



NATIONAL FERTILIZER POLICY OF THE GAMBIA (2024 – 2033)

Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

The Quadrangle

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANR	-	Agriculture and Natural Resources
CAADP	-	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
DOA	-	Department of Agriculture
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)
FFS	-	Farmer Field Schools
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GIEPA	-	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GLF	-	Gambia Local Fund
GNAIP	-	Gambia National Agricultural Investment Programme
GOTG	-	Government of The Gambia
IFDC	-	International Fertilizer Development Center
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MoA	-	Ministry of Agriculture
NARI	-	National Agricultural Research Institute
NDP	-	National Development Plan
NFP	-	National Farmers Platform
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization

FOREWARD

Agriculture remains a strong pillar of the Gambian economy, and provides the livelihoods of about 70 percent of the rural population in The Gambia. Despite this, Gambian farmers continue to get relatively low yields from farms, mainly because of poor soils. Poor soil fertility threatens food security in the country, and increases poverty levels, especially because the highest rates of poverty are found in rural areas in The Gambia. For this reason, the low levels of soil fertility and high nutrient deficiencies of Gambian soils is of serious concern to the Government of The Gambia.

Gambian farmers generally use fertilizers (both chemical and organic) to alleviate soil infertility and nutrient deficiencies which reduce crop yields. Despite this, the policy environment of the fertilizer value chain in the country needs improvement. Although the Agricultural and Natural Resources policy, the Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan, and the National Development Plan (2018 – 2021) all acknowledge the critical role fertilizers must play in increasing agricultural development in the country, there is yet to be a national fertilizer policy.

Furthermore, the high cost of fertilizers means that fertilizer use and application rates by Gambian farmers are very low. The high cost of fertilizers can be attributed to various factors, mainly, the fact that all chemical fertilizers used in the country are imported, and the relatively cost of transporting and distributing fertilizers to different parts of the country. Although the Government of The Gambia has frequently subsidized fertilizers to make them more affordable to Gambian farmers, it is now clear that these subsidy programs are not sustainable in the long-term.

Against this background, the Government of The Gambia, through the Ministry of Agriculture has prepared this National Fertilizer Policy to help develop a competitive fertilizer subsector which will sustainably provide fertilizers to Gambian farmers, thereby increasing food security, and the contribution of agriculture to national development.

I hereby acknowledge the support provided by FAO (both the Gambian and Regional Offices), and the International Fertilizer Development Center in the preparation of the National Fertilizer Policy.

Finally, I have the greatest pleasure to present this National Fertilizer Policy of The Gambia to confirm the commitment of the Government of The Gambia to fighting poverty among Gambian farmers by helping provide them fertilizers to ameliorate soil infertility and increase crop yields.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Demba Sabally', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

**Hon. Dr. Demba Sabally,
Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security
Ministry of Agriculture**


PREFACE

This National Fertilizer Policy of The Gambia is testimony to the commitment of the Government of The Gambia to the objectives of the Abuja Declaration made at the 2006 Fertilizer Summit in Nigeria. Furthermore, the policy will help the attainment of the National Development Plan, as well as the SDGs by increasing crop yields and income of Gambian farmers. Toward this end, this policy will help increase fertilizer use in The Gambia by supporting the development of a vibrant fertilizer subsector which provides (and in a timely manner) quality, affordable fertilizers to farmers throughout the country.

Accordingly, the document includes a rationale, Vision and Mission for the policy, and 17 guiding principles ranging from ownership, and equity to risk management and gender responsiveness. The policy also provides a definition of fertilizers based on ECOWAS guidelines, and has broad and specific objectives, as expected outcomes. Furthermore, the policy provides various directions including for such issues as fertilizer production and blending, imports and exports, as well as fertilizer trading and marketing. The policy also provides for the funding plan for its implementation, as well as a monitoring and evaluation framework, and its periodic review.

The National Fertilizer Policy was prepared and finalized using the national fertilizer policies of Ghana, Rwanda, and Uganda as templates, and in conformity with relevant ECOWAS regulations and guidelines. In addition, the preparation of the National Fertilizer Policy was a highly participatory process in which a wide range of stakeholders including, government representatives, researchers, private sector operators, as well as non-governmental and farmers organizations deliberated on various issues covered by the policy.

In conclusion, it is my sincere hope that this National Fertilizer Policy will make a significant contribution to the fulfillment of the aspirations of Gambians, and Gambian farmers especially, that our dear country achieves food security and reduced poverty through a sustainable and environmentally friendly use of fertilizers.



Mod AK Secka
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Security

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Agriculture has been, is, and will continue for a long time to be a major pillar of the Gambian economy. The sector accounts for 30 – 40% of export earnings and contributes 17% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of The Gambia. Agriculture is also important because it employs 80% of the rural population, 70% of which was poor in 2015, compared to 48.6% nationally. As such, agriculture is key to reducing poverty in The Gambia.
2. The importance of agriculture to national development in The Gambia has been articulated in various development blueprints, and national policies. Thus, the National Development Plan (NDP – 2018 – 2021), the Agricultural and National Resources (ANR) Policy (2017 – 2026), the Supplementary ANR Policy (2017), the second Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP II – 2019 – 2026) all recognize the crucial role agriculture plays in national development efforts. In the same vein, agriculture is a key plank of the international development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda 2063 of the African Union as well as its first 10-year implementation plan (2014 – 2023).
3. Agriculture is a Strategic Priority of the NDP, which calls for increasing production of basic agricultural commodities (crops and livestock) to enhance food and nutrition security in the country. The attainment of this objective is, however, hampered by the inadequate and timely availability of agricultural equipment and inputs, including fertilizers. The ANR policy also identified other constraints to agricultural development in The Gambia, including weak farmer organizations, research and extension services, as well as fragile soils that generally have very low fertility.

1.1. Background to the Fertilizer Policy

4. The NDP calls for ensuring the timely availability of adequate and affordable agricultural inputs, including fertilizers. In addition, the NDP calls for encouraging private sector involvement in the provision of agricultural inputs, and use public-private partnerships to provide fertilizers to Gambian farmers. Similarly, the ANR Policy calls for ensuring that farmers have access to inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides at affordable prices.
5. At the international level, the Abuja Fertilizer Summit 2006 Declaration of the AU, called on African countries to apply at least 50 Kg of nutrients per hectare by 2015 to be able to attain and maintain the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) target of 6% annual growth of the agricultural sector. In addition, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the ECOWAS Fertilizer Regulation C/REG.13/12/12 in 2012 to harmonize rules governing fertilizer production, trade and quality control in the sub-region. ECOWAS also published its Fertilizer Analysis and Inspection manuals to further strengthen fertilizer regulation in its Member States.

6. Although The Gambia published the ECOWAS Fertilizer Regulation C/REG.13/12/12 in its National Gazette in 2016, it is yet to have a National Fertilizer Policy (NFP) and/or Fertilizer Laws which govern fertilizer production, trading and use in the country. Against this background, the Government of The Gambia (GOTG) requested the FAO in 2019 to assist it in the preparation of an NFP. The need for an NFP is especially urgent because the Gambian fertilizer market remains undeveloped and fragment with many policy gaps which hinder the contribution of fertilizers to national development. This NFP was prepared through a highly consultative process involving GOTG agencies, the FAO, and various other stakeholders, and is aimed at harmonizing and streamlining the operations of all fertilizer industry actors in The Gambia.

1.2. Policy Problem Statement

7. The Gambian soils are characterized by sandy soils and low organic matter content. Furthermore, many farmlands are exposed to wind and water erosion by shifting cultivation, and high demand for fuel wood which has significantly increased deforestation in the country. Many farmlands thus have very low productive capacity. In addition, Gambian farmers Currently, crop yields in The Gambia are generally on the decline because of continuous cropping and complete removal of crop residues by resource-poor farmers. This, coupled with a low rate of macronutrients application contributes to negative nutrient balances.
8. The low levels of soil fertility, especially in the upland fields, means that farmers have to apply large amounts of fertilizers every year to potential reasonable yields from their crops. Despite this, many farmers cannot apply the required quantities of fertilizers because of the high cost, poor accessibility and untimely availability of fertilizers. For this reason, the use of fertilizers is very low, compared to the rest of Africa. Fertilizer consumption in The Gambia generally decreased between 1968 and 2018, with an average of 8 Kg/Ha, which is far less than the target of 50 Kg/Ha for Africa.
9. In order to increase food security in the country, the GOTG aims to increase and sustain fertilizer consumption to 10 Kg/Ha in the next few years. Such an increase will also increase crop production and productivity, improve food security and income of small-scale farmers without compromising the environment. The prospects for achieving an increase in fertilizer consumption will be dependent on having an enabling policy environment, and the active participation of the private sector in the importation, production, and marketing of fertilizers, which up to now, is minimal.
10. Instead, the GOTG is the main importer of fertilizers into the country, and distributes fertilizers at subsidized prices, thus distorting the fertilizer market, and squeezing private sector operators out of the fertilizer market. The quantity of fertilizers imported annually is also usually not enough to meet the demand, resulting in high prices, reducing their availability, and ultimately reducing crop yields in the country.

1.3. Rationale for Developing the National Fertilizer Policy

11. The rationale for developing the NFP stems from the ANR Policy, the NDP, GNAIP, and the Agriculture Extension Policy, all of which are aimed at achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture production in The Gambia. To achieve these goals, agricultural production and productivity needs to be increased, which calls for an increase in the commercialization of fertilizers through increase private sector involvement, and an increase in the use of chemical fertilizers, especially by smallholder farmers. Despite this, the fertilizer sector in the country currently remains uncoordinated, and the market system underdeveloped, thus making the availability and accessibility of fertilizers to small farmers a huge challenge.
12. Against this background, The Gambia, with support from FAO is preparing this NFP to improve fertilizer markets and marketing structures and help ensure that they function and perform well and ensure that Gambian farmers will be able to get fertilizers that are of sustainably high quality, availability, and affordability. In addition, the NFP will help provide a conducive environment for private investment in the fertilizer subsector of the agriculture sector in the country.

2. VISION, MISSION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1. Vision

13. The Vision for the NFP is of a viable, vibrant, and sustainable fertilizer subsector that contributes to national development in The Gambia by providing quality, affordable and accessible fertilizers to farmers. The NFP aims to improve fertilizer distribution using digital application for a better targeting of beneficiary, transparency and impact.

2.2. Mission

14. The Mission of the NFP is to provide policy environment for the development of a competitive fertilizer subsector that sustainably provides quality, affordable and accessible fertilizers to farmers who use them in a manner that is environment-friendly, and adaptive to climate change.

2.3. Guiding Principles

15. The NFP will be based on the following internationally recognized principles:

1. Ownership

The effective performance of the NFP will be dependent on the commitment and ownership of it by all stakeholders. For this reason, the formulation of the NFP was a highly consultative and participatory process which involved stakeholders ranging from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, farmer groups, and development partners. In the same vein, all stakeholders in the fertilizer sub-sector will be constantly involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of the NFP.

2. Holistic approach

This principle is an acknowledgement of the multi-faceted nature of fertilizers which can be a mineral, or organic substance, an industrial product, an agricultural input, as well as a tradable commodity. This principle also recognizes that the NFP is not a silver bullet and needs to be implemented in a manner that recognizes the multi-faceted nature of fertilizers.

3. Credibility

The NFP should be credible in terms of the due process for its formation, appraisal, implementation and review.

4. Equity

This principle recognizes that individuals are not equitably endowed, but all of them require a minimum level of resources to sustain their livelihoods. For this reason, the NFP will promote inclusive access to, and use of fertilizers through smart subsidy programs, credit facilities and appropriate and sustainable financing of fertilizer purchases by farmers, especially small-scale subsistence farmers.

5. Resources Availability

Fertilizers, especially imported fertilizers, are very expensive and this, coupled with limited access to capital and inadequate infrastructure means that it will be important to ensure the availability of resources to implement the NFP. Furthermore, the allocated resources must be used efficiently and effectively, and their use should be properly monitored and reviewed.

6. Regional and International Consistency

The NFP should conform with the ECOWAS, AU, and other international policies and best practices on fertilizers, fertilizer trading and marketing, as well as fertilizer use.

7. Balanced Fertilization

This principle requires that the provision and use of fertilizers should ensure that macro- and micronutrients are in balanced proportions based on soil testing and crop requirements for different agro-ecological zones.

8. Environmental Integrity

This principle requires that the NFP should provide for efficient fertilizer use based on the need to protect and conserve the environment.

9. Market Friendliness

This principle calls for the NFP promoting a competitive fertilizer market

10. Enhancing Local Content

The NFP shall promote the use of more local materials, expertise, and services in the production, distribution and marketing of fertilizer and its products in The Gambia.

11. Legality

This principle calls for the promulgation of appropriate legislation(s) to support the NFP.

12. Partnership and Dialog

All stakeholders in the fertilizer sub-sector should be constantly and effectively involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of the NFP.

13. Gradual Approach

Any and all reforms in the NFP should be gradual, and within a time frame agreed to by all stakeholders.

14. Fiscal Responsibility

This principle requires that the resources required for the proper implementation of the NFP are committed, mobilized, and made available.

15. Truth-in-labelling

All Fertilizer products offered for sale in The Gambia shall meet the minimum labeling requirement of having the grade, guaranteed analysis, the net weight properly indicated on them. The sources of the elements and the manufacturer's or blender's address shall also appear on the label, and the quality control of the products shall be based on the truthfulness of the claims on the label. Organic fertilizers will be validated through field-testing.

16. Risk management

This principle calls for informed decision-making that explicitly addresses risks and uncertainties.

17. Gender Responsiveness

All gender categories shall be equitably involved in the development, implementation, evaluation and review of the NFP, and all gender aspects will be considered along the entire length of the fertilizer market value chain.

2.4. Definitions of Fertilizer

16. Generally, "fertilizer" means any substance containing or providing one or more recognized plant nutrient(s) and used to promote plant growth. Specifically:
- a) "Inorganic Fertilizer" means fertilizer produced by chemical processes or mined derivatives of an inorganic substance or synthetic organic substance
 - b) "Organic Fertilizer" means fertilizer derived from non-synthetic organic material, including sewage sludge, animal manures, and plant residues prepared through composting, fermentation, mincing, grinding, soaking, drying or other similar methods to enhance the use of the plant nutrients it contains
 - c) "Bio-fertilizer" means any substance which contains living micro-organisms which when applied to seed, plant surfaces or soil, colonizes the rhizosphere or the interior of the plant and promotes growth by increasing the supply or availability of primary nutrients to the host plant(s)
 - d) Any combinations of the three above.

2.5. Policy Goal

17. The goal of the NFP is to help provide a viable, vibrant, and sustainable fertilizer subsector which provides quality, affordable and accessible fertilizers to farmers, and thereby contributes to national development of The Gambia.
18. The Ministry shall publish annually and in a form that may be deemed proper:
- a) Information concerning the distribution of fertilizers in The Gambia by tonnage in the administrative regions of which amount distributed through the digital platform; and
 - b) Results of analyses based on official samples of fertilizer collected by Inspectors as compared with the guaranteed analyses.

2.6. Policy Objective

2.6.1. Broad Policy Objective

19. The objective of the NFP is to help increase agricultural productivity, economic returns, and incomes through sustainable access to, and increased use of fertilizers.

2.6.2. *Specific Policy Objectives*

- i). Create an enabling environment for the development of a privately driven and liberalized fertilizer importation and distribution system that fosters competition and innovation
- ii). Promote fertilizer trade by introducing appropriate and effective incentives that encourage private sector investment in the sub-sector;
- iii). Provide proper oversight of the fertilizer market to prevent anti-competitive practices, and unfair pricing
- iv). Increase private sector importation of fertilizers into the country
- v). Ensure that fertilizers are imported at the required time, and are of the right quality. The NFP will also ensure that fertilizers are made available to farmers around the country, in required quantities and at competitive prices
- vi). Ensure a diversification of the sources of fertilizers imported into the country, and encourage the importation of fertilizers from the West African sub-region
- vii). Establish an efficient regulatory and monitoring system that is private sector friendly and ensures the sustainable supply of high-quality fertilizers, while safeguarding human health and protecting the environment;
- viii). Create awareness and improve knowledge of the benefits of fertilizers
- ix). Promote diverse products and technologies (improved seeds, irrigation, soil conservation, lime) that enhance efficient utilization of fertilizers
- x). Promote integrated nutrient management and conservation agriculture for environmental sustainability
- xi). Establish incentives that permit increased access and use of fertilizers at affordable rates by all the farmers. Such incentives shall include, but will not be limited to agriculture finance, insurance and subsidies
- xii). Support agricultural research and development to improve farmers' returns to investment in fertilizers through establishing crop and area specific soil nutrient requirements and fertility levels to improve the fertilizer use efficiency, and increase crop yields
- xiii). Promote the application of balanced fertilizer in line with crop- and area-specific soil nutrient requirements of the different cropping systems and agro-ecological zones, based on soil testing and fertilizer trials
- xiv). Support the local production of organic fertilizers through the exploration of local resources (groundnut shells, as well as animal and poultry manure), and fertilizer blending and bagging to ease access and reduce cost of fertilizers
- xv). Foster institutional linkages, and gender issues into consideration in implementing the policy.

2.7. Guiding Principles

2.7.1. Principle of Truth-in-labeling

The principle of truth-in-labeling holds that whatever a manufacturer, an importer or an agro-dealer claims he/she is selling, he/she must guarantee it; it is therefore essential that label claims on fertilizer packaging be truthful.

2.7.2. Principle of Free Movement of Fertilizers

The present Regulations shall ensure that all fertilizers distributed in The Gambia, whether manufactured locally or imported, comply with the minimum quality standards prescribed in the harmonized ECOWAS legal framework for fertilizer trade and quality control and for the purpose the organization of a regional market as described in the common agricultural policy, there shall be free movement of fertilizers in all Member States.

2.7.3. Principle of International Standards Recognition

In order to ensure the supply of quality fertilizer within the ECOWAS region and facilitate inter and intra-Member States trade in fertilizers, all national and regional fertilizer legal frameworks, within the meaning of the present Regulations, shall be anchored on international standards.

2.7.4. Principle of Participation and Information

Pursuant to the present NFP, the Department of Cooperative Development, in collaboration with all stakeholders in the fertilizer sector, shall make available to the public all necessary fertilizer-related information and in doing so, shall help train and build the awareness of these stakeholders.

2.7.5. Principle of targeting and transparency in the distribution mechanism of subsidized fertilizer

The NFP should:

- ensure targeting of the needy beneficiaries, transparency, and efficiency of the fertilizer's subsidy program through the digital application;
- Support the harmonized/generalized use of the digital application for all subsidized fertilizer procured by any donor-funded project or directly by the Gambia Government;
- Monitor and made public the volume of subsidized fertilizers sold through the digital application, a way to build transparency and efficiency and to get more development impact on the fertilizer's subsidy program.

2.8. Expected Outcomes

20. The following outcomes are expected when the policy comes into effect:

- i). National institutions, in partnership with the private sector, will be more responsive to national fertilizer needs and priorities;
- ii). A functional fertilizer value chain which applies research and development findings, and competes effectively on the global marketplace is developed;
- iii). Indigenous scientific, technological and organizational capacities to harness national resources are developed to respond effectively to national fertilizer needs and priorities
- iv). A culture of judicious use of fertilizer to address the severe declining soil fertility, increase agricultural productivity and agro-industrial growth, and at the same time protect the environment is developed

3. POLICY DIRECTIONS

3.1. Fertilizer Production and Blending

- i). The production and blending of fertilizers shall be open to both Gambian and foreign investors.
- ii). All investors interested in establishing a fertilizer production or blending plant in The Gambia must comply with relevant national laws and policies
- iii). The GOTG shall encourage the domestic production and blending of fertilizers by providing appropriate incentives through the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA)
- iv). The GOTG shall encourage the use of country's raw materials for fertilizer production based on sound research
- v). The GOTG shall work with financial institutions and relevant stakeholders to mitigate risks associated with production and blending of fertilizers and access to raw materials used in fertilizer production
- vi). Fertilizer formulations and types produced in the country shall be based on soil fertility status and crop nutrient requirements in different agro ecological zones of the country as determined by NARI
- vii). Fertilizer types to be produced and blended in the country must conform with national fertilizer standards.
- viii). GOTG shall encourage fertilizer producers and blenders to, as much as possible, use locally available raw materials and the services of local experts in their processes
- ix). All fertilizer producers and blenders in the country shall establish their own functional internal quality control mechanism.

3.2. Imports and Exports

- i). The importation of and export of fertilizers shall be the responsibility of the private sector in partnership with the GOTG
- ii). In a bid to develop economies-of-scale, the GOTG may consider mechanisms to pool the country's fertilizer imports with those of its neighbors either bilaterally or at the sub-regional level through ECOWAS to reduce cost.
- iii). Fertilizer importers and exporters shall operate under the legal and regulatory framework established by the GOTG
- iv). All fertilizer importers shall request for a permit for fertilizer consignments being imported into the country
- v). All fertilizer formulations and types imported into the country shall be based on soil fertility status and crop nutrient requirements in different agro ecological zones of the country as determined by NARI
- vi). For monitoring purposes, fertilizer importers shall inform the Department of Cooperative Development /NARI of their importation plan on a yearly basis. The GOTG shall guarantee the confidentiality of such data and information.
- vii). For monitoring purposes, fertilizer importers shall inform the Department of Cooperative Development Agribusiness Services/NARI of their shipment manifest including the expected date of cargo arrival, to enable them to arrange for necessary inspection and quality

assurances verification. The GOTG shall guarantee the confidentiality of such data and information.

- viii). Each shipment of Fertilizer must be accompanied with Clean Report of Inspection (CRI), manufacturer's certificate, bill of lading, invoice and manifest, authenticated by pre-shipment inspection agent.
- ix). The importation of subsidized fertilizers shall be conducted by private companies in partnership with the GOTG
- x). The GOTG shall advise fertilizer importers to import required fertilizer types and quantities, and in a timely manner with regards to the cropping seasons.
- xi). There shall be no export of fertilizers that are subsidized by government.

3.3. Fertilizer Trading and Marketing

The private sector shall be primarily responsible for fertilizer trade and marketing.

Government shall facilitate the private sector and perform a regulatory role.

3.3.1. Improving supply: Privatization and liberalization of the fertilizer market

- i). Private fertilizer wholesalers, distributors, and retailers (agro dealers) are free to trade and market fertilizer in the country but must comply with the country's legal and regulatory framework governing fertilizer trading and marketing.
- ii). The private sector can trade, and market fertilizers subsidized by the government in a transparent and competitive environment.
- iii). Fertilizer prices will generally be determined by market forces. Where government subsidizes fertilizers to support farmers, such subsidies shall be introduced in consultation with the private sector and farmer groups, and in a manner which will not disrupt the market.
- iv). The GOTG shall support the private sector to invest in fertilizer trade and marketing, by partnering with financial institutions and stakeholders to provide finance, and reduce risks associated with access to finance.
- v). The types and quantities of fertilizers distributed in the country shall be determined by crop requirements and agro-ecological conditions around the country. In addition, fertilizers in distribution channel in the country (importer-distributor-agro dealers-farmers) shall be monitored and inspected to ensure quality is maintained and delivery is timely
- vi). The GOTG shall establish an effective and efficient information system linking importer, distributor and agro dealer networks to the Department of Agribusiness Services and local governments to improve fertilizer trade and market efficiency;
- vii). Subsidized fertilizers shall be priced by the GOTG in partnership with the private sector and the National Farmers' Platform, and monitored by local governments and district/extension officers to ensure that they reach the targeted beneficiaries.

3.3.2. Increasing demand: promoting fertilizer use

3.3.2.1. Extension

- i). The GOTG, through the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and NARI, shall provide technical guidance in developing and implementing extension programs aimed at promoting fertilizer use.

- ii). Local governments, the private sector and relevant stakeholders shall partner with the DOA to establish and implement Farmer Field Schools (FFS), demonstrations, field days, and training courses to educate all stakeholders on the benefits of and best practices for using fertilizers, thereby promoting their use.
- iii). The Ministry of Agriculture and partners shall train extension agents in fertilizer use, and the trained extension agents will train farmers on fertilizer use to increase and improve their use of fertilizers.
- iv). Extension agents shall be trained on organic fertilizers and their use, and they shall in turn train farmers on the use and benefits of organic fertilizers to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers.

3.3.2.2. Fertilizer subsidies

- i). The GOTG shall, when appropriate, subsidize fertilizer prices to make them available, accessible, and affordable to Gambian farmers.
- ii). Government shall facilitate increased fertilizer use by farmers through various interventions such as subsidies, but these interventions shall not distort the market.
- iii). However, the GOTG shall have an exit strategy out of whatever subsidy program it introduces
- iv). Resources for fertilizer subsidies can be redirected to help farmers overcome other limitations to increasing agricultural production.

3.3.2.3. Agricultural and rural finance

- i). The GOTG, financial institutions and stakeholders shall design and implement interventions that increase access to agricultural and rural finance to facilitate access to fertilizers. The interventions will include:
 - a) Customized financial products for inputs applicable to smallholder farmers;
 - b) Encouraging financial institutions to develop units dedicated to agricultural financing
 - c) Reducing perceived risks associated with agricultural financing through interventions like crop insurance, an agricultural financing fund and market linkages.
- ii). Cooperative societies shall be revitalized to help farmers buy fertilizers during the trade season
- iii). Microfinance companies and organizations shall be encouraged to finance fertilizers purchases by farmers.

3.4. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change

- i). The GOTG shall take the lead in ensuring environmental safety and sustainability in fertilizer use by ensuring that:
 - a) The GOTG shall establish guidelines for fertilizer manufacturers/blenders to properly dispose of the waste products (e.g. solid wastes, effluents and fumes) emanating from their plants to ensure that such waste does not pollute the environment.
 - b) Extension agents advise farmers not to use fertilizers excessively to prevent pollution of air, water and farm produce or soil degradation
 - c) NARI and other competent bodies and institutions regularly update and provide site-and crop-specific fertilizer recommendations to ensure judicious use of fertilizers

- d) Marketers and transporters of fertilizers ensure that their activities protect and conserve the environment (including air, water and soil)
- e) Bio fertilizers and organic fertilizers are used when and where appropriate
- ii). GOTG shall encourage organic manure production on an industrial scale for domestic use and export
- iii). Farmers shall be trained to understand CC issues and their impact on fertilizer requirements and use
- iv). Farmers shall be trained on the appropriate handling, as well as judicious use and proper application of fertilizers.
- v). Soil maps shall be updated periodically to ensure that fertilizer recommendations are based on sound data on soil nutrient deficiencies and requirements for different crops and agro ecological zones
- vi). The use of organic and bio-fertilizers together with inorganic fertilizers shall be popularized, and an integrated approach to plant nutrient management will be promoted to counter soil degradation and maintain soil fertility

3.5. Research and Development

- i). Research and development of fertilizer formulations/blends and fertilizer recommendations shall be the primary responsibility of the GOTG through NARI, working in partnership with its research affiliates, the private sector, NGOs, the National Farmers' Platform, and the University of The Gambia.
- ii). The GOTG shall periodically commission nationwide soil mapping to update the soil nutrient requirements for the various agro-ecological zones in the country.
- iii). Based on these soil nutrient maps NARI and partners shall periodically develop fertilizer application recommendations appropriate for the crop requirements, soil fertility, and climatic conditions of the agro-ecological zones.
- iv). The updated fertilizer recommendations shall be provided to fertilizer importers, manufacturers and blenders to produce or import appropriate fertilizer formulations;
- v). Farmers shall be encouraged to conduct soil testing on their fields to improve the site-specificity of the fertilizer types, formulations, and rates they apply
- vi). The use of lime, organic and bio-fertilizers shall be encouraged to compliment inorganic fertilizer and achieve an integrated approach to soil fertility management.
- vii). Any importer of a new fertilizer product shall submit a sample of the product to the NARI for them to conduct a laboratory test and field trial of it under Gambian conditions. The results of the laboratory analysis and field trials should be ratified by NARI prior to marketing of the product. The cost of the laboratory testing and field trial as well as other relevant public information costs shall be borne by the importer of the fertilizer.

3.6. Quality Control

- i). The GOTG shall be responsible of ensuring that good quality Fertilizer products are on the market by:

- a) Establishing and enforcing of a market-friendly legal and regulatory framework that is adopted, legislated and implemented by the Department of Agribusiness Services and other appropriate authorities.
- b) Compelling producers and traders to monitor the quality of their products to ensure that they conform with existing legal and regulatory frameworks.
- ii). The legal and regulatory framework for fertilizer quality control shall provide for the following:
 - a) Fertilizer Inspectors shall undertake periodic quality control inspections at the fertilizer production/blending plants, port of discharge, warehouses and other selling outlets;
 - b) Fertilizer samples collected by Fertilizer Inspectors shall be analyzed by NARI or any other GOTG-approved laboratory;
 - c) Imposition of penalties on violators of the relevant aspects of the framework. Such violations include, but are not limited to, plant nutrient deficiencies, misbranding, adulteration, short weight, bagging quality, failure to report tonnage and pay inspection fees, and/or operating without a certificate of registration or with an expired certificate of registration;
 - d) Guidelines for proper labeling of fertilizers;
 - e) Payment of inspection fees;
 - f) Requirements for fertilizer products to be free from harmful substances and for environmental safety;
 - g) A financing mechanism, and institutional arrangements for the implementation and enforcement of the fertilizer quality control
- iii). The Department of Agribusiness Services (ABS) will be responsible for enforcing these regulations

3.7. Fertilizer Use (Education, Extension Services and Security)

- i). Education on fertilizer use shall be an integral part of the agricultural education curricula at all levels.
- ii). Extension services shall be ensured by the GOTG through the Department of Agriculture (DOA), while the private sector and NGO extension services shall support DOA's efforts to ensure nationwide coverage.
- iii). NARI, DOA, and other partners shall collaborate to periodically publish fertilizer recommendations for various crops and agro-ecological zones of the country
- iv). The fertilizer recommendations shall be shared with fertilizer producers and blenders to enable them to produce appropriate grades and packages of fertilizer products.
- v). Complementary use of inorganic, organic and biological fertilizers shall be encouraged through the development of Integrated Soil Fertility Management systems appropriate to the agricultural production systems in The Gambia.
- vi). The GOTG shall periodically commission studies on the fertilizer market, and the results of such studies shall be shared with stakeholders to ensure a competitive fertilizer market.
- vii). The purchase and the use of fertilizer products shall be regulated to ensure that fertilizers are used for their intended purposes.

- viii). Measures shall be taken to prevent the use of fertilizer to manufacture explosives.
- ix). The Ministry of Agriculture should ensure the adequate use of the digital application for any subsidized fertilizer program to improve targeting, transparency and efficiency;
- x).

3.8. Governance and Institutional Roles

- i). The GOTG shall be responsible for promoting the proper use of fertilizer in the country and to facilitate adequate availability and affordability to farmers. Therefore, the government shall operate through the following institutional structures, each assigned specific roles:
- ii). The MoA has the overall responsibility for formulating, re-formulating and implementing the NFP of The Gambia for which purpose the National Fertilizer Regulatory Board, with the Honorable Minister of Agriculture as the Chairman, shall be statutorily responsible.
- iii). Technical Fertilizer Committee shall be responsible for providing technical advisory services on all aspects of the fertilizer economy to the Honorable Minister of Agriculture through the National Fertilizer Regulatory Board.
- iv). The Directorates of the MoA, under the directives of the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, shall undertake all activities stipulated above in collaboration with relevant organizations and agencies.
- v). The Department of Agribusiness Services shall be responsible for:
 - a) the regulation and quality control of Fertilizer.
 - b) fertilizer market studies to inform the promotion of a competitive Fertilizer market.
- vi). A Fertilizer Inspection Unit shall be established under the Department of Agribusiness Services
- vii). The DOA shall be responsible for technical advisory services and fertilizer technologies.
- viii). NARI shall:
 - a) be responsible for the conduct of adaptive fertilizer trials leading to improved agronomic practices, efficient use and management of soil and water resources.
 - b) NARI shall be mandated and financed to carry out fertilizer research, and periodically provide site-specific and crop-specific fertilizer recommendations for benchmark soils in all agro-ecological zones of the country.
- ix). The Monitoring & Evaluation Directorate of the MoA shall be responsible for the reformulation and analysis of this policy and assess the impact of programmes emanating from it.

4. FUNDING

- i). Implementation of the NFP shall be funded by GOTG
- ii). Other potential sources of funds for the implementation of the NFP are: agricultural development projects, such as the Rice Value Chain Project (which is supporting the NFP development), FAO, IFDC, ECOWAS, AfDB, IsDB, Qatar Fund, JICA/KR 2, and Gambia Local Fund (GLF).

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- i). The GOTG shall develop an action plan to meet the objectives of the NFP, assign roles and responsibilities, and provide the resources to implement the plan.
- ii). The GOTG shall commission internal and external monitoring of activities assigned to all organs and institutions in the fertilizer subsector, in order to be able to make necessary changes in the implementation workplan and achieve objectives of the NFP
- iii). The GOTG shall undertake evaluation and impact assessments of the NFP at appropriate times, in order to ensure its objectives, and its desired impact on agricultural development of the country are achieved
- iv). GOTG shall ensure that all stakeholders in the fertilizer sub-sector in the country are, when and where appropriate, involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NFP
- v). The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NFP shall be technically conducted following the required legal and moral process
- vi). Learning points should be captured during the implementation of the NFP
- vii). The GOTG shall build partnerships, cooperate with, and share lessons learned with other countries and development partners

6. POLICY REVIEW

- i). The NFP shall be reviewed at least once in five years to capture whatever changes that are relevant to fertilizer production, trade, marketing and use in the country.
- ii). If necessary, the Government shall undertake review of the Fertilizer policy following the review of the ANR policy, the National Development, or other international development agenda, e.g. the SDGs.
- iii). Each formulation or reformulation of the NFP, shall be followed by the formulation of a new implementation action plan
- iv). The GOTG shall ensure that a wide range of relevant stakeholders are involved in the NFP review and evaluation process.
- v). The review of the NFP shall be conducted in accordance with technical, legal and moral standards.