A number of factors such as the high incidence of poverty and income inequality, high food prices and extreme weather conditions (drought and floods) contribute to food insecurity in Namibia. These trends negatively impact the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and reduce their resilience and capacity to cope with shocks. The establishment of a Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMS) in Namibia is a step towards strengthening national capacity to detect and track shocks and their potential impact on the population.

**Purpose of the FNSMS**

The goal of FNSMS is to achieve food and nutrition security for the Namibian population through effective food and nutrition security planning and programming. The purpose of the FNSMS is to provide accurate and timely information about the prevailing food and nutrition security situation in a harmonized format for planning and decision making. Specific objectives of the FNSMS are to:

- systematically and regularly monitor specific indicators in order to generate timely, accurate and frequent data on food and nutrition security from the household to national levels;
- coordinate and manage data collection from different sources including sentinel sites and to ensure that data are recorded appropriately at collection sites and reported accurately to the regional and national levels;
- perform an accurate harmonised analysis against agreed thresholds of the current food and nutrition security situation in the country;
The concept of food security comprises four pillars including availability, access, utilisation and stability of food which need to be satisfied simultaneously in order to achieve food security at the individual, household and national levels.

**Food Security:**

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

(World Food Summit in 1996)

Monitoring food and nutrition security means collecting data regularly on selected indicators and analysing and interpreting those indicators and causal factors associated with household food security and nutrition in order to provide timely and appropriate information for decision making. This process involves tracking changes in each of the dimensions of food and nutrition security and building a composite picture of the situation by geographical area and/or by social groups.

**Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring:**

Monitoring Evolving Food Security Situations in Namibia

[Government institutions mandated to monitor and respond to disasters (for example the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management within the Office of the Prime Minister and Regional and Constituency Disaster Risk Management Committees).]

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**Uses and users of food and nutrition security monitoring information:**

> Government institutions mandated to monitor and respond to disasters (for example the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management within the Office of the Prime Minister and Regional and Constituency Disaster Risk Management Committees).

> The government which tracks and measures the effectiveness of policies over time to respond to acute food security situations in Namibia.

> The humanitarian community who in view of human rights and global agreements to end hunger support Government long-term efforts and step in to broaden national capacity to respond to acute changes/emergencies.
Linkages with other national systems:

- the Namibian Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System (FNSMS) collects and collates data on the food and nutrition security situation on a regular basis and supplements these with focused surveys as well as other bi-annual and ad hoc data collections as and when necessary.

- builds on and aligns existing systems in Namibia which collect information on different dimensions of food and nutrition security, e.g.:
  - the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry generates early warning information via its Agricultural Inputs and Household Food Security Assessment Missions
  - the Ministry of Health and Social Services’ Health Information and Sentinel Surveillance Systems
  - the Namibia Vulnerability Assessment Committee’s (NAMVAC) system which generates annual information on vulnerability and associated factors such as livelihoods and means of survival for communities in Namibia.

How the NFNSMS works:

Following an alert about deteriorating food and nutrition security conditions, the FNSMS initiates and coordinates an analytical process that involves reviewing existing food and nutrition security assessment (NAMVAC and NEWFIU) reports, increasing the frequency of data collection by the sentinel sites, conducting further analysis on the NFNSMS data and, if necessary, recommending more complex and in-depth analyses. The system also triggers a political process to mobilise stakeholders and raise awareness about the food and nutrition security situation. Information from the FNSMS analytical process feeds into the political process to trigger decision making, resource mobilisation and the designing of appropriate responses and interventions. The consolidated actions will lead to lessons learnt which will result in better management of future shocks as shown in the Early Warning process below:
What does the Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System monitor?

The food and nutrition security monitoring system collects and synthesises the following key indicators by dimension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring System Analysis</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro Level</td>
<td>One-off / Static</td>
<td>Continuous / Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability (Environment)</td>
<td><strong>Trends</strong> (Economic &amp; political conditions and agro-meteorological, grazing, pasture and livestock conditions)</td>
<td>NEWFIU / NAMVAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Shocks</strong> (Drought, Floods, Pests, Diseases)</td>
<td>NEWFIU / NAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Availability</td>
<td>Cereal Production</td>
<td>Cereal Import / Export and Market conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro Level</td>
<td><strong>Food Access</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rural prices (food and livestock)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Income levels (labour wages) and expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Terms of Trade</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Coping Strategies Index</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Food Consumption Score</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MUAC, Morbidity, WASH</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from WFP (2012a) and WFP (2012b).
How were Sentinel sites identified?

Sentinel sites were identified and selected by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) using a stratified two-stage cluster sample design to ensure that they are representative at the constituency level. A total of 100 sentinel sites (PSUs) were randomly selected in 71 rural constituencies located in all fourteen administrative regions of Namibia. At each of the sentinel sites, fifteen households are randomly selected and interviewed, giving a sample of 1,500 households.

Map: Location of Sentinel sites in Namibia

Primary data collection methods and tools:

- Data is collected at the sentinel sites using Android devices to improve the rate and reliability of collection, thus eliminating data entry errors. The electronic devices also record GPS coordinates. Primary level information is collected at the sentinel sites using a community as well as a household questionnaire.

- Data is collected on a bi-annual basis. However, if the indicators show increasing distress and worsening food and nutrition security conditions, the frequency of data collection at sentinel sites will be increased to monitor the situation more closely.

- Data collectors (enumerators) are carefully selected, based on their experience and qualifications, and are trained appropriately in all areas of data collection.
The FNSMS data collection, analysis and reporting process:

The main emphasis of the FNSMS is at the community level where changes in food access and utilisation will be monitored through primary data collected at the individual, household and community levels. The NAMVAC coordinates and oversees all food security monitoring activities. A range of different stakeholders is involved, each having specific roles and responsibilities within the FNSMS as shown in the diagram below.

To fulfil its purpose of providing monitoring and early warning information to stakeholders to trigger responses, the FNSMS utilises several channels and platforms to disseminate information. These include electronic mail (e-mail), hard copy publications and the OPM website hosted by the DDRM.

The main information product of the FNSMS is its bi-annual Food and Nutrition Security Monitoring bulletin which provides a detailed forward looking analysis of the current food and nutrition security situation in the country. Food and nutrition security data is summarised and reported using the Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food and Nutrition Security (CARI) console.