

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to a mixture of supply and demand factors, Namibia continues to battle with a high backlog in the supply of affordable serviced land and housing infrastructure. On the supply side, general investments in land servicing and housing has been below the level required to adequately meet the ever-growing demand or need for these essential commodities and opportunities. The main contributing factors are very high urbanization rate, on the one hand, and limited financial resources, high building costs and delivery capacities on the other. On the demand side, the challenge of constrained access to proper shelter, land ownership and sanitation is most felt by the poor, ultra-low and low income groups who due to poverty, unemployment, income inequality, overpriced land and housing properties, speculation and lack of mortgage facilities tailored to their circumstances. This has resulted in people settling and setting up dwellings on open unplanned and un-serviced peripheral parts of urban areas.

To guide national efforts and investment in land and housing, the Government has put in place an overall policy and legal framework namely the National Housing Policy and Strategy which was developed in 1991 and revised in 2009 and accentuated by the Namibia Housing Development Act, 2000 and programmes. The adopted framework calls for and promotes an integrated and collaborative approach to housing development as well as aggressive mobilization of domestic savings, government subventions, enhancing private sector investment, public-private partnerships, exploring alternative building materials and technologies and supporting peoples' housing processes.

Given the diverse nature of housing needs as well as affordability levels, a number of targeted programmes and interventions have been considered and developed.

- As an employer, the Government has in place a Home Owner's Scheme for Staff Members (HOSSM), which offers housing access support to government employees. The Government also has accommodation properties (houses and apartments) most of which were built during the pre-independent period, which have been made available to house Government employees on rental basis;

- Through the enactment of the National Housing Enterprise Act, 1991 as amended, a State owned enterprise (National Housing Enterprise) was established with the object of “financing of housing for inhabitants of Namibia...”;
- In addition to the above, a number of sector-specific housing initiatives have also been developed for employees while in service and largely on rented basis. In the tourism sector, there is a National Policy for the Provision of Housing in Protected Areas, 2010. Other sectors such as education, health and the military also use to build accommodation facilities to house their employees;
- In 1992, the Government developed and started implementing the Built Together Programme, which provides for the establishment of housing revolving schemes by regional councils and local authorities to provide concessional home loans to ultra-low income earners to acquire land for and to build affordable houses for themselves;
- Community-led housing initiatives such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) have an important role to play in the delivery of housing for the poor and ultra-low income groups, and the Federation receives annual grant funding from the Government to boost its housing development capacity;
- In 2013, Cabinet approved a Blueprint for Mass Housing Development Initiative in Namibia whose aim is to cause the delivery of some 185,000 housing units by 2030.

Notwithstanding the above listed interventions, Namibia’s housing backlog remains high. In response to the above, the Government through the Cabinet has called for an urgent rethink and interventions to arrest the housing crisis. In this connection, the Ministers of Finance and Urban & Rural Development and the Director General of the National Planning Commission at a consultative meeting held on 12 April 2021, agreed to set up a joint team of senior officials to review existing interventions, identify gaps and proposed a strategic approach and plan of action that will bring about an accelerated delivery of affordable housing in the country going forward.

COMPOSITION OF THE JOINT TASK TEAM

At a meeting held on 23 April 2021, the Executive Directors of the Ministries Urban & Rural Development and Finance and NPC agreed the composition of the Task Team as follows:

- Director: Housing and Habitat Development, MURD (Chair)
- Director: Budget and Deputy Director: Assets, Cash and debt Management, Ministry of Finance;
- Director: Monitoring & Evaluation and Sector Director, Ministry of Works and Transport
- Director: National Planning Commission
- National Housing Enterprise
- Shack Dwellers Federation
- Namibia Housing Action Group
- Namibia University of Science and Technology

The above-mentioned core technical team reports to and its work will be overseen by the Executive Directors, and is expected to be supported by senior technical and support staff with the expert knowledge and skills required for the assignment.

THE TASK

The main task of the Task Team is to propose a comprehensive and more responsive National Housing Policy (including an Implementation Plan) by undertaking the following specific actions:

- a) Develop a Project Charter, which will outline all the activities that need to be undertaken in order to come up with its recommended Policy and Implementation Plan. The Charter shall among others indicate the activity to be carried out, start and completion timelines as well as roles and responsibility of stakeholders (implementers/affected parties);
- b) Review all existing studies, policies, programmes and projects, identify gaps and propose a comprehensive Housing Policy and Implementation Plan that will bring about an accelerated delivery of affordable housing in the country;
- c) Submit a draft National Housing Policy including Implementation Plan.

REPORTING LINES

The Task team reports to and its work will be overseen by the Executive Directors, who in turn reports to the Committee of Ministers (MURD and Finance) and the DG: NPC.