

STATUS AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR MULTILEVEL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY COORDINATION STRUCTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA

*STATUS AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE FAO/DAFF
PROJECT TCP/SAF/3701 “Supporting the Development and
Implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Plan for South Africa”*

Prepared by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

30 October 2019



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	7
2. METHODOLOGY	8
3. CURRENT STATUS: CAPACITY GAPS AND CONSTRAINTS	9
3.1. <i>Enabling environment</i>	9
3.2. <i>Institutional level</i>	12
3.3. <i>Individual level</i>	15
4. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	16
5. CONCLUSION.....	18
REFERENCES	19
APPENDICES	20
Appendix 1. Summary of capacity assessment findings	20
Appendix 2. FNS-related structures and platforms at national and provincial levels.....	23
Appendix 3. NFNSP Strategic Objective 1	24

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDW	Community Development Worker
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DHIS	District Health Information System
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FNS	Food and Nutrition Security
FNSIS	Food and Nutrition Security Information System
KPA	Key Performance Area
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NFNSCC	National Food and Nutrition Security Coordinating Committee
NFNSP	National Food and Nutrition Security Plan
NPFNS	National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security
OSS	Operation Sukuma Sakhe
SAVAC	South Africa Vulnerability Assessment Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Status and Capacity Assessment Report has been prepared as part of the project commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with South Africa's Department of Agriculture, to define a Food and Nutrition Security Information System (FNSIS) to be managed through a digital platform: the FAO/DAFF TCP/SAF/3701 Project "*Supporting the Development and Implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Plan for South Africa*". The overarching aim of this report is to identify individual, institutional and enabling environment capacity gaps and constraints towards coming up with recommendations for the creation and strengthening of multi-level Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) coordination structures in South Africa. This Status and Capacity Assessment Report is also meant to establish a firm foundation upon which FNS stakeholders from a variety of sectors can engage, build partnerships and map comprehensive approaches to food and nutrition security in the country. Data was collected through a participatory and highly consultative process of extensive key informant interviews at national and subnational levels as well as provincial stakeholder workshops.

From the capacity assessment exercise undertaken, the major capacity gaps and constraints identified are as follows:

At the enabling environment level:

- Whilst the policy framework of and scope for the establishment of multi-level FNS coordination structures in the country is well-defined especially in the 2017 National Food and Nutrition Security Implementation Plan (NFNSP), the urgency for and political will to implement proposals that are on paper appear lacking.
- There are concerns around the lack of inclusivity of South Africa's FNS policy formulation process towards incorporating views and input from non-state actors.
- There is a lack of budget prioritisation for FNS interventions and programmes in the country, with seemingly low political priority of food and nutrition security issues in a context of a myriad of challenges in the country.

At the institutional level:

- Institutions involved in FNS-related activities are working in silos, with little cooperation and convergence among different state and non-state actors vis-à-vis such activities as FNS policy implementation, information sharing and management etc.
- A serious lack of commitment to established/currently existing FNS-related multi-sectoral structures by key state and non-state entities at both the national and subnational levels
- Human, financial and technical resources are insufficient and severely lacking to support operational activities in key departments that deal with FNS especially at the subnational level.

At the individual level:

- Poor understanding of FNS-related policy and implementation imperatives
- Poor understanding of reporting elements
- Limited FNS data collection, analysis and poor report writing skills.

Subsequent capacity development recommendations following from the gaps and challenges highlighted above are as follows:

1. The government must urgently move towards implementing and actualising proposals on the setting up of multi-level FNS structures as outlined in the 2017 NFNSP. In establishing the proposed structures, there is need for drawing lessons from such international success stories as Brazil. There is also need to take note of the positive factors that have led to the effective and smooth functioning of such internal success stories as Operation Sukuma Sakhe in KwaZulu Natal province, as well as the negative factors that have led to the collapse or dysfunctionality of a number of multi-sectoral FNS-related structures at the national and subnational levels
2. In implementing the 2017 NFNSP proposals, the involvement of non-state actors will be crucial. Non-state actors should fully participate and be adequately represented in all the proposed FNS structures from national, to provincial, to district levels. This will ensure their full buy-in vis-à-vis interventions against and solutions to food and nutrition insecurity in the country.
3. Government should increase funding towards FNS initiatives. In essence, the government should increase the annual budget towards FNS activities in all key departments to facilitate the scaling-up of FNS initiatives in all relevant departments. Whilst there is substantial

support from international organisations vis-à-vis FNS already, more development partners should be encouraged to commit themselves to supporting key departments to undertake capacity assessments, and to support capacity building through providing trainings as well as technical expertise and financial resources for FNS activities

4. The reporting on indicators to be fed into the planned FNSIS should be made part of the Key Performance Areas (KPA) of the various institutions involved thereby building and strengthening commitment within institutions towards supporting the system
5. Hiring skilled personnel and/or adequately equipping available personnel with the requisite data/information collection, analysis, management and advanced IT skills for those working with such highly technical FNS-related information as meteorological and hydrological information will be an effective capacity development tool towards building and maintaining an effective multi-level FNS information system.
6. Government departments should invest in relevant computer equipment and basic internet services especially at the subnational level. This will facilitate the faster movement and sharing of FNS information across different levels. Furthermore, whilst recent advances in technology such as cloud computing and storage may still have to be approved for use by government departments, the government should seriously consider incorporating these as part of the software infrastructure of the multi-level FNS structures
7. Institutions may also have to take advantage of advances in mobile technology vis-à-vis FNS data collection and transmission, thereby reducing having to deal with huge loads of paperwork.
8. Institutions involved in FNS-related data collection and analysis should adequately train their staff responsible for these activities through refresher courses and capacity building training programmes
9. The chairs of the proposed FNS structures at different levels should see to it that stakeholders at their respective levels, particularly key government departments, familiarise with FNS-related policies, so that individuals within these institutions are well conversant with implementation imperatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

This capacity assessment report has been prepared as part of the TCP/SAF/3701 Project “*Supporting the Development and Implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Plan for South Africa*” commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with South Africa’s Department of Agriculture, to define a Food and Nutrition Security Information System (FNSIS) for South Africa that will be managed through a digital platform. The report identifies capacity gaps, constraints and sustainable capacity development options towards the creation of robust and well-coordinated multi-level FNS institutional structures which will drive and oversee the envisaged synchronised FNSIS for South Africa.

A capacity assessment aims at providing a clear picture of a system, sector or country’s capacity in terms of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities (FAO, 2015). FAO’s capacity assessment approach, which was used for this exercise, seeks to explore capacities across three dimensions of individuals (i.e. their knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes), institutions/organisations (i.e. their mandates, priorities, processes and structure) and the enabling environment (which includes political will, policy and legal frameworks) (ibid). As the Regional Food Security Analysis Network (2016) articulates, the FAO capacity assessment approach considers an FNS system as three-dimensional (as already noted) but requiring four functional capacities to successfully and effectively function. The functional capacities highlighted in the FAO framework are:

- The capacity to formulate and implement policies and legislation (policy and normative capacity)
- The capacity to access, generate, manage and exchange relevant knowledge and to adapt it to local systems (knowledge capacity)
- The capacity to connect, to advocate and engage in networks, alliances and partnerships with international and national actors (partnership capacity)
- The capacity to manage and implement programmes from planning to monitoring and evaluation (implementation capacity)

An ultra-light capacity assessment approach (FAO, 2010) was used for this exercise. This approach seeks to simply identify and understand existing capacity issues in terms of gaps and constraints, then suggest a series of actions to deal with these gaps and constraints. The ultra-light approach looks at the ‘broad picture’ and does not seek to conduct an in-depth assessment

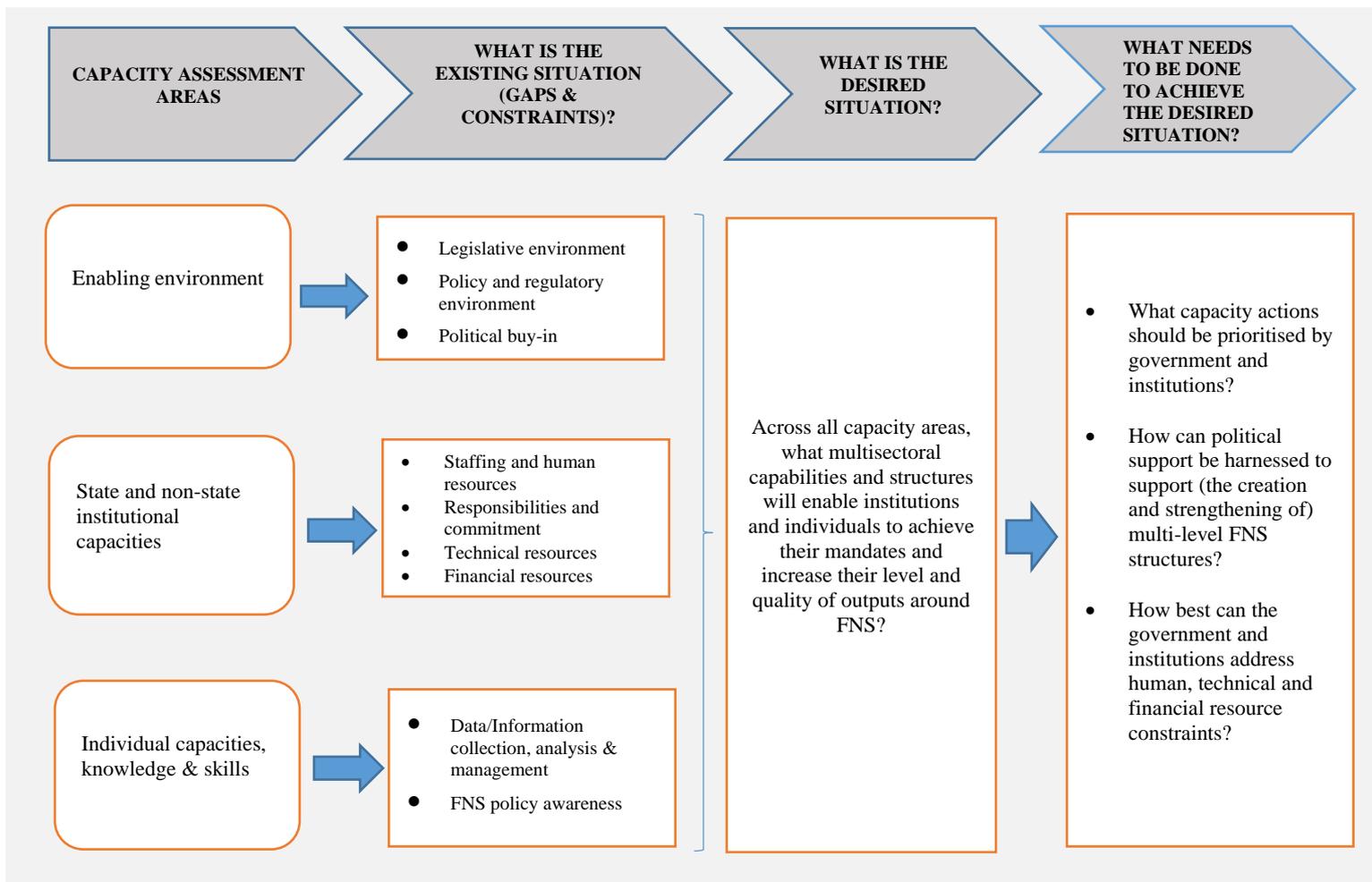
into the functional capacities highlighted. The aim is to help define a simple baseline of existing capacities towards skilled and knowledgeable individuals working on FNS activities, more effective institutions to drive and oversee FNS structures, and a more conducive enabling environment which facilitates, in this case, the creation and strengthening of multi-level FNS coordination structures. Deciding between using a lighter or a more in-depth capacity assessment approach is contingent on time and resources (FAO, 2010), hence these are the factors which determined our choice for an ultra-light approach.

The report is divided into 5 main sections. Following this introduction section is a brief overview of the methodology used for this capacity assessment exercise in Section 2. This is followed by a discussion on the current status vis-à-vis capacity gaps and constraints across the 3 dimensions of the enabling environment, institutions and the individual level in Section 3. Section 4 outlines implementable capacity development recommendations for consideration by the government in building and strengthening capacities for multi-level coordination structures in the country. Section 5 is the conclusion section

2. METHODOLOGY

Methods used for the capacity assessment exercise took the form of provincial stakeholder workshops (carried out in all of the country's nine provinces) as well as interviews with officials from various state and non-state entities at both the national and subnational levels (i.e. provincial and district levels). An initial comprehensive review of literature formed the foundation for understanding insights obtained from interviews and stakeholder workshops. The literature review also informed the development of data collection tools. Across the three dimensions (of the individual, institutions and enabling environment) at which capacity assessment was carried out, the capacity assessment exercise was guided by three main focal points around (a) what the existing situation is, (b) what the desired situation is, and (c) what needs to be done to achieve the desired situation (see Figure 1). The last two focal points form the recommendations aspect of this analysis.

Figure 1. Capacity assessment framework



Adapted from MQ-SUN (2018)

3. CURRENT STATUS: CAPACITY GAPS AND CONSTRAINTS

3.1. Enabling environment

The enabling environment is characterised by such factors as the policy and regulatory/legislative context as well as the political buy-in of FNS initiatives. Legislativewise, at the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa adopted a rights-based approach to FNS, intrinsically linking people’s right to food to one’s right to life and dignity, and building into the Constitution requirements that food be available, accessible, appropriate and adequate for everyone without discrimination (Ramkisson, 2016). Section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa underscores the right of everyone to access to sufficient food and water, whilst Section 27 (2) emphasises that the State must proactively ensure ‘within its available resources’ and as supported by reasonable legislative and other measures, that these

rights are achieved. Sections 28 and 35 respectively expand on the right to food as a right to basic nutrition for children and as a right for detainees and sentenced prisoners. It is therefore implicit within the current legislative framework and approach to FNS that effective structures and mechanisms to track FNS progress, highlight bottlenecks, raise the profile of FNS issues and hold stakeholders to account must be established, as such a strong rights-based approach can only be actualised and sustained through well-functioning multi-level FNS coordination structures.

Policywise, the framework and scope for the establishment of well-functioning multi-level FNS structures are clearly articulated in both the 2014 National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS) and the 2017 National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP). The 2014 NPFNS, for example, explicitly acknowledges that FNS requires well-managed intersectoral coordination (p6) and it recommended the setting up of a National Food and Nutrition Advisory Committee to be chaired by the Deputy President “comprised of recognised experts from organised agriculture, food security and consumer bodies, as well as climate change and environmental practitioners and representatives of organised communities” (p18). It went on to recommend the formation of similar structures at provincial and district levels to be supported by relevant government departments.

The 2017 NFNSP is much more definitive in the multi-level structures recommended for planning, coordination, mobilisation of resources for investment and the monitoring of progress around FNS. Under Strategic Objective Number 1 (see Appendix 1), the NFNSP proposed an FNS multi-level institutional framework that includes (a) a National Council on FNS to be chaired by the Deputy President, (b) Nine provincial sub-councils on FNS to be chaired by Premiers, and (c) District sub-councils on FNS to be chaired by Mayors. Accountability for the success of these structures at the different levels is therefore envisaged to lie with the proposed chairs at their respective levels. The NFNSP went further to propose the formation of Consultative Forums at all levels (i.e. national, provincial and district), which should meet once every six months to discuss all matters relating to food and nutrition security and attrition at their levels. Through the establishment of the highlighted structures, the NFNSP therefore seeks to ensure visible FNS leadership, improved integration across government departments and strengthening the management of existing FNS programmes at all levels.

It is, however, remarkable that none of the FNS governance structures proposed (at all levels) have been established, with all of the targets behind schedule¹. In fact, according to one senior official (interviewed at the national level) who works in a key department that deals with FNS-related issues, it appears there is no longer zeal and commitment at the highest political level for the establishment of the proposed structures as the mistaken view at that level is that there is already an existence of adequate structures which can deal with FNS issues in the country. It is therefore clear that whilst the policy framework of and scope for the establishment of multi-level FNS coordination structures in the country are well-defined, the urgency for and political will to implement the proposal that are on paper appear lacking.

Two academics interviewed as part of national level consultations also emphasised that the lack of prioritisation of FNS initiatives (at both the national and subnational levels) can simply be read in the limited budgets allocated for FNS-related initiatives, (a point further developed in the next subsection). They noted, for example, that increases in grant payments have not kept up with inflation, with food prices rising by as much as 10% or more in recent years, yet allocation on social grants has increased by less as much. They noted that, looking at the budget presented in February 2019 for instance, the focus seems to be more on one dimension of food security i.e. food production/availability – with relatively huge allocations towards land-reform projects and assistance of emerging farmers to acquire land to farm, yet food and nutrition security is not just a function of food production. They suggested that if the government were to prioritise FNS vis-à-vis the national budget, then this should show in the following five immediate imperatives: (a) removal of VAT charged on nutritious foods identified in the 2018 Woolard Committee report, (b) setting aside of funds to improve the implementation of food safety regulations following the deadly 2017/2018 listeria outbreak, (c) substantial increases in the Child Support Grant, which is the single most important intervention towards reducing child food and nutrition security in the country, (d) increases in funding for research and innovation in the food production, processing and distribution sectors, and (e) increase in funds for drought relief and flood damage in anticipation of future climate change.

Another enabling environment level constraint raised firstly by a renowned FNS scholar interviewed as part of national level key informant interviews, and confirmed by respondents at the subnational level (e.g. extensively discussed during the KZN provincial workshop), is the lack of inclusivity of South Africa's current FNS policy formulation process. The scholar

¹ The National FNS Council was supposed to have been established by June 2017, whilst the Provincial FNS Councils should have been set up by December 2017.

noted that this ultimately sets the ground for the lack of cooperation of non-state actors when it comes to supporting and implementing FNS imperatives.

3.2. Institutional level

From the interviews and stakeholder workshops conducted, main challenges at the institutional level vis-à-vis capacities for multi-level FNS coordination structures in the country include (a) institutions largely working in silos, (b) lack of commitment to established/currently existing FNS-related structures by some key government departments and non-state institutions, (c) human resource constraints, (d) technical resource constraints, and (e) financial resource constraints

The first challenge is a direct result of the current absence of overarching well-functioning multi-level FNS coordinating structures in the country as discussed in the preceding section. In interviews and workshops at both the national and subnational levels, it was clear that there is currently lack of cooperation and convergence among different state and non-state actors vis-à-vis such key FNS activities as FNS information collection, analysis, management and dissemination. This has resulted, for example, in the lack of standardisation of FNS information being collected in different areas, resulting, in most cases, in a large number of poorly targeted and poorly streamlined indicators; as well as different frequencies in collection and dissemination of similar types of FNS information. Furthermore, the lack of proper coordination arrangements have led to challenges around clarity of mandates among different FNS stakeholders, with duplications and overlaps in different aspects of FNS initiatives. In KZN for example, it was noted during the provincial workshop that due to lack of coordination in FNS information collection for instance, the same households were being profiled many times by different departments.

A senior official from a non-state entity interviewed during national-level engagements pointed out that, for government institutions, the problem goes beyond simply lack of coordination but, in some instances, it becomes a matter of real competition and hostile contestation characterised by departments pulling in different directions vis-à-vis implementation of FNS-related policies. The lack of coordination has also led to a perpetuation of misalignment of FNS systems between state and non-state actors. As another non-state official explained during national level interviews:

“(Our organisation) has its own ways of working in terms of how we deliver results, financial management as well as protocol, timelines and what we prioritise. The

government has its own systems. Coming to a common ground to ensure that these processes are aligned, in the absence of clear coordinating FNS structures, is impossible”

The issue of lack of commitment to existing FNS-related structures was a challenge raised at both the national and subnational levels. There are currently a number of multi-sectoral structures where FNS-related issues are advanced at all levels. These include the South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC) and the National Food and Nutrition Security Coordinating Committee (NFNSCC) at the national level, Provincial and Municipal War Rooms on Poverty as well as Provincial and District Integrated Food Security Committees². Using regular attendance of meetings as an indicator of commitment to current structures for example, it was remarkable that the issue of poor attendance by officials from key departments especially at SAVAC and Integrated Food Security Committee meetings was prominent. A discussion with selected SAVAC members, for example, revealed that the committee is not functioning to expected standards as, for instance, it had only met twice in the last 2 years.

A major reason advanced for lack of commitment was heavy workload on officials who are supposed to represent their institutions in these structures. From discussions in provincial workshops in Northern Cape and the Free State for example, it was noted that due to human resource constraints and shortages in personnel (to be discussed in the next subsection) particularly in government institutions, the same people are expected to attend all meetings in all FNS-related platforms which exerts pressure on them given other tasks they will also be expected to cover. This therefore results in some of them not being able to attend some of the meetings for some structures. Another indication of low commitment to FNS-related platforms raised especially at the subnational level was that high-level government officials often delegate attendance of meetings on these platforms to junior officials who, many a time, do not have decision-making powers nor the institutional memory and/or confidence to make meaningful contributions.

There were, however, structures both at the national and subnational levels which are said to be functioning relatively well, and these include the Food and Nutrition Security Coordinating Committee (NFNSCC) at the national level, Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) in KwaZulu Natal, and the Food Security Governmental Work Group in the Western Cape province. The main factor highlighted as contributing to the smooth functioning of these specific structures

² See Appendix 2 for different FNS-related structures and platforms in the country's 9 provinces

was that they are chaired by entities which have strong and unquestioned convening powers e.g. the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) (which sits in the Presidency) in the case of the NFNSCC, and the Premier's offices in the case of the OSS and the Western Cape Food Security Governmental Work Group.

The third institutional challenge around human resource constraints has to do with the lack of not only enough personnel in some key FNS-related government departments, but also lack of adequately skilled personnel in others. In Northern Cape province for example, Department of Health officials interviewed noted that there is a serious lack of dietitians at both provincial and district levels. In the context of an FNS information system, this affects the collection and analysis of information and indicators around diet-related aspects of FNS. In Limpopo province, it was noted that there is currently an average of one FNS coordinator in each district, which is not enough for the efficient and effective carrying out of FNS work in the province. In almost all provinces, and in some key departments at the national level, a major human resource constraint mentioned was the lack of information and communication technology (ICT) technicians. Some institutions noted this as the reason why their digital platforms (on which FNS data, among other information, is released) are not being maintained and have not been updated for a long time.

The fourth challenge raised impinging on capacity at the institutional level has to do with the lack of basic and advanced technical resources. In key informant interviews and workshop discussions, especially at the subnational level, it was noted that basic computers in good working condition as well as slow and/or non-existent internet connection were huge challenges. In two of the three districts selected for project focus in the Free State province for example, the majority of government officials interviewed noted that they do have computers available in offices but internet connection remains a huge challenge. This has had negative effects on information exchange and flow within and across institutions at different levels (e.g. the conveying of information from district to provincial and to national level). Closely linked to this challenge, there were also concerns around the continued reliance on paper-based systems in collecting FNS information. For such FNS-related information systems as the District Health Information System (DHIS) for example it was noted that this has perpetuated the rather long lead time experienced before the information from the subnational level is finally captured onto the system. A senior official in the national Department of Health noted that whilst information is collected monthly at the facility level, it usually takes at least 45 days for data to flow from this lowest level to the national level because of delays in collating and

cleaning the data. In few provinces however, particularly in the Western Cape, North West and Limpopo, Department of Agriculture officials noted that they had begun to extensively use the smart pen in collecting FNS-related data which had gone a long way in quickening the process.

The last constraint raised vis-à-vis the institutional dimension was around financial resources, particularly at the subnational level. In most provinces, it was noted that limited budgets advanced to FNS-related departments every year have seriously hamstrung their activities. Even technical resource constraints discussed in the preceding paragraph were linked to this challenge. Such key aspects of FNS programmes and initiatives as monitoring and evaluation exercises have been affected by lack of enough financial resources. As one official in a key FNS-related department in Northern Cape province articulated:

“We have not (been able) to put measurable impact assessment (arrangements) in place so as to track program shortcomings and successes. Interventions are done but nobody knows how far we are, where we started, and (exactly) how far we have to go”

The issue of low budget for FNS issues was also strongly raised and emphasised during the KZN provincial workshop. It was noted that there is clear lack of budget prioritisation for proposed FNS interventions and programmes. An eminent scholar on FNS in South Africa interviewed as part of national-level key informant interviews noted that the low budget prioritisation for FNS interventions both at national and subnational levels betrays a more serious issue of the lack of political will or impetus to effectively address food and nutrition insecurity as a political priority. He emphasised that FNS issues have not been high on the political agenda in South Africa, with low political priority of food and nutrition security in a context of a myriad of challenges.

3.3. Individual level

At the individual level, key capacity challenges revolved around (a) a poor understanding of FNS-related policy and implementation imperatives, (b) poor understanding of reporting elements, and (c) limited FNS data collection, analysis and poor report writing skills in some instances. With respect to the first and second challenges, most officials (both state and non-state) especially at the subnational level in the majority of provinces, noted that they are really not aware of the policies which support FNS work in the country, let alone any policy changes and/or reviews effected in recent years. As one Assistant Director in a key FNS-related department in the Free State put it:

“Information around food and nutrition security policy is unavailable to us. So...there is a gap. We need to be informed (about) what is in the most recent policy (document) and how to implement the policy...”

Most government officials, even at provincial level, noted that they are not very sure of the FNS elements that they have to report on even if an information system were to be set up in the short term. On limited data and information collection skills, it was noted that this mainly relates to Community Development Workers (CDWs) who are hired in most provinces to administer household profiling forms where poverty and FNS-related data is collected. During the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) provincial workshop for example, it was noted that most of the CDWs are hired and made to work without adequate training to administer the forms resulting in a lot of errors.

4. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

At the *policy level* the following recommendations are advanced:

- a) The government must urgently move towards implementing and actualising proposals on the setting up of multi-level FNS structures as outlined in the 2017 NFNSP. This will be the first critical step towards solving the multi-sectoral coordination problem whereby institutions are currently largely working in silos vis-à-vis FNS-related activities. In establishing the proposed structures, there is need for drawing lessons from the positive factors that have led to the effective and smooth functioning of such internal success stories as OSS, as well as the negative factors which have led to the collapse and/or dysfunctionality of the other existing structures
- b) In implementing proposals in the 2017 NFNSP, the involvement of non-state actors will also be critical. Non-state actors should be adequately represented in all the proposed structures from national, to provincial, to district levels. This will ensure their full participation in FNS policy formulation and implementation going forward and in crafting solutions to food and nutrition insecurity in the country, which will lead to maximum buy-in of FNS initiatives from all key stakeholders. This was one of the key factors in such international success stories like Brazil (cf. Kepple and Segall-Correa, 2017)
- c) Government should increase funding towards FNS initiatives. In essence, the government should increase the annual budget towards FNS activities in all key departments to facilitate the scaling-up of FNS in all departments. Development partners should also be encouraged to commit themselves to supporting key departments to undertake capacity assessments,

and to support capacity building through providing technical expertise and financial resources for FNS activities

At the *institutional level*, the following recommendations are put forward:

- a) The reporting on indicators to be fed into the planned Food and Nutrition Security Information System should be made part of the Key Performance Areas (KPA) of the various institutions involved. As one provincial workshop participant in North West province articulated:

“The (reporting) should be part of KPAs starting at legislature, from the Provincial Members of Executive Councils (MECs) manning FNS-related portfolios, to each head of department, and to district mayors as well. It is only (through) this way that we will get right...”

- b) Hiring skilled personnel and/or adequately equipping available personnel with requisite data/information collection, analysis, management and relevant basic IT skills for those working with such highly technical information as meteorological and hydrological information would be an effective capacity development tool towards building and maintaining an effective multi-level FNS information system.
- c) Government departments should invest in adequate computer equipment and basic internet services especially at the subnational level. This will facilitate the faster movement and sharing of information across different levels. Furthermore, whilst recent advances in technology such as cloud computing and storage may still have to be approved for use in government, the government should seriously consider incorporating these as part of the software infrastructure of the multi-level FNS structures
- d) Institutions may also have to take advantage of advances in mobile technology vis-à-vis data collection and transmission, thereby reducing having to deal with huge loads of paperwork.

At the *individual level*, the following are the key recommendations:

- a) Institutions involved in FNS-related data collection and analysis should adequately train their staff responsible for these activities through refresher courses and capacity building training programmes
- b) The chairs of the proposed FNS structures at different levels (i.e. Deputy Presidency at national level, Premier’s office at provincial level and Mayor’s office at district level) should see to it that stakeholders at their respective levels, particularly key government

departments, familiarise with FNS-related policies, so that individuals with these institutions are well conversant with implementation imperatives.

Appendix 1 provides a clear summary of the opportunities available; capacity gaps and constraints; and capacity development recommendations vis-à-vis the desired situations and steps towards actualising the desired situation across the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacity assessment dimensions.

5. CONCLUSION

As explicitly acknowledged in the 2017 NFNSP, the setting up of well-defined FNS structures which guide the coordination of actions among different stakeholders, FNS information management, and the monitoring of progress vis-à-vis food availability, access, utilisation and stability of supply will be one of the biggest game changers in as far as FNS in the country is concerned. This report set out to explore capacity gaps and constraints as well as sustainable capacity development options across the enabling environment, institutional and individual dimensions towards building and strengthening capacities for multilevel FNS coordination in the country. As the preceding section shows, the establishment of strong multilevel FNS structures is possible, however, it requires political will and commitment at the highest political levels, the building of commitment at the institutional level at both the national and subnational levels, as well as capacity building and training of individuals working in key FNS-related departments and institutions towards the effective execution of their duties.

REFERENCES

FAO, 2010, FAO capacity assessment approach and supporting tools: Discussion draft, http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/291153/Capacity_Assessment_methodology_tools_final_sept2010.doc

FAO, 2015, FAO approaches to capacity development in programming: processes and tools, Learning Module 2, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations

Government of South Africa (GoSA), 2017, Draft National Food and Nutrition Security Plan For South Africa 2017-2022

Kepple, A.W., & Segall-Corrêa, A.M, 2017. Food security monitoring in Brazil and other Latin American countries: Support for governance with the participation of civil society. *Global Food Security* 14: 79-86.

MQ-SUN, 2008, Lesotho multi-sectoral nutrition governance capacity assessment report, Lesotho Food and Nutrition Security Office (FNCO)

Ramkissoo Y, 2017, The right to access to nutritious food in South Africa, South African Human Rights Commission

RFSAN, 2016, Food security information systems review and capacity assessment, Regional Food Security Analysis Network

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Summary of capacity assessment findings

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION			
Existing situation		Desired situation	Steps to desired situation
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Gaps/Constraints</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy framework of and scope for the establishment of multi-level FNS coordination structures in the country well-defined • Progressive legislative environment • SDGs momentum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will to implement policy recommendations appears lacking • Lack of inclusivity of South Africa's FNS policy formulation process towards incorporating views and input from non-state actors. • Seemingly lack of budget prioritisation for FNS interventions and programmes in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of inclusive multilevel structures and forums as outlined in the 2017 NFNSP • FNS issues to be high on the political agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start implementing the 2017 NFNSP recommendations towards the setting up of multilevel FNS coordinating structures and forums as a matter of urgency • Increase the annual budget towards FNS activities in all key departments

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION			
Existing situation		Desired situation	Steps to desired situation
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Gaps/Constraints</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of FNS-related structures already – (Lessons on both positive & negative fronts) • Supportive international partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of cooperation and convergence among different state and non-state actors vis-à-vis most FNS activities • Serious lack of commitment to established/currently existing FNS-related multi-sectoral structures by key state and non-state entities at both the national and subnational levels • Human, financial and technical resources insufficient and severely lacking to support operational activities in key FNS-related departments especially at the subnational level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-level FNS structures which promote cooperation and coordination of activities among different state and non-state actors • State and non-state entities totally committed to established multisectoral FNS coordination structures at all levels • Adequate human, financial and technical resources in key FNS-related departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start implementing the 2017 NFNSP recommendations towards the setting up of multilevel FNS coordinating structures and forums as a matter of urgency • Increase the annual budget towards FNS activities in all key departments • Reporting on indicators to be fed into the planned FNSIS should be made part of the Key Performance Areas (KPA) of the various institutions involved • Government departments should invest in relevant computer equipment and basic internet services especially at the subnational level. • Development partners should be encouraged to commit themselves to supporting all key departments to undertake capacity assessments, and to support capacity building through technical expertise and financial resources for FNS activities

INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION			
Existing situation		Desired situation	Steps to desired situation
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Gaps/Constraints</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel in various state and non-state entities willing to learn and know more around FNS policies and how to implement them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor understanding of FNS-related policy and implementation imperatives in government departments especially at the subnational level Poor understanding of reporting elements Limited FNS data collection, analysis and poor report writing skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel in FNS-related state and non-state entities with good understanding of FNS policies at all levels and sound knowledge and skill on how to implement them Personnel well-trained in FNS-data collection, analysis and report writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutions involved in FNS-related data collection and analysis to adequately train their staff responsible for these activities through refresher courses and capacity building training programmes Chairs of proposed FNS structures at different levels to see to it that stakeholders at their respective levels, particularly key government departments, familiarise with FNS-related policies, so that individuals within these institutions are well conversant with implementation imperatives.

Appendix 2. FNS-related structures and platforms at national and provincial levels

National/Province	FNS-related structures/platforms
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Food and Nutrition Security (Technical) Coordinating Committee • South African Vulnerability Assessment Committee (SAVAC)
Western Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Food Security Work Group • Community Projects Allocation Committee (CPAC)
KwaZulu Natal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) • Radical Agrarian Socio-Economic Transformation (RASET) • Regional Malnutrition Meetings
Free State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Committee (IFSNC) • Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Task Teams (district level)
Northern Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFSNC • Outcome 7 Cluster • Social and Political Cluster • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms
Eastern Cape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms • Integrated School Health Programme Committee
North West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Task Team • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms
Limpopo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFSNC • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms
Mpumalanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IFSNC • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms
Gauteng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial and District Anti-Poverty War Room Platforms

Appendix 3. NFNSP Strategic Objective 1

Strategic Objective 1: Establish a multi-sectoral governance and leadership structure for coordinating FNS policies and programmes							
Strategic intervention	Specific activities	Responsibility	Output	Output indicator	Baseline	Target 2019	Target 2022
Establish multisectoral FNS council	a Facilitate the establishment of the FNS Council, chaired by the Deputy President	Office of the Deputy President Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)	FNS Council established, chaired by the Deputy President	FNS is envisioned in the Food and Nutrition Security Policy of 2013	FNS Council not yet in place.	FNS Council established by June 2017 FNS Council convenes bi-annually (to provide oversight and ensure accountability for the delivery of food and nutrition security programmes)	Improved coordination of Government Food and Nutrition Security programmes resulting from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNS Council convening bi-annually to provide oversight for the delivery of Food and Nutrition Security programmes • FNS Council holding government departments accountable for coherent delivery of Food and Nutrition Security programmes across all government departments • FNS Council leading resource mobilisation efforts for the delivery of Food and Nutrition Security programmes

Strategic Objective 1: Establish a multi-sectoral governance and leadership structure for coordinating FNS policies and programmes							
Strategic intervention	Specific activities	Responsibility	Output	Output indicator	Baseline	Target 2019	Target 2022
Establish and operationalise an integrated FNS delivery structure	Facilitate the establishment of the Provincial and Districts Councils, chaired by Premiers and Mayors	Offices of the Premiers National council Provincial spheres of government	Provincial Council established, chaired by the Offices of the Premier Deputy president, minister, premier (chair of the provincial structure) and premier's delegates (MEC) Premiers, MEC's (HOD), District/	Provincial FNS Council approved by the Offices of the Premiers	Provincial FNS Councils not yet in place	Provincial FNS Councils established by December 2017, Provincial FNS Councils provide oversight and ensure accountability for the delivery of food and nutrition security	Improved delivery of Government Food and Nutrition Security programmes resulting from the effectiveness of Provincial FNS Councils

		Role players	metro maybe the chairperson of the local structure (MMC's of agriculture) and CD's from provincial government NGO's, Civil society, business, labour, organised agriculture, SOE's				
		Office of the Mayors	District FNS Councils established, chaired by the Offices of the Mayors	District FNS Council approved by the Offices of the Mayors	District FNS Councils not yet in place	District FNS councils established in 27 priority districts by March 2018, modelled on the Operation Sukuma Sakhe (OSS) approach of the government of KZN District FNS Councils convened in 44 districts	Improved delivery of Government Food and Nutrition Security programmes in 40 Districts. resulting from the effectiveness of District FNS Councils

						(excluding Metros) to track progress with the implementation of Food and nutrition Security Programmes	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--