



**SOMALI FEDERAL REPUBLIC**

Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education

# **NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS POLICY**

October 2025

# FOREWORD

The United Nations and the African Union declared School Meals Programs as an effective way to achieving progress in multiple Sustainable Development Goals like SDG2 – Ending Hunger; SDG 4 on Equitable Quality Education) as well as SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10. The School Meals Programme is an integral part of the Ministry’s strategy to eradicate child hunger in schools and increase access to education. Since 2003, School Meals has been operational in Somalia through a partnership between the Government of Somalia and the World Food Programme covering Public Primary School going children. In addition, the School Meals Programme serves as an effective mechanism for increasing school enrolment, retention, transition and completion rates of learners. The program provides an opportunity to generate income, create employment and economic benefits to communities in which it is implemented.

The Ministry of Education (MOECHE) is tasked with the crucial role of designing, developing, and implementing a robust School Meals programme across the Federal Republic of Somalia. However, efficient and successful School Meals requires multi-sectoral collaboration led and mobilized by the Federal Government of Somalia at the national, regional and district levels. This implies that the need for major change management processes and capacity-building amongst stakeholder institutions and the personnel involved. Significant challenges that need to be tackled right away include creating an appealing public image for the School Meals, strengthening financial management, human resource capacity, procurement governance, monitoring and evaluation which must be integrated into a holistic and focused accountability. It is in this regard, that a comprehensive policy on School Meals is necessary to assist the country to organize and deliver a success School Meals programme.

# Foreword

The goal of the National School Meals Policy is to deliver a well-organized, decentralized intervention providing school-going children with healthy, nutritious and locally produced food. This will help reduce poverty through improved household incomes and effective local economic development. To all Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as the non-governmental institutions and other stakeholders in the School Meals programming, I present to you this National School Meals Policy, 2025. I call upon all of us to receive this policy and work with us in implementing it to the latter.

**H.E. Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir**  
**Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education**

# Acknowledgement

The Somalia National School Meals Policy is the outcome of an extensive and inclusive consultation process with stakeholders at both national and sub-national levels. First and foremost, we give all praise to Allah the Almighty, who enabled the successful completion of this important policy document.

On behalf of the Ministry, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to H.E. Nura Mustaf Mukhtar, the state minister for Education, and H.E. Abdirashid Mohamed Duale, Deputy Minister for Education. We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Abdullahi Abdi Omar, the Director General for Basic Education, (MoECHE), for his unwavering commitment and leadership throughout the entire process.

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Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to the United Nations World Food Programme for their technical support and partnership, which played a crucial role in facilitating the development and finalization of the National School Meals Policy 2025.

**Mr. Hassan Mohamed Ali,**  
**Permanent Secretary**  
**Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education**

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# Our Vision

To enhance education, improve health and nutrition, empower communities, and support local economies, ultimately contributing to the development of human capital to foster a thriving Somali society.

# Our Mission

To ensure that all school-age children have access to timely healthy, nutritious, safe and diversified meals while enhancing educational, health and nutritional outcomes in the Federal Republic of Somali

# Guiding Principles

This policy is anchored on the following principles underpinned in the Somalia National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2025-2029 which are in tandem with the provision in the Constitution of Somalia and the universal principles described under human rights:

## ➤ Intergovernmental Ownership, Leadership and Sustainability

The Policy shall be guided by mutual government ownership, and leadership at federal, member state, region, district and community towards fostering long-term economic, social, and environmental development in the overall provision of school meals.

## ➤ Equity and Inclusiveness:

The implementation of this policy shall cater for the needs of all school going children regardless of their social background, abilities or identity – to be fed within genuinely welcoming and embracing environments without any forms of imagined or created barriers.

# Guiding Principles

- **Integration, Complementarity and Flexibility:**  
The policy shall be implemented within the context of the member states and regional diversities in a flexible and mutual reinforcing and complementary manner.
- **Transparency and Accountability:**  
The policy shall anchor open systems and processes as well as access to timely information to all stakeholders.
- **Effectivity and Efficiency:**  
The policy shall ensure timely and quality provision of school meals based on standards related to education, health, nutrition, food safety, water and sanitation and environment conservation.
- **Data-driven Decision-making:**  
The policy shall ensure availability and reliability of data to the government and stakeholders assess the school meals programme coverage, nutrition outcomes, funding needs and economic impacts.
- **Multi-sectoral Collaboration and Coordination.**  
The policy shall strengthen interdependent collaboration, partnership and multi-sectoral approach to address systemic challenges and amplify the impact of school meals programmes.
- **Local community participation and ownership**  
The policy shall enhance involvement of the community by providing their specific roles in sustaining the school meals programmes.

# Abbreviations And Acronyms

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CVA</b>	Cash and Voucher Assistance
<b>CBS</b>	Corn Based Soya
<b>CEC</b>	Community Education Committee
<b>CESA</b>	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on Right of the Child
<b>ESSP</b>	Education Sector Strategic Plan
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization
<b>FBO</b>	Faith Based Organization
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>FSNAU</b>	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit-Somalia
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GAM</b>	Global Acute Malnutrition
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

# Abbreviations And Acronyms

<b>HGSMP</b>	Home Grown School Meals Programme
<b>MOECHE</b>	Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education
<b>MOHHR</b>	Ministry of Health and Human Resources
<b>MOHA</b>	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>MOA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MOF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MOPI&amp;E</b>	Ministry of Planning Investment and Economic Development
<b>NSMP</b>	National School Meals Policy
<b>NSSMP</b>	Nutrition Sensitive School Meals Programme
<b>PLHIV</b>	People living with HIV
<b>SBCC</b>	Social Behavioural Change Communication
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SMP</b>	School Meals Programme
<b>SNSHCP</b>	National Safety Net for Human Capital Project

# Abbreviations And Acronyms

<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation Children Fund
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WASH</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>IASCSM</b>	Inter-Agency Steering Committee for School Meals
<b>IMTWGSM</b>	Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group for Home-Grown School Meals
<b>RSMC</b>	Regional School Meals Committee
<b>SMC</b>	School Meals Committee
<b>SMD</b>	School Meals Department

# Definition Of Terms

## ➤ Basic Education

It is the fundamental training or knowledge, skills and experiences that all children under school going age need to acquire or attain. It is the prerequisite to further education and comprises pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels or as defined in the Education Act.

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## ➤ Beneficiaries

Include those who benefit from School Meals programme including the schoolchildren, families and community.

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## ➤ Devolved Model

Model where the School Meals management functions, resources, and responsibilities are vested to the Member State Governments (FMS), local governments, schools and community with federal government providing national coordination, donor liaison and unifying roles.

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## ➤ Deworming

Treating schoolchildren with drugs (albendazole or mebendazole, praziquantel) to control intestinal worm infections such as helminths (roundworm, ringworm, and hookworm) and schistosomiasis.

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## ➤ Emergency School Meals

The provision of Meals to schoolchildren in situations that are classified as humanitarian crises.

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## ➤ Energy Diet

Diet that meets only the energy requirements and does not consider nutrient requirements.

# Definition Of Terms

## ➤ Fortification

The deliberate process of increasing the content of essential micronutrients such as Vitamin A, iron, iodine or zinc to foods.

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## ➤ Governance

In the execution of the School Meals programme, how decisions and priorities are set, and stakeholders made accountable.

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## ➤ Home-Grown School Meals Programme

Programme that provides schoolchildren with safe, diverse and nutritious food sourced locally from smallholder farmers/traders to support and foster local agricultural production and food markets.

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## ➤ Multisectoral Coordination

Deliberate collaboration among various School Meals programme stakeholders and sectors to jointly achieve the goal of the School Meals programme.

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## ➤ Nutritious Diet

Diet that meets requirements for nutrients, including protein, vitamins and minerals, but does not exceed an individual's energy and fat requirements.

# Definition Of Terms

## ➤ National School Meals Programme

School Meals programme implemented across all Member States of the Federal Republic of Somalia managed by both the federal and member state governments with support of UN agencies, development partners, NGOs and private sector to provide food to schoolchildren throughout the country on a regular basis.

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## ➤ Nutrition Sensitive

School Meals that are adequate in quantity, energy value and nutrients requirement as per the age and developmental level of the pupils.

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## ➤ Participation

Local community members active and genuine involvement in the School Meals programme including implementing SMP policies and in taking action to improve School Meals programme.

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## ➤ Procurement

Process of sourcing, buying and receipt of food products with the aim of ensuring timely, uninterrupted supply of quality food for the School Meals programme

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## ➤ Production

Activities that involve or result in producing agricultural /livestock products and marketing.

# Definition Of Terms

## Safety Nets

Programmes that provide cash or in-kind benefits including direct, regular, and predictable food assistance, in cash or in-kind, to the most vulnerable households to reduce poverty or vulnerability, increase resilience to shocks and promote food security.

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## School meals

Provision of food to children attending school through in-School Meals, where children are fed in school and or take-home rations, where families are given food to make sure that they keep their children in school.

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## Service Delivery

The whole process of School meals activities including production, procurement, logistics and processing, distribution of food to schools, and food preparation and Meals required to provide a timely nutritious meal of adequate quantity, quality and cost to schoolchildren.

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## Smallholder Farmers

Subsistence farmers who cultivate small portions of land and produce small quantities of food items.

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## Social Protection

Programmes that help vulnerable persons and communities to build resilience to risks and achieve equity.

# Definition Of Terms

## ➤ Stakeholders

Federal and member state Government, organizations, individuals, group of individuals, partners, school, parents, community, that may influence or be influenced by the School Meals policy.

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## ➤ Strategy

Best plan of action that is opted to achieve a particular policy area.

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## ➤ Targeting

An approach that concentrates programme resources on the poor or most vulnerable.

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## ➤ Transition

The progressive lessening of external support from development partners to government in the national School Meals programme.

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# Introduction

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## 1.1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

School feeding programs have been defined by the World Bank (World Bank and World Food Programme, 2022) as “targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrollment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level.” Beyond improvements in access to food, school feeding programs also have a positive impact on nutritional status, gender equity, and educational status, each of which contributes to improving overall levels of country and human development. School Meals play a critical role in incentivizing access, enabling quality and equity in education provision beside improving on school children’s health and nutritional status for better learning.

According to the State of School Feeding Worldwide 2024 (Report), School meal programmes have expanded exponentially and are now reaching a new historic milestone of 466 million children globally. Several countries are only now announcing and starting a rapid scale-up of their programmes, which gives us hope for the future. While there are school feeding programs in several countries, each program varies widely from country to country in design, implementation, and evaluation.

A critical look at the global trends indicate that Brazil operates one of the largest school feeding programmes in the world, providing free meals to 40 million children. The experience in Brazil of its National School Feeding Program has been recognized for over 60 years, especially by developing countries, as a point of reference for its sustainability, quality, progress and challenges (WFP & GSMC, 2024). Data from 174 countries indicate that approximately 466 million children at pre-primary, primary and secondary school levels are now reached by school meal programmes. Part of the increase may be attributable to improvements in data quality. Further analysis indicates significant differences by income levels and geographies. Low-income countries with the lowest school meals coverage show the largest scale up of almost 60 percent over the last two years. In terms of regions, Africa has made the most progress, accounting for approximately 20 million of the additional children covered by school meal programmes since the last report.

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[1] WFP (2019). Somalia annual country report 2019. Country strategic plan 2019-2021.



Presently, Somalia has a Gross Enrolment Rate of only 36% and nearly 4 million school-age-children being out of school. Food insecurity has also continued to exacerbate hunger worsening health and nutrition of schoolchildren thus affecting the quality of education. In such circumstances School Meals remains an important safety net for vulnerable children by ensuring their continued access to education beside promoting social cohesion and improved community livelihoods[1]. School Meals programme is also an important entry point for improving community hygiene, health and nutrition practices at the household level.

The Federal Government of Somalia continues its efforts to strengthen capacity to improve educational outcome, manage food security and nutrition through policies and infrastructure development across all member states. These efforts are well articulated in the National Transformation Plan (2025-2029), the revised Education Sector Strategic Plan [2022-2026], nutrition strategy among other documents. World Bank studies show that, three key strategies are imperative to improve learning outcomes, these include: ensuring that, children are ready to learn, go to school and enrol on time; keeping children in school by enhancing attendance and reducing dropout rates and finally, improving learning through enhanced cognition, attentiveness and active participation in teaching learning process (World Bank, 2020).

This National School Meals Policy (NSMP) is anchored in the nation's overall ambitions and plans including the National Transformation Plan 2025-2029 which has been endorsed by the Cabinet in February 2025. The policy outlines an overarching framework for guiding the implementation of a Nutrition-Sensitive School Meals Programme (NSSMP) across the country. The policy sets out the vision, mission, goal, objectives, principles, policy statements and implementation strategies for the NSSMP.

## 1.2 POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

Implementation of School Meals programs in Somalia has been responsive to the humanitarian needs of the Somali communities, the main objective been to alleviate short-term hunger among schoolchildren. In addition, SMP has incentivized parents to enrol children in school, promote learning capacity and help communities in fragility to build resilience and return to normalcy. SMP is also a social safety net that ensure survival and education continuity among schoolchildren in crisis situations. However, there are critical gaps that need to be addressed to make the programme nationally sustainable, thus the following are identified as the policy issues to address these gaps:

1) **Limited coverage and inequities**: While all schoolchildren should benefit from a nutritious meal at school to boost their active learning, retention and completion of schooling cycle, the current programme is targeted to children in vulnerable circumstances only. Whereas, targeting is important, efforts should be made to ensure vulnerable schoolchildren in urban areas also get a meal at school.

2) **Donor-Dependency**: The UN World Food Programme is the leading agency in providing school Meals while the Global Partnership for Education together with 'Education Cannot Wait' funds NGOs providing School Meals in parts of the country. Thus, making the current provision donor dependent with minimal public contribution.

3) **Inadequate Community and Local Participation**: There is inadequate participation and involvement of the local communities especially in supplying food to schools, which may influence local level ownership and sustainability of the programme.

4) **Differentiated Models of SMP**: There are multiple stakeholders who use different models of food access, dispatch and delivery processes without adequate coordination, which may lead to unequal supply of School Meals programme. The Home-Grown School Meals Programme (HGSMP) is currently limited to sourcing food from local retailers and to a small extent local farmer raising the need for better articulation of the HGSMP model.

5) **Weak Coordination Structures**: The current management is also vertical and linear yet there are multiple stakeholders. There is also inadequate capacity to ensure effective multi-sectoral management and coordination.

6) **Inadequate Complementary Services**: There are inadequate complementary services including school-based health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation interventions in most schools which may jeopardize the provision of school Meals due to hygiene related illness among schoolchildren. However, there is limited interventions from NGOs under the emergency programmes which are project based.

7) **Micronutrient Deficiency:** There are critical gaps in micronutrient deficiency among schoolchildren in Somalia. Besides a dearth of data on micronutrient needs among school children, the present School Meals programme needs to be strengthened to ensure nutrient requirements across age groups are met.

8) **Poor Linkages between Farmers and the SMP supply chain:** Presently, there is inadequate linkage of School Meals programme with local smallholder farmers though the programme has linked well with local traders who supply schools with food commodities.

9) **Poor School SMP infrastructure:** The schools face challenges of inadequate infrastructure for food storage, preparation and cooking energy which may compromise food quality and safety.

10) **Model of schooling affects SMP:** A typical school day in the Federal Government of Somalia now runs from 7am to 12 pm noon. This makes attendance and school hours shorter as children are expected to have lunch and go back to class so that the Meals have the intended impact on the learner. It is ideal to change the current model of schooling in order to achieve the goals of the National School Meals Policy.

### **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE POLICY**

Globally, school meals programmes have proven to be effective in addressing hunger among school children and enhancing their health and educational outcomes. Somalia's National School Meals Policy outlines the country's long-term strategy to achieve four key target objectives, which include:

#### **Target 1: Enhanced School Enrollment**

Provision of hot meals at school helps relieve immediate hunger, improves attendance and enables children to better concentrate and engage in learning. When sustained, school meal programmes can serve as an effective strategy for reducing poverty, enhancing child health, increasing school enrolment, and improving overall educational outcomes.

#### **Target 2: Improved Health and Nutrition**

The National School Meals Policy will prioritize the nutrition and health of school-aged children and adolescents by ensuring access to balanced, nutrient-rich meals that meet their essential dietary needs. Proper nutrition is vital for cognitive development and learning, as hunger impairs concentration and can lead to reduced academic performance and long-term developmental challenges.

## Target 3: Empowered Smallholder Farmers

The school meals policy supports linkage of school meals programme with smallholder farmers by promoting the use of locally and domestically sourced food. This approach not only provides farmers with a reliable market and source of income but also enhances the availability of fresh, local food in schools.

## Target 4: Strengthened Multi-Sectoral Coordination

The School Meals Policy emphasizes the need to strengthen coordination and management of the school meals programme at both national and sub-national levels. At the national level, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education will provide overall leadership to ensure effective implementation of the National School Meals Programme. In addition, the policy promotes a multi-sectoral approach by fostering partnerships and mobilizing diverse stakeholder groups—including public and private sectors, civil society, community and diaspora groups—as well as relevant sectors such as education, health, agriculture, water, and rural development. This collaborative approach allows partners to pool their knowledge, expertise, and resources, leveraging their collective strengths to achieve the shared goals and objectives of the programme.

### 1.4 POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this policy is to enhance the provision of healthy, nutritious and safe school meals in the Federal Republic of Somalia.

This Policy seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To improve access to education, student retention, and learning performance by ensuring the timely delivery of a variety of nutritious meals in schools.
- 2) To enhance the nutrition and overall health of school children and adolescents by providing balanced, nutritious meals at school every school day.
- 3) To strengthen the capacity of local farmers especially smallholder producers by connecting them to schools through the National School Meals Programme.
- 4) To foster effective coordination and cross-sector collaboration in the governance, administration, and implementation of the National School Meals Programme.

### 1.5 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all schoolchildren in basic education institutions in Somalia. In addition, the policy is applicable to the Federal Government of Somalia, Federal Member State Governments (FMS) and non-state actors including UN agencies, development partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), NGOs and FBOs that support SMP as well as parents and local communities. The policy encircles many aspects touching on education, nutrition, health, and environmental.

## 1.6 POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Development of the School Meals Policy began in 2021 and adopted a participatory design model that encompassed analysis of actors, content and processes at federal, state and school levels. A multi-sectoral taskforce was appointed by MOECHE and WFP brought in two consultants to provide technical support to the taskforce. The first phase of the policy development process involved a rigorous desk review of relevant national and international literature ranging from policies, regulations, published and unpublished reports related to food security, education, school health, nutrition and hygiene. The second phase involved analysis of key actors / stakeholders and an extensive consultative process that entailed discussion with a sampled range of stakeholders through workshops, review meetings, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and use of online questionnaires across five member states. The consultations were held at the federal, state and school levels with participants drawn from government ministries and departments at both federal and State as well as respondents from development partners, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Education Committee (CEC) members, school principals and School Meals support staff. Based on the desk review and stakeholder consultations, a draft policy was developed.

## 1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE POLICY

This policy is organized in the following parts;

- **Preliminary Section:** Describes the title, forward, preface and acknowledgment, acronyms and abbreviations, and table of contents.
- **Chapter 1-Introduction:** Provides background information on the need for the development of the SMP policy, Policy Issue(s) Identification, Rationale, Policy Goal and Objectives Scope of the Policy and the Structure of the policy document
- **Chapter 2 - Situation Analysis:** Describes the status and trends of the SMP in the country highlighting any unusual patterns by reviewing regional and international frameworks identify the gaps and informing the next steps.
- **Chapter 3 - Policy Statements and Strategies:** Outlines the policy statements and strategies that will guide decisions and actions to achieve the policy provisions.
- **Chapter 4 - Coordination and Administration:** Sets out the coordination and management functions of both levels of government as well as roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at various levels.
- **Chapter 5 - Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Reporting and Learning:** Presents how Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Reporting and Learning (MEARL) will be applied in school meals programming and provides a framework for future policy reviews.

# CHAPTER 2: SITUATION ANALYSIS

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This section of the policy describes the status and trends of the SMP in Somalia in relation to education, health, nutrition, food systems, social and environment protection.

## 2.1 CONTEXTS OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL MEALS IN SOMALIA

In a context of widespread poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition, School Meals has been an important safety net in Somalia for more than two decades, ensuring that many children can participate in primary education, and receive a daily minimum healthy diet. However, the various models of School Meals that have been in place in Somalia have had disadvantages, among them high financial and administrative costs, poor infrastructure and little to no contribution to the local economy, in terms of food production and processing. For this reason, the Government of Somalia has taken a step forward to add School Meals to the newly adopted National Transformation Plan 2025-2029. At the core of this new model is the wish to pursue a homegrown model. Food produced and processed by local producers, and implemented by national actors and agents. The concept of Home-Grown School Meals (HGSF) was cemented to action in a Roundtable Meeting dated in October of 2023. HGSMP will be developed and implemented with involved partners. The aim is to guarantee equal access to a healthy food at school for all children. School-based food creates an enabling environment for learners to concentrate as it prevents children from getting ill from malnutrition thus reducing absenteeism.

### 2.1.1 SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT

Somalia has an estimated population of around 17,436,508 million of which 29 % are between the ages 6-18 years<sup>[1]</sup>. Of the total, 3.9 million are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)<sup>[2]</sup>. The country's economy depends largely on agriculture and livestock that accounts for 65% of the GDP and workforce employment<sup>[3]</sup>. Livestock accounts for about 40% of GDP and more than 50% of export earnings<sup>[4]</sup>. Low annual rainfall, drought, erratic weather, volatile food prices, conflicts and violence compound the country's food insecurity and vulnerability constraining economic development.

The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has made significant progress towards the establishment of a stable and democratic structures of government. This is attested in the adoption of the Constitution of Somalia in 2012 that reinvigorated institutional reforms and reengagement with Member State Governments (FMS)s including opportunities to rebuild human capital and chart a pathway toward economic resilience and growth. Recently, a unified education curriculum was launched and is being implemented in the country giving hope for better educational outcomes.

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[1] Ministry of Education, EMIS (MoECHE), 2024

[2] Internal Displacement monitoring center

[3] Somalia Social Protection Policy – March 2019

[4] Country Background Note Somalia, Version 1.0 December 2020

## 2.1.2 POLICY AND LEGAL CONTEXT

The National School Meals Policy for Somalia is anchored on provisions in existing international protocols and conventions that Somalia has ratified as well as national policies and strategic development plans some of which include:

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**- The FGS is committed towards achieving the SDGs and view School Meals programmes to contribute directly to achieving SDG2, SDG4 and SDG5 while indirectly contributing to achievement of SDG1, SDG3, SDG8, SDG10 and SDG16.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)**- Somalia is a signatory to these international conventions which provide for appropriate legislative, administrative, education, social and protection measures to safeguard children including right to education, development, adequate health and nutrition.
- **Somalia Provisional Constitution, 2012**-the Federal Republic of Somalia Provisional Constitution of 2012 is explicit on the rights to economic and social rights as well as the right of a child to education.
- **National Transformation Plan- 2025-2029**- under Initiative 6: Enrolment Drive and Retention Programme are three key pillars which are School Health & Nutrition, School Incentives, and Advocacy and Enforcement. And each pillar has three components all of which are aimed at achieving improved health, nutrition and safety of school-children.
- **General Education Law (Level 1 And Level 2) / Act**- provide guidance in terms of regulating the education system in Somalia, guaranteeing the rights of every Somali to have access to quality education at various levels. The law also details the national, regional and district education targets as well as the delivery system of education services and the expected outcomes.
- **National Education Policy (2020)**- The policy was approved by the cabinet on 28th February 2020 and mandates the MoECHE to provide the overall coordination of education matters and collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure adequate access to education, quality, equitable and inclusive education provision.
- **Education Sector Strategic Plan (2024-2026)**- the ESSP expounds the MoECHE commitment to improve the quality of learning outcomes, especially at early grade levels; expand access to education for children (boys and girls), adolescents and youth, especially those from marginalized communities such as pastoralists, IDPS, and the urban poor; with a commitment to achieve targets of the Sustainable Development Goal four (SDG4).
- **National Social Protection Policy (2019)**- provides the national strategic vision to establish and strengthen social protection systems and improve livelihoods. The Implementation Framework focus on mitigating vulnerability and reducing reliance on short-term humanitarian aid.

- Somalia Country Strategic Plan (2016-2020)- point out the need to ensure malnourished and food-insecure children have improved nutritional status and that smallholder farmers benefit from more resilient, inclusive, and nutritious food systems. Plan also underscore the need for national institutions to have strengthened policies, capacities and systems for supporting food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations.
- Somalia Nutrition Strategy, May 2020- call for the mainstreaming of nutrition as a key component of nutrition-sensitive sectors and ensure that, WASH, health, education, social protection policies, strategies and activities are nutrition sensitive.
- Somalia Health Policy (2014)- prioritize strengthening reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health and nutrition as well as preventing and controlling the spread of priority targeted communicable diseases to reduce their burden of morbidity, mortality with a focus on acute watery diarrhoea, cholera, other enteric diseases and acute respiratory diseases. School provides a good platform to impart preventive strategies.
- The HIV National Strategic Plan and M & E Framework (2021 – 2023) outlines that the Ministries of Health in collaboration with the Ministries of Education will review the existing school curriculum and update it to include age appropriate and relevant reproductive health information.
- Somalia National Food Fortification Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024- seek to improve nutritional status of people by combating micronutrient deficiencies through national food fortification for accelerated socioeconomic development.
- Puntland Education Sector Strategic Plan (2017-2021) - point out the need to increase access and equity to educational opportunities, enhance efficiency, strengthen systems.

### 2.1.3 EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MOECHE) has the mandate to ensure quality education and training for all citizens to optimize individual and national development. The revised ESSP, outlined the ministry's priority to increase access to quality education for children and equip youth with the requisite skills and knowledge for social economic development.

Notwithstanding, the protracted conflict, displacement, and high levels of poverty has had devastating impact on the education system. The MOECHE is striving to strengthen the education institutional capacities and systems towards improving access to education and learning outcomes. However, the education sector is facing major challenges summarized below.

- Lack of school readiness - school readiness prior to formal entry into primary school at the appropriate age are critical for children's success and survival in primary education and subsequent educational level. Nevertheless, there is no concrete data on Early Childhood Education (ECE) and many preschool age children attend Koranic schools, where learning typically focusses on religious teaching. As a result, there is inadequate readiness for formal schooling (MOECHE, 2018).

- **Low access to education**- only 35% of school-aged children are enrolled in school. Low enrolment is attributed to poverty, food insecurity, hunger, lack of adequate learning facilities, shortage of teachers, relevant learning and teaching resources, insecurity / safety, gender discriminating norms and practices. In addition, 3.3 million out of the 4.9 million school-aged children and youth are out of school. The Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) is estimated at 30.1% for boys and 21% for girls indicating gender disparity[1]. Elsewhere, access and participation are lowest among poor households, IDPs pastoralist community and the urban poor.
- **Low quality of education** –the survival rate to grade 5 range from 61 to 74 per cent across the country and is especially low for those from poorer households and disadvantaged communities. This has translated to poor learning outcome and education performance. The lack of reliable data on children’s learning outcomes is also a major challenge to assessing the effectiveness of education at primary school level.
- **Inadequate School Health, Nutrition and Sanitation** -School health and nutrition impact on education outcome, improve health, enhance nutrition, alleviate hunger and prevent disease among schoolchildren (World Bank,2016).
- **Gender disparity** – while girls seem to have a slightly higher chance of completing primary education compared to boys, they are significantly low in secondary and university levels indicating high dropout as they move up the education ladder.
- **Teaching and learning capacity** – MoECHE upped its efforts to increase the number and capacity of teachers by recruiting 6,000 new teachers in the past three years. However, despite this, there is need for more as estimated studies have shown that in order to get all school-aged children to access education, the government of Somalia needs to avail 110,000 teachers[2].

## **2.1.4 NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY CONTEXT**

The health and nutritional status of schoolchildren influences their learning and performance in school. Inadequate nutrients intake, protein energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections, and diseases depresses the learning potential of schoolchildren by diminishing their cognitive development and their ability to participate in learning experiences. Moreover, schoolchildren have extra demand for energy to carryout various chores and sometimes to walk long distances to and from school [WFP,2020].

Studies have shown Somalia to have an estimated 59% iron deficiency, 33.3% vitamin A deficiency and a very low household salt iodine utilization (3.9%). In addition, intestinal and blood parasitic worms are a major source of disease and malnutrition in schoolchildren in Somalia. A joint study by WFP and the FGS showed that, dietary intake of calcium, vitamin A, folic acid (for adolescents) and iron is low in Somalia. The study also revealed that the nutritional requirements

[1] Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education/Federal Government of Somalia ( 2017). Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2020.

[2] The Education Cluster, UNICEF, 2024

of an adolescent girl are the most expensive to meet among the Somali household and cannot be met with locally available foods (FSNAU (2009)). Children are also the most vulnerable to waterborne diseases, measles, and malaria. The major drivers of the low health and nutrition among schoolchildren includes conflicts, droughts, food insecurity, displacement of populations and inadequate access to maternal and child health facilities as well as lack of access to community health workers. Additionally, there is high prevalence of hunger amongst school-age children especially those from poor rural, urban and displaced populations who often experiencing acute food insecurity[1].

Malnourished and unhealthy children lose valuable learning opportunities due to absenteeism. Hunger which is common among schoolchildren from food insecure households has adverse effect on learning as hungry pupils will have more difficulty concentrating in learning tasks. Moreover, inadequate nutrition not only impact children's cognitive and sensory abilities but also result in late enrolment, grade repetition, and drop out resulting in inefficiency of the educational system and low education performance. It is therefore imperative, that a nutrition sensitive School Meals programming be implemented. Studies show that school Meals not only reduce hunger and improve health and nutrition but also boost countries' productivity and allow children to better understand the links between what we grow and what we eat [2].

## 2.1.5 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

### CONTEXT

Evaluation of different School Meals programmes across the global indicates that, the strongest and most sustainable School Meals programmes are those that respond to community needs, are locally owned and incorporate community involvement and participation. Such programmes most likely make successful transition from donor dependency to national ownership and sustainability.

Strengthening community involvement in School Meals programme will improve local level ownership through decision making process in the implementation of School Meals programme. Besides, participation will ensure the untapped community resources are harnessed and mobilized to support School Meals for sustainability. In addition, developing links between School Meals and local agricultural production will result in greater community involvement in schools and participation which will promote health, wellbeing, quality of life and environmental protection and sustainability.

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[1] FGS (2019). The 'Fill the Nutrient Gap' Analysis: An approach to strengthen nutrition situation analysis and decision-making toward multisectoral policies and systems change.

[1] World Food Programme, 2024

## 2.2 HOME-GROWN SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME (HGSMP)

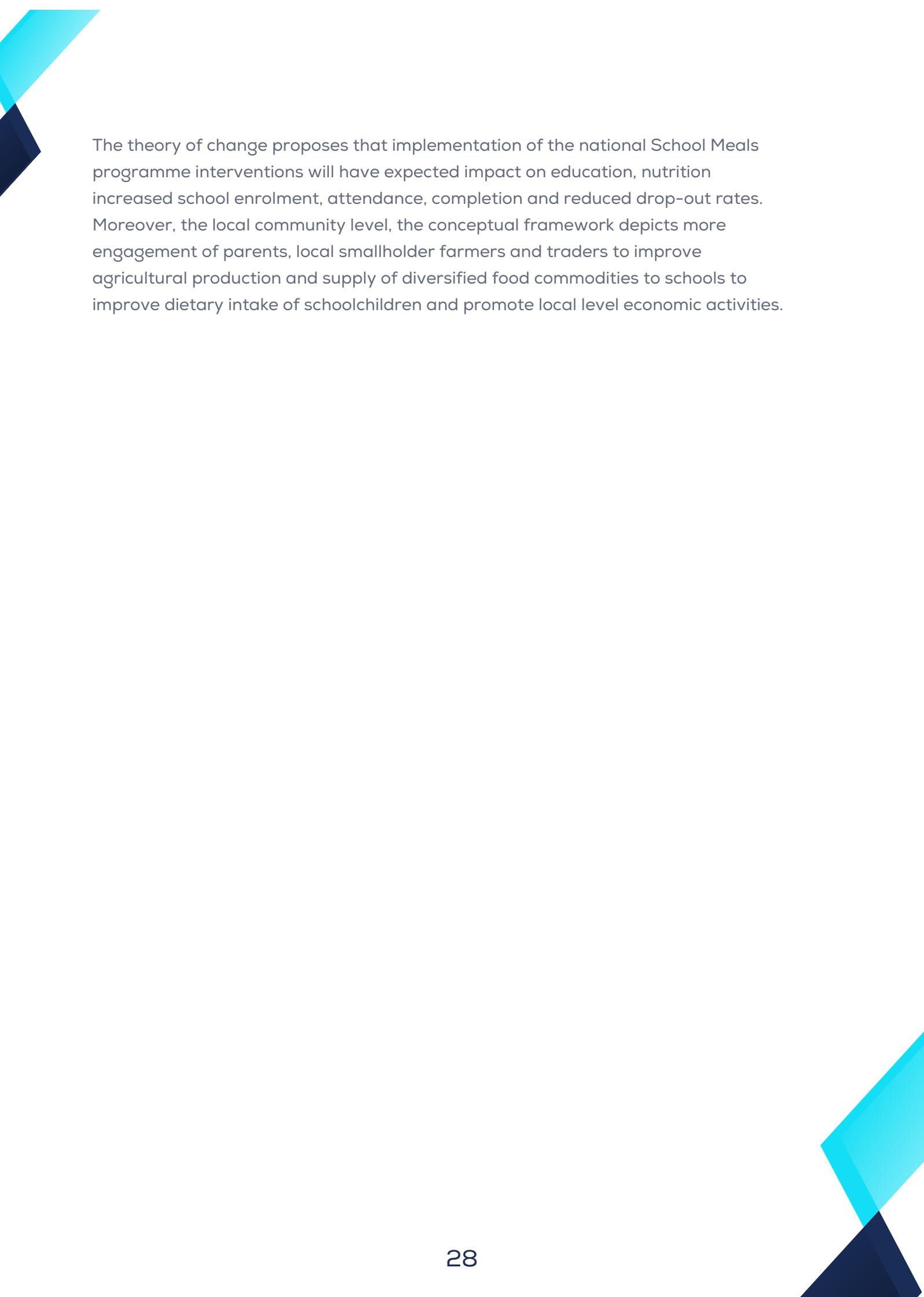
Home-Grown School Meals programme (HGSMP) involves sourcing food for School Meals locally from smallholder farmers in a bid to boost local agriculture, strengthen local food systems and move people out of poverty. HGSMP augments the impact of regular School Meals programmes with increased food production and diversification as well as economic benefits for local communities. The country's HGSMP has the following objectives:

- To ensure provision of nutritious meals from locally available food items enhancing dietary diversity.
- To stimulate the local markets and local food production through the engagement of local farmers and retailers.
- To strengthen capacity of the communities as well as the local authorities to manage SMP
- To incorporate behaviour, change communication as an integral part of the project design and rollout at both community and school level.

HGSF programmes will enable the development of nutrition-sensitive and inclusive food value chains, that will maximize benefits to smallholder farmers. This will play an important role in shaping and strengthening sustainable local food systems and improve diversity in school Meals and ensuring use of fresh foods. This will promote structured demand and ready markets for local farm produce and local suppliers, leading to wealth creation for rural households.

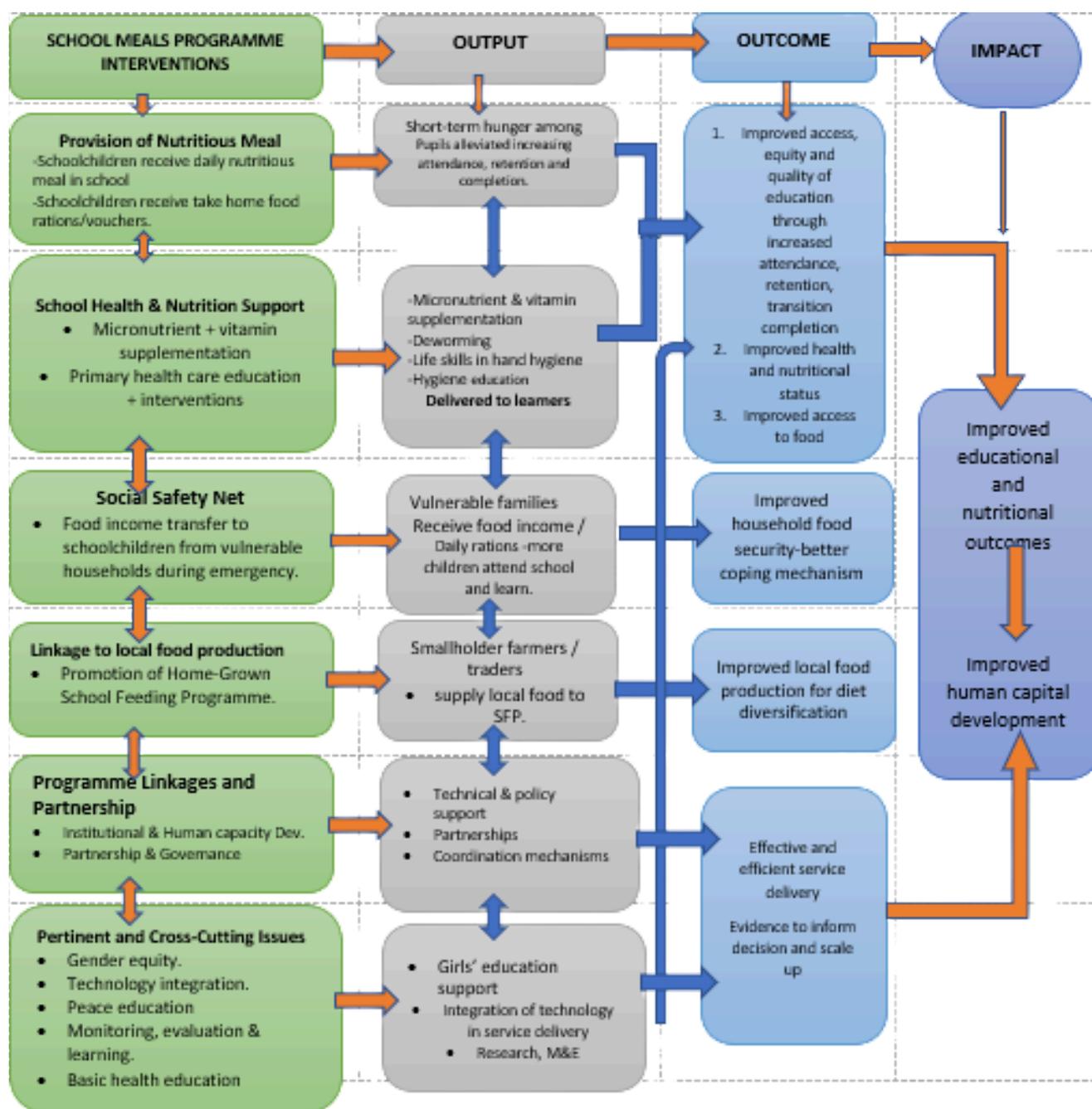
## 2.3 NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS POLICY THEORY OF CHANGE

This National School Meals Policy outlines the country's approach towards provision of a nationally owned, managed and sustainable free School Meals Programme. It is notable that, School Meals play a crucial role in addressing the dual challenge of alleviating hunger amongst schoolchildren and strengthening community as well as improving educational outcomes. To address the gaps highlighted above, this policy envisions implementation of a comprehensive and integrated National School Meals Policy through a devolved approach which in the long term, will contribute positively to the country's human capital development through improved education and health status among generations of learners. Improved school health and nutrition status of schoolchildren directly impacts quality of education and economic performance because well-nourished children stay in school longer, develop the skills needed for better jobs, and drive economic growth. The policy conceptual framework in figure 1 depicts six key components that will be implemented to bring about the desired outcome.



The theory of change proposes that implementation of the national School Meals programme interventions will have expected impact on education, nutrition increased school enrolment, attendance, completion and reduced drop-out rates. Moreover, the local community level, the conceptual framework depicts more engagement of parents, local smallholder farmers and traders to improve agricultural production and supply of diversified food commodities to schools to improve dietary intake of schoolchildren and promote local level economic activities.

FIGURE 1: SOMALIA NSMP CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Cross cutting themes: Food safety, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Inclusion and Gender Transformation

Figure 1: Somalia National School Meals Programme Conceptual Framework

# CHAPTER 3 : POLICY STATEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

This chapter provides policy statements and strategies that will guide decisions and actions, to achieve policy provisions in enhancing educational, health and nutritional outcomes in the Federal Republic of Somali.

## POLICY AREA 1: ACCESS TO QUALITY, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE BASIC EDUCATION

The School Meals Programme is a vital educational intervention that represents an investment in both the health and education of schoolchildren, while also contributing to the transformation of national food systems. It is understood that education must address the needs of the ‘whole child’ –not just literacy and numeracy. Health and nutrition play a vital role in learning outcomes, and the School Meals Programme contributes not only to increased participation in education but also to its quality. By reducing hunger, the programme boosts enrolment, improves retention, and enhances students’ concentration in the classroom. Looking ahead, the programme aims to expand its coverage to include all public Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, supporting school readiness for children aged 3 to 5. Additionally, the National School Meals Programme seeks to extend to secondary schools and Alternative Basic Education (ABE) levels, with a particular focus on helping adolescent girls stay in school and complete the basic education cycle.

**Policy Statement:** The Government of Somalia, at both national and sub-national levels, is committed to institutionalizing school meals as a strategy to broaden access to quality. Equitable and inclusive basic education.

### Policy Strategies

- 1) Strengthen and mainstream School Meals to all public basic education institutions paying special attention to children with special needs institutions, areas with lower school enrolments to ensure children from vulnerable households receive a nutritious food at school every day.
- 2) Progressively expand School Meals coverage to benefit all schoolchildren in all levels of basic education including pre-primary or level 0.
- 3) Explore innovative financing options for School Meals programme to guarantee sustainability of the program.
- 4) Strengthen service delivery in the provision of nutritious school Meals in targeted public primary schools through continuous development of the capability and morale of support staff.
- 5) Establish and Improve School Meals operational guidelines for all levels including pre-primary, primary and secondary.

- 6) Promote diet diversification based on nutrient requirements and regional food basket.
- 7) Upgrade school infrastructure to ensure improved food storage, preparation, cooking, serving and dining for all children including those with disability.
- 8) Enhance public awareness on the importance of School Meals programme, and gender equity and generate local ownership of the programme at school and community level.
- 9) Enable school Meals personnel to use technology in preparing, cooking, and serving food to children in order to enhance quality of service delivered from entry point to store, kitchen up to the last point of serving children.
- 10) Progressively scale up School Meals programme to cover all Public primary school children and eventually expand to include Early Childhood Development (ECD) and secondary school learners.

## POLICY AREA 2: IMPROVED HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF ALL SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Inadequate health and nutrition diminish the cognitive development of school children through physiological changes, and help boys and girls stay at school longer thus easing parents of the burden to provide food for them and at the same time enhance retention and completion rates. in learning experiences or both. On the health front, school-children who are deficient of certain nutrients, particularly iron and iodine, or suffering from parasitic infections or other diseases perform far less than their counterpart who are healthy and well-nourished (World Bank, 2018) [1]. In Somalia, school child have deficiency in critical micronutrients including vitamin A and low dietary intake of calcium, and folic acid which when coupled with high levels of parasitic worm infections affects the pupils' learning ability (WFP and FGS, 2019)[2]. This policy proposes the hiring of school nutritionists who closely work with the school, district officials, parents and other stakeholders. It may be ideal to hire a nutritionist for each school district to achieve policy objectives.

**Policy Statement :** Access to healthy and nutritious food at school is one of the policy priorities of the education system. The Ministry of Education is determined to increasing access to equitable and quality food at school through a coordinated government-community partnership

### Policy Strategies

- 1) Establish nutritional baseline indicators among schoolchildren to inform micronutrients and vitamin supplementation.
- 2) Strengthen and build capacity of school Meals composition, preparation, cooking and serving.

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[1] World Bank, 2018. Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies.

[2] FGS, WFP and SUN (2019). Somali Fill the Nutrient Gap and Cost of the Diet Assessment, summary report.

- 3) Promote diversification of school meals using locally available food basket.
- 4) Promote health, nutrition and hygiene education in schools including life skills in appropriate handwashing, personal hygiene, balanced diet, school-led total sanitation and sensitization against drug abuse.
- 5) Strengthen school Meals nutritional quality and safety through fortification in line with the nutrition policy.
- 6) Strengthen school health and nutrition interventions including WASH to address parasitic infections, micro-nutrient and vitamin deficiencies.
- 7) Promote disease awareness and prevention education among pupils, teachers and school community.

### POLICY AREA 3: LOCAL APPROACHES TO SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

School meals programs can create demand from the agricultural sector for school foods from preferably sustainable local farm systems that use agroecological practices. The goal here is to meet nutritional needs of school children by applying local approaches to agriculture that promote biodiversity, resilience, and food sovereignty.

**Policy Statement** :The Government of Somalia encourages farm to school linkages so that to increase local production and enhance consumption of locally sourced foods at schools.

#### Policy Strategies

- 1) Encourage smallholder farmers to supply schools with fresh produce therefore making Home Grown School Meals as a reliable model.
- 2) Encourage schools embrace school gardening to support school meals programme.
- 3) Strengthen the capacity of smallholder farmers to improve local food production and effectively participate in HGSMP.
- 4) Strengthen schools' capacity to use alternative sources of energy (fuel) for cooking to safeguard environment and lower cost.
- 5) Promote school gardening schemes and active and voluntary participation of schoolchildren in school gardening activities.
- 6) Promote mechanisms to mitigate against price volatility of food commodities.
- 7) Strengthen the use of technology by local farmers and programme implementers to improve food production and supply chain management.

## POLICY AREA 4: PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This policy envisions partnerships and active participation of local communities as an essential element for successful, accountable and sustainable SMP. While efforts have been made to build community participation and involvement in School Meals programme, it has been inadequate so far. This policy aims to strengthen community involvement for ownership, complementarity and sustainability of the SMP. In addition, given the finite resources, it is imperative to seek for new partnerships with local private sector especially business community to support SMP at community, state and federal levels, this will prioritize partnership with existing private sector providers of SMP in schools such as private, civil society and religious institutions sponsored schools. The priority goal in this policy area is to enhance ownership, sustainability and accountability at the local level through active community participation, strengthen existing collaborations and establish new partnerships where necessary to improve SMP service delivery.

**Policy Statement** : Encourage public and private sector participation in the planning, design and implementation of School Meals Programmes by organizing community meetings in schools with the agenda of communicating program successes, challenges and opportunities to parents, and seek their views on how best to serve their children in school.

### Policy Strategies

- 1) Empower the Community Education Committee to in turn engage the local community to fully support School Meals Program.
- 2) Engage the school leadership, and community to ensure schools are habitable and livable place for learners by improving school environment, providing a healthy and nutritious food, clean and safe drinking water, equipped with social amenities and other facilities
- 3) Organize workshops & community platforms to create awareness on the roles and responsibilities of community
- 4) Establish feedback loop where the community can communicate with authorities involved in School Meals

## POLICY AREA 5: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE, MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATION AND REPORTING

Realization of the goals and objectives of this policy will require effective governance and multi-sectoral planning and enhanced accountability. The policy proposes the establishment of a robust multi-sectoral management and coordination structure that includes both levels of government national and subnational as well as sectors such as education, health, nutrition, agriculture, planning, finance, environment and social protection. Therefore, successful implementation of this policy and delivery of top-quality national school meals programme largely depends on effective governance and management structure.

**Policy Statement** : Institutionalize School Meals Programme and integrate it into school calendar and the national curricula system such that children get a chance at a healthy, nutritious meal to facilitate their physical and cognitive development and future survival as adults. The programme also provides learners with knowledge on how to feed themselves and their loved ones and this can help break the intergenerational cycle of hunger and poverty.

### **Policy Strategies**

- 1) Establish and strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration that can translate vision into action through system level change.
- 2) Strengthen existing operational management and administrative guidelines to reflect multi-sectoral approach.
- 3) Establish engagement, roles and responsibility framework of stakeholders within the mandate of the different levels of government, line ministries and stakeholders.
- 4) Strengthen advocacy for School Meals in relevant existing multi-agency bodies such as education, food security and nutrition clusters.
- 5) Strengthen the roll-out of a knowledge-management and common reporting system to collate, analyse, store and show case School Meals Programme.
- 6) Mainstream and strengthen multi-sectoral coordination structures for effective governance at all levels.
- 7) Establish, promote and coordinate a robust partnerships and collaborations mechanisms with all actors and stakeholders in the provision and support of School Meals programme at both levels of government.

## **POLICY AREA 6: IMPROVING RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND INNOVATIVE FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

Resource allocation is a central factor to advance School Meals programme nationwide. Well-nourished children can learn and grow to reach their full potential. Presently, school meals programme is funded by the WFP and a few other partners with limited government and local community contribution. This policy envisions an increase in government contribution through local financing and engaging the private sector in the process.

**Policy Statement** : Exploring sustainable financing options to design, develop and implement a comprehensive National School Meals programme that meets Somalia's aspirations to achieve national transformation goals. The government shall foster a culture of ownership and strong commitment to School Meals by mobilizing resources domestically and internationally.

## Policy Strategies

- 1) Allocate domestic funds to school Meals by including the program into the national budget to enhance predictability and sustainability of the programme
- 2) Undertake fiscal space analysis to explore innovative ways to finance school Meals
- 3) Collaborate with the WFP to conduct market analysis and revise food basket once in every few school years
- 4) Establish and promote a fundraising strategy from local and external resources to support National School Meals implementation across the country.
- 5) Develop a costed transition plan in close cooperation with FMS and the WFP
- 6) Integrate School Meals into Education Sector Strategic Plans to consider the programme during financial planning to fund education
- 7) Encourage community contribution school Meals and engage private sector in PPP to expand and sustain the programme
- 8) Collaborate with the Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health & Nutrition (SFI) to get technical support in analyzing financing patterns and challenges, as well as financing strategies and to develop multi-year financing strategy for sustainable school Meals in Somalia .

## POLICY AREA 7: SAFETY NET SUPPORT DURING EMERGENCY

School Meals programme has been a critical social protection intervention during emergency in Somalia. In effect, mitigating against child labour, recruitment into armed groups, and early pregnancies and marriages. Additionally, SMP promises to provide a reliable income transfer to the very needy families offsetting their education and food costs. School Meals Programmes serve as accessible platforms for psychosocial support all in the Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) process. The priority in this policy area is to ensure continuity in education and learning opportunities and to improve the nutritional, health and psychosocial wellbeing of schoolchildren during emergencies.

In addition to safety net support to education, the policy proposes to link with the Social Protection Policy and advocate for inclusion of SMP related costs in the valuation of the cash transfer under the Minimum Food Expenditure Basket (MFEB). The SMP monthly cost per school going aged child will be provided by the School Meals Department (SMD) annually per region.

**Policy Statement :** Ensure a strong social safety net that enhances dignity, reduces poverty, and promotes equality by providing essential support, especially nutritional assistance—to school children during times of need.

## Policy Strategies

- 1) Implement the newly developed school Meals strategy 2025 which has a detailed selection strategy and SF intervention during emergency and in line with the social protection policy.
- 2) Strengthen and expand income transfer to vulnerable families with schoolchildren through innovative modalities including take-home-rations/ cash transfer or grab and go modalities that promote learning opportunities during emergencies.
- 3) Secure and provide nutritious foods and gender transformative nutrition messaging, mentorship and counselling and other psychosocial support during emergencies.
- 4) Strengthen social behaviour change communication strategy during emergencies
- 5) Reinforce mechanisms that prioritize provision of School Meals intervention as a social safety net for vulnerable schoolchildren and their families during emergencies and in accordance with the social protection policy.
- 6) Strengthen complementary support including mitigation against abuse and psychosocial support.

# CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION STRUCTURE

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This chapter sets out the policy provisions regarding the coordination and management functions of both levels of government as well as roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at various levels. This policy will be domiciled under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MoECHE). The School Meals Department is the Designated National Authority to manage and implement the policy, with this responsibility in the long term shifting to an independent commission established by an Act of Parliament.

## 4.1 COORDINATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

Effective Nutrition-Sensitive School Meals Programme (NSSMP) will require the involvement of different actors from diverse sectors to consolidate knowledge, expertise and resources in the planning and implementation of the Programme. Further, it is essential that NSSMP is integrated into all levels of sectoral policies and frameworks to allow for smooth national and sub-national collaboration where ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) across both levels of government to demonstrate the stark interest and value of National School Meals Programs.

Multi-sectoral coordination will allow establishment of technical expertise and capacities to be established and enable clear communication through joint actions, goal planning, and performance measurement through agreed-upon indicators and outputs. In addition, a functioning technical working group, drawn from all relevant institutions of the government, and development partners are imperative to strengthen coordination at all levels. The policy will be implemented within the existing federal and member state governance structures and strengthened through multi-agency technical working groups that will be established to facilitate collaboration.

These structures are briefly described below.

a) The School Meals Department (SMD) housed at the Ministry of Education (MoECHE) in the national government shall be the Designated National Authority (DNA) to oversee the implementation of this policy. The SMD shall be strengthened and upgraded to an independent Commission through an Act of Parliament to lead the battle against school hunger and malnutrition among school-going children nationwide. The resulting SMD will chair the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Home-Grown School Meals (IMWGHGSM), a multi-agency technical team with representation from line ministries at the national government level.

b) An Inter-Agency Steering Committee for School Meals (IASCSF) - will be established at the federal level for ultimate management decisions and resource mobilization. The IASCSF will be co-chaired by the Federal Minister for Education, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Health and WFP representing the donor community (as the lead agency supporting School Meals). Members of this committee include ministers of education or representative from federal member states, Director General of Education from federal and member states, development partners representatives, Minister or representative for health, agriculture, humanitarian affairs and finance; INGOs representatives, representative of food security and education clusters.

The functions of the steering committee are:

- Strategic decision making
- Resource/fund mobilization
- International advocacy
- National advocacy
- Foster partnership and collaboration

c) Regional School Meals Committee (RSMC) will be established at each Member State. The RSMC will be co-chaired by federal member state's minister for education or representative and that shall be the leading agency supporting School Meals at state level.

Functions of RSMC include:

- Liaison with the Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group for Home-Grown School Meals (IMTWG-HGSM)
- Strategic decision making about
- Complementary resource / fund mobilization in the state
- In state advocacy
- Foster partnership and collaboration in the state.

d) District School Meals Committee (DSMC) - This will be established at the district level to oversee School Meals implementation within the district where they are based. Members of the DSMC will include: District Education Officer who will chair the meetings; representatives from the ministries of Agriculture, Health and Humanitarian Affairs as well as representatives from local NGOs, CBO and local government administration.

The functions will include:

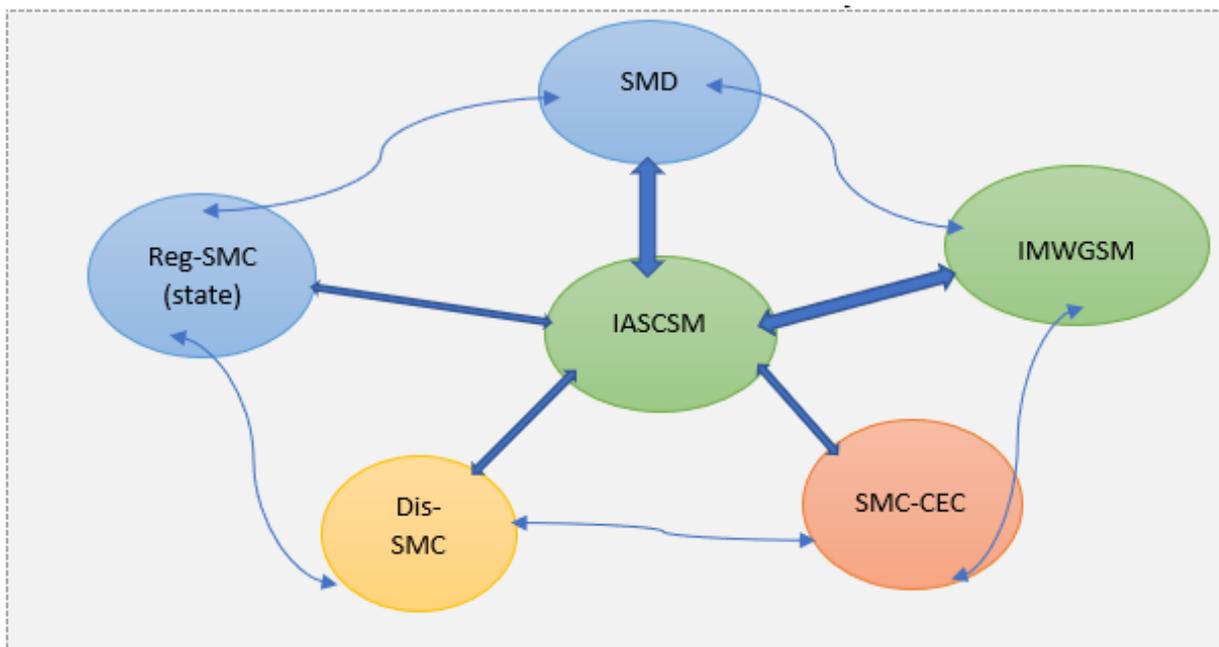
- Liaison with community / schools and the RSMC
- Support to school
- Quality assurance
- Map vulnerability and exclusion issues.
- Identify targeted schools and pupils to be supported through School Meals
- Monitoring and outcome/impact assessment in the district
- Data collection and reporting
- Liaison with social protection, nutrition and food security clusters in the district.

e) School Meals Committee (SMC) -this will be a sub-committee within the Community Education Committee (CEC) based in each school. SMC will be chaired by the school principal and shall have a minimum of three members and maximum of five members. The SMC members shall be nominated by the District School Meals Committee and will be approval by the Regional School Meals Committee. The SMC shall have roles such as chairperson, storekeeper, and treasurer. These members will be nominated considering the most trustworthy and capable people available in the land. The committee shall meet on weekly basis or as demand arises.

Functions include:

- Day-to-day oversight of all School Meals operations
- Coordinate various stakeholder engagements
- Quality assurance of School Meals
- Linkages with key local community, farmers and traders
- Oversee procurement, storage, preparation, cooking and serving
- Collect school level data using available technology and transmit it to the district level

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR COORDINATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY



LEVEL	COORDINATION STRUCTURES	KEY FUNCTIONS	COORDINATION MODALITY
FEDERAL LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOEHE</li> <li>UN, partners &amp; private sector</li> <li>Other Federal Line Ministries</li> </ul> <p>IASCMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic decision making.</li> <li>Resource / fund mobilization.</li> <li>International advocacy &amp; partnerships</li> <li>National advocacy</li> <li>Inter-government liaison.</li> <li>National monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>Evidence generation &amp; communication</li> <li>Policy review and development</li> <li>Liaison with social protection, nutrition and food security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IASCMS</li> <li>Meets quarterly</li> <li>IMWGSMS</li> <li>Meets bi-monthly</li> </ul>
FM STATE LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION</li> <li>UN, Partners &amp; Private Sector</li> <li>Other State Line Ministries</li> </ul> <p>RSMC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaison with the IGMWSC</li> <li>State level Strategic decision</li> <li>Complementary resource mobilization for the state</li> <li>In state advocacy</li> <li>Partnership and collaboration in the state.</li> <li>Implementation oversight</li> <li>Monitoring and data</li> <li>Reporting on status</li> <li>Liaison with social protection, nutrition and food security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSMC</li> <li>Meets monthly</li> </ul>
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoE &amp; Line Ministries</li> <li>UN / PARTNERS/NGOS/ CBOS/ PRIVATE</li> </ul> <p>DSMC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaison</li> <li>Quality assurance</li> <li>map vulnerability and inclusion</li> <li>Identify targeted schools and pupils</li> <li>Data collection and reporting</li> <li>Support supervision to schools</li> <li>Liaison with local authority</li> <li>Environmental sustainability</li> <li>Agricultural production support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSMC</li> <li>Meets monthly</li> <li>Maintain meeting records</li> </ul>
SCHOOL / COMMUNITY LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMC / CEC</li> <li>Pupils /parents community</li> </ul> <p>SMC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day-to-day oversight of School Meals operations</li> <li>Coordinate various stakeholder at school</li> <li>Quality assurance of school meals.</li> <li>Linkages with key local community, farmers and traders</li> <li>Food commodity market surveys</li> <li>Complementary Resource mobilization</li> <li>Support to farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMC</li> <li>Meets weekly</li> <li>Maintain meeting records</li> </ul>

## 4.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

The key implementers of this policy include relevant Federal Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), Member State Governments (FMS) Departments and Agencies, development partners including UN agencies, Civil Society Organizations, Community Education Committees, school administrators, teachers and parents and communities.

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HIGHER EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management and technical matters as guided by the IASCSF</li><li>• Secretariat to the IASCSF</li><li>• Lead policy area one on improving access, retention, quality and equity in education at federal level</li><li>• Review and development of School Meals policy</li><li>• Liaison with development partners &amp; philanthropists</li><li>• Development of national service standard guidelines</li><li>• National level performance Monitoring and evaluation</li><li>• Support capacity development member states School Meals focal points</li><li>• Liaison with federal parliament and other agencies to ensure legal and regulatory structures are in place.</li><li>• Establish mechanisms for multisectoral collaboration and partnerships.</li><li>• Capacity building on school Meals management and delivery</li></ul>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead the policy area 2 on improving health and nutrition of schoolchildren</li><li>• Technical and financial support to school-based health and nutrition activities</li><li>• Capacity building of stakeholders on WASH, nutrition.</li><li>• Establish nutritional standards for schoolchildren</li><li>• Provide guidance on nutrition sensitive school Meals, food quality and safety guidelines.</li><li>• Provide technical guidance on school menus to ensure school Meals address nutrient requirements.</li><li>• Provide guidance on micro-nutrient and vitamin supplementation.</li><li>• Support school to ensure food handlers in schools meet the medical requirements.</li><li>• Advice on medical check-ups for personnel handling school food</li></ul>

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (MOAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the policy area 3 on linkages to local food production /HGSMP</li> <li>• Mainstream homegrown School Meals programme into ministry’s programme</li> <li>• Allocate budget to support smallholder farmers to improve food production.</li> <li>• Build capacity of stakeholders on food production and food markets.</li> <li>• Provide technical guidance on food storage, safety, and distribution.</li> <li>• Undertake research to inform local food production and nutrient composition.</li> </ul>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF LIVESTOCK, FORESTRY AND RANGE (MOLF&R)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead in livestock integration into School Meals</li> <li>• Collaborate with MOECHE to establish mechanisms for School Meals among pastoralist group</li> <li>• Support capacity building of stakeholder on involvement of pastoral communities in homegrown School Meals .</li> </ul>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure integration of School Meals programme into national development plans.</li> <li>• Support capacity building in programme management</li> </ul>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure budgetary allocation for School Meals within the line ministries.</li> </ul>

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND WATER RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen water provision in learning institutions</li> <li>• Provide technical guidance on energy saving cooking methods to schools</li> <li>• Advice on alternative sources of energy</li> </ul>
STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall coordinating ministry at the state level</li> <li>• Ensure legal and regulatory structures in the state government.</li> <li>• Support and lead multisectoral collaboration and partnerships in the state</li> <li>• Support multi-sectoral monitoring and quality assurance in the state.</li> <li>• In-charge of programme financing in the state</li> <li>• Support the development of operational and standard guidelines in the state.</li> <li>• Capacity building of technical team in the state</li> </ul>
STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary allocation for school-based health and nutrition activities</li> <li>• Capacity building of stakeholders on nutrition and school wash</li> <li>• Establish nutritional standards for schoolchildren.</li> <li>• Advise of on nutrition sensitive school Meals, food quality and safety guidelines in the region.</li> <li>• Provide technical guidance on school menus in the region.</li> <li>• Provide guidance on micro-nutrient and vitamin supplementation in the region</li> </ul>
STATE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream homegrown School Meals programme into ministry's programme.</li> <li>• Allocate budget to support smallholder farmers to improve food production.</li> <li>• Build capacity of stakeholders on food production and food markets.</li> <li>• Provide technical guidance on food storage, safety, and distribution.</li> <li>• Undertake research to inform local food production and nutrient composition.</li> </ul>

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
STATE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate School Meals programme into national development plans.</li> <li>• Support capacity building in programme management</li> </ul>
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support to School Meals activities</li> <li>• Programme monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Technical support for capacity building of government institutions and personnel.</li> <li>• Administrative support</li> <li>• Technical expertise support</li> </ul>
CIVIL SOCIETIES ORGANIZATIONS, RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial support to the ministries</li> <li>• Support monitoring, evaluation and research</li> <li>• Technical support in the implementation of the programme.</li> <li>• Technical expertise support</li> <li>• Support in technical capacity building.</li> <li>• Support in development of guidelines.</li> </ul>

### 4.3 FINANCING SMP

Many countries, including Benin, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, have unveiled ambitious plans to achieve universal school feeding. School feeding figured with some prominence during the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and its subsequent Stocktaking Moment in 2023. The Rockefeller Foundation has committed to reaching 100 million children with school meals by 2030. The Brazilian Presidency of the G20 has identified school feeding as a priority area for its Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, which was launched at the November 2024 G20 Summit. The World Bank has identified school feeding as a potential platform for expanding the reach of social protection programs and a priority for the recently replenished International Development Association (IDA) (Watkins et al 2024).

1) Government Financing: While delivering efficient school meal programs is about far more than finance, budget constraints are holding back progress. Many governments lack the fiscal space necessary to scale up school meals. In many countries, real budgets have been falling in the face of rising inflation. The Federal Government of Somalia commits...xxx to expand its coverage of SMP through annual budget provision as will be requested by the SMD or the independent commission. Additionally, to reach universal coverage in Somalia, the cost of SMP would have to be covered through a mix of domestic budgets and international development finance, most of it in the form of grant aid or concessional lending. The government financing can be attained through:

i. "Sin taxes" in national budgets and health financing.

Excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) produce a triple benefit. They reduce demand for products harmful to public health, generate revenue, and can be designed to produce progressive outcomes (with poorer households securing more of the benefits and wealthier households carrying a greater share of costs). The Federal Republic of Somalia will designed sin taxes fund directly school meals through taxes on alcohol and tobacco.

ii. Taxation of natural resource wealth:

The Federal Republic of Somalia will use its vast natural resources to finance a universal school meals program.

iii. Government's earmarking revenues for school feeding.

The case against earmarking is well known. Assigning revenues to specified budget line items can introduce rigidity and volatility into public finance systems. However, "soft earmarking" can play an important role in financing priority areas across political cycles, and in demonstrating that taxation leads to identifiable benefits. Earmarking revenues from SSB and/or ultra processed food taxes for school meals may help the Federal Republic of Somalia to make – and win – the public case for taxation. More broadly, earmarking for school meals can help build social contracts between states and citizens in countries where confidence in taxation systems is limited.

2 ) Funding from bilateral and multilateral institutions: The SMD through the MoECHE and the Federal Government of Somalia, to seek funding from bilateral and multilateral institutions through grants and concessional loans where feasible from the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), African Development Fund (ADF), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Embassies, UN agencies, Green Climate Fund (GCF), Climate Investment Fund (CIF), Children Investment Fund Facility (CIFF), Adaptation Fund and Global Environment Facility (GEF) among others. This will seek to complement and support the Government financing of the SMP in the spirit of increasing coverage and sustainability of SMP.

3) Climate Financing: Through the adoption of clean cooking technologies, SMD in consultation with the MoECHE and Federal Government of Somalia, will seek to trade in carbon credits sequestered from the clean cooking in schools. The climate financing to be obtained from the voluntary carbon markets and potentially Government to Government relationships, will further expand the coverage and sustainability of SMP.

4) Public Private Financing: The SMD and MoECHE recognize that parents and guardians in private schools or religious institutions and/or civil society supported schools cater for the costs of SMP for their children. This is applicable in urban areas among more affluent population. The policy recognizes the need to expand the coverage of public private financing of SMP where possible, where parents and caregivers provide for the cost of SMP, while private sector led learning institutions provide the meals. The policy will provide guidelines for ensuring food quality and safety standards are maintained in these schools.

5) Strategic Partnerships: The SMD and MoECHE will engage strategic partners such as the UN WFP, Civil Society and other non-state actors to provide financial and technical support towards the implementation of the policy.

# CHAPTER 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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This chapter outlines how Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Reporting and Learning (MEARL) will be applied in school meals programming and provides a framework for future policy reviews. To strengthen transparency and accountability, the Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEARL) system will be put in place to better track implementation status of the strategies outlined in this Policy.

## 5.1 MONITORING OF NATIONAL SMP

Implementation of the NSMP will be effective, efficient and of high quality. A monitoring system will be used to facilitate the generation of information on the outlined policy strategies, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact, as well as external factors, to track progress on the implementation programme. The MOECHE will spearhead MEARL of this policy. Thus, regular monitoring of activity implementation will be carried out to ensure due diligence processes are followed alongside management processes from food procurement/voucher redemption to cooked Meals served to pupils in schools. Generating evidence of what works well or not working well will help in decision making and improve implementation. Major challenges may include initiating School Meals and at the same time expanding coverage. The priority in this area is to strengthen regular and technology-based monitoring, evaluation and reporting system of the SMP implementation and to generate succinct evidence to inform decision making and policy review and development.

## 5.2 EVALUATION

The evaluation of the NSMP will highlight its positive impact on children's education and well-being, with plans for expansion to benefit more students. The MOECHE and other stakeholders will conduct baseline surveys, mid-term and end-term evaluations to inform decision-making, promote accountability, provide lessons learnt, identify gaps and recommendations for future improvement in the implementation of the school meals policy. The evaluation of the Schools Meals Programme will underscore its significant role in enhancing children's educational experiences through improved nutrition. The findings will support ongoing efforts to expand the programme and ensure that more children can benefit from nutritious meals, ultimately contributing to their academic success and overall well-being. The government will remain committed to reviewing and adapting the programme based on these evaluations to maximize its impact on students' lives.

### 5.3 REPORTING AND LEARNING

The MOECHE will prepare periodic reports on the status and progress of policy implementation. These reports will be shared with stakeholders, including relevant government agencies and other strategic development partners through appropriate communication channels. In addition, the MOECHE will convene annual or biannual forums to share experiences, lessons, and best practices in the implementation of this Policy.

### 5.4 REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

This Policy remains a living document and is subject to review as needs arise in line with international, regional and national trends. A national review of this policy shall be commissioned in the fifth year of implementation to respond to emerging trends and issues.

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