

2021



BOTSWANA FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION DRAFT PATHWAY

1. Background

Food systems are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Without eliminating hunger and improving the health and nutrition of the world's population, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be effectively realized (United Nations Environment Programme, 2019). Achieving these objectives is also fundamentally connected to the global challenge of reducing environmental impacts from the production and consumption of food. Designing and implementing sustainable food systems policies and programmes in a systemic way can help achieve at least 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNEP, 2016). The challenges involved with building truly sustainable food systems are multidimensional and interrelated, and thus require a holistic approach. Governments at all levels face increasing difficulty in their efforts to achieve sustainable food systems. This is primarily explained by the fragmented nature of, and silo approach to, food and agriculture policies (Ingram, Ericksen, and Liverman, 2012) and the tendency of institutions to try to solve food insecurity challenges by focusing mainly on production-level approaches (TEEB, 2018). As a result, food system problems are often tackled through isolated interventions, with a focus on end-of-pipe solutions rather than root causes.

Botswana's food system like the rest of the world is facing many challenges and there is need to take specific action to promote development of smart and resilient systems, ensuring food safety, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is need to develop a plan to address challenges of the food systems. This plan will explore the food systems, identify specific opportunities and challenges, discuss synergies and different thematic areas and elements of food systems and aim to outline a roadmap toward more sustainable food systems in Botswana. We have reached a point where better focus, collaboration, coordination, and increased

investment and organizational capability, can take the national food system to the next level. The Food Systems Pathway provides the road map to take us there. The goal is to increase the vitality and resiliency of our food system and to identify financing strategies and mechanisms to support a more equitable, health-promoting, and accessible food system for all. It is in this light that it was realised that the preparation on the Pathway was crucial after a series of dialogues conducted throughout the country.

The purpose of the Food Systems Pathway is to support a resilient, prosperous, equitable and sustainable food. It calls for strategic leadership and investment in all aspects of the food system, from growing to distribution, and to many types of customers, from individual to retail and institutional purchasers. This approach will increase access to healthy locally grown food for those most in need, as well as grow new markets for our farms, businesses, and food and agricultural entrepreneurs. Combined with increasing knowledge about the importance of agriculture to our country and the ways to access, prepare and eat these foods; training the next generation of farmers and workers; and incubating new technologies that will make our food system the most sustainable together we can achieve these goals. The benefits of developing such a plan are that it will highlight identified gaps and priority actions, provide a roadmap for action and integrate the full spectrum of food system issues within a single policy framework.

This document is a draft of the Botswana Pathway for transforming food systems. It was developed using information gathered through a series of dialogues conducted throughout the agricultural districts in the country and other dialogues organised by different organizations. A fully fledged Implementation Plan that describes the organizations and partners already working in the targeted areas, innovative models, and what is needed to reach scale and impact through investments in infrastructure, programs and organizational capacity will be developed at a later stage (post summit).

These dialogues were an effort to engage stakeholders so that they provide input on gaps and game-changing solutions in our national food system. Its development will involve the engagement of partners and potential investors in moving the plan to implementation, with different partners taking on various implementation roles. The involvement and buy-in from the Government to adopt systemic change is valuable, given their task in setting the institutional and regulatory framework. Without diverse perspectives and sufficient engagement among food systems actors, it will be almost impossible to minimize trade-offs and promote viable solutions to food systems challenges. The final Pathway will be a living and fluid document and the coordinator of the implementation will continue to identify emerging issues and areas of opportunity; convene, connect and coordinate stakeholders, funders and others; set up a metrics system; and communicate about and advocate for our food system.

2. Identified Gaps

The following section represents a mix of gaps identified during the dialogues. However, during the implementation of the plan focus on a certain number of key issues that are most likely to bring about “quick wins” might be considered. This can help to build momentum, as stakeholders may lose interest in the process if they do not see tangible results in the short term. Nevertheless, any focus on quick wins should be in the context of a systems-wide plan with medium-to-long-term objectives and goals. Themes that emerged from the dialogues covered the following: agriculture production; agriculture infrastructure; healthy communities; economic prosperity; marketing/awareness; and sustainability. Table 1 below summarises the challenges of Botswana food system by thematic areas.

Table 1: Summary of Challenges by Thematic Areas

THEMATIC AREA	CHALLENGES
Agriculture/Food Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both rural and urban farmers have difficulty accessing resources such as financing and land. This is true for beginning farmers as well as farmers wanting to expand operations • Business planning, mentoring and market information • Land conservation and resource stewardship needed for agriculture at all scales and for a healthy, sustainable local food system • Management of food losses and waste
Agricultural Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation logistics and road maintenance/improvements along with public transportation to outlying areas • Needed facilities: cold storage/freezer space, local distribution network, aggregation, packaging, processing for produce • efficient water access/distribution; waste remediation • Reliable broadband access needed for farming and market access • Lack of coordinated sensible, supportive legislation
Economic Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce development and training programs needed to develop the next generation of farmers • Access to markets needed for small and mid-scale farmers, especially to connect with institutional customers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion/development of processing and distribution sites, including for job generation in low-income communities • A sustainable funding vehicle that supports key social, educational, and emergency food programs • Economics must work for farmers and ranchers
Healthy Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many children, school is the only place they get fresh food and more support is needed for school and programs to be better connected & coordinated • Many people lack knowledge of where to access healthy foods, and lack transportation access to these foods • Even when access to healthy food is available, nutrition and cooking education is needed to establish healthy eating habits • Affordability of healthy foods is a challenge for many
Marketing/Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More awareness needed on career pathways and opportunities for new farmers • More education needed on food access and healthy foods, and better communications, especially in low-income neighbourhoods
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought has underscored the need for agriculture at all scales to utilize water and energy conservation strategies and technologies • Increased collection, recycling and resource

	<p>recapture, and turning waste into energy to reduce waste and hunger and create new economic opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy is key to making this work sustainable; continued buy-in and support is crucial • Better communication across service agencies needed to create more efficiency in services
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3.0 The Food System Pathway’s Thematic Areas, Goals & Action

The creation of a Pathway for Sustainable Food Systems by the Government and food systems stakeholders is viewed as a significant step because it establishes an official governmental mechanism for presenting a food systems agenda and trajectory for the food and agriculture sector. A Pathway for sustainable food systems will connect existing policies that impact or are impacted by food systems activities to support movement beyond simple siloed interventions to an integrated and comprehensive multi-stakeholder effort. Moreover, the Pathway should create a joint vision concerning the expected sustainable food systems outcomes to be achieved (long-term vision), with a clear timeframe upon which stakeholders agree. At the same time, it should specify ways for managing short and medium-term necessities and change (Dalal-Clayton and Bass, 2006). The selection of priority areas for the Pathway was based on the country’s development needs.

Alongside the Pathway there is need to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework. The monitoring and evaluation of progress towards sustainable food systems provides accountability for those parties and stakeholders involved and highlights the achievements and merits of the collaborative

actions undertaken for food systems transformation. In addition, monitoring and reviewing the actions will allow institutions to better adapt to a complex environment of changing social, economic, political, and climatic conditions (Termeer et al., 2018). It is important to note that that this will be covered when the fully fledged plan is developed. Monitoring of progress entails the generation of data which could be collected through our food systems. In the absence of such data information can be obtained from research institutes, health facilities (e.g., hospitals or insurance companies), education systems (e.g., school programmes), economic institutes, and smallholder associations. Encouraging collaboration among food systems actors will foster information sharing and discussion to collect data, understand what already exists, and suggest methods for recording information (e.g., creation of an official food knowledge system). Table 2 below summarises game-changing solutions for Botswana food system by objective and thematic areas.

Table 2: Summary Game-Changing Solutions by Objectives and Thematic Areas

THEMATIC AREA	OBJECTIVES	GAME-CHANGING SOLUTIONS
Food production	Increase sustainable, climate-resilient food production and increased productivity from agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of post-harvest, storage, processing and consumption food losses. • Provision of infrastructure along the food value chain. • Promote agriculture finance and investment.
Value creation and markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sustainable value creation and private sector development in the food sector that ensures stable access to healthy and safe food and reduces food waste. • Promote regional and international trade in agriculture commodities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide links to market networks, especially for smallholder farmers, women and the youth, to stimulate food production. • Adoption of affordable processes to lower transaction costs. • Establishment of processing and value addition facilities.
Nutrition and diet	Improve nutrition and sustainable consumption patterns due to improved knowledge and access to healthy and varied diets, safe food and clean drinking water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include of indigenous foods in the local food systems. • Promote home grown school feeding. • Provide nutrition and food safety education along the food chain, including street

		<p>vendors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop food dietary guidelines for the vulnerable groups including the elderly. • Promote fortification of food commodities.
Job creation	Promote of decent employment, opportunities for fair, productive and secure work, occupational health and safety as well as social protection schemes for improved performance and productivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create decent employment in the whole food value chain, including at production level, so as to make the jobs attractive to the youth.
Technology Adoption and ICT	Support the development and deployment of new technologies that help food and agriculture to adapt to changing environmental conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt disruptive technologies to transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture. • Expand existing farmer training programmes to include ICT. • Reform extension service to make it more efficient and effective.
Policy and governance	Strengthen institutional capacity for long-term food system governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform policies, acts and standards for realignment and closing of existing gaps. • Intensive mind-set change

		<p>towards the reduction of dependency syndrome and the drive towards the treatment of agriculture as a business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide psychosocial support and economic empowerment to social safety nets beneficiaries to reduce dependency.
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4. Funding

This Pathway is a national investment strategy and should be viewed as an opportunity for the country to gather and focus investment on pivotal priorities, including improving the capacity of the non-governmental sector working on healthy food system activities. There will be a need for Government to assist stakeholders in identifying and successfully competing for these resources and increasing the visibility of the food system's investment opportunities. This will in turn help generate resources for the Pathway's implementation. Funding the implementation of the Pathway requires financing strategies that would help generate new levels of more integrated investment in the food system's organizational, infrastructure and programmatic capacity to reach scale and impact matched to the needs and opportunities, and for sustaining efforts over the long-term. Effectiveness of these strategies will be based on proactive efforts to catalyze existing underutilized resources, as a starting point.

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

This draft Food System's Pathway is the first to be developed for Botswana. As shown throughout this document, the food system is big, complex and dynamic. Analysis of the status of our food system reflects the large disconnects that exist as demonstrated by the great abundance of our food and that little of this abundance makes its way directly to markets and consumers within the country and the reality that many in our communities suffer from high, chronic levels of hunger and food insecurity and limited access to fresh, locally grown healthy foods. There are opportunities to address these challenges by leveraging our expanding innovative food system assets and creating a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable food system. The Pathway identifies several priority areas that are actionable; work that can be accomplished if we all work to our strengths with shared purpose. While the Pathway provides an integrated framework that links the specific strategies and recommended actions of its major goals,

implementation needs to focus on the areas where we can connect the greatest need with the greatest impact and where we can accelerate the excellent and innovative work that is already going well. The Pathway provides the roadmap for this work.

The development of the Pathway has made clear that there is a great deal of momentum for this work and support for the collaboration, coordination and investment needed to bring food system goals to fruition. There are many willing partners ready to carry the work forward, as well as important roles for each of the partners to play. We need to show progress and ensure that our leaders and communities are engaged across the country. The nexus will be in how we work together moving forward.

A fully fledged Pathway needs to be developed, validated and launched. Following this the Leadership needs to be activated to ensure action. The immediate next steps will be to disseminate the Pathway through the communications networks and other partners, including briefings for selected officials, civic and community organizations, non-profits and other interested parties and activate a committee to take a leadership role in implementing the plan. A dedicated organizational function is needed if this plan is to be successfully implemented. The coordinator will have to connect and convene the partners and food system stakeholders; oversee the progress of the Plan; support local organizations, agencies, farmers and businesses; share information; and catalyse activity. Over the course of the coming year, the following activities should occur:

- Engage strategic partners in implementation of the Pathway.
- Set up the metrics system and identify data to be collected for the tracking system. Track the progress of action recommendations as implementation begins. Develop annual metrics, taking into consideration where investments are being directed.
- Conduct research to fill key data gaps. For example, in order to increase institutional procurement of locally-grown foods, better understanding is

needed of procurement policies and practices by schools, hospitals and local governments. Identification of emerging models, best practices, policy innovation and funding opportunities is another area of research to be conducted, followed by communication of these findings to the community and to implementation partners.

- Identify emerging issues of relevance and areas of opportunity that will affect the implementation of the Pathway and suggest future areas of potential action and investment.
- Continue to convene and connect food system stakeholders and interested partners. The Pathway coordinator will need to facilitate networking, convening, and communications on food system innovations and funding sources as well as respond to requests for information. This is a way to keep the momentum building for the Pathway.
- Report back to the Community and Champions Committee on the progress of the Pathway.

References

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