

Namibia National Housing Programme – “Build Together”

Assessment of the effectiveness of the programme



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Shelter Situation Analysis

Shelter affects every aspect of the lives of women and men. As indicated by the FEANTSA (1998), if one cannot gain access to decent shelter, then one is not allowed to exercise other fundamental social rights, such as the right to health and to the protection of the family, the right to dignity and the right to education. Moreover, FEANTSA further argues that, an adequate provision of decent shelter is essential to the stability and unity of society.

The government of Namibia is committed to the principle of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlement development (MRLGH, 2000). Several strategies were formulated to address the enormous housing need in Namibia e.g. the National Housing Policy 1991 and the National Housing Development Act 2000. However, according to the draft National White Paper on Housing, Namibia’s housing delivery is characterized by many challenges especially a lack of financial support for the low income. It is further alleged, in the National Plan of Action of 1996 (National Habitat II Committee), that the private sector is not interested in the lower end of the market, because of the assumed high risk involved for return on

capital and the cost of administering small loans. Therefore, the Build Together Programme (BTP) has become the main vehicle for the provision of low income housing in Namibia. However, the programme is faced with many issues and challenges. It is claimed that the programme is incurring losses due to abuse by Regional Councils (RCs)/ Local Authorities (LAs) and individual beneficiaries and that the programme is not used for the purpose it was intended for. There is evident in the poor performance of the programme in parts of the country. As the facilitator in housing, the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) has the capacity and capability, to take an active part in the solution of the problem. This can be done through an assessment of the BTP and to develop a 'program improvement plan' in improving the performance of the BTP.

Basic General Data

Geography and Administration

Namibia, officially the Republic of Namibia, is situated on Africa's south-western seaboard, and is bordered in the west by the Atlantic Ocean, in the east by Botswana and Zambia, in the south by South Africa and in the north by Angola.

With a surface area of 824,268km², Namibia is the 31st largest country in the world. The country is divided into 13 administration regions, Caprivi, Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Kavango, Khomas, Kunene, Ohangwena, Omaheke, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa.



The capital of Namibia Windhoek, has a population of 233,529 (2001 census), and is situated in the central highlands. Other main cities are, Grootfontein, Katima

Mulilo, Keetmanshoop, Luderitz, Ondangwa, Oranjemund, Oshakati, Otjiwarongo, Swakopmund, Tsumeb, and Walvis Bay. The country's terrain varies from coastal desert to semi-arid mountains and plateaus. The climate is hot semi desert and cool high plateau (www.wikipedia.com).

Namibians are of diverse ethnic origins. The principal groups are the Owambo (50%), Kavango (9%), Herero/ Himba (8,5%), Damara (7%), Nama (5%), Mixed race – colored and Rehoboth baster (7%), White – Afrikaner, German and Portuguese (6%), Caprivian (4%), San (3%) and Tswana (0,5%). The languages spoken are English (official), Afrikaans, German, Oshiwambo, Herero, Nama/ Damara, and other indigenous languages.

Namibia is a multiparty, multiracial democracy, with an elected president for a 5 year term. The constitution established a bicameral Parliament and provides for general elections every 5 years (party list system on a proportional basis) and regional elections (within popularly elected Regional Councils) every 6 years. The three branches of government (executive, legislative and judicial) facilitates checks and balances, and there is also provision for judicial review. The judicial structure in Namibia largely parallels that of South Africa and comprises a supreme court, the high court, and lower courts. Roman – Dutch law has been the common law of the since 1919.

Demography and Health

The report of the Namibia Households Income & Expenditure Survey 2003/2004 (NHIES 2006:9) states that Namibia has a population of 1.985 million, with 34.7% living in urban areas. The survey also shows that 40% of the Namibian population is under the age of 15, and 51.2% are below the age of 19 years. Only 8% of the inhabitants are older than 75 years. The population growth rate is 2.6% per annum. Notwithstanding the relatively small population, the growth rate will impact the planning of housing. Life expectancy is estimated at 49 years. This shows a decrease from 61 years in 1991 (USAID 2005). In 2000 – 2001, AIDS related deaths accounted for 50 percent of individuals aged 15 – 49. This has also exacerbated the problem of orphans. A 2001, census recorded that there is 87,587 orphans and other vulnerable children in Namibia. This number was projected to reach 114,500 by 2003 (USAID 2005).

Economy

The following are statistics on the economy of Namibia.

GDP (PPP) : \$14.23 billion (2005 est.)	GDP growth : 3.5% (2005 est.)
GDP per capita : \$7,000 (2005 est.)	Inflation (CPIC) : 2.3% (2005 est.)
GDP by sector : Agriculture: 9.7%, Industry: 31.5%, Services: 58.8% (2005 est.)	Population : 34% of the population live on Below poverty Line \$1 per day and 55.8% live on \$2 per day
Labour force : 820,000 (2005 est.)	Unemployment : 35% (98 est.)
Labour force by occupation : Agriculture: 47%, Industry: 20%, services: 33% (99 est.)	Main industries : meatpacking, fish processing, dairy products, mining (diamonds, lead, zinc, tin, silver, tungsten, uranium, copper)

Shelter Related Fact and Figures

Access to Shelter

In 2003 the MRLGHRD estimated that Namibia would require a total of 300,000 low-income housing units in rural and urban areas up to the year 2030. The 2001 national census further ascertained that effective demand for housing continues to increase countrywide.

In Namibia 60% of housing units are occupied by owners without any mortgage. This phenomenon is more common in rural areas (88%) than in urban areas (35%). Housing units occupied by owners with mortgage are found mainly in urban areas (31%). Likewise, households which reside in rented dwellings not tied to their jobs are found mainly in the urban areas. About 10% of the households live in dwellings provided by employers.

Throughout Namibia, first world standards in terms of municipal services are almost applied everywhere (irrespective of appropriateness or affordability). This is one of the contributing factors to high land and house costs. Affordability on the part of the homeless is one of the significant constraints when it comes to housing delivery in Namibia. Due to poverty, the majority of the population do not have adequate income, and thus, cannot afford decent shelter. Public policy, requires an individual or a household no more than 25% of their monthly income on housing.

Housing construction is mainly done by qualified builders. However, in the case of the low-income, youth groups or self-help groups are equipped with necessary skills and usually do the construction. Building materials are very expensive as it is

mainly imported from South Africa. Materials use for construction is mainly bricks, cement and corrugated iron. Nevertheless, people are also encouraged to use other alternative building materials to cut on the cost. Thus, the MRLGHRD constructed a research centre to demonstrate and test various technologies in the fields of water, sanitation, building materials and energy, which are suitable to Namibia's conditions.

Land tenure systems in Namibia include customary land rights, freehold title or private ownership, leasehold title, permission to occupy (PTO), starter title, land hold title, prescription, informal tenure, and land owned by government or local authorities. The land tenure in Namibia is stable, especially in urban setting, except in rural areas where a leasehold system need to be used, particularly to further rural housing development efforts.

Access to and cost of Basic Services/ Infrastructure

The Namibian Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2003/2004 indicates that piped water is the main source of drinking water for households in Namibia, accounting for 75% of all households. According to the 2001 census, 54.2% of Namibians do not have access to flush toilets, a situation that calls for a drastic move to provide sanitation facilities to communities. Access to energy sources for cooking and lighting is dominated by wood, as 64.6% of all households use biomass for cooking purposes and 35.4% use electricity for lighting. Basic services are expensive for most people.

Access to and cost of Education

Education has been extended in varying degrees to most rural areas in recent years. The estimated adult literacy rate was relatively high at 81% (2001 census). The cost of primary and secondary education in Namibia is affordable and it is also public policy for government to pay school fees for the destitute. However, tertiary education is unaffordable to most. It is important to note that the number of Namibians who are functionally literate and have the skills that the labour market needs is significantly fewer.

Housing Policy

Namibia people gained independence in March 1990. Physically segregated urban settlements were inherited from the apartheid regime, under which the majority of

low-income groups could not afford low-cost housing and the vast majority of women had no access to shelter. Therefore, the government made housing one of the four top development priorities to bring about integrated development. The Namibian Constitution provides a framework for legislation and policies to safeguard equal right to shelter for every Namibian. Government commitment in the area of housing provision led to the formulation of the National Housing Policy which was approved by Cabinet in July 1991. The policy encouraged partnerships between the public, private and community sectors in housing development and is currently under review to be in line with the decentralization policy. The central goal of the National Housing Policy is:

“To make resources available for the development of infrastructure & facilities so that every Namibian family will be given a fair opportunity to acquire land with water, energy and a waste disposal system, and to facilitate access to shelter in suitable locations at costs and standards which are affordable to the family on the one hand and the nation on the other hand”.

With the assistance of UNDP and UNCHS, Namibia has developed a shelter strategy which led to the formulation and implementation of the National Housing Programme, known as the ‘Build Together’. The BTP commenced during 1992/1993 financial year and is an umbrella body of four sub-programmes namely:

Urban/rural housing loans	facilitate housing loans to low-income families earning below N\$3,000 (±US\$428) + low and middle income families with no access to credit from banks and NHE due to locality. Loans are to construct new houses + upgrading of existing houses.
Social housing	facilitate housing provision for welfare cases such as the pensioners, destitute and people living with disabilities on an economical sustainable basis through a cross subsidization system.
Informal settlement upgrading	provision of communal basic services such as water, roads, sewerage and electrical reticulation in informal settlement areas.
Single quarter’s transformation	demolish single quarters and erect new houses for the affected residents. This is implemented on a cost recovery basis and the principles of the urban/ rural housing loans are applied.

The BTP was awarded the Habitat Scroll of Honour in 1993 and World Habitat award in 1994. Upon formulation of the decentralization policy in 1998, the BTP was decentralized to the RCs/ LAs during 1998/1999 financial year.

Actors in Shelter Delivery and their Roles

The following are the sectors and institutions involved in housing delivery:

MRLGHRD	Facilitate housing provision and responsible for policy formulation
RCs/ LAs	Provision of land + housing
National Housing Enterprise (NHE)	Parastatal of the MRLGHRD providing housing for the low and middle income.
National Housing Action Group (NHAG)	A non-governmental organization (NGO) working with low-income communities to establish saving schemes in order to assist with the servicing of land and construction of houses
Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)	A local community based organization (CBO), which demonstrated remarkably the ability of the poor to create their own solutions to the housing challenges facing Namibia today. The government annually contribute N\$1mill. (±142,857 to the Twahangana Fund of the SDFN for housing activities.
Financial Institutions, Private Developers, Real Estate	Banks provide housing finance for middle and high income. Private Developers and Real Estate function in the open market and also provide housing for middle and high income.

The Division of Housing at MRLGHRD

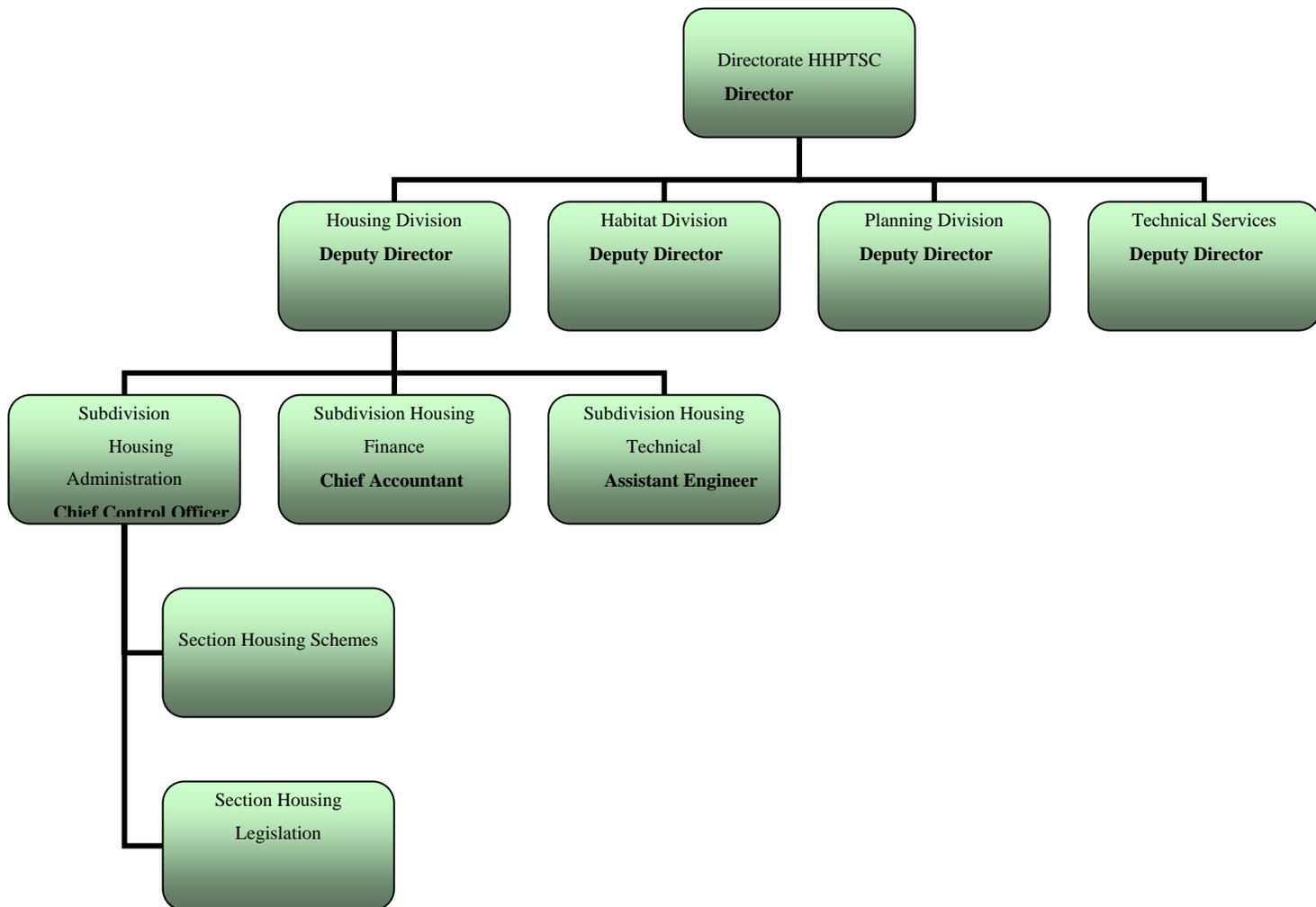
The Division Housing of the Directorate of HHPTSC is housed in the MRLGHRD and was established in 1990/ 1991 to address issues of shelter and human settlement development. The mission statement of this housing sector is:

“To provide support to Regional Councils and Local Authorities to ensure efficient, effective, adequate and affordable housing for all Namibians with particular emphasis on the low-income group of the population and to improve social and living conditions of the community within the concept of sustainable development”.

The Division Housing is headed by a Deputy Director and has three legs viz., Housing Administration, Housing Finance and Housing Technical Services. The author of this paper is a Chief Control Officer heading Subdivision Housing Administration, that consist of Sections Housing Schemes and Housing Legislation. The Division is responsible for:

- Facilitating policy formulation for the housing sector
- Develop strategies to improve housing conditions of the people
- Facilitate the implementation of the national housing programme
- Monitor the sustainable implementation of the national housing programme
- Provide support and capacity building to the RCs and LAs on the sustainable implementation of the programme

The following is the orgnaogram of the Directorate Housing, Habitat, Planning and Technical Services coordination.



Critiques of the Build Together Programme

As previously mentioned the implementation of the Build Together National Housing Programme commenced during the 1992/1993 financial year. As could be expected of a new programme that is radically different from conventional forms of housing development, the Ministry faced many institutional and procedural bottlenecks. Many of these problems have been overcome but some remain to be solved. The launching of the decentralization policy for Namibia during 1998 has necessitated the decentralization of housing provision to the Regional Councils and Local Authorities. The programme was thus decentralized through delegation to these sub national levels during the 1998/1999 financial year. The government role has therefore changed from being involved directly in the construction to that of facilitator. However, the phases before decentralization (from 1992/1993 to 1997/1998 financial years) are still administered by the Housing Division. The reason being that most of the houses were incomplete, due to mostly mismanagement of funds by the individual beneficiaries, and the Ministry firstly needed to complete the houses before transferring the said phases to the sub national levels. The following are some of the major problems that are contributing to the poor performance of the BTP:

Revolving Fund

In order to sustain the programme over the long term and reduce the dependency on central government, the National Housing Development Act requires Regional Councils and Local Authorities to establish housing revolving funds. The proceeds of housing revolving funds will be used to allocate future loans for housing purposes and to some extent other housing activities (e.g. servicing of plots, purchasing of a truck to transport building materials etc.). In this case the sub national levels are expected to open a disbursement account (for payments of house construction activities) and a receipt account (for repayment of loans by beneficiaries). However, most of the RCs/LAs have failed to establish these accounts and usually leads to unaccountability of funds meant to solve the housing challenge of the poor. Without a receipt account, it might also be difficult to account for loan repayment by beneficiaries.

Human Resources

The sub national levels are arguing that the decentralization of the BTP was not done fully as no staffs were transferred to administer the programme. However, the Local Authorities' Act stipulates that housing provision is one of the functions of the LAs and that they should develop initiatives to house their communities. Many RCs/LAs are struggling with the administration of the BTP as no permanent staffs are appointed to deal with this enormous task. This has therefore a negative impact on the performance of the programme.

Availability of Affordable Serviced Plots

The majority of the poor people cannot afford land as it is very expensive. Since Local Authorities own the land in urban areas of the country, they are responsible for the development of affordable serviced land through participative measures. Some LAs have brought a significant input into the programme by providing affordable land to the BTP beneficiaries, which tremendously reduced the cost in relation to commercial costs. This happens only in some LAs and a solution in this regard needs to be found on how to provide affordable land to the low and ultra-low income groups of Namibia. The other problem is the high cost for infrastructure development, and the RCs/ LAs depends on central government limited development budget for their development projects. Thus in most cases, funds earmarked for the BTP and that are already transferred to the sub national levels are not utilized in the timeframe stipulated (even for more than 3 years) due to lack of serviced plots.

Housing Construction

Beneficiaries and other interest groups have made several complain that most houses build under the BTP are of poor quality. Quality should not be compromised although these houses belong to the poor as the burden will still come back to the government.

Budget

Housing was identified as one of the development priorities; however when it comes to budgeting priority to housing is forgotten. Funds given to the BT programme is too limited, especially to the social housing and informal settlement sub-programme. As the BTP has become the main vehicle in housing the poor, consideration should

be given in the sufficient budget allocation to the housing sector in order to realize Vision 2030.

General administration

The Ministry and some of the local newspapers are undated with reports of mismanagement of the BTP by the RCs/LAs. There are complains of nepotism, tribalism, corruption, to name a few in the allocation of individual housing loans. Building materials for the construction of houses are missing from the warehouses, and members of the public held several demonstrations in this regard to air their grievances. Administration of the programme is not done correctly by some of the RCs/LAs in accordance with the stipulated rules and regulations.

The Ministry as the one responsible for the support of the RCs/LAs, capacity building to the staff and monitoring of the sustainable implementation of the programme, introduced over the years different measures on how best the BTP can be administered. ‘BTP workshops’ are held annually where the different stakeholders can assess progress of the programme, share knowledge, identify problems/challenges and to come up with solutions. However, the problems and challenges are still many and perhaps, there is a need in improving or changing the way the programme is administered.

Assessment of the Build Together Program

Given the above it is proposed for an assessment of the programme to be done, in order to come up with suggestions on how best the BTP could be improved. Public/Private Partnership is encouraged; however it is a well known fact that this is far from realization especially in the aspect of housing the poor. Therefore, the government and all the stakeholders involved in housing the poor should strive to improve on what is available.

It is proposed for the assessment to be done using the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)¹, which can assist to improve the quality, and therefore the relevance, feasibility and sustainability of development cooperation.

¹ LFA is an instrument for objective oriented planning of projects that improves the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a development intervention. This tool is now widely used by most organizations, when assessing, and making follow-ups and evaluations of projects/ programmes.

SIDA, USAID and German GTZ to name a few, highly encourages the use of LFA when their counterparts are planning, implementing and evaluating a process of change, a project/ programme. Therefore, the LFA will be a useful and good tool in assessing the BTP.

The following is the goal, purpose and outputs intended for the assessment:

Goal	BTP housing Namibians towards Vision 2030
Purpose	Improvement of the BTP performance in housing the poor of Namibia
Outputs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of the BTP in making sure that it is working well for the Namibian people 2. Development of a program improvement plan to follow up and improve the BTP performance

The following is a SWOT analysis examining the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats that the assessment might face:

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment is part of the 5 year strategic plan of the Division. • Commitment from management in improvement of the programme. 	<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing pressure from members of the public and politicians to address the grievances regarding the BTP.
<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Human Resources (if assessment to be done by Division), however this could be outsourced to be done by an independent consultant 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget cuts, but assistance could be requested from the development partners • Fear of consultant not delivering on time or deliver work of not good quality

Action Plan

The following are the activities that I intend to do -

Short term basis:

- Present proposal to management and obtain approval thereof.
- Obtain inputs/ comments and adjust proposal accordingly if need be.
- Develop Terms of Reference for the assessment.
- Obtain Tender Board Approval if there is a need for appointment of a Consultant.
- Commence with the assessment of the BTP.
- Finalization of assessment + reporting.
- Development of a program improvement plan.

Long term basis

- Improvement of the Build Together Programme.
- Monitoring, follow-up and evaluation of the programme using the LFA.

References

MRLGH

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