

Appendix I

DRAFT Terms of Reference of the Botswana National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (BVAC)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In order to assist its Member States realise their goals of ensuring food security for households, SADC set up Vulnerability Assessment Committees in member countries beginning in the late 1990s to better manage food insecurity and vulnerability to disasters. In 2001 a more formalised system was put in place, primarily in response to the 2001/02 emergency food crisis that had arisen in the region. Although Botswana was not covered in this initial food surveillance of the SADC countries, it was nevertheless understood that vulnerability assessments work would begin as soon as the country was ready to implement it in some future time.

Over the years, SADC's strategic visioning initiatives have thus coalesced into a region-wide Statement of Intent: To strengthen national and regional vulnerability analysis systems in order to inform policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions that reduce vulnerability to hunger and poverty in the region. A number of activities have and continue to be undertaken to further this vision, including the setting up of National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) in member countries. To this end Botswana has formally instituted a national Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Committee, acronymed BVAC.

In May 2004 the SADC Heads of State Summit endorsed and mandated the setting up and strengthening of vulnerability assessment and analysis (VAA) groups in order to better understand household vulnerability. In addition to the 8 or so other SADC countries currently on VAA system, Botswana is the latest country to have requested and obtained assistance in establishing a National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (NVAC) of its own in order to undertake vulnerability analysis. This assistance has come to Botswana under the SADC's umbrella Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme.

Early attempts at institutionalizing vulnerability assessments in Botswana were limited; as they tended to emphasize the monitoring of food supplies only. Monitoring of access to food for example was of less priority in the work of the Botswana Early Warning Technical Committee and consequently, not much effort went into vulnerability assessments per se. Although the need for a Food insecurity and Vulnerability assessment System was foreseen in National Development Plan Nine (NDP 9), very little work has since been achieved in implementing such a system.

Generally, attempts at managing risks in Botswana, including containment of disasters and poverty reductions have been sporadic and sometimes, piece-meal in nature. In recent past, Botswana Government has for example tended to address poverty through provision of basic infrastructure and other services only. Many other issues have received similarly inadequate appraisals such as HIV and AIDS, other disease outbreaks and food and nutrition insecurity with costly outlays to the national fisc.

More effective anti-poverty instruments are required in order to reduce poverty, focusing on creation of wholesome livelihoods and gainful employments for households. Thus, the Botswana Core Welfare Indicator Survey of the Central Statistics Office will increasingly become an important instrument in monitoring poverty and other risks. However, vulnerability assessments will be necessary to conduct in between these surveys in order to track the direction of key welfare indicators. These assessments will also enrich the design of government programmes and deepen the quality of development planning, overall.

In the past, the difficulty of implementing vulnerability assessments had always been a lack of an analytical framework to handle complexities of household-level analyses. Such a framework would have the capability of translating how people might gain access to food and cash incomes as well as how they might be affected by shocks (droughts, floods, diseases etc) into practical information to guide decision-making. Livelihood-based vulnerability assessment approaches have come handy in aiding household-level analyses of the kind. It is for this reason that a Botswana National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (BVAC) is being established in order to undertake vulnerability assessment and analysis (VAA) work on a fulltime basis.

1.2 Issues

The issues of concern in establishing a Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis capability in Botswana through the BVAC include the following elements (*The listing is not exhaustive*):

- Credibility in the information system is a crucial consideration. Given that people's livelihoods are complex and that many factors impact on people's food security, vulnerability assessments should typically be multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral in coverage.

- Many agencies in government and outside of government should therefore be involved in the future work of BVAC in order to achieve effective communication, collaboration and networking. Such an arrangement will ensure a strong sense of ownership of the BVAC among participating agencies; and thus attract and optimize resources to it.
- Quality assurance in an information gathering system is also equally crucial. Ideally, BVAC should thus foster and optimize assessment-response linkages in the emergent information system in order to ensure that the results typically translate into practical interventions and;
- Utility of the information products will also be a consideration. Ultimately, the usefulness of the information generated by BVAC will be judged by its own clients' willingness to pay over time, indicating also the sustainability of the system. The issues will largely characterise the work to be undertaken by the new Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Committee (BVAC).

2. GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

2.1 Goal

The BVAC will develop an improved information system on livelihoods and food security in order to enhance poverty reduction and the management of disasters by Year 2016.

The goal of this VAA system will be deemed to have been reached when members of the BVAC are able to realize the following tangible outputs and associated objectives through own activities.

Objective 1

To influence the formulation, reviews and the monitoring and evaluation of programs, policies and strategies relevant to food security, poverty reduction and livelihoods.

Output 1.1: Reviewed policies and strategies, which will imply that at some future time, key policies and strategies that drive vulnerability analysis work of BVAC will need to be prioritized for effective monitoring.

Output 1.2: Information on targeting characteristics produced. What this output implies is that at design stages of policies and intervention programmes, targeting schemes should be developed as well.

Output 1.3: BVAC established, implying organizational modalities for effective functioning of the new organization are fully mobilized

Output 1.4: Improved M & E of intervention programs

Objective 2

To improve collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of food security and livelihoods information

Output 2.1: Livelihoods zones identified and baseline information established

Output 2.2: Reports produced

Output 2.3: VAA Database developed

Output 2.4: Website for information dissemination developed

Output 2.5: Improved methodologies

Objective 3

To strengthen capacity for understanding vulnerability, assessment and analysis

Output 3.1: Institutional capacity on VAA improved

Output 3.2: VAA integrated in to EW system

Output 3.3: Training workshops conducted

Output 3.4: Information, Education & Communication materials on VAA produced