed for sustainable national development	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved
4.	Enhanced land, river, sea and air transport for affordability and competitiveness	0	3	5	36.5%, not on track to be achieved
5.	Improved management and provision of public works infrastructure for socioeconomic development	0	4	1	80%, on track to be achieved

The achievements under this SP were recorded in the areas of improving the policy and regulatory environment for energy and infrastructure development, access to electricity and other energy services and the expansion of public works.

These achievements were driven by increase in downstream petroleum activities leading to the development of 7 regulations, the commissioning of projects in the generation, transmission and distribution network such as Electricity Expansion Programme (EEP) which recently connected some communities in parts of Kiang, Gambia Electricity Sector Project (GESP), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Electricity Access Project (ECOREAP), Rural Electrification Expansion Project (REEP), 20 MegaWatt (MW) Brikama 3, importation of electricity from Senegal. Public works expansion was aided by the implementation of China Aid Projects which constructed the international conference centre and is completing 40 Kilometres (Km) of roads and bridges in the Upper River Region (URR). The United Nations Office for Project

Services (UNOPS) feeder roads, Food and Agricultural Sector Development Project (FASDEP), National Roads Authority (NRA) Maintenance Programme, and National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA) have also expanded the feeder road network by 265km.

Implementation of this SP has been challenged by limited funding of planned programmes, the breakout of COVID–19 which delayed the implementation of some projects and the inability to make available all of the generated (electricity capacity) owing to the ageing Transmission and Distribution (T&D) infrastructure.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended that the electricity generations projects also cater for some element of T&D strengthening or expansion; and to encourage team work and stakeholder collaboration and participation in all planned interventions.

SP6: Promoting an inclusive and culture-centered tourism for sustainable growth

The aim is to improve competitiveness of the sector to enhance its contribution to national development. A ‘highly competitive and sustainable tourism industry that is people centred, celebrates our rich and diverse cultural heritage and contributes to socioeconomic development’. The challenges highlighted included poor quality of existing tourism infrastructure, limited tourism product mix and high prices, limited diversity of the number of activities available to tourists; and limited air access and continued reliance on tour operators even after the experience of Thomas Cook bankruptcy and its impact on arrivals.

Across the two outcomes, the objectives of proposed interventions included:

- Improve tourism data availability;
- Improve tourism policy environment;
- Intensified marketing for destination recognition and attractiveness;
- Enhancing security and product diversity;
- Enhancing community participation and greater linkages with other sectors especially agriculture;

For the purpose of measuring progress, this SP is tracked by 5 indicators across 2 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 20% of these indicators are achieved, 20% are on track and 60% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period.

This translates into achievement of 40% of all indicators and 1 out of the 2 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome

Outcome	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1. Enhanced contribution of tourism to economic growth and employment opportunities	1	0	3	25%, not on track on track to be achieved
2. Cultural assets integrated into tourism industry and promoted	1	0	0	100%, on track to be achieved

The outcome achieved or on track to be achieved relates to the integration and promotion of cultural assets in tourism. Important as this may be, the outcome is measured by only one indicator - Amount of funds allocated to promotion of culture. This measure is inadequate, as allocation may vary from actual expenditure and on the item of expenditure. This points partly to the limited TOC analysis that results are subjected during their formulation.

Challenges highlighted include the travel restrictions occasioned by COVID-19 which resulted in closure of airports and hotels affecting both arrivals and jobs. Also cited is the high cost of preserving cultural heritage sites and the needed infrastructure to reach these and other tourism products.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended that the expatriate quota be revised and enforced to increase the number of Gambians employed in the sector. It is also recommended that the budgetary allocation to the sector be increased to support aggressive marketing targeting high spending tourists and to finance the high cost involve in preserving heritage sites. The impact of COVID-19 and the negative effect of the Thomas Cook bankruptcy have shown the risks of dependency on tourist arrivals through tour operators. There is need for a strategy to improve the competitiveness of the sector to attract travelers, including from the sub-region and reduce the seasonality in the arrivals. This could help increase the direct employment and tax collection.

SP7: Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth

The goal under this priority area is to 'secure sustainable livelihood for the youth through skills development, decent work and excellence in sports'³⁵

³⁵ The Gambia NDP, p82/271

In pursuit of the goal, the following challenges will be addressed:

- a. Insufficient access to knowledge, information and strategic education, which makes them less competitive at national and international levels;
- b. Inadequate access to financial services due to their lack of collateral and financial literacy, among other reasons;
- c. Limited access and ownership/control to land for farming and other business purposes;
- d. Limited access to markets due to the growing international influence of formal markets and the rigorous standards;
- e. Limited involvement of youth in public policy dialogue and weak policy coherence and coordination around youth issues; and
- f. Continues difficulties in accessing jobs and the resulting high irregular migration.

Key planned interventions under this priority include:

- a. Creation of employment opportunities for Gambian youth including youth with disability through strengthening of existing youth employment, entrepreneurship and other skills development programmes; advocacy and policy dialogue platforms on youth employment and through the establishment of a national youth development fund;
- b. Strengthening institutional and technical capacity of youth services agencies;
- c. Establishment of multi-purpose youth friendly service centres across the country as a means among others to increasing and improving young people's access to quality health services including Sexual and Reproductive Health;
- d. Incorporation of rights-based approach to youth planning and programming;

Even though 'promotion of excellence in sports 'is one of the goals, no specific intervention is identified in its pursuit. No intervention was also identified specifically 'to facilitate the placing of returning youth migrants into productive employment and society'.

This SP is tracked by 16 indicators across 4 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 19% of these indicators are achieved, 56% are on track and 25% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 75% of all indicators and all 4 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Harmonised rights-based policies, legislations and regulatory frameworks for youth empowerment and sport development	2	3	3	62.5%, on track to be achieved
2.	Increased employment opportunities and enhanced entrepreneurial skills	1	2	0	100%, on track to be achieved
3.	Mental, physical and social wellbeing, sexual reproductive health and rights improved for all	0	1	1	50%, on track to be achieved
4.	Sports promoted and competences developed for effective participation in national and international competitions	0	3	0	100%, on track to be achieved

All of the four outcomes under this SP are expected to be achieved by the end of the plan period. Success is driven mainly by the availability of funding from government and partners.

Key challenges on the other hand included limited involvement of key stakeholders during the revision process of the youth policy, untimely engagement of partners on resource mobilisation, limited awareness of youth on empowerment issues, limited awareness of youth on ownership of the youth facilities and reluctance on the part of some Area Councils to hand over the youth friendly centres to the youth. Provision of reproductive health services at youth centres was hampered by the unavailability of the required human resources.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended that partners are increasingly involved in policy revision processes and related resource mobilisation activities and to strengthen the operationalisation of the youth development fund.

SP8: Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation

The objective of involving the private sector is to expand and grow the economy and increase the contribution of private sector to industry (in particular manufacturing) and trade. The key planned interventions includes:

- a. Diversification of local production by introducing high value products such as findi³⁶, moringa, sesame, honey, cashew and horticulture for both export and the domestic market;
- b. Create market linkages focusing on building the quality infrastructure for agricultural products;
- c. Enhance capacity for custom clearance through the establishment of a Single Window Custom Clearance system;
- d. Strengthen trade in services including service export through improved trade and investment negotiations, data management, tax and investment incentive reform;
- e. Enhance consumer welfare through competitive markets;
- f. Improve access to finance, and undertake tax reforms;
- g. Undertake Investment incentives policy reforms; promote the Gambia brand;
- h. Strengthen the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA); strengthen MSME and industry development, and create employment.
- i. Strengthen labour administration through review and implementation of the Labour and Trade Union Acts and regulations.

This SP is tracked by 16 indicators across 5 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 6% of these indicators are achieved, 25% are on track and 69% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 31% of all indicators and 1 out of the 5 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Upgraded policies, laws, regulations for efficient functioning of labour market	0	2	1	66.6%, on track to be achieved
2.	Promoted and facilitated trade, investment and private sector development	0	1	3	25%, not on track to be achieved

³⁶ Digitaria exilis

3.	MSME and industrial growth enhanced	0	1	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
4.	Enhanced employment and employability	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved
5.	The national quality infrastructure improved	1	0	3	25%, not on track to be achieved

Only one of the five outcomes is on track to be achieved and is related to the upgrade of policy and regulations for the labour market. This achievement alone without accomplishing major strides like growth of the private sector through trade and industry, improvement in employment and infrastructure cannot lead to the goals.

The SP is challenged by in-comprehensive data owing to non-submission or delay in providing employment-related data by stakeholder institutions; and non collection of re-export trade data due to the absence of a unified transport Union. Also identified as a contributor to under-reporting of performance in the sector is the fact that about 90% of MSMEs are in the informal sector, thus their contribution is not captured in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) computation.

Also identified as challenges are limited funding for promoting The Gambia as an investment destination, access to land for investment, reliable electricity and access to finance especially for the MSME sector. Export promotion is constrained by the absence of a reference lab that certify produce before their export.

In 2019, manufacturing contribution to GDP was 4.3% shrinking from 4.6%³⁷ in 2018. This reduction can be attributed to closure of some industries. COVID-19 has led to job loss in the private sector and led to a delay in the expected approval of 100+ standards by ECOWAS.

The 2013 International Labour Statisticians Conference upgraded the definition on some of the parameters used to determine employment. Employment is now defined as anything that is done for pay or for profit, thus eliminating subsistent farmers or household workers that are not paid. Secondly, the new Labour Force Survey (LFS, 2018) used a 7 days reference period as opposed to the 2013 LFS that used 3 months. Thus the figures of unemployment from the 2013 survey cannot

³⁷ Gambia Bureau of Statistics, National Accounts

be used to determine if unemployment is on the increase or not compared to the 2018 LFS³⁸. Based on the 2018 LFS, the unemployment rate was estimated at 35.2%.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended government and its partners commit adequate financial and technical resources for the implementation of the National Employment Policy and Action Plan 2021-2025 once it is finalised; support infant industries to expand production and meet international quality standards; establish a functional and accredited testing lab in The Gambia, particularly for food products, establish an MSME fund to enhance entrepreneurs' access to affordable finance; allocate GIEPA with adequate resources to promote Gambia as an Investment Hub; support the formalisation of MSMEs in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders; ensure electricity supply is stable and affordable.

Critical Enablers Assessment:

CE1: A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry

This CE recognises the need for strong public institutions and public service to deliver the NDP. Without mentioning why the public service is not responsive as expected, the reform will be achieved through pay and pension reform and proper performance management. The goal is to establish efficient and responsive public sector institutions.

This CE is tracked by 4 indicators across 1 outcome. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 25% of these indicators are achieved, 50% are on track and 25% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 75% of all indicators and the only outcome by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome.

Outcome	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
Appropriately remunerated and well managed public service	1	2	1	75%, on track to be achieved

³⁸ These two figures cannot be compared because of the difference in methodology

The one outcome that defined this result is on track to be achieved aided by periodic salary increments and a steady implementation of the Civil Service Reform (CSR) Programme 2018-2027. Despite successes recorded so far, there are still challenges of funding as is evident in CSR programme which is the only FSP that supports this CE. From the report received, this FSP is not funded.

While it is well known that pay is not the single determinant of a motivated staff, a proper performance system must be premised on a clear definition of institutional mandates and articulation of staffing needs and individual roles. From the early 2000s, there was never a time when the government is not implementing a CSR programme or project. Whereas the focus remains largely the same from one project to the other, recently, the objective of a 'lean civil service' has either been lost or not pursued; and a lean civil service is important for a well-paid and efficient public service³⁹.

The clear definition of institutional mandates and individual staff responsibilities will not only provide a basis for rationalising the many and sometimes overlapping MDAs, but also a basis for determining the relationship between available and needed human resource capacity. This determination could provide invaluable information to guide interventions under the Human Capital Development (HCD) priority. The only activity relevant to this – a staff inspection, was however not undertaken. It was expected to provide the basis to address duplications, overlaps and redundancies in the civil service, thereby leading to a leaner and more efficient service once completed.

There is an urgent need to put a context to the human resource capacity development need. Unless HCD is tied to national need, there is a tendency of developed human capital to continually move creating perpetual gaps and an eternal need for capacity building. To further improve efficiency of the public sector it is also recommended that the National Assembly enacts the new Pensions Bill and approve the new pay and grading system.

CE2: Empowering the Gambian Woman to realise her full potential

The objective of government under this theme is gender equality, equity and empowerment of women and girls for sustained socioeconomic development. According to the NDP, the challenge is despite considerable gains in empowering women, they still lag behind their male counterparts in terms of welfare. This is manifested in among others:

- a. Patriarchy, that promotes such negative socio-cultural practices like forced and early marriage, teenage pregnancy, female genital mutilation and assignment of women as

³⁹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2848?show=full>

(unpaid) home care providers;

- b. Exclusion of women and girls from actively participating in certain sectors and at certain levels of the development including adult literacy for numeracy and livelihood skills;
- c. Women's low control or ownership of the factors of production in agriculture, especially land; and
- d. Limited voice and influence in policy dialogue, focus specifically on marginalised groups and women.

As a result, interventions planned included gender mainstreaming, empowerment through training and provision of funds, legislative reforms to enhance representation in decision making, and reduce violence against women and girls.

This CE is tracked by 8 indicators across 3 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 37.5% of these indicators are achieved, 37.5% are on track and 25% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 75% of all indicators and all 3 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Enhanced women's economic empowerment and sustainable livelihood	1	1	1	66%, on track to be achieved
2.	Increased representation and participation of women in decision making	0	1	1	50%, on track to be achieved
3.	Gender-based violence reduced	2	1	0	100%, on track to be achieved

All of the three outcomes that are designed to deliver results in this area are on track to be achieved aided largely by advocacy efforts of the newly created Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare (MoGC&SW). Ideally, achieving all of the outcomes should lead to an empowered Gambian woman who is able to reach her potential, but there are challenges. These include the limited commitment and capacity of some sectors to mainstream gender in the sector programmes and

policies; education levels, cultural and traditional factors barring women from decision making roles in society and inability of the relevant government authorities to fully enforce for example the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) law, as well as putting an end to early marriages that are being widely practiced.

Partly explaining the less than optimal result has to do with the way the result is defined and the process of identifying the required strategic interventions. Usually what constitute the result, in this case the empowered Gambian woman, is not comprehensively analysed leading to identification of sub optimal strategies for their delivery. It is obvious from the result matrix that all of the issues that matter for reducing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for example, were not fully targeted in the interventions especially considering the fact that only seven of the targeted sixteen sectors actually mainstreamed gender-related issues in their sector policies and programmes.

To further improve performance of this SP, it is recommended efforts are directed at getting:

- a. More sectors to mainstream gender into their various policies and strategies.
- b. More budget allocation/investment to provide women with sustainable livelihood in order to reduce the number of women living below the poverty line.
- c. Government reserve certain number or percentage of seats at the National Assembly for women.
- d. The office of the President should appoint more female ministers.
- e. More sensitisation and trainings on the harmful effects of FGM and enforcement of the law.
- f. Establish more centres for survivors of domestic violence.

CE3: Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use

The objective is to ensure a sustainable management of the environment and natural resources for the benefit of all and to establish a sustainable land management system that stimulates and responds to the demographic and economic trend of The Gambia.

The major issues/challenges affecting the environment sector have been identified as land degradation, coastal erosion, loss of forest cover, biodiversity loss, ineffective waste and pesticides management. Also included among the main contributing factors in a situation already made

precarious by climate change, are deforestation through illegal logging and bushfires, sand mining, illegal settlements and other uncontrolled activities.

In response to these challenges, the NDP identified interventions included improving the environment and climate change policies, increasing awareness about the environment and climate change including the effects and how to adapt, and strengthening capacities to manage natural disasters.

This CE is tracked by 7 indicators across 3 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 28.5% of these indicators are achieved, 43% are on track and 28.5% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 71.5% of all indicators and all 3 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Environment and climate change friendly policies, programmes and awareness strengthened at all levels for resilience	0	1	1	50%, on track to be achieved
2.	Natural Resources sustainably managed and utilized	1	2	0	100%, on track to be achieved
3.	Emergency and disaster risk reduction response strengthened at all levels	1	0	1	50%, on track to be achieved

The current state of the indicators shows that all three outcomes are on track to be achieved by the end of the plan period. The successful implementation is driven by support from government, donor and local organisations, and participation of communities that live near the parks.

Some of the challenges identified as affecting implementation or reporting under this CE include lack of funds and capacity to conduct a study on CO₂ emission level, the weak enforcement of existing laws for example the anti-littering and ban on the use of plastic bags and the inadequate material and human resource required to prevent illegal logging and bush fires. Also observed as a challenge is the growth of sectors such as transport, agriculture, infrastructure and manufacturing which contribute to increased emissions and the fact that there are no proper mechanisms to either check or monitor these sectors.

Looking at the results matrix the goal is ensuring ‘a sustainable land management system that stimulates and responds to the demographic and economic trend of The Gambia’. This goal is not supported by the interventions articulated above nor does it have any relationship with the defined outcome. Clearly, there was no TOC analysis with respect to this goal, the defined results and strategic intervention.

To address some of the challenges, it is recommended that the government introduces some controls on the importation of second hand vehicles and other equipment to check the pollution from these equipment, introduce more expansionary conservation laws and increase the number of eco-tourism sites and game parks and to support enterprise development including in handicraft, eco-tourism and wildlife management in the community forest communities to increase the value of these forest. In addition to these above initiatives, it is important that stakeholders responsible for delivering this CE undertake a detailed review in order to align the interventions to the results chain. This is fundamental if successful implementation of interventions is to lead to the defined goal.

CE4: Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society

The objective is to harness the benefits of ICT for equitable development. The goal is ‘to build a knowledge society that contributes to national development, social cohesion and improved well-being’.

The planned interventions are aimed at ‘improving regulatory services and polices; establishing a National ICT Agency; establishing a national data centre to strengthen e-government; upgrading the Telecoms Access Network (Last Mile Connectivity); establishing a national technology park to spur research and development; increasing roll out of regional ICT centres to enhance connectivity to schools and communities; achieving digital switch over and analogue switch off; strengthening cyber-security and enhancing postal service delivery’.

This CE is tracked by 4 indicators over a single outcome. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 50% of these indicators are achieved, 25% are on track and 25% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 75% of all indicators and the only outcome by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome	Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
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Enhanced ICT infrastructure and services for increase access to quality broadband services and solutions to support inclusive sustainable development	2	1	1	75%, on track to be achieved
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The outcome is 75% successfully implemented, driven mainly by availability of ICT infrastructure and market friendly policies. The success, especially the increase in broadband penetration has led to the proliferation of e-services across all sectors and has contributed to the enhancement of productivity/output. This notwithstanding, there is still some room for improvement which is being challenged by inadequate regulation of the sector, inability to attract investment by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in unserved and underserved areas, high tariffs (both telephone and internet) especially considering that 48.6% of the population fall below the poverty line as of 2015/16, high cost of infrastructure and low literacy rate.

From the result matrix, the sum of the indicators that further explain the outcome, do not seem to be sufficient for the delivery of the goal of building ‘a knowledge society that contributes to national development, social cohesion and improved wellbeing’. This is obvious when one contrasts the indicators with the strategic interventions above. For example there is no indicator that captures the establishment of regional ICT centres, or the national data centre. As a result, this goal is not achievable unless there is adjustment to make sure the strategy is sufficient. The challenge of low ICT literacy again brings to the fore, the need for sectors to work together to enable them find practical solutions to cross sectoral challenges – to ensure effective mainstreaming of ICTs across all sectors.

To further improve performance of this CE and increase the related benefit to society, it is recommended the stakeholders prioritise the deployment of advanced broadband infrastructure, enhance regulatory policies, revise ICT levies and encourage co-location and infrastructure sharing not just within the sector but also across different sectors to lower the cost of providing services and make them more affordable and accessible for the populace,

CE5: A civil society that is engaged and is a valued partner in national development

The goal of pursuing this CE is to have an engaged civil society that serves as a valued partner in national development.

As a challenge, it is observed the civil society is marginalised when it comes to their participation in national development. Thus, a section of society had been excluded and with that the value that it can bring to bear on overall development and the wellbeing of the population

The proposed interventions to increase the involvement of civil society in national development include capacity building of civil society, better coordination including information sharing and introduction of laws and policies that create a conducive environment for CSOs to thrive.

This CE is tracked by 8 indicators across 3 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, none of these indicators are achieved, 63% are on track and 37% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 63% of all indicators and 2 out of the 3 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Civil society positioned as a representative, dynamic and credible consortium	0	4	0	100%, on track to be achieved
2.	Sustainable CSO services delivered in an efficient, relevant and participatory manner	0	1	1	50%, on track to be achieved
3.	Enhanced relationship with government and other stakeholders	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved

Two of the three outcomes under this CE are on track to be achieved by the end of the plan period. The one that is constrained could be because of the poor definition of the indicators that make their measurement very subjective. For example one of the two indicators that tracks this result is ‘Level of CSO participation in government decision making platforms B=Low; T=High. Where what is high or low is not clearly defined, it becomes difficult to objectively report on progress.

The successful implementation of the other two outcomes was spurred by the engagement of CSOs to the fullest in the implementation of the NDP (TWGs), empowerment of communities on their rights and the need to claim them, the development of the NGO Protocol of Accord and NGO Code of Conduct.

Some of the challenges encountered in implementing this CE included limited dialogue between government and CSOs, frequent movement of the portfolio of the NGO Affairs Agency (NGOAA)

from one Ministry to another delaying processes, unclear classification of what qualifies as a CSO, interventions making their monitoring almost impossible and the outbreak of COVID-19 which made it impossible for the key stakeholders to work on the Act and hold the 2020 CSO forum.

To further improve performance of this CE, it is recommended government speed up the enactment of the CSO/NGO bill and continue to involve in national matters, stop the movement of NGOAA from one Ministry to another, train communities on Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and Social Accountability to be able to hold CSOs operating in the localities to account and strengthen NGOAA to carry out its role effectively.

CE6: Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making

The goal of this CE is to generate and disseminate credible development data for results-based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in a timely and cost-effective manner. Interventions considered relevant to achieve this goal include improving statistical governance, coordination of the National Statistical System (NSS) and data quality; enhancement and retention of quality human resources; physical, ICT and statistical infrastructures; production and dissemination of quality data; and the forging of partnerships for sustainable funding.

This CE is tracked by 12 indicators across 4 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, 17% of these indicators are achieved, 17% are on track and 66% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of 34% of all indicators and 2 out of the 4 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by NDP outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Statistical governance of the NSS and data quality enhanced	2	0	2	50%, on track to be achieved
2.	Enhanced and sustained quality human resources, physical, ICT and statistical infrastructures	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved
3.	Quality data produced, disseminated and adequately monitored and evaluated	0	2	2	50%, on track to be achieved

4.	Sustainable funding and partnerships	0	0	2	0%, not on track to be achieved
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The outcomes achieved or are on track to be achieved (Outcome 1 – 50% accomplished and Outcome 3 – 50% on track to be achieved) result in the improvement in data quality and accessibility. These accomplishments were assisted by support from development partners, existence of Gambia Data Quality Assessment Framework (GDQAF) and conduct of a host of household surveys including the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Senegambia Migration Survey, National Agriculture Sample Survey (NASS), and Integrated Household Survey (IHS) from 2018 to date.

Key challenges on the other hand included the delay in enacting the statistics bill, limited awareness of the GDQAF, limited coordination among the National Statistical System (NSS) leading to conduct of surveys without GBoS' approval and the inadequate capacity and funds for Statistical development. Additionally, despite the conduct of an assessment, the Statistical Training Centre could not be established owing to lack of funds

For improvement of performance of this CE, it is recommended that the enactment of the statistics bill be accelerated, strengthen the NSS through funding, capacity building (establishment of a statistical training centre) and coordination through the establishment of the steering committee. Sensitise all MDAs and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to ensure awareness of the existence of the GDQAF, and GBoS take the lead to ensure that all statistical reports and data are made available for dissemination.

CE7: Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development

The objective here is to harness the great economic potential and expertise of diaspora towards national development. The challenge has been an atmosphere characterised by mistrust and confrontation resulting in exclusion especially in the governance space. Key interventions include creation of a Diaspora Directorate and formulation of a diaspora engagement strategy.

This SP is tracked by 15 indicators across 4 outcomes. From the status update of the progress registered so far, none of these indicators are achieved, 7% are on track and 93% constrained to the extent that they may not be achieved during this programme period. This translates into achievement of only 7% of all indicators and none of the 4 outcomes by the end of programme period.

The table below presents the level of achievement of indicators by outcome.

Outcome		Achieved	On Track	Constrained	Remarks
1.	Structured and facilitative approach to diaspora engagement enhanced	0	1	2	33%, not on track to be achieved
2.	Leveraged diaspora remittances and investment	0	0	4	0%, not on track to be achieved
3.	Vulnerable migrants protected and facilitation of regular pathways ensured	0	0	3	0%, not on track to be achieved
4.	Active and enhanced participation in national policy and development policy	0	0	5	0%, not on track to be achieved

None of the outcomes under this CE are on track to be achieved. The challenges identified included the late establishment of the diaspora directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This further means that the diaspora engagement strategy could not be formulated in time and implemented. Planned diaspora forum for 2020 could not be held as planned partly due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

One major challenge is that in justifying the engagement of diaspora as a value adding strategy, the stakeholders have set themselves multiple targets that are offshoots of each other in the same time frame. The risk with this is if the foundational activity – in this case the formulation of a diaspora engagement strategy fails to be implemented, all subsequent activities that depend on this initial activity for example leveraging diaspora remittance and investment are affected.

Other challenges included lack of comprehensive registry/data of all Gambians in the Diaspora, difficulty regarding the provision of legal documents to Gambians in the Diaspora, lack of adequate logistic to monitor circular migration activities and full participation in diaspora events is constrained by inadequate legal status.

To further improve performance of this CE, it is recommended the diaspora engagement strategy is finalised and implemented. It is also recommended that some realism is maintained in planning. Target setting must take into account the capacity of implementers in order not to over burden stakeholders with targets that are not attainable. Answers to questions like ‘what is preventing the achievement of a particular objective or what triggers are needed to accelerate achievement of an objective ’are good steps to align the interventions. It is difficult to see how some of the indicators

are related to the outcomes they illustrate. This could also be explained by the level of articulation of the results, whereas the NDP is articulated at outcome level, for its implementation stakeholder should have broken the outcomes into outputs. This in addition to enhancing the alignment of strategy to the objectives, allow one to define output level indicators which are more easily reported using administrative data.

Implementation of FSP

The basis of the estimated cost of NDP is the FSPs. Thus, to understand the adequacy of progress registered, it is imperative that in addition to assessing the level of implementation of FSPs, we also assess whether FSPs are also fully consistent with the proposed intervention for the SPs and CEs. It follows that where the FSP falls short of fully addressing the proposed intervention, their full implementation will still not lead to the planned results. For this reason, the approach to implementing NDP mainly through FSPs is not sufficient. It is pertinent that a comprehensive strategy for the implementation is developed focusing on individual outcomes and as they (the outcomes) relate to each other.

41 FSPs were proposed for implementation. From the review of the update on FSP, some sectors are implementing more projects than proposed, accounting for these additional projects, brings the total number of projects to 125. Of these, 116 projects are disbursing representing approximately 92.8% of all projects. The negative effect of this variance in the numbers on achieving NDP results targets is compounded by their limited spread. 5 of the 7 CEs have no resources committed to their proposed projects. 1 of the SPs though had some resources committed to its implementation, recorded no disbursement over the period under consideration. This affected such important SPs as tourism and the Diaspora CE. Of the remaining CEs, only the Environment and women empowerment related FSPs are funded.

In addition to this discrepancy in numbers and limited spread, in many cases the actual projects being implemented also differ from those proposed. This is most evident in the Agriculture and Fisheries SP, human capital development and Infrastructure FSPs. Of the 17 projects that were committed and disbursing in the agriculture FSP, 6 were rice value chain related. Proposed projects for poultry, horticulture, livestock and fisheries have no resource committed to their implementation at least from donor funds. Similarly actual projects for HCD and Infrastructure are to a large extent different from those proposed.

For effective implementation of NDP and for results, leadership should be strengthened to steer commitment and resources to the plan, and ensure that funding proposals are strongly linked to priorities as envisaged by the establishment of the GRSB.

The table below shows numbers of proposed projects versus actual

Strategic Priorities /Critical Enablers	# of Proposed Project	# Actual Projects
Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance	8	13
Stabilizing our Economy stimulating growth and transforming our Economy	0	9
Modernizing our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction	5	17
Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society	9	20
Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy	11	29
Promoting an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth	1	1
Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and	1	8
Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation.	0	5
Critical Enablers		
A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry	0	0
Empowering the Gambian Woman to realize her full potential	1	5
Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use	3	9
Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society	1	0
Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making	1	0
Civil society positioned as a representative, dynamic and credible consortium	0	0
Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development	0	0
TOTAL	41	116

2.2.3. Coordination

The level of establishment and functionality of the structures/working groups proposed in the document for the implementation of the plan was assessed. According to NDP⁴⁰, these institutional and coordination frameworks are necessary in view of the magnitude of the planned reforms, the fragmented policy making environment and the prevailing weak arrangement for coordination of development inventions. The proposed institutions, their membership and role are described in the NDP⁴¹.

The table below summarises the state of establishment and functionality of the proposed institutions to give some indication of the level of implementation and effectiveness of NDP implementation arrangement.

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Status of establishment</i>	<i>Evidence of functionality</i>	<i>Remarks /Observations</i>
National Assembly	not established	N/A ⁴²	Cabinet Paper on the Institutional arrangements of the NDP was only granted provisional approval by Cabinet in 2019
Cabinet		N/A	
Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee		N/A	
Government-Donor Consultative Forum		N/A	
Multi-Stakeholder National Coordinating Committee			
Regional Governor's Forum			
National Think Tank	Established	N/A	
Government-Development Partners forum			
A National Technical Committee	partially established	N/A	PSs Retreat being used instead
Technical Clusters(Sector/Thematic Working Groups)	partially established	not fully functional	
National M&E platform	partially established	Not functional	the system has already been built and currently awaiting training for administrators and the issuance of user rights
Regional Technical Advisory Committee	Established		

⁴⁰ NDP p134

⁴¹ NDP134 - 139

⁴² N/A means Not Available

The structures created or proposed for the implementation of NDP is heavy in terms of numbers and overlapping mandates posing challenges to coordinated functionality and efficiency. For example National Assembly is to ensure that plan address national priorities, sector plans are aligned to NDP and review progress reports. These functions are replicated to some extent as the role of the national technical committee (NTC). One of the role of NTC makes reference to a ‘national coordinating committee’ which does not seem to be defined in the NDP document.

For such an elaborate structure to serve its purpose, not only must the roles be clear, but the relationship between the levels must also be clear and straight forward. The schematic diagram⁴³ has not clarified these relationships well, in many cases the arrows are pointing both ways. There is also need to rationalise to avoid multiplication of membership across the institutions. From a brief description on page 135 of the NDP document, the inter-ministerial steering committee, the high level national committee and the government – donor consultative forum all have ministers as members; and cabinet, another of NDP implementation institutions, is made up of ministers. Experience from the past is also against the proliferation of these institutions. From the review of PAGE 2012-2015, it is reported that ‘the institutional arrangement proposed by PAGE were hardly implemented ...’. This is a lesson that should have informed the proposal for the institutional arrangement for NDP.

The above exposure aside, most of the institutions proposed were either not fully established or are not functional. This is the situation even after the APR of the NDP in 2018 which stated that ‘there is no functional institutional framework to ensure the effective coordination of the implementation of the NDP as the proposed structures were neither established nor functional in 2018’.⁴⁴ According to the update, the Cabinet Paper on the institutional arrangements of NDP was only approved in 2019.

2.2.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

As is expected of a plan of its nature, the NDP also proposed a monitoring and evaluation system to track implementation and provide the information for quick remedial actions to keep the plan on track. Accordingly, the basic elements of this system include a results matrix and a monitoring plan as far as the major milestone exercises (APR, mid- and end-term evaluation) are concerned.

⁴³ NDP p137

⁴⁴ NDP APR 2018 p112/113

A metadata that clarify the indicators and a detailed M&E plan that specify M&E activities in between the mid- and end-term were not formulated. Although the institutional arrangement specified some reporting arrangements⁴⁵, their non-establishment in most cases however mean, these accountabilities were not enforced. Thus, M&E of NDP is mostly evident around the 2018 APR. It would have been easier to report updates during this MTE exercise had the plan been more closely and regularly monitored.

Close and regular monitoring was also hampered by the level of articulation of the results. NDP defined results at outcome level, for implementation however, these outcomes should have been broken down into outputs as outlined in NDP⁴⁶ with output level indicators that are more amenable to tracking with administrative data. A lot of the outcome indicators that track the NDP are survey biased and do not change in the short term therefore progress registered in between surveys is not readily captured.

The presidential dashboard, a key element of the M&E platform, is yet to be operational. This is expected, as much as digitalisation (introduction of electronic) of processes enhances their ease of delivery; their functionality, regularity and accuracy will depend on the manual processes that they digitalise. Thus, the focus should be on establishing functional manual processes first – in this case a process of collecting and reporting data before developing expensive computer systems that will not be operational.

Ideally, even if there were no data collection and recording arrangements for NDP before APR in 2019, the APR exercise (demand for information) should have prompted sectors to establish some data feed systems and keep these updated to make tracking and subsequent reporting of NDP much easier. The challenge however is that some MDAs do not have record of the data provided to the APR process to be able compare it to the data they provided for this MTE process⁴⁷. It is therefore important that each MDA maintains the section of the NDP results matrix (with further articulation of the results – adding outputs) and update this as regularly as possible. This is not just to be able to report during exercises like this, but to be able to self-monitor as part of overall implementation.

⁴⁵ NDP, 147

⁴⁶ NDP p146

⁴⁷ This is evident in differences between reports on some indicators over this period. The update on Agriculture fisheries SP for APR reported the animal health and phytosanitary Acts as available while data collect for this MTE shows they are not enacted.

2.2.5. Partnerships

Across all strategic priorities and critical enablers, it is observed that partnerships among relevant stakeholders are essential for the successful and impactful implementation of NDP programmes. Partnerships with private sector, CSOs and Diaspora are specifically entrenched in the NDP through the articulation of a relevant SP and CEs respectively for their realisation. DPs are engaged through their commitment to various global agenda which Gambia ratifies and bilateral partners through various cooperation agreements.

These partners complement each other's competencies during planning and implementation to increase efficiency and enhance the overall effect of strategic interventions; partnerships also engender ownership, which enhances leadership of programme intervention and sustainability of gains over the longer term.

From the analysis of progress above, the private sector SP is not on track to be achieved. This means that private sector was not engaged as planned. For the CE related to CSOs, the most partnership relevant indicator (enhanced relationship with government and other stakeholders) is not on track. This is partly because of the lack of engagement strategies or where strategies adopted⁴⁸ were neither appropriate nor implemented. In the case of the Diaspora, the engagement strategy was not formulated. A clear statement of how diaspora can and will contribute to NDP is especially important considering its unorganised and dispersed nature. Limited coordination in government also means that the engagement of DPs is not optimal. There are still potentials for fragmented projects and duplicated funding. The Government-Donor Consultative and Government-Development Partners forums proposed in NDP were neither established nor functional in any recognised form.

2.2.6. Resource Mobilisation and Utilisation

Given the precarious fiscal situation of the government at the time, the plan was to rely on external financing to allow the economy to recover and over time increase local financing of NDP. Of the US\$1.6 billion gap required for the financing of the flagship projects, local resources contribution was expected to be US\$157 million (9%), ODA is expected to be US\$1.0 billion (62%) and private sector investments US\$471 million (29%)⁴⁹.

⁴⁸For example involving CSO in government meeting and delegations as a means of enhancing the relationship with government.

⁴⁹ The Gambia NDP Popular Version page 27

On the face of it, the NDP is well resourced. Estimated at the cost of US\$ 2.4 billion, and taking into account available resources of US\$750 million leaves a funding gap of US\$ 1.6 billion. US\$1.7 billion was pledged at the resource mobilisation conference held in Brussels on 22nd May 2018⁵⁰. Thus all of the monies needed for the implementation of NDP were mobilised from the beginning. In fact, by end 2018, additional pledges in grant of US\$176.15 million were received bringing the total pledge to US\$1.8 billion.

It was however obvious from this time that all of the pledges did not materialise into commitments as some had huge loan components. According to the report of the resource mobilisation conference 60% of support pledged are loans. The debt situation of the country would not allow contracting non-concessional loans. It would have been ingenious that strategies were developed to minimise the effect of excluding loans from the available finances by advocating for grant financing, debt restructuring/rescheduling to create fiscal space for development spending, promoting public-private partnerships (PPPs) and other financing mechanisms such as remittances for development⁵¹.

From Brussels, multilateral accounts for 95% of all pledges while bilateral accounts for the rest. The loan component of pledges (60%) amounted to US\$981.84 million and US\$648.87 million was the grant before additional bilateral grant pledges amounting to US\$176.15 million⁵². The total grant is therefore US\$825.02 million which is 82.5% of the US\$1.0 billion expected from international development partners. So even if none of the loan component of the pledges were accessed, NDP is well resourced provided the contributions expected from the Government and private sector were redeemed.

Government is expected to contribute a sum of US\$157 million while private sector is tasked to raise and apply US\$471 million to plan implementation. According to available evidence shown here in the below table, Government has spent a total of GMD25.5 billion (equivalent to US\$531.9 million⁵³) in the implementation of NDP over the past three years (2018, 2019, and 2020)⁵⁴.

Government Local Fund (GLF) FINANCING OF THE NDP (TOTAL ACTUAL GMD)				
NDP Priority Area	Total		Gross Total	Development as a % of Total Expenditure
	Recurrent	Development		
Governance, Human Rights and Decentralization	7,610,725,073.88	230,801,674.71	7,841,526,748.59	2.9

⁵⁰ <https://www.africanews.com/2018/05/23/gambian-president-musters-usd-1.7-billion-of-support-from-international-donors/>

⁵¹ Extracted from MoFEA presentation of NDP to UNCT

⁵² NDP APR 2018, p120

⁵³ Using the current reference rate of GMD47.93 to US\$1 - <https://www.cbg.gm/daily-reference-rate>

⁵⁴ MoFEA

Macroeconomic Stabilization and Economic Management	2,452,778,066.77	99,836,852.33	2,552,614,919.10	3.9
Modernized Agriculture, Agribusiness and Fisheries	558,885,575.97	424,167,271.94	983,052,847.91	43.1
Human Capital Development - Health, Education and Social Protection	8,204,303,716.22	603,807,665.33	8,808,111,381.55	6.9
Infrastructure and Energy	333,662,428.64	1,120,758,067.22	1,454,420,495.86	77.1
Tourism and Culture	94,189,683.26	7,000,000.00	101,189,683.26	6.9
Youth Empowerment	208,843,015.25	33,725,627.00	242,568,642.25	13.9
Private Sector Development and Trade	217,940,997.60	12,920,000.00	230,860,997.60	5.6
Strengthening Public Institutions	448,427,994.26	-	448,427,994.26	0.0
Women Empowerment	45,058,671.33	1,793,050.05	46,851,721.38	3.8
Diaspora in Development	2,297,310,191.28	137,421,331.96	2,434,731,523.24	5.6
Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change, Land Use Planning	226,416,879.78	31,647,898.20	258,064,777.98	12.3
Strengthening Civil Society and Non-State Actors	0	0	0	0
Information Communication Technology	70,237,381.26	20,779,378.63	91,016,759.89	22.8
Data for Development	0	0	0	0
Total	22,768,779,675.50	2,724,658,817.37	25,493,438,492.87	10.7

Nominally, this amount is much more than the contribution expected from government. But considering the fact that only about 11% of this (equivalent to US\$58.5 million) is devoted to development financing which is more likely to support NDP implementation, the government effort falls short of the planned outlay. Even the 11% must be taken with caution as the alignment between the budget and the NDP⁵⁵ needs further strengthening. Government effort has however augmented

⁵⁵ Two CEs – CSO and Data for development were not supported by the government budget even though they were identified as critical to the successful implementation of NDP.

the effort of development partners who are funding development interventions. Data on private sector contribution to the implementation of NDP is not assessed.

Commitment of Funds

From the available data, a total of US\$1.32 billion is committed to FSPs related to SPs and of this amount, 34.6% are loans and 65.4% are grants. So far 42.1% of this amount has been disbursed. With respect to CEs, a total of US\$48.7 million is committed and of this amount which is a (100%) grant, only 36.2% was disbursed. In total therefore, approximately US\$1.37 billion was committed and so far 41.9% has been disbursed.

It should be noted that the commitment figures above do not differentiate between the commitments before Brussels (US\$750 million)⁵⁶ or after.

Allocation of Resources by SP/CE

The table⁵⁷ below shows commitment of funds by SP/CE for the implementation of FSPs of NDP. The columns show total commitment, disbursement and balance. From the total disbursement level of 41.9% and considering this is the third year of a four-year plan, it is apparent that the implementation is behind schedule. The table also shows the proposed number of projects against the actual projects being implemented indicating 5 of the 7 CEs are not supported by actual projects.

Strategic Priorities	# of Proposed Project	# of Actual Projects	Est. Project Cost	Disbursed	Undisbursed Balance
Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance	8	13	40,600,173.43	27,350,177.19	13,249,996.24
Stabilizing our Economy stimulating growth and transforming our Economy	0	9	230,631,038.65	139,138,190.68	91,492,847.97
Modernizing our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction	5	17	119,549,009.24	28,722,875.55	90,826,133.68
Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society	9	20	145,928,903.98	51,109,097.49	94,819,806.49
Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy	11	29	706,015,308.82	269,336,568.39	436,678,740.43
Promoting an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth	1	1	574,479.66	0	574,479.66
Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and	1	8	53,909,774.39	26,092,973.98	27,816,800.41

⁵⁶ According to the NDP, US\$750 million was already committed before Brussels

⁵⁷ Financial information used to generate this table was provided by staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA)

Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation.	0	5	23573160.93	14597037.83	8,976,123.10
TOTAL			1,320,781,849.09	556,346,921.12	764,434,927.98
Critical Enablers					
A public sector that is efficient and responsive to the citizenry	0	0	0	0	0
Empowering the Gambian Woman to realize her full potential	1	5	1,841,931.82	803,490.77	1,038,441.05
Promoting environmental sustainability, climate resilient communities and appropriate land use	3	9	46,903,571.54	16,840,601.75	30,062,969.79
Making The Gambia a Digital Nation and creating a modern information society	1	0	0	0	0
Strengthening evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making	1	0	0	0	0
Civil society positioned as a representative, dynamic and credible consortium	0	0	0	0	0
Enhancing the role of the Gambian Diaspora in national development	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	41	116	48,745,503.36	17,644,092.53	31,101,410.83
GRAND TOTAL			1,369,527,352.45	573,991,013.64	795,536,338.81

2.3. Efficiency of the NDP

Despite significant progress registered in terms of achievement of some objectives, the NDP was not efficiently implemented. This implies that the gains registered could have been much more, if the below deficiencies were not observed:

Guided by the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) criteria for the statement of results, some NDP result statements are broad and not specifically focused. This makes every intervention relevant and actual prioritisation very difficult. The focus of strategic intervention should be either ‘to unblock a developmental challenge or to trigger an accelerator’. This increases the effectiveness of an intervention. Other weaknesses include silo programming and implementation, reliance on projects for implementation, all of which are not efficient. Project establishment of infrastructure for example does not support long term sustainability as projects phase out and cannot cater for maintenance and expansion in the long run. The approach adopted in

estimating the cost of implementing the plan, the means and resource allocation procedures for financing the implementation of the plan are not clear. The costing of NDP was guided by the estimated cost of the FSPs as opposed to the needed resources to implement each outcome. Thus, the US\$2.4 billion bill is an underestimation of the cost of implementing NDP as there is not an FSP for every SP and CE.

Ideally, the national budget should be the main channel through which NDP implementation is financed. NDP interventions should be developed into programmes that are presented in the development budget proposal of leading MDAs for funding. This approach would have generated costing along outcomes and provided a more enhanced focus on the results. Instead, FSPs are used as means to finance the plan.

Efficient implementation of NDP was also affected by COVID-19 especially for the education sector. What is lost due to COVID-19 including contact hours, are now being recovered through the measures adopted for the reopening of schools. These measures have increased the cost of school operation in terms of increased number of teachers, classrooms and number of school days in the week among others.

The absence of effective institutional arrangements and structures to monitor implementation of the NDP, means that the ‘implementation strategy’ elaborated in the NDP⁵⁸ was not followed through. This has seriously eroded efficiency gains.

Significant tax exemptions amounting to about 3% of GDP⁵⁹ and limited use of open tender procurement suggest that there is room for improving the mobilisation and the use of public resources. Furthermore, the absence of project selection criteria until 2020 means less relevant project could have been selected and implemented at the early stage of NDP implementation.

There is also the need to bring all government institutions and agencies receiving government subvention under the Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) procurement rules and supervision. This will ensure a better and a more efficient use of public resources.

2.4. Sustainability

Sustainability of plan gains depend on the following: Ownership and leadership of the plan, Establishment of institutions and procedures, Capacity building and strengthening of partnerships.

⁵⁸ NDP, p140-144

⁵⁹ IMF country report no. 20/102

Where NDP relies on donor funding through FSPs, sustainability is weakened as fund flows rest outside the control of government; thus weakening ownership and leadership. Data from budget formulation and execution documents and consultations with stakeholders, suggests that the alignment between the budget and the NDP could be further strengthened.

Establishment of institutions and procedures – these once established, tend to outlive the plan and ensure some level of sustainability of gains accomplished. Most of the proposed institutions for the NDP implementation were not established. Perhaps project offices established to implement FSPs could be cited, these however usually phase out with the projects and thus do not provide any support to ensure sustainability in the long run.

‘Capacity deficit in public sector institutions’⁶⁰ was recognised as a key challenge and a capacity building strategy formulated on the basis of a capacity needs assessment. There is however no evidence that this plan is being implemented. The capacity constraint is aggravated by the frequent movement of senior level staff – Permanent Secretaries across government.

Partnership with Private Sector, NGOs/CSOs, Diaspora and Communities are also sure ways of growing the resource envelope and engendering ownership of development interventions and the urge to preserve associated gains. This way sustainability of NDP gains are ensured. Partnership for the NDP have remain largely informal and ad hoc. Plans to strengthen these through engagement strategies (for the private sector, the Diaspora) have remained undeveloped.

⁶⁰ NDP, p144

3. BEST PRACTICES, INNOVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

It is consistent with best practices in strategic planning and plan implementation processes that the:

1. Results statements are clearly defined according to the SMART criteria. Results are stated to reflect the changes that are expected from interventions across the various levels of the result identified through a theory of change analysis. This will include in addition to stating the outcomes, statement of the outputs as well as activities especially in the implementation action plans. This increases understanding of stakeholders of the plan and aids its implementation.
2. Estimate of the cost of the plan is based on all of the activities expected to be undertaken in pursuit of plan goal, and not on selected components. This way, all of the activities can be undertaken once the plan is fully capitalised and this increases the chances of successful implementation.
3. Government leads and owns the plan by ensuring participation of relevant government officials at the highest level and by ensuring that resources are allocated for the implementation of the plan through the national budget. Budgeting for the plan is aided by adopting PBB as an approach to resource allocation.
4. Government mobilises and channels all available national resources (government, non-government, private sector and development partners) towards the plan.
5. Institutional arrangement for the implementation of the plan clearly states the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder or structure to be established. This helps institute checks in the system and ensures plan prescriptions including regular monitoring are adhered to.
6. Implementation arrangement for the plan is kept lean and simple. This is to minimise the efforts required to operationalise it and keep its budget low so as not to distract resources from the actual programmes. This could be achieved by using existing government structures to carry out some of the functions.
7. Lessons learnt from preceding plan implementation are integrated as much as possible into the new plan.

It is also best practice that the 'agency or unit that produces the plan, mobilises support and is ultimately responsible for supervising plan implementation, monitoring key results and reporting on progress' is located in an office that has strong political influence. 'There is no widespread evidence yet to suggest that merely being located in a finance ministry or a powerful political office like that

of the president increases commitment or the possibility of plan implementation. However, there is some evidence of an association between the location and ownership of a plan in a powerful political office and the likelihood that the plan will begin to influence how resources are allocated through the budget⁶¹.

It is important that strategies are devised to bring into operation some of the best practices for a more impactful NDP implementation. While these strategies could be innovative in their approach, they must be kept simple and sustainable should they be found to be effective. Sophisticated computerised systems established in the recent past⁶², have proven difficult to maintain and sustain after the project.

Lessons Learnt

Generally, unless the accountability framework (institutions and the reporting arrangement) for the NDP are up and running, the plan will not be effectively implemented and goals will not be attained. It is necessary to improve the monitoring of ongoing projects and to enhance project appraisal and impact assessment before new projects are approved; especially if projects are financed with government local funds. Continued effort in implementation of the Public Investment Management Assessment (PIMA) recommendations especially in terms of public procurement will ensure the value for money and improve the efficiency of public spending.

Specifically from the respondents and analysis of implementation reports across the various strategic areas of the NDP, the following lessons are identified:

Governance - Unwillingness of voluntary witnesses (in the transitional justice process) signals the further sensitisation and exploration of alternative sources of evidence; and sensitisation and communication of public policy targeted at regional, district, ward and village levels using the current modes have been found to be inadequate, pointing to the need for innovation in this area.

Macro - The economy may take beyond the NDP period to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which is likely to slow down the attainment of this indicator. It is pertinent to have alternative plan around every plan to cater for eventualities like COVID-19.

Agriculture - As poultry farming expands in the country, farmers should be encouraged to cultivate more maize to feed the poultry industries. Insect cultivation is also an option that could be promoted.

⁶¹ The 'New' national development planning and global development goals: Processes and partnerships - Admos O. Chimhowu, David Hulme and, Lauchlan T. Munro. 7

⁶² The Aid Management Platform (AMP)

It is easy and affordable and is currently being piloted with EU support. Some interventions (GCAV) have shown that by improving rice irrigation system, yield increased from 2 to 4-5MT/ha and much more could be achieved (6-8MT/ha like in Senegal) by adding improved high-yielding varieties. Improving processing will help to get quality rice, and by increasing yield and quality, local rice could become more competitive with imported rice. There is limited effort directed at producing organic fertilisers and encouraging agro-ecological practices and agro-forestry.

Human Capital - School Improvement Grants (SIGs) and school feeding improve enrolment and retention pointing to the need to extend the school feeding programme especially to more schools; and need to align students study programmes/research topics with needs of their sector and country priority for meaningful impact.

Tourism - Need to promote domestic tourism to shift the near total dependence of external markets. This is to keep the sector operational in the face of events like COVID-19. This should go hand in hand with expansion of tourism infrastructure into the hinterland as well as strengthening the tourism –agriculture linkages. Also, there is need to “domesticate” the air space with Senegal. A return ticket Dakar-Banjul is currently three times more expensive than Dakar-Ziguinchor. This will encourage well-to-do Senegalese pick The Gambia as a week-end destination.

Youth - Limited awareness of youths on their ownership of the youth facilities. This is necessary for them to access these facilities and take charge; and the entrepreneurship skills training demand for the young people is limited, compounded by the inability to absorb the various categories of young people into the existing entrepreneurship programmes. There is a category of young people who do not have the basic qualification or awareness to undergo these training.

Infrastructure - Transmission and distribution network infrastructure expansion is necessary and green mini grids (GMG) off-grid projects are also necessary for electricity access expansion especially for the far to reach areas in terms of grid connection. The total installed capacity (for electricity) is not totally consumed and a strengthened transmission and distribution (T&D) infrastructure is important to enable the distribution of additional capacity; and in addition to upgrading transformers and T&D infrastructure, thorough meter reading is necessary to reduce the technical and non-technical losses.

Private sector - Team work and partnership across institutions and sectors is essential for effective and inclusive policy development and implementation; the domestic production for the country is limited, thus export is the most viable option to expand business and attract investment. It is therefore essential and strategic for trade promotion and facilitation to maintain good relations with

neighbouring countries. It must be noted that sales of groundnuts for example across the border through informal channels deprives the Gambia that export value, just like the few Gambian businesses utilising the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) system to export within ECOWAS. The transfer of the land to the GIETAF Special Economic Zone ⁶³ as equity contribution for GIEPA is still pending; it is important to note that other potential investors are watching this case to firm up their engagement approach with the government, as consistency is key to winning investors' heart. Lands allocated for industrial purpose are diverted to build commercial stores and even residences at Kanifing Industrial Zone. There is need for strict monitoring of similarly allocated land to check this kind of practice, as The Gambia has a small manufacturing base. The local target market is small and not sophisticated. Cost of industrial tariffs for electricity is very high. Some of the products produced by our local manufacturers cannot be exported due to inferior standards, as a result of lack of quality infrastructure and standards. Without a strong and vibrant private sector, employment creation for youths will remain a major challenge; Need to have an accredited laboratory to support certification and standardisation efforts at the national and regional levels; and Policy makers are not appreciating the value and contribution of metrology to sustainable national development

Public sector - The other lesson learnt is that planning for the post exercise is perhaps even more important than planning for the conducting of the exercise. This is because it allows for the putting of appropriate measures to deal with consequences of the exercise including provision for the resources needed for proper implementation.

Women empowerment - The response to domestic violence is usually inadequate and uncoordinated. Drivers and implication of domestic violence are multifaceted and should be approached as such.

Environment - The pollutant sectors such as transport, agriculture, infrastructure and manufacturing industries are on increase, and on the contrary there is no proper mechanism to either check or monitor the rate of emission.

CSO - NGOs are involved in a lot of areas throughout the country but it was discovered that they are under-reporting their activities; and continuous consultation with Government and monitoring will reduce the duplication of efforts and waste of resources within an intervention area.

⁶³ The GIETAF Special Economic Zone is a 160-hectare mixed-use Business Park being developed through a public-private partnership between Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency and TAF Africa Global Limited.

Diaspora - There should be follow up for accurate information from our embassies to MoFA on for example citizens residing in their jurisdiction to enable the establishment of a robust database.

4. CONCLUSION

Relevance

In evaluating Relevance of NDP, the design of the plan, appropriateness and comprehensiveness of identified SPs and CEs, and Integration of the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 were assessed. While largely relevant, the evaluation found some elements across the three areas assessed that could be improved to enhance the overall performance of the plan. These include:

- The process of NDP design was consultative but not sufficiently interactive partly due to the silo approach to identifying the priorities. This led to limited cross sectoral work and multiplicity of outcomes (63 for a four year plan). As a result, the coordination challenge was amplified by the need to streamline fragmented intervention strategies.
- The SPs/CEs are defined broadly to accommodate almost every development challenge the nation faces and could have benefitted from more comprehensive TOC analysis. This has made ranking of priorities a difficult and complex exercise.
- An assessment conducted by the MAPS mission found a strong alignment representing a strong foundation for the effective implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. This alignment could improve with improvement in data collection quality and coverage.

Effectiveness of the NDP

In assessing effectiveness of the NDP, the evaluation exercise looked at completeness of the definition of the identified results and appropriateness of the strategies for their realisation. At three years of implementation, NDP has already achieved some significant milestones across several SPs and CEs. The accomplishments are challenged partly by the reliance on FSP financing mainly driven by development partner funding.

Weak implementation of prescribed NDP actions specifically ‘prioritisation and sequencing of actions’ and the need to address the human resource capacity gap as well as many legal and regulatory reforms minimised the effective implementation of NDP. Other challenges have been the COVID–19 pandemic, limited cross-sectoral coordination of implementation, weak engagement of partners (CSOs, Private sector and DPs), largely non-functional implementation arrangement and limited availability of data.

Implementation of FSP

The basis of the estimated cost of NDP and its implementation is the FSPs. Ideally, if all of the FSPs were fully funded and implemented, this should lead to the achievement of the objectives of NDP. The findings however are not consistent with the ideal situation. Of the 41 FSPs that were proposed, there are still some strategic areas that are not supported by any FSP⁶⁴. Considering additional projects that were not planned but are being implemented, the total number of projects is 125 of which 115 projects (including 54 unplanned projects) are disbursing.

For effective implementation of NDP and for results, a comprehensive strategy for the implementation must be developed focusing on individual outcomes and as they (the outcomes) relate to each other; there must be strong leadership over the commitment and resources so that resources are allocated to priorities and catalytic interventions.

Coordination

As important as the institutional and coordination frameworks to the effective implementation of NDP, the best part of the arrangement is still not operational. As a result, the enforcement of safeguards and accountabilities needed to spur plan implementation are weak. This means that the gains from regular monitoring and reviews, and synergies from engagement and coordination of other stakeholder contributions were not harnessed.

Resource Mobilisation and Utilisation

Fortunately, NDP is well resourced even with the precarious fiscal situation of the government that limits the accessing of the loan components of the pledges. Estimated at the cost of US\$2.4 billion, and taking into account available resources of US\$750 million leaves a funding gap of US\$1.6 billion compared to the US\$1.7 billion pledged at the resource mobilisation conference and additional grants of US\$176.15 million that were received later bringing the total pledges to US\$1.8 billion.

Even though 68% of support pledged are in the form of loans, the total grant was US\$825.02 million which is 82.5% of the US\$1.0 billion expected from international development partners toward the NDP. So even if none of the loan component of the pledges were accessed, NDP is well resourced provided the contributions expected from the Government and private sector (US\$157 million and US\$471 million respectively) were redeemed.

From the available data, a total of US\$1.3 billion is committed to FSPs related to SPs and of this amount, 34.6% are loans and 65.4% are grants. So far 42.1% of this amount has been disbursed.

⁶⁴ 2 of the SPs and 6 of the CE has no resources committed to their proposed projects.

With respect to CEs, a total of US\$48.7 million is committed and of this amount which is a (100%) grant, only 36.1% was disbursed. In total therefore, approximately US\$1.4 billion was committed and so far 41.9% has been disbursed.

Thus, it is the levels of commitment of the funds, the disbursement and spread of the allocation of resources amongst SPs/CEs (as seen above under implementation of FSP) that needs further improvement.

Efficiency of the NDP

NDP, to a large extent was not efficiently implemented despite significant progress registered in terms of achievement of some objectives. This means that the gains recorded could have been much more, if results pursued were more strongly prioritised; if the cost of identified priorities were directly estimated using the outcome indicators and the expected effort and the national budget directed to financing implementation; if the implementation and accountability framework was made to function as planned; if partners were sufficiently engaged to make sure their efforts complement each other; and if COVID-19 has not entered the scene. These issues must be addressed to improve efficiency of plan implementation.

Sustainability

In evaluating the sustainability of the plan, this exercise looked at the level of government ownership and leadership of the plan, the level of establishment of institutions and procedures and the extent to which human and institutional capacities and partnership engagements are built and strengthened over the period of implementation.

From the review, it has become obvious that though the government led the identification of the prioritisation and articulation of the plan, it could enhance the provision of financing and strengthen the screening of projects. Limited participation of senior policy officials in the implementation of the plan is also interpreted as an indication of limited ownership. Proposed institutional arrangements, capacity building and engagement of partners, have not been implemented as planned.

Thus, even though significant gains have already been registered from NDP implementation, these may not be sustained in the long run unless measures are taken to correct the slippages mentioned above.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Even though NDP was drafted during the Vision 2020 period, there is not much reference to it. A long term vision is however indispensable in guiding development effort. It is considered paramount that a long term vision is developed (now that vision 2020 has formally lapsed) to provide a contextual framework for upcoming NDPs.
- b. Adopt a judicious allocation of resources for plan implementation. Whatever activity is being undertaken to achieve the NDP result should be specified and provisioned for in terms of required resource for its accomplishment. So ensuring alignment of plan financing to budget must take effect with the next NDP.
- c. The government considers the GLF component in the budget preparation, but there is a problem when a project that was not approved in the budget is included for its execution in the middle of the year. There is no pipeline of projects that can be included in medium-term budget projections. The creation of Gambia Strategic Review Board (GSRB) and the validation of the project selection criteria could help create a pipeline of ready to be implemented NDP-enabler projects that could be included in the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) and subsequently in the budget. This will reinforce the role of the annual budget in the implementation of the NDP. Better alignment of the partner supports on the NDP priorities could also help strength the role of budget in implementing the NDP.
- d. Source of financing for the NDP should be expanded to include private sector and NGO community. The current effort seriously under exploits the potential of these sources.
- e. Redefine the priority of the NDP considering the new challenges the country is facing including the COVID-19 pandemic and set targets that are consistent with maintaining fiscal and debt sustainability. Undertake a comprehensive Theory of change (TOC) analysis for every results chain to affirm the adequacy of defined strategic interventions. It would be necessary to also define clear performance indicators that can give a clear idea of their real impact.
- f. Promote coordination and collaboration – sectors working groups and donor forums to align every stakeholder's energy and resources to the implementation of the plan.
- g. Too many MDAs distracts, duplicates and make coordination difficult. As part of its proposed CSR agenda, government should rationalize and streamline the functions,

organisations and staffing of the public sector in pursuit of efficient and effective delivery of services.

- h. Participation of Heads of MDAs should be further strengthened in the implementation of the plan to enhance ownership and complement the efforts of technical staff and consultants. That way the government can exercise leadership for effectiveness and sustainability.
- i. Each MDA should maintain the section of the NDP results matrix (with further articulation of the results – adding outputs) and update this as regularly as possible. This is not just to be able to report during exercises like this, but to be able to self-monitor as part of overall implementation. It is also important that information that is quoted in national documents are standardised. Government must adopt a policy that require that all surveys and survey reports are signed-off by GBoS before they can be quoted in national or sectoral policies, strategies and reports.
- j. The DDP, assigned with responsibility of coordinating the implementation of the NDP, should be elevated to a Department to be headed by a Director General with authority to follow up on plan formulation, resource allocation, implementation strategy and reporting, similar to a National Planning Commission.
- k. The private sector should play a key role in achieving the objectives of the NDP. Find a way – a strategy that works to bring in the private sector through strengthening business environment, promoting access to finance and land. In industry and agriculture one big challenge to the private investment is access to land. This has to be solved to give confidence to investors. Current GIETAF initiative, a major PPP project is on hold partly because of land dispute.
- l. Support agriculture research and promote adoption of appropriate technology. There is need to review the rice-self-sufficiency agenda to make sure investments in this drive are best value for the money. There are suggestions to shift some of the investment into promoting nutrition through introduction of nutrient rich crops and food fortification.
- m. There is a huge capacity need across government. The capacity building plan referred to in the NDP document must be reviewed to take up new capacity needs and be implemented. Vacancies at the senior level in the justice system have slowed down bill drafting among many other services.

- n. Implementation of NDP should be driven by a performance management system. Government should accelerate the implementation of a performance management system and contracts with MDA and individual staff and enforce the accompanying checks and balances (reward system). This must begin with the planned staff inspection to properly reorient MDAs to delivering development.
- o. Government should enhance its leadership role and further enhance the participation of senior MDAs officials in leading the NDP processes.

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7. ANNEXES

ANNEX I - Summary of results reporting matrix

ANNEX II - Summary matrix of NDP Financing

ANNEX III - List of participants who completed NDP Results Matrix