Assessing the Food Policy Systems in Africa

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAPF	Comprehensive Agricultural Policy Framework
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSAIP	Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan
DEP	Diaspora Engagement Policy
DRMB	Disaster Risk Management Bill
FASDEP II	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy II
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
GASIP	Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Program
GLTNDPF	Ghana National Long-Term Development Perspective
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
GNCCAS	Ghana National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
GNCCP	Ghana National Climate Change Policy
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Office of Migration
METASIP II	Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan II
NAPF	National Agriculture Policy Framework
NCCAP	National Climate Change Action Plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDP	National Drought Plan
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Council
NFP	National Forest Policy
NGP	National Gender Policy
NLMP	National Labour Migration Policy
NMP	National Migration Policy
NNP	National Nutrition Policy
NREP	National Renewable Energy Policy
NRGP	Northern Rural Growth Programme
NYP	National Youth Policy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAFE4ALL	Safeguarding African Foodsheds and Ecosystems for All Actors Across

	Local, Regional, and International Levels to Manage Migration
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
SPIRIT	Scalability, Power-sensitive Inclusivity, Institutional Flexibility, Reflexivity, Temporality
TNF	Tripartite Negotiating Forum
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VIS	Volontariato Internazionale Per Lo Sviluppo
WTO	World Trade Organization
WU	Wageningen University
ZCP	Zimbabwe Climate Policy
ZDP	Zimbabwe Diaspora Policy
Zim Asset	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZiNEPF	Zimbabwe National Employment Policy Framework
ZNWP	Zimbabwe National Water Policy

Executive Summary

Background

Africa's food systems are under mounting pressure from climate change, environmental degradation, and shifting migration patterns. Recognizing the need for integrated solutions, the SAFE4ALL initiative—Safeguarding African Foodsheds and Ecosystems for All Actors Across Local, Regional, and International Levels to Manage Migration—aims to strengthen food, climate, and migration governance systems across Africa. This study assesses the adaptability and resilience of national policy frameworks in Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, focusing on how food security, climate change adaptation, and migration are addressed and interconnected. The analysis aims to inform more inclusive, scalable, and dynamic policy responses to build sustainable food systems under conditions of uncertainty and change.

Methodology

The study reviewed a total of 60 national policy documents (18 from Zimbabwe, 17 from Ghana, and 25 from Kenya) relevant to the food-climate-migration nexus. A snowballing approach was used to identify strategic frameworks, excluding laws, acts, and program implementation manuals. Policies developed or revised within the past 10–15 years were prioritized. The assessment applied the SPIRIT analytical framework—evaluating each policy across seven dimensions: Scalability, power-sensitive inclusivity, institutional flexibility, reflexivity, temporality, fitting local realities, and adaptive nature. Document review was complemented by stakeholder consultations and a qualitative rating system (Strong, Moderate, Weak) to synthesize cross-country patterns.

Key findings

- Kenya demonstrates stronger scalability, institutional flexibility, and fitting to local realities, largely due to its devolved governance system and localized planning mechanisms. However, moderate gaps remain in adaptive capacity and dynamic integration of migration into food and climate policies.

- Ghana exhibits moderate performance across most SPIRIT dimensions. While policy frameworks are relatively stable, gaps in adaptive nature, fitting local realities, and cross-sectoral coherence limit the country's ability to dynamically adjust to emerging climate and migration challenges.

- Zimbabwe shows moderate reflexivity and scalability but faces major challenges with power-sensitive inclusivity, temporality, and adaptive nature. Rigid institutional structures and weak feedback mechanisms reduce the responsiveness of Zimbabwe's food system governance under changing socio-ecological conditions.

Across all three countries, while climate adaptation and food security policies are moderately integrated, migration governance remains weakly mainstreamed into food and climate strategies. Limited operational frameworks for periodic policy review and lack of localized adaptability also constrain long-term resilience building.

Conclusion

The policy ecosystems in Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe provide important foundations for advancing integrated food system resilience. However, critical gaps in cross-sectoral integration, inclusivity of marginalized actors, dynamic adaptability, and local responsiveness remain. Without addressing these gaps, national efforts to build climate-

resilient and food-secure communities are likely to fall short in the face of accelerating environmental and demographic pressures. SAFE4ALL is strategically positioned to leverage existing policy strengths while addressing systemic weaknesses, using approaches such as foodshed management, LivingLabs, and decentralized resilience programming.

Recommendations

Building on the SPIRIT analysis across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, several recommendations emerge to enhance policy adaptability, inclusivity, and integration across food security, climate resilience, and migration governance:

1. Across all three countries, integration between food, climate, and migration policies remains partial or fragmented. Governments should establish formalized, multi-sectoral coordination platforms—linking agriculture, environment, migration, and social protection sectors—to foster joint planning, implementation, and monitoring. SAFE4ALL can support the creation or strengthening of inter-ministerial committees and cross-sectoral task forces that bridge current policy silos.

2. Temporality gaps highlight the need for structured review and renewal mechanisms within national policies. Governments should institutionalize mandatory policy review intervals (e.g., every 5 years) aligned with medium-term development strategies. This would enhance policy dynamism and ensure responsiveness to emerging risks such as climate shocks, migration surges, and food system disruptions.

3. Marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, women, youth, pastoralists, and persons with disabilities, must be systematically included in policy design, implementation, and monitoring processes. SAFE4ALL should promote gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive participatory platforms (e.g., community dialogues, citizen advisory boards), and mechanisms for empowering traditionally excluded voices at national and local levels.

4. Devolution has proven critical, particularly in Kenya, in fostering scalability and flexibility. Ghana and Zimbabwe should deepen decentralization by providing local governments with greater autonomy, resources, and technical capacity to adapt food, climate, and migration strategies to diverse local realities. Investment in district-level and ward-level planning processes is essential to embed adaptive governance closer to communities.

5. Policies must avoid one-size-fits-all approaches by reflecting socio-ecological diversity. Governments should systematically integrate localized vulnerability assessments, traditional knowledge systems, and context-specific livelihood strategies into policy formulation and implementation frameworks. SAFE4ALL can facilitate LivingLabs and co-creation processes that bridge top-down policy frameworks with bottom-up innovation.

6. Migration remains insufficiently integrated into food and climate policies. Governments should mainstream human mobility considerations into climate adaptation plans, food security strategies, and rural development frameworks. This includes developing mechanisms to address climate-induced displacement, support migrant-inclusive resilience building, and harness diaspora contributions for local development.

7. SAFE4ALL countries should invest in robust data systems, early warning mechanisms, and iterative learning platforms that link policy to evidence. Embedding flexible monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems into policy cycles will enable real-time feedback, promote

learning from implementation, and allow timely course correction.

8. Given the similarities and differences observed across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, cross-country learning platforms should be institutionalized. SAFE4ALL can facilitate peer-learning exchanges where policymakers share best practices, innovations, and challenges in scaling food system resilience under climate and migration pressures.

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1. Background

Africa's food systems are increasingly exposed to complex pressure from climate change, environmental degradation and migration dynamics. These interacting drivers are reshaping agricultural livelihoods, food security, and rural-urban socio-economic transitions across the continent. Although Africa is projected to play a pivotal role in global food production over the coming decades, food systems remain highly vulnerable to shocks, underscoring the need for resilient and adaptive policy frameworks (SAFE4ALL Proposal, 2023).

In this context, the Safeguarding African Foodsheds and Ecosytems for All Actors Across Local, Regional, and International Levels to Manage Migration (SAFE4ALL) project seeks to generate evidence-based insights to strengthen policy systems in Africa. It adopts an integrated lens recognizing that food security, climate resilience, and migration governance must be addressed together to avoid fragmented and ineffective responses.

This publication assesses the extent to which national policies in three African countries—Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe—demonstrate adaptability and integration across food, climate, and migration domains. It applies the SPIRIT analytical framework—examining Scalability, Power-sensitive inclusivity, Institutional flexibility, Reflexivity, Integration, and Temporality—as a tool to systematically evaluate policy systems' capacities to respond to dynamic and interrelated challenges (Vij et al., 2017).

Rather than focusing only on sectoral policy content, in Task 3.1. our assessment explores how adaptable, inclusive, and forward-looking the food policy ecosystems are, particularly in supporting sustainable livelihoods under conditions of climate uncertainty and migration pressures. This policy assessment will explain the rigidity or fluidity of policy documents during their lifetime. To this end, this report reflects on this policy assessment and provides insights into answering the following two questions:

1. To what extent do policy documents show a certain level of flexibility to be adaptive to change in current rapidly changing circumstances?

2. To what extent do the policy documents inhibit, support, overlap, conflict each other on the variable topics of the climate-food-migration nexus?

Even though policy documents might link climate change directly to migration, this is not an assumption we wish to make or to confirm. Instead, the aim is to focus on the type of link that is made between climate change and migration in text in the policy documents, and how either of the two issues are aimed to be solved focusing on policy documents. The findings aim to inform more coherent, responsive, and transformative food policy systems that align with broader development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

The remaining of the report is structured as follows. The next section describes the methodological approach, which details the data collection and the SPIRIT framework. This is followed by the presentation of the country-specific analysis. The final section concludes and provides policy recommendations based on the findings.

2. Methodology

2.1 SPIRIT framework

For assessing the overall adaptability of the policies, we used the SPIRIT framework (Vij et al., 2017, 2021). This framework is used as a guiding tool to qualitatively review the policy documents focusing on five indicative elements: scalability, power-sensitive inclusivity, reflexivity, institutional flexibility and fitting local contexts/realities (Table 1).

Table 1: Key definitions of the components of the SPIRIT framework

SN	Concept	Definition and explanations
1.	Temporality	The ability of a policy to account for both short-term needs and long-term strategic planning, including clear timelines for review, renewal, and adaptation to future conditions. The timeline of each policy document includes the initiation and expiration date of the policy. It also includes the revision date of a specific policy, and how (before initiation and after expiration) the policy document is ensued by a new policy document. As such, temporality relates to aspects of the element reflexivity, focusing on both mainstreaming but also internal growth and development of the policy timeline.
2.	Scalability	The capacity of a policy to operate across multiple functional and spatial scales, including national, regional, and local levels, while ensuring contextual relevance. In other words, the characteristic within the policy document that allows the policy to be used at multiple scales combining both functional and spatial units. This asks the question whether the policies have a focus on both the national and local scale, such as devolving power to local authorities or explicitly describing how the policy is tailored to local conditions.
3.	Reflexivity	The degree to which a policy integrates feedback from other sectors, past experience, new knowledge, and stakeholder learning to continually improve policy design and implementation. That is, how much other sectoral policies feed into the new adaptation policy and vice versa. Reflexivity thus specifically relates to mainstreaming or integration of multiple agencies/sectors. This research interprets the aspect of reflexivity as to what extent do policies seek integration or mainstreaming with other (sub) sectors and to what extent is it described. This can range from such a statement being completely absent, merely stating the desire but without any concrete elaboration, to explicitly naming the (sub) sectors, policies or institutions to be integrated into.
4.	Power-sensitive Inclusivity	The extent to which a policy recognizes and addresses existing power imbalances by promoting the participation and empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable groups in decision making processes. In this context, power is defined as 'a manifestation between policy actors to influence the climate change adaptation policy-making processes, often transpiring through interactions, discussions, negotiation and dialogue'. This research adapts a simplified interpretation of this characteristic, relating to if and to what extent the policies talk about and create actions for the inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups.
5.	Institutional flexibility	The ability of institutions associated with a policy to adapt their roles, structures, and implementation processes in response to evolving socio-economic, environmental, and governance conditions. In other words, the flexibility of institutions to change roles for planning and implementation in accordance with future conditions. This element has been interpreted by linking to processes of decentralization of planning and implementation.
6.	Fitting local realities	It refers to the awareness and adaptation of policy plans, programs and mechanisms (including their implementation strategies) geared towards local realities. More specifically, each socio-economic, geographic, political and environmental context shapes in what ways people govern their diverse livelihoods. As such, fitting local realities is considered as opposed to 'one

		size fits all' type of policy.
7.	Adaptive nature	This refers to the inherent adaptability of the policy itself. That is the flexibility of the policy to adjust itself to new realities in relation to changing circumstances over time. This includes the provision of a revision date or, the policy being a 'living document' which is continuously updated.

Source: Vij et al. (2017)

2.2 Data collection

Data collection for this assessment focused on national policies and strategic frameworks related to food security, climate change and migration in Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The analysis focuses on levels of interconnectivity, integration, and fragmentation within national policies. These policy areas are critical in shaping the country's socio-economic and environmental landscape, particularly in the context of increasing climate variability, economic challenges, and shifting migration patterns. National policies in relation to the three main themes – climate change, food security, and migration – were selected:

- Climate: including environment (land, forest, water), wildlife, (natural) disaster
- Food: including nutrition, agriculture, health, livestock, oceans & fisheries
- Migration: including (peri)urban development, diaspora, international treaties
- Overarching/cross-cutting: youth, gender, social protection, financing

Initially the existing policies were mapped. VIS Ghana initiated by organizing relevant policy documents in Microsoft Teams. This was followed by a snowballing approach, beginning with key known policy documents and expanding systematically through references cited with these policies and recommendations from SAFE4ALL project partners and stakeholders. Priority was given to policies and strategies developed or revised in the past 10-15 years, ensuring relevance to current socio-economic dynamics.

We specifically targeted national-level policy frameworks such as climate policies, agricultural policies, migration policies and food security policies that addressed one or more of the three thematic areas: food, migration and climate change. Laws, acts, regulations and program implementation documents were deliberately excluded to maintain a focus on strategic policy intentions rather than operational or legislative instruments.

However, a key challenge is that this document analysis lacks insights through stakeholder consultations across the three case study countries. This suggests that the assessment was grounded in only formal policy text.

2.3 Data analysis

For the analysis, three partners were involved with their own background, experience and knowledge: Elmo van den Beld (WUR MSc student), James Natia Adam (VIS Policy Research Advisor), and Annemiek Pas Schrijver (WUR Post Doc). Data analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, each identified policy document was reviewed through qualitative document analysis using a standardized coding sheet based on the SPIRIT analytical framework. Policies were evaluated against each SPIRIT dimension to assess their adaptability, inclusivity, and cross-sectoral coherence. We applied a mix of methods to analyse the policies. While working in Excel files, each of us focused on a single country to tease out the adaptability of the policies through the SPIRIT framework.

Second, findings were organized using a country-by-country analysis, applying thematic coding to identify patterns, gaps, and opportunities within and across national contexts. The analysis was supported by a Notebook Language Model (Notebook LM), which was trained using the collected documents. The Notebook LM (see §§ 2.4) facilitated rapid

cross-referencing between different policy documents, enabling the research team to validate key interpretations, identify overlaps and inconsistencies, and ensure consistency in coding across the three countries.

2.4 Notebook LM

Notebook LM is an Artificial Intelligence research and note-taking tool which helps to understand complex information. It allows us to upload sources and make comparisons, connections and links relating content from each of the documents, and, therefore, allows us to usefully compare multiple documents at once. We applied this tool to support our analysis on finding commonalities and differences between the multiple policies regarding the integration of the three main topics. After uploading specific policy documents, we first prompted general introductory questions for the tool to get acquainted with the content. Each document was prompted with the same question in the same order.

In addition, we asked the tool to provide us with insights into the overall role of 1. food security, 2. migration, and 3. climate change. Finally, we asked the tool to show how the three main topics are interlinked within the policies, and to provide an overview of the commonalities and differences in approaches on how to tackle the major issues in relation to food security, migration and climate change. While we had initially done this manually using an Excel file, the tool enhanced the outcome by being better able to make a comparison of policy documents in a qualitative way. This tool, therefore, serves to support our own findings and strengthen the outcomes. A collaborative peer-review process among team members ensured that assessments were triangulated, minimizing individual bias.

2.5 Qualitative rating of SPIRIT elements

A qualitative rating scale—Strong, Moderate, and Weak—was applied to each dimension based on consistent interpretative criteria to synthesize the SPIRIT framework findings across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

- Strong was assigned where policies explicitly integrated the SPIRIT dimension across sectors, provided clear operational mechanisms for implementation, and demonstrated institutional commitment or practice.
- Moderate was used where policies acknowledged the SPIRIT dimension but exhibited partial, fragmented, or inconsistent integration or operationalization.
- Weak was assigned where policies had limited or no substantial articulation of the SPIRIT dimension, or where operational mechanisms and cross-sectoral linkages were absent.

Although inherently qualitative, this rating approach provided a structured synthesis of complex policy dynamics, supporting cross-country comparability and identifying strategic gaps and strengths. The next section presents the insights gleaned from the assessment.

3. Findings of food security, climate change and migration

3.1 Ghana context

Ghana, West Africa, is bordered by Togo to the east, Burkina Faso to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the west with ecological zones ranging from tropical forests in the south to drier savannah in the north[1]. In 2024, Ghana had a population of approximately 34.4 million, of which more than half live in urban areas (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2023). The economy of Ghana is considered lower middle-income and is based on mainly agriculture, services, and industry. Agriculture employs around 70% of the labor force and contributes approximately 21% of GDP (GSS, 2023). Important export products include

[1] climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org

gold, cocoa, and oil[2]. Despite large economic gains through cocoa and the oil industry, many communities still rely on rain-fed farming for their livelihoods. Ghana faces challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, and highly variable and unpredictable rainfalls and droughts, especially in the north (ibid), which geographic and socio-economic features expose Ghana's vulnerability to climate change.

As stated above, agriculture is an important source of livelihoods, predominantly through rain-fed smallholder farming. A changing climate – marked by rising temperatures and erratic rainfall – is reducing crop production as the growing seasons have become unpredictable.[3] The impacts of these climatic changes on agriculture bring people at risk of food security. Further floods, droughts or pest outbreaks could further reduce food availability. These risks are more serious in northern Ghana where poverty rates are higher. Resulting, increased food prices would worsen the situation. There is movement from northern Ghana to urban centers (Accra or Kumasi) in search of livelihoods, which is not a simple story of distress migration in the face of environmental calamities, but it does indicate on the complex interaction between climate change, food production and other development challenges.

These challenges stress the urgency of climate adaptation to which Ghana is actively responding. The government has developed policies including the *National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy* into its implementation plans.[4] There are initiatives to advance climate-smart agriculture, and strengthen water resource management for improved irrigation, reduce erosion, increase the use and production of renewable energy, etc. Furthermore, international support (such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) is used to foster resilience especially for vulnerable communities through early warning systems for floods which are being improved, and a series of district-level climate vulnerability assessments to guide local adaptation.[5]

3.1.1 Ghana policy documents

Ghana has ambitious plans for national development, with a strong emphasis on agricultural transformation, economic diversification, and sustainable resource management. Achieving these goals will require effective implementation of policies, strong institutional coordination, private sector engagement, and sustained investment in key sectors. Addressing challenges related to land use planning, environmental protection, and resource mobilization will be crucial for success. Table 2. presents the Ghana national policy documents included in the policy analysis.

Table 2: Ghana's National Policy Documents included in analysis.

Policy arena	Policy document	Abbreviation	Timeline
Climate policy	National Climate Change Policy	GNCCP	2013
Agricultural policy	Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Program	GASIP	2015-2021
Migration policy	National Migration Policy	NMP	2016
Climate policy	Ghana National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	GNCCAS	2010-2020
Agricultural policy	Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan	METASIP II	20114-2017
Nutrition and health policy	National Nutrition Policy	NNP	2013-2017
General policy	Ghana Medium-Term National	GMTNDPF	2022-2025

[2] statsghana.gov.gh
[3] cnbcafrica.com
[4] apps.fas.usda.govapps.fas.usda.gov
[5] napglobalnetwork.orgiisd.org

	Development Policy Framework		
General policy	Ghana National Long-Term Development Perspective	GLTNDPF/ Ghana@100	2018-2057
Youth and employment policy	The National Youth Policy	NYP	2022-2032
Agricultural policy	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy	FASDEP II	2007
Migration policy	National Labour Migration Policy	NLMP	2020-2024
Migration policy	Diaspora Engagement Policy	DEP	*In process*
Urban policy	National Urban Policy Framework	NUP	2012
Agricultural policy	Planting for Food and Jobs policy II	PFJ	2023
Agricultural policy	One Village, One Dam	OVOD	2017
Industrial and trade policy	Industrial policy	GIP	2010
Youth and employment policy	Youth employment and education support policies		2023-2028
Agricultural policy	Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan	CSAIP	2014-2018
Agricultural policy	Northern Rural Growth Programme	NRGP	2007-2016

Source: Various policy documents, 2025.

3.1.2 SPIRIT framework for Ghana

Scalability and reflexivity

Several of the policies reviewed incorporate strategies and mechanisms that aim to foster scalability and reflexivity. In this case, the two SPIRIT elements are connected as the related strategies are intertwined. The strategies to foster scalability and reflexivity (mainstreaming through connecting to other policies, and considering monitoring and evaluation processes to enhance policy learning) include:

- *Mainstreaming into Existing Frameworks and Plans*: The Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP) will scale up a value chain investment approach and contribute to the Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP). GASIP also aims to serve as a flexible vehicle to support MOFA's METASIP framework for value chain development. The Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP) aims to achieve policy coherence by having a strong portfolio of CSA investments that demonstrate supportive and barrier policies, thus furthering CSA across the policy arena. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) highlights the need to ensure climate change issues are adequately considered in national development planning. The National Labour Migration Policy aims at mainstreaming labor migration issues into development planning systems in Ghana.

- *Building on Existing Programs and Initiatives*: The CSAIP notes that momentum from existing programs and initiatives can be used to leverage continued growth and development in Ghana's agricultural sector.

- *Phased Implementation and Learning*: The Northern Rural Growth Program is designed with a flexible approach, including an 'initial' and an 'expansion' phase to provide for testing innovative instruments, learning, and the scaling up of results. This suggests a deliberate strategy for scalability based on initial successes and lessons learned. GASIP also follows a two-phase process to select new value chains for piloting, implying potential for broader adoption of successful models.

- *Decentralization and Multi-Level Implementation*: The National Youth Policy (2022-2032) is applicable at national and sub-national levels in Ghana. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Authority will develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to be replicated at all levels. The Ghana National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (GNCCAS) identifies implementing bodies at the national, regional, district, and community levels. The National Urban Policy Framework envisions spatial development frameworks at national, regional, and local levels. FASDEP II aims for a decentralized extension service.

- *Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing*: The NCCAS emphasizes support for local institutions in capacity building. GASIP activities aim to enhance capacity within national systems for promoting climate-resilient agricultural production, with potential for replication and up-scale as lessons learned are transferred to other localities through training support and knowledge sharing amongst smallholder farmers. The CSAIP highlights that investments are directed toward diverse beneficiaries across the food system, located in different agroecological zones, suggesting an intention for broad applicability. The M&E system for GASIP will focus on providing learning backed by data to fine-tune models for systematic scaling up, and knowledge management is central to its partnership efforts.

- *Private Sector Engagement and Market-Driven Approaches*: GASIP will be governed by a demand and market-driven approach and will be national in scope. It aims to formalize relationships with agribusinesses to give smallholders reliable access to markets and technologies, with the expectation that successful models can be expanded. Planting for Food and Jobs aims to link farmers to processors and exporters and develop standardized guidelines, which could create scalable market linkages.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning and Adaptation*: The CSAIP M&E plan aims to provide implementers with a system to assess the success of investments and inform operational and strategic decision-making. It also aims to describe how data will be used and how it will feed into policymaking. GASIP's M&E system will focus on the effectiveness of value chain development tools and provide fine-tune models for systematic scaling up. The National Labour Migration Policy highlights the usefulness of an effective Monitoring and Evaluation framework to facilitate the identification of deviations from set targets and take informed corrective measures, which could support wider and more effective implementation over time.

Despite these intentions and strategies, CSAIP also notes potential barriers to investment and implementation, such as the absence of intersectoral collaboration, policy misalignment, weak institutional capacity, and poor farmer information access. These challenges could hinder the scalability of the policies. A lack of collaboration between sectors and governmental ministries is also identified as a major limiting factor to development and the implementation of pro-CSA policies. Additionally, FASDEP II highlights' risks to successful implementation, including inadequate funding and weak prioritization at the district level. Therefore, while many policies are designed to support scalability, their actual reach and impact will depend on various implementation challenges. CSAIP also points out that some national policies do not relate much to climate change issues, suggesting a lack of initial reflexivity in mainstreaming this topic.

It also notes that FASDEP II and METASIP were not initially developed specifically to address climate change. This suggests that while M&E and review mechanisms might exist for these broader agricultural policies, their initial design might have lacked specific

inclusion regarding climate change. The National Labour Migration Policy also notes that migration functions are performed by various MDAs with no clear coordination, leading to disjointed actions. Hence, while many of the policy documents in the reviewed policies include M&E frameworks and review processes, the initial design of some policies might have had gaps in addressing cross-cutting issues like climate change. Furthermore, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on the extent to which M&E findings are effectively used to inform policy adjustments.

Power-sensitive inclusivity and fitting local contexts/realities

The policies described in the sources attempt to fit local realities in several ways. Many policies emphasize decentralization (and therefore demonstrate a strong overlap with the issues discussed at 'scalability and reflexivity' as well), local participation as inclusivity, and the consideration of specific local contexts. Some of the ways policies aim to align with local realities include:

- *Decentralized Implementation and Planning*: The Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (MTNDPF) 2022-2025 highlights implementation within the context of a decentralized planning system that promotes broad participation at all levels. The Long-term National Development Plan (2018-2057) also discusses decentralized planning and the need to incorporate issues such as the establishment of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA). FASDEP II recognizes that the performance of the food and agriculture sector depends on other MDAs outside of MoFA and emphasizes coordination at national, regional, and district levels. METASIP describes the demarcation of districts into zones and operational areas for efficient service delivery. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) supports capacity-building within local communities where policy implementation takes place and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS) states that sub-national level institutions, especially at district and community levels, will be the actual implementing entities, with District Assemblies preparing adaptation programs and projects. The National Urban Policy Framework also stresses the involvement of local communities, opinion leaders, traditional authorities, and other local actors in urban development and management.

- *Addressing Local Vulnerabilities and Needs:* Policies like the Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP) adopt a demand and market-driven approach and aim to provide benefits based on local needs and circumstances. GASIP also plans to adapt mature technologies to local climatic, soil, and environmental conditions, especially in more vulnerable northern districts. The NCCAS emphasizes that resilience measures differ according to social groups and sectors due to varying local characteristics. The Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP) recognizes that the impacts and risks of climate change will differ in urban and rural contexts.

- *Incorporating Local Knowledge:* The NCCP acknowledges that Ghana can draw on a wealth of traditional knowledge that can be an asset in the face of climate change. It also aims to support scientific research, including traditional and indigenous knowledge, in natural resource management and to identify and incorporate climate-relevant traditional knowledge into health delivery systems.

- *Engaging Local Stakeholders:* The CSAIP states that CSA priorities are defined by in-country expert stakeholders and have gone through multiple reviews. It also highlights the importance of engaging and strengthening farmer networks and organisations. The National Youth Policy (2022-2032) emphasizes a multi-sectoral

approach requiring all state and non-state actors to assemble their resources at various levels. The National Urban Policy Framework underscores the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders at the local level.

However, the policy documents also reveal challenges in attempts to fit local realities. For example, CSAIP notes that issues related to tree and land tenure (realities versus how the policy documents talk about it) can also create barriers to the adoption of innovative practices at the local level. The Long-term National Development Plan notes that monitoring and evaluation have received little attention, which can hinder the ability to assess if policies are effective at the local level. FASDEP II mentions that the impact of policies and projects has not been well documented because monitoring reports have tended to focus on activities and outputs rather than actual impact on the ground. CSAIP also highlights poor farmer information access and capacity building as risks. It also notes limited farmer access to knowledge, economic, and agronomic resources to support innovation. Strong social and cultural norms can also limit the adoption of innovative practices at the local level. Hence, while many policies articulate the need for local relevance through decentralization, participation, and addressing specific needs, the policy documents also indicate significant challenges related to policy coherence, implementation capacity, access to information and resources at the local level, and the need to overcome policy gaps and distortions to ensure that these policies truly fit the diverse realities across Ghana.

Temporality

The reviewed policies are built on various timelines, ranging from medium-term frameworks like the MTNDPF (2022-2025) to long-term visions like the National Development Plan (2018-2057) and the National Youth Policy (2022-2032). Many policies also incorporate phased implementation, short, medium, and long-term activities, and planned review cycles to ensure they remain relevant and effective over time. This strongly depends on the specific policy.

3.1.3 Ghana policy interplay

In line with its commitment to international climate agreements, Ghana has updated its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement for the period 2020 to 2030. Climate change has, therefore, been on top of the national development priorities. Ghana wants to achieve lower middle-income status soon, and therefore committed to put its oil, gas and other natural resources to 'prudent use' while at the same time pursuing sustainable economic growth and development to secure the well-being of its people.

Role of food security

Across the policy documents that were reviewed, the role of food security is generally spoken of as a national objective for overall development in Ghana. Many documents explicitly state food security as a core policy objective. The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) mentions 'Food security and emergency preparedness' as one of its main objectives. The Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (MTNDPF) 2022-2025 aims to 'sustain food and nutrition security' as part of its focus on Food Systems Transformation and Nutrition Security. The Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) program also has ensuring food security as its primary objective. Furthermore, food security is seen as an indicator of the country's progress and the well-being of its citizens. The vision for the food and agriculture sector, as stated in FASDEP II, includes food security as a key outcome of a modernized and structurally transformed economy. The Long-term National Development Plan 2018-2057 notes that achieving food security is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More specifically, the reviewed policies acknowledge that particularly the rural poor in specific regions (Northern, Upper East, and Upper West), are more vulnerable to food insecurity. Policies and programs like GASIP aim to reduce this vulnerability by targeting smallholder farmers and enhancing household food security. The National Nutrition Policy also recognizes the need to ensure all people have secure access to adequate nutritious food, irrespective of their social and vulnerability status. The National Nutrition Policy explicitly aims to promote food security and assure food quality and food safety. The MTNDPF also integrates nutrition security as a key aspect of food systems transformation. Furthermore, the policy documents recognize that factors such as climate change, market access, infrastructure (especially rural roads), and policy coherence significantly impact food security. For example, climate change is identified as a major threat to food security due to its effects on agricultural productivity. Trade policies and regional obligations are also noted as having implications for domestic food production. Increasing agricultural productivity and developing sustainable food systems are presented as key strategies to achieve food security. Climate-smart agriculture is promoted as an approach to sustainably increase productivity and build resilience for food security in the face of climate change.[6]

Role of migration

Migration plays a significant role in only a few of the policy documents. Throughout, migration is viewed from various perspectives such as development, labor, youth, climate change, and urbanization. The Long-term National Development Plan (2018-2057) recognizes that until recently, migration was managed from an immigration and security standpoint. The plan now aims to maximize the benefits of migration. It discusses labor migration, including brain drain due to emigration of skilled Ghanaians and brain waste where skilled emigrants take substandard jobs. The plan also addresses migration of unskilled youth through dangerous routes, highlighting their vulnerability to exploitation. Furthermore, it acknowledges increasing in-migration from the sub-region and the challenges of porous borders leading to migration like human trafficking and smuggling.

The MTNDPF 2022-2025 states the importance of leveraging migration for sustainable development. It highlights the implementation of a national migration data management strategy and the initiation of mainstreaming migration into District Development Plans. Policy objectives for the medium-term include improving population and civil registration management, harnessing the benefits of labor migration, and promoting good migration governance. Strategies include strengthening coordination of population policies, preventing internal displacement, reviewing the framework for refugees, ratifying ILO Convention 189 on migrant domestic workers, providing funding for the National Migration Policy, operationalizing the National Migration Commission, managing regular migration, promoting diaspora engagement, creating an enabling environment for return and reintegration, developing migration legal frameworks, and strengthening migration data systems. The document also focuses on harnessing the benefits of labor migration through the implementation of the National Labour Migration Policy, improving labor market information systems, facilitating social security portability agreements, and promoting international cooperation. The MTNDPF also identifies increasing irregular migration, brain drain, barriers to regular migration, human trafficking, and seasonal displacement as key issues, and outlines strategies to increase sensitization on irregular migration, promote regular migration, optimize brain gain, manage internal displacement, and review refugee frameworks. It also aims to address migrant abuse and exploitation, weak coordination and legislative frameworks for labor migration, and inadequate migration data. Promoting good migration governance through improved coordination, funding for the National

[6] Initiatives like cereal-legume integration and improved water management are highlighted for their potential to enhance food security.

Migration Policy, operationalizing the National Migration Commission, and strengthening institutional frameworks are also key. Creating an enabling environment for returnees and developing migration legal frameworks are further strategies. The MTNDPF also includes indicators related to remittances and labor migration.

The National Migration Policy (NMP) itself is a policy focused entirely on managing migration flows (internal, intra-regional, and international) for poverty reduction and sustainable national development. It recognizes that while Ghana has historically experienced migration, the patterns have evolved, with a 'culture of migration' emerging by the 1980s. The NMP aims to provide a strategic framework to address challenges like brain drain, rapid urbanization, and human trafficking, while also harnessing the opportunities presented by migration, such as remittances. It emphasizes the need for policy coherence and better coordination in migration management. The policy was formulated through a collaborative process with various stakeholders. It acknowledges that migration has both positive and negative impacts and aims to maximize the gains and minimize the costs associated with it. The NMP outlines various policy objectives related to internal migration, irregular migration, labor migration, return and reintegration, increased influx of immigrants, border management, and forced displacement. It also addresses cross-cutting themes like migration and gender, health, vulnerable groups, tourism, cultural heritage, and natural resources. The policy includes an action plan with specific activities, timelines, implementing bodies, and indicators for various aspects of migration management.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020-2024) specifically focuses on labor migration, recognizing it as an important aspect of national development by providing job opportunities and skills transfer. It aims to provide a coordinated framework for good governance in labor migration to protect migrant workers' rights and maximize developmental impacts. The policy acknowledges Ghana as a country of origin that can benefit from placing excess labor in countries with vacancies. It builds upon the National Migration Policy (2016) and the Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024). The goal is to improve labor migration governance that harnesses its benefits for socioeconomic development. Strategic objectives include promoting good governance of labor migration, strengthening protection and empowerment of migrant workers, maximizing developmental impacts, and improving labor market and migration information systems. The policy addresses various aspects like legislative, regulatory, and institutional frameworks; protection of rights; social security portability; mainstreaming migration into development planning; leveraging remittances; skills transfers; and data management. It also outlines the roles of different Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in its implementation.

The National Youth Policy (2022-2032) touches upon youth migration and mobility, noting that while movement is normal, rampant, ill-informed, and injurious migration becomes problematic. One of its objectives is to promote decent job creation, employability, and livelihood empowerment for the youth, which is linked to addressing the drivers of youth migration in search of opportunities. The Ghana National Climate Change Policy (2013) recognizes climate change as an exacerbating factor in the drivers of migration, particularly from rural to urban areas as people leave environmentally fragile areas. It notes that while economic and social factors are primary drivers, climate change influences them. The policy aims to address climate change and migration by ensuring migrants have equal opportunities in destination areas and promoting development and resilience in both origin and destination areas. Key interventions include promoting vocational training in areas receiving in-migration, investing in agriculture in vulnerable areas to curb rural-urban migration, improving transport between source and destination

areas, and increasing access to healthcare for immigrants. It also calls for mainstream migration into national development frameworks and establishing a national institution for migration management.

FASDEP II mentions several policies that form the context of its implementation, but it does not directly discuss the role of migration itself. The National Urban Policy Framework (2012) aims to facilitate the redistribution of the urban population, implying a consideration of internal migration patterns within the country, although it does not explicitly detail the role of migration.

In summary, migration is a cross-cutting issue in these policy documents. It is recognized as a significant factor influencing development, labor markets, youth opportunities, climate change impacts, and urban dynamics. The policies aim to manage migration effectively to harness its benefits, protect migrants' rights, address irregular migration, and mitigate potential negative consequences like brain drain and social tensions. The National Migration Policy and the National Labour Migration Policy provide comprehensive frameworks specifically dedicated to the governance and management of migration in Ghana.

Role of climate change

Across the policy documents, climate change is recognized as a critical and cross-cutting issue that poses 'threats' to Ghana's socio-economic development, particularly impacting agriculture and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. As such, climate change is considered a major driver of vulnerability because, as stated, Ghanaian agriculture is predominantly rain-fed, making it highly susceptible to climate variability. The policies specifically emphasize water stress for crops, degradation and erosion of arable land, and intermittent floods as prominent climate-related hazards. The northern regions are noted as particularly vulnerable due to their reliance on rain-fed agriculture and high levels of poverty. Climate change is also seen as a driver for increasing the incidence of diseases and pests, leading to high mortality rates of livestock. Because of the vulnerability of Ghana's agricultural production to climate change, it is projected to have a severe impact on the economy, potentially reducing economic growth by 2-7% by 2050, largely due to the predicted decline in agricultural GDP.

Numerous national policies and strategies have been developed specifically to address climate change and its impacts, demonstrating its central role in policy thinking. These include the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS), and the National Climate Smart Agriculture Food and Security Action Plan (CSA-FSAP). These policies aim to make the mainstream climate change into national development planning and budgeting processes. The Long-term National Development Plan (2018-2057) also emphasizes the need for climate-smart agriculture for food security. Programs like GASIP (Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme) are specifically designed to promote climate change resilience in the agricultural sector. GASIP aims to adapt to mainstream climate change adaptation across selected agricultural value chains, particularly in vulnerable regions. The Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) Phase II also aims to mainstream climate issues into agricultural activities. The Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP) was developed to identify and prioritize CSA technologies to enhance productivity and resilience under a changing climate. Internationally, climate change is central to Ghana's commitments under the Paris Agreement, reflected in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Agriculture is a major component of these NDCs, integrating climate adaptation, increased productivity, and reduced emissions.

Importantly, climate change is increasingly considered becoming a factor influencing migration, as people move from environmentally fragile regions. Policies aim to mainstream this aspect into national development planning and the NCCP. Some national policies are recognized as giving inadequate attention to climate change issues, indicating a need for better alignment with national objectives. There is also recognition that some policies may be skewed towards mitigation rather than the critical need for adaptation for resource-poor smallholders.

In summary, across the policy documents, climate change is not just an environmental concern but a fundamental developmental challenge that permeates various sectors, most notably agriculture. It is a key driver of vulnerability, and complication to economic progress, a central element in policy formulation and investment strategies, a crucial aspect of international commitments, and an important consideration for monitoring and evaluation efforts in Ghana. The policies reflect a growing awareness of the interconnectedness of climate change and agricultural development and a commitment to building resilience and ensuring food security in the face of a changing climate.

Integration of food, migration and climate change

Above we showed how national policies highlight several commonalities and differences in how to approach the three topics independently of food security, migration and climate change. Several policy documents address the climate-migration-food security nexus and how they relate, each with its own emphasis and strategies. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (GASIP), Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP II), National Migration Policy (NMP), National Labour Migration Policy, and Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) all play a role in addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, migration, and food security. While all policies recognize the interconnectedness of climate change, migration, and food security, they differ in their primary focus and strategies. The NCCP provides a broad framework for climate action, METASIP II and PFJ focus on agricultural investments and climate-smart practices, the NMP addresses migration as an adaptation strategy, GASIP supports climate resilience through value chain development, and the National Urban Policy Framework integrates climate change adaptation into urban planning. The NCCP provides a broad policy framework, the NMP focuses on migration management, and GASIP on climate-resilient agricultural investment. Thus, they approach the nexus from different angles and propose varying strategies and interventions based on their specific mandates and objectives. Effective management of the climate-migration-food security nexus requires coordinated implementation of these policies, leveraging their respective strengths and addressing their gaps.

3.2 Kenya context

Since its independence in 1963, Kenya has focused in large part on industrialization and economic growth. The ambition for economic growth is still present, and vested in the acclaimed Kenya Vision 2030, which wishes to transform Kenya into a middle-income country providing a high-quality life to all its citizens by 2030. The vision is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and therefore aims to both tackle poverty as well as food security. One of the key sectors for achieving this is the agricultural sector, since it's a cornerstone of the economy of Kenya, mostly consisting of rain-fed agriculture, pastoralists or other livestock farmers, and fisheries.

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 provides the legal framework for the introduction of a devolved system of government with increased responsibility, but also adaptability for the 47 newly instituted counties. Climate change is an increasingly prominent problem to which Kenya is also vulnerable in the form of floods, droughts and erratic weather and

rainfall patterns, directly negatively affecting key sectors also including agriculture. Increased climatic changes are also responsible for compounding the interlinked problems such as threatened livelihoods of vulnerable and marginalized groups, rural-urban migration or displacement, human-wildlife conflict and disasters. To tackle these problems and address climate change, the government has also instituted the Climate Change Act of 2016 to ensure mainstreaming of climate change responses into national and county governmental planning and decision making (CCA 2016, FAOLEX). The Kenyan government has made strides in developing strategies, policies, programs and plans on different levels for addressing these issues. Persisting in the policy landscape, however, is the overarching problem of inadequate monitoring and evaluation, caused by financial constraints as well as inadequate frameworks.

3.2.1 Kenya policy documents

A total of 27 national policy documents relevant to the climate-food-migration nexus have been reviewed (Table 3).

Table 3: Kenya's National Policy documents reviewed

Policy arena	Policy document	Abbreviation	Timeline
Environment policy	National Environmental Policy and Strategy	NEP	2013
Land use and planning policy	National Land Use Policy	NLUP	2017
Development policy	National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands		2012
Climate policy	National Climate Change Framework Policy		2016
Water policy	National Water Policy		2021
Wildlife and conservation policy	National Wildlife Conservation and Management Policy		2017
Water policy	National Irrigation Policy		2017
Forest policy	National Forest Policy		2014
Food and nutrition policy	National Food and Nutrition Security Policy	NFNSP	2011
Agriculture policy	Agricultural Policy		2021
Health policy	Kenya Health Policy		2014-2030
Agriculture policy	National Agricultural Sector Extension Policy	KASEP	2023
Agriculture policy	National Agricultural Mechanisation Policy	NAMP	2024
Agriculture policy	National Livestock Policy		2008
Migration policy	National Policy Labour Migration	NLMP	2023
Migration policy	Kenya Diaspora Policy		2014
Urban policy	National Urban Development Policy	NUDP	2016
Youth and employment policy	National Employment Policy		2013
General policy	Kenya Vision 2030		2008-2030
Social protection policy	National Social Protection Policy	NSPP	2011
Youth and employment policy	Kenya Youth Development Policy	KYDP	2019
Economic policy	National Policy on Climate Finance		2016

Research and innovation policy	National Agricultural Research System Policy	NARS	2012
Gender policy	National Policy on Gender and Development	NPGAD	2019
Meteorology policy	Meteorology Policy		2020
Trade policy	National Trade Policy	NTP	2009
Disaster management policy	National Policy on Disaster Management		2009

Source: Various policy documents, 2025.

3.2.2 SPIRIT framework for Kenya

Scalability

Regarding focus on local scale, all policies except for four have been published after 2010 and lay emphasis on devolved obligations of adapting and implementing the policies to their respective regions and in this way indirectly pay attention to local conditions. The four policies published before 2010 are the National Policy for Disaster Management in Kenya 2009, National Livestock Policy 2008, National Trade Policy 2009, and the Kenya Vision 2008-2030. The Kenya Vision explicitly states that one of its first flagship projects of 2012 will be to incorporate the new constitution into relevant policies and legislation, and the policy on disaster management (DM) states it will establish DM committees for each county as to improve collaboration with local authorities. The others of these four do not mention integration or reviewing after the release of the Constitution and have as of now not been updated yet. The funding allocated to the counties usually surpasses the minimum of 15% of the national annual revenue, which gives counties significant ability for influencing climate change investment on the local level (Naeku, 2020). Besides local conditions, most policies explicitly mention their adherence to regional or international agreements and commitments. Sometimes these regional or international agreements are themselves also explicitly stated, most frequently these consist of the SDGs, MDGs, and the African Union Agenda, with less frequently the Paris Agreement or Kyoto Protocol.

Power-sensitive inclusivity

Not a single policy manages to completely neglect the mention of inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups as an issue or highlighted in any other way. Especially problems of gender inequality are always mentioned except for when the policy simply refers more broadly to vulnerable groups. The inclusion of youth is occasionally missing. Social inclusion, either as solely gender, youth or 'vulnerable groups' are often incorporated as a cross-cutting issue in the document. People With Disabilities (PWD) are almost never explicitly mentioned but would fall under the marginalized. It is unclear however, if these 'vulnerable' or 'marginalized' groups extent to beyond the recurring ones mentioned such as the elderly, youth and woman, and otherwise disadvantaged due to food insecurity, disease, or other socio-economic reasons, as there are no clear categorisation criteria for these groups. An example is pastoralists, which are only explicitly identified as vulnerable by some policies such as the 2012 ASAL and 2017 Land Use policies. This could signify that while policies tend to display awareness for the cross-cutting issue of overall social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially gender and youth to an extent, the level of detail could result in neglection of certain groups.

Reflexivity

Only two policies do not manage to have some form of reflexivity by integrating different sectors into their policy, being the National Policy on Labour Migration 2023 and National Employment Policy and Strategy 2013. The other documents manage to announce their wish to involve other sectors for the realization of the policy either with or without

explicitly stating what sectors they are integrating with. Besides this, policies will appoint or establish an institution responsible for mainstreaming the subject of the policy into other policies, legislations, or (sub)sectors. How concretely this is described differs significantly between policies. While some policies explicitly state which ministries, sectors, policies or institutions are integrated, others state that mainstreaming will happen within all developmental policies and plans or within all main line ministries. Sometimes policies will state that an inter-ministerial or intersectoral approach will be achieved, or more simply state that mainstreaming will be done on all levels or all sectors, or that the policy will seek to establish mechanisms for achieving inter-sectoral or inter-ministerial integration/coordination, without concrete specifications on how to achieve this. This also implies that sometimes the policies seemingly only aim to mainstream the policy within its own sector, such as can be seen in the National Land Use Policy 2017, which states both that it aims to reduce contradiction between sectors by revising and harmonizing all policies and frameworks within the sector in accordance with itself, which is a contradiction of itself Likewise, the Livestock Policy 2008 takes cognizance of and aims to integration with the subsectors of agriculture, but not with other external (sub) sectors. Additionally, there are examples of policies which put the emphasis on coordination with stakeholders other than different ministries or sectors as can be seen in the Youth Development Policy 2019, which states it will establish a coordinated approach under partners and stakeholders, without definitions of these, similar to the 2023 KASEP and Meteorology Policy 2020, which solely state that they seek coordination with the counties. There lies importance in how concrete these descriptions are, since frequently policies recognize the negative overlap of tasks or responsibilities between institutions which is why they call for general harmonization but can still be overseen when not explicitly made clear what overlaps exist or for what sectors it bears importance.

Institutional flexibility

As described under scalability, all but four policies are developed after the enactment of the new Constitution in 2010 and describe explicitly the responsibility that the counties now hold in implementing the policies, often through the mainstreaming of the policies into their County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP), one of which is the Kenya Vision 2030 which still incorporates the new constitution in its policy in form of one of the first flagship projects. Of course, the National Livestock Policy 2008, which explicitly states the need for restructuring and re-organizing the institutions involved in the sub-sector to adequately address the challenges present in the sub-sector. In this way, almost all the national policies lend some institutional flexibility and localized power to the counties which can tailor the CIDP to their local conditions. Another document instituted before the constitution of 2010 which is interesting and possibly problematic is the Disaster Management policy, since it's a field which especially relies on plans tailored to local conditions for quick emergency responses. Despite the policy stating that the counties will each get a DM committee as part of involvement of local authorities, it needs to be ensured that the principles and institutional setups vocalized in this policy properly lived on after the implementation of the new constitution.

Temporality

As opposed to using a specific and explicit timeframe, the reviewed policy documents all utilize a starting date, which is the publish date, and are then accompanied by a section which describes how the policy is monitored and evaluated (M&E). Most of the policies do not explicitly state a time after which the document needs to be reconsidered but instead give ambiguous statements such as 'regularly' or 'when necessary' or simply state that it will be reviewed without any elaboration at all. Besides this majority, most of the policies state an explicit time after which the document will be reviewed, usually being between 3 to 5 years, which sometimes is in accordance with either the Kenya Vision 2030 Medium

Term Plans or conforming to international agreements such as the UNFCCC as stated in the National Climate Change Framework Policy 2016. A significant number of policies state that the M&E system is to be developed or provided by the government and the policy will adhere to this. There are limited examples of policies which acknowledge and elaborate on the need for being able to adjust to new realities, such as the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2012, which acknowledges changes in conditions over time and states that the policy will remain dynamic for this reason. The National Health Policy is the only policy besides the Kenya Vision 2030 that employs a timeframe, in this case that of 2014 to 2030 which is aligned with the combined goals of the International Development Agenda 2030 and the Kenya Vision 2030.

In summary, the policies portray scalability through the devolvement of power to the counties, which have the responsibility but also to an extent the freedom to specialize their own policies, plans, strategies and programs. Four policies were instituted before 2010, but two of these still make a statement regarding integrating this new setup into the policy or close coordination with the counties. The National Policy on Disaster Management is of note since, however it still mentions close coordination with the counties, is not fully updated to properly include this new institutional setup, since the field of disaster management would majorly benefit from more localized power for quicker response to emergencies. All the policies either mention or explicitly state the international and regional commitments and agreements it aligns with and are scalable in this sense.

Social inclusion is the best overall performing SPIRIT factor, with no policy failing to mention vulnerable or marginalized group in any form, especially gender issues being frequently included as cross-cutting issues. The inclusion of youth is irregularly still missing however, and at times the policy does not make any concrete definition of social inclusion but rather describes 'vulnerable' or 'marginalized' people, and in this sense can neglect or oversee certain vulnerable groups such as PWD or pastoralists.

All policies except two have at least some forms of integration but heavily differ in the way they describe this integration, ranging between explicitly stating which sectors to integrate with and how to only describe the desire to improve harmonization or coordination between institutions, policies, mandates or (sub) sectors. Infrequently the policies also aim to only streamline the policy within their own sector as opposed to outside of their sector. Policies often acknowledge existing overlaps, but don't explicitly state these, increasing the probability of these overlaps being overseen in harmonization.

As previously described under scalability, all but four policies were written with the devolved government in mind and are heavily aligned with the notion of the responsibility of the counties to adapt the policies to their own region's needs. The disaster management policy is of note as it is favored by the devolved government as it allows for quicker response to emergencies. It is important this policy is properly adjusted to this institutional setup.

Almost all policies work with a publish date and a section on M&E. Most policies use ambiguous timeframes for review such as 'regularly' or 'when necessary' which makes could be positive if it is adhered to or negative if this ambiguity turns into neglect. Besides this majority most of the policies describe a review term between 3 to 5 years, which sometimes is in accordance with other overarching policies, plans, or other agreements. Additionally, a portion of policies describe they will adopt the yet to be developed M&E system, either by an institution from their sector or supplied by the government. A singular policy explicitly acknowledges rapidly changing conditions and the need for a

dynamic policy.

The policy landscape of the CFM nexus in Kenya overall displays the ability to be adaptable to changing circumstances according to the SPIRIT framework, seen by increasing reflexivity, power-sensitive inclusivity and the presence of review provisions, but is troubled by the ambiguity present in the way some of the policies handle and describe these elements. Furthermore, scalability and institutional flexibility are seemingly overlapping and both answered in the new Constitution with devolved power to the counties, making the counties bear responsibility of scaling the policies down to their regions and giving them inherent flexibility. Recommendations would be to be more concrete about defining goals and mechanisms to achieve their ambitions to reduce ambiguity regarding the adaptability of the policies.

3.2.3 Kenya policy interplay

Role of food

Food (in)security or nutrition is frequently mentioned in almost all policies that were reviewed The only policies that do not mention food security are the Kenya Diaspora Policy 2014, the National Policy on Labour Migration 2023, and the Forest Policy 2014, which are inherently policies which only go into details about their specific topic without bridging much to other topics, if any. Overall, food security is usually properly integrated as a key challenge with issues such as climate change, economic opportunities, livelihoods and the general well-being of the population, or at least mentioned. Interesting to note however, is that many policies which seem to properly integrate food insecurity as a problem in the overall landscape tied in with climate change are built off the Kenya Vision 2030, which does not clearly describe food insecurity as a key challenge. Instead, it only indirectly addresses it through wanting to increase efficiency of the agricultural sector through the lens of heavily technocratic approach, such as increasing cultivated and irrigated land, increasing productivity of agricultural lands and optimizing different parts of the supply chain. Hence, even though food security is in general at the forefront of policies and their main goal as well as frequently being linked to climate change, it still seems as if the main road to tackling this is through more top-down technocratic approaches, including increasing uptake of technology, improving access to markets and stimulating investments. It is important to note that the development of one of the Medium-Term Plans (MTPs) could have addressed this issue of tackling food security through climate change adaptation. A reason that food security and nutrition is generally talked about so much in the policies is because of regional and international agreements and commitments regarding food security such as the SDGs and MDGs most frequently, as well as regional commitments such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). These different agreements and commitments include eradication of food insecurity as one of their key priorities and vertically impose these on Kenya's government, hence it being close to omnipresent in her policies and legislation.

Role of migration

Migration in the form of internal migration or displacement due to instable livelihoods or disasters is the most neglected topic in the reviewed policies. In many of the documents, rural-urban migration is usually acknowledged, but not elaborated upon relating i.e. linking it to environmental, economic, or social instability being drivers. This also means that Internally Displaced People (IDP) are often not explicitly mentioned, however possibly described in the form of vulnerable populations, sometimes specifically referring to people living in the drylands. However, this topic of vulnerable people is the second worst represented in the reviewed policies besides that of internal migration or displacement. The policies that interlink migration with different topics are the National Land Use Policy 2017 which explicitly links migration to climate change, and the National Policy for

Disaster Management in Kenya 2009, which presents a table with numbers on displaced people based on different types of social and natural disasters and recognizes the specific vulnerability of IDP. Policies focused on migration such as the National Policy on Labour Migration (year) and Diaspora policy 2014 solely focus on immigration and emigration. A recommendation would be to strengthen explicitness and attention to internally displaced people due to climate change in development policies, also seeing that the Disaster Management policy has been developed before the new constitution and might need different reforms.

Role of climate change

There is a wide range of policies that revolve around the main theme of climate change, relating directly to climate change or through the environment, and include topics such as land (use), water (use), forest, and wildlife. Outside of these policies that make climate change the core of their document, other policies in general do include climate change. This makes climate change the topic that is on average the most seen and integrated in the policies. The way climate change is talked about is either at the forefront as a key driver of a problem/topic of the policy, as key emerging issue to tackle within the policy, or as cross-cutting issue. In these ways, climate change is adequately covered and interlinked with the broader policy topic. There are a select few policies which mention climate change more briefly such as the National Trade Policy 2009 which only very briefly touches upon the topic but does make a significant statement saying that there are no adequate frameworks to ensure compliance with environmental regulations as well as low appreciation of environmental issues among stakeholders. Despite this omnipresence of climate change, some policies still take on a more economic and industrial approach as opposed to ones of climate adaptation and resiliency. A reason why climate change and environmental degradation are so clearly and widely incorporated in the policies is in part because of international and regional agreements and commitments which Kenya must adhere to. These are almost always stated, however not explicitly. Most notably are the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Integration of food, migration and climate change

In general, policies support and reinforce each other by adequately coupling and integrating climate change as a key driver or challenge with the ambition of achieving (sustainable) food security. There is inherently a lot of overlap in the contents of the policy documents such as the overarching problems, regional and international alignments, important or cross-cutting issues, and Management and Evaluation methods. To start, most documents include climate change as a key driver in their preface or introduction as a key factor or driver. As previously described, this is partly due to regional and international commitments which influence the policy by explicitly stating their adherence to them. Besides these there is almost always a strong alignment with the Kenya Vision 2030 and the 2010 Constitution and their values such as sustainable economic growth and devolvement of power to the counties. Climate change and food security specifically are two very intertwined topics in the policy landscape, creating grounds for giving space to both more economic and climate resilient statements and measures in the policies. Cross-cutting issues are frequently similar in nature, containing climate change as well as social inclusivity issues, among others.

Finally, all policies provide a chapter or section or otherwise mention the institutional M&E setups, which stress the importance of increased coordination and harmonization between sectors and levels which are often explicitly found to be inadequate, as well as expulsion of overlaps in tasks and responsibilities. Additionally, a portion of the policies mention the competition between sectors for natural resources such as water and land, as well as the acknowledgement of existing overlaps between institutions and the need for

harmonization between policies.

Next to re-iterating statements that positively reinforce the implementation of different policies, there are also discrepancies present within the documents which contradict or conflict with each other, either directly or indirectly. As previously described, the competition between sectors over natural resources is conflicting. The Kenya Vision 2030 states both that it aims to conserve water resources and that it aims to double the irrigated area in the same paragraph. A major project is to increase cultivated and irrigated areas in the medium and low potential areas which are thus far underexploited. The Agricultural Policy 2021 echoes this ambition in wanting to intensify and substitute towards high value products and expansion of cultivable areas and availability of water resources through irrigation. The National Climate Change Framework Policy 2016 talks about water being a scarce resource that will affect critical sectors such as energy, agriculture, health and environment, where it explicitly mentions the destruction of underground aquifers being an issue and advocates for mechanisms for sustainable use of natural resources. The National Water Policy 2021 neglects this statement and instead says that the potential for groundwater resources has not been fully determined and utilized. This policy aims to achieve equitable access of water for human rights and economic uses such as irrigation and to this end will integrate implementation of catchment and ecosystem management activities into irrigation projects. Furthermore, it seeks to accelerate irrigation by 40.000 ha per year, as it views irrigation being a sustainable alternative to more traditional rain-fed agriculture.

The policy on drylands aims to promote and protect the livestock mobility essential for pastoralism and in general emphasizes the need for proper land tenure and management systems to preserve the routes and livelihoods of pastoralists. The National Livestock Policy 2008 mentions that specific measurements such as expansion of livestock areas and fencing them could hinder pastoralist routes. This also relates to the objective of the Kenya Vision 2030 to expand irrigated and cultivated area for both livestock and crops. In this way it is important to ensure the coherence of land management strategies between policies in such a way that pastoralists are not inhibited. The livestock policy also describes unsustainable livestock practices which have led to environmental degradation of the fragile rangelands. More policies talk about the general competition over (land) resources between sectors, such as the National Land Use policy 2017 which describes the division and conversion of agricultural lands into urban areas and conversion of pastoral lands into other uses. It also states that land use and environmental management are guided by multiple legislations and guidelines which are not harmonized. As previously described, the Agricultural Policy 2021 aims for intensification and substitution towards high value products and expansion of cultivable area. This is stated in the context of the drylands not being suitable for rain-fed agriculture. Furthermore, it states that the mobile nature of fisher folk and pastoralists has hindered access to financing from commercial banks, without a policy statement which addresses this in a manner it will function for this group of people, placing the emphasis on increasing intensive agriculture instead. This highlights the importance of proper coordination and harmonization between sectors as to address such discrepancies possibly leading to competition.

Kenya is a developing country with ambitions to elevate to a middle-income country to get all its citizens access to a high-quality life, as stated in its Vision 2030. Creating a modern and commercialized agricultural sector is one of the key goals but is threatened by its extreme vulnerability to climate change in the form of floods, droughts and erratic rainfall. Climate change compounds other present problems such as food security, internal migration and displacement, human-wildlife conflicts, and disasters. To this end, the government has instituted a wide range of developmental policies as well as key

legislation pieces such as the new Constitution of 2010 and the Climate Change Act of 2016. Furthermore, Kenya's adherence to regional and international commitments such as the SDG, Paris Agreement, and CAADP further increase the urgency for adaptable and adequately interlinked policies to combat the present issues.

To short, a lot of the policies mention the competition between sectors for natural resources such as water and land and acknowledge the existence of overlaps in institutions which require harmonization to decrease such competition. These issues are interesting since they are overlaps and yet existing conflicts simultaneously, however the issue of harmonization can be seen more as an overlap, since the policies aim to resolve this problem. Actual examples of possible conflicts between policy statements on natural resources can be seen on the topics of water and land (use). The policies generally link or integrate climate change with the aim of sustainable food security. There is inherently a lot of overlap in the contents of the policy documents such as the overarching problems, regional and international alignments, important or cross-cutting issues, and M&E methods. Climate change and food security specifically are two very intertwined topics in the policy landscape, creating grounds for giving space to both more economic and climate resilient statements and measures in the policies. This is in part due to pressure from regional and international commitments.

Despite this omnipresent inclusion of climate change, regular policies adopt an approach with emphasis on technological or economic measures instead of those that promote climate adaptation and resiliency, such as the overarching Vision 2030, Agricultural, and Water Policy. The issue of internal migration or displacement is heavily underrepresented in only a handful of policies which might also be outdated such as the National Policy on Disaster Management. Infrequently rural-urban migration is mentioned or linked to climate change but can benefit from being made more explicit. Recommendations would be to address possible conflicts regarding competition over natural resources or overlapping institution functions arising from contradictory policy statements by harmonization of relevant sectors and better integrate internal migration and displacement in developmental policies.

3.3 Zimbabwe context

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in southern Africa, bordered by Zambia to the northwest, Mozambique to the east and northeast, South Africa to the south, and Botswana to the west and southwest. Covering approximately 390,580 square kilometers, the country is divided into ten provinces and comprises diverse ecological zones, ranging from the humid Eastern Highlands to the semi-arid southern and western lowlands. With a population of over 15 million, Zimbabwe is predominantly rural, with about 67% of the population residing in rural areas where rain-fed agriculture is the main livelihood source (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016; Manatsa et al., 2020). The economy is highly dependent on natural resources, making it particularly vulnerable to climate variability, land degradation, and water scarcity (Gukurume, 2013; Muzari et al., 2016).

Over the past two decades, Zimbabwe has faced a combination of economic volatility, recurrent droughts, floods, and food insecurity, which have weakened institutional capacity and increased reliance on fragile ecosystems (Mwadzingeni et al., 2022). Climate change has exacerbated these vulnerabilities, particularly in agro-ecological zones IV and V, where exposure to drought and crop failure is most acute (Manatsa et al., 2020). The country is a party to major international conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In response to these environmental and development challenges, Zimbabwe has formulated

several cross-sectoral policies—such as the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016), Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012), and National Drought Plan—to promote resilience and sustainable development (Brazier, 2015; Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). However, as highlighted in the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) and echoed by recent studies, systemic and institutional constraints continue to hinder integrated implementation and adaptive capacity across climate, food, and migration governance systems (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

3.3.1 Zimbabwe policy documents

Zimbabwe's policy landscape reflects a broad recognition of the interconnected challenges posed by climate change, food security, and migration. A total of 18 national policy documents relevant to the climate-food-migration nexus have been reviewed (Table 4). These policies span key sectors such as agriculture, water management, climate adaptation, food and nutrition security, disaster risk reduction, gender equality, and labor migration.

The review focuses on strategic policy frameworks developed or updated within the past two decades, capturing Zimbabwe's efforts to respond to both domestic socio-economic pressures and international obligations under frameworks such as the UNFCCC, the SDGs, and Agenda 2063. By analyzing these documents through the SPIRIT framework, the assessment identifies both the strengths and critical gaps that shape Zimbabwe's capacity to build resilient, inclusive, and adaptive food systems in the context of climate variability and human mobility.

Table 4: Zimbabwe national policy documents included in the analysis

Policy arena	Policy document	Abbreviation	Timeline
Climate policy	Zimbabwe Climate Policy	ZCP	2016 – open (targets to 2030)
Food and health policy	Food and Nutrition Security Policy	FNSP	2012- No clear end date
Drought policy	National Drought Plan	NDP	Undated (cyclical framework)
Generic policy	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation	Zim Asset	2013-2018
Agriculture policy	Comprehensive Agricultural Policy Framework	CAPF	2012-2032
Bill	Disaster Risk Management Bill	DRMB	Draft (2011)
Agriculture policy	National Agriculture Policy Framework	NAPF	2019-2030
Diaspora policy	Zimbabwe Diaspora Policy	ZDP	2016 - No end date specified
Forest policy	National Forest Policy	NFP	2023 - No end date specified
Trade policy	National Trade Policy	NTP	2012-2016 2019-2023
Gender policy	National Gender Policy	NGP	2013 - 2017
Generic policy	Zimbabwe United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework		2022-2026
Water policy	Zimbabwe National Water Policy	ZNWP	2012- No specific renewal
Migration policy	National Labour Migration Policy for Zimbabwe	NLMP	2020-No stated expiry
Economic policy	National, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Policy		2014-2018 2020-2024
Employment policy	National Employment Policy Framework	ZiNEPF	2009 - No end

			date specified
Science policy	Second Science, Technology and Innovation Policy of Zimbabwe		2012
Energy policy	National Renewable Energy Policy	NREP	2019- No specified end date

Source: Various policy documents, 2025.

3.3.2 SPIRIT framework for Zimbabwe

Scalability

The scalability of Zimbabwe's food, climate, and migration-related policies reflects a growing institutional intent to address development challenges across multiple functional and spatial levels. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) remains a cornerstone in this regard. It provides a modular national framework adaptable to sub-national contexts. Structured around key thematic areas—vulnerability, mitigation, and cross-cutting enablers—the policy promotes multi-sectoral coordination among ministries and enables decentralized adaptation efforts in sectors such as agriculture, water, and energy (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016; Klojcnik et al., 2018). This multi-level design allows application across various agro-ecological zones, governance tiers, and community-level resilience programming (Manatsa et al., 2020).

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) supports scalability through inter-sectoral integration involving agriculture, health, education, and social protection. It establishes district-level food and nutrition committees, fostering localized responses tailored to specific vulnerabilities in nutrition and agriculture (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). Moreover, the policy is aligned with overarching development agendas such as Zim Asset, Vision 2030, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby enabling both vertical scaling (across governance levels) and horizontal scaling (across sectors) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Further reinforcing Zimbabwe's capacity for scale-responsive policy is the National Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF, 2019–2030) and the Comprehensive Agricultural Policy Framework (CAPF, 2012–2032). These policies are explicitly designed to promote layered implementation, targeting national, provincial, district, and ward levels. The NAPF emphasizes agro-ecological zoning, climate-smart agriculture, and gender-responsive programming, enabling adaptation to regional biophysical and socio-economic conditions (Gukurume, 2013). Both frameworks also encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships and promote investment alignment, further supporting scalable application across Zimbabwe's diverse landscapes and development priorities.

The National Drought Plan enhances spatial scalability by defining risk management protocols adaptable to Zimbabwe's distinct agro-ecological regions. It integrates national-level early warning systems with localized contingency and recovery strategies, allowing both national coordination and grassroots action (Government of Zimbabwe, 2024). This structure improves operational agility and policy responsiveness at different governance levels.

In the realm of migration, the National Labour Migration Policy (2020) and the Zimbabwe Diaspora Policy (2016) demonstrate scalability within the socio-economic governance space. These policies connect national development with regional and global migration frameworks, including the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan, the AU Migration Policy Framework, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) standards. They

institutionalize mechanisms for engaging the diaspora and migrants through investments, remittances, and skills transfer, effectively scaling engagement across local, national, and international platforms (Vij et al., 2017).

While Zimbabwe's policy architecture shows strong design intent toward scalability, practical execution is often constrained by financial limitations, institutional capacity deficits, and governance bottlenecks (Brazier 2015). The effectiveness of scaling policies across regions and sectors depends heavily on coordinated implementation, political will, and tailored interventions suited to regional realities. Moreover, climate adaptation strategies must be context-specific, reflecting the heterogeneous socio-economic and environmental conditions across the country (Vij et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, Zimbabwe's policy frameworks—particularly the Climate Policy—provide a robust foundation for scalable action, through their alignment with international conventions, emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, and promotion of integrated, decentralized governance systems. If resourced and coordinated effectively, these policies have the potential to support transformative development outcomes at scale.

Power-sensitive inclusivity

Zimbabwe's policy frameworks demonstrate an evolving, though uneven, commitment to power-sensitive inclusivity, as several national strategies seek to address social inequities, gender disparities, and the structural exclusion of historically marginalized groups. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) sets a strong benchmark by explicitly acknowledging the disproportionate impact of climate change on smallholder farmers, women, children, and rural communities. It advocates for inclusive planning through stakeholder engagement mechanisms that involve civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and local communities, while also emphasizing the use of indigenous knowledge systems and gender-responsive programming as central to resilience-building (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016).

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) reinforces inclusivity through a multi-sectoral governance model, led by the National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC) and supported by decentralized district structures. These mechanisms ensure the participation of vulnerable groups—especially food-insecure households and women—in food system governance and program design (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). However, the success of these platforms often hinges on the capacity and willingness of local institutions to engage inclusively, which remains variable across regions.

The National Gender Policy (2013–2017) forms a critical foundation for power-sensitive policymaking. It promotes the mainstreaming of gender across agriculture, environment, climate adaptation, trade, and employment, while addressing intersectional disadvantages stemming from age, disability, geography, and economic status. The policy calls for gender-responsive budgeting, institutional reforms, and affirmative action to rectify historical disparities in access to land, credit, and political participation. Notably, it advances a rights-based and intersectional lens that aims to move beyond nominal inclusion.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020) and the Zimbabwe Diaspora Policy (2016) also adopt inclusive lenses by recognizing the vulnerabilities of low-skilled, informal, and undocumented migrants, including female domestic workers, returnees, and trafficked persons. The Labour Migration Policy embeds gender and rights-based approaches into its regulation of cross-border mobility, while the Diaspora Policy widens the definition of national belonging by integrating diaspora voices into development frameworks,

particularly through investment, philanthropy, and skills exchange (Manatsa et al., 2020).

Further support for inclusive development is embedded within the National Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF, 2019–2030), which prioritizes the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in climate-smart agriculture, innovation, and inclusive value chains. It supports policy devolution and institutional flexibility to allow local authorities to tailor interventions to diverse community contexts—an essential feature for equitable delivery of services.

Despite these inclusive intentions, implementation gaps persist. Studies indicate that in many rural and peri-urban communities, elite capture, entrenched patriarchal norms, and centralized governance structures often dilute the effectiveness of inclusive design. Additionally, limited budgetary support, weak accountability mechanisms, and uneven institutional capacities undermine the meaningful participation of marginalized groups in planning and delivery processes.

Reflexivity

Zimbabwe's national policy landscape is showing increasing signs of reflexivity, reflected in the extent to which policies integrate lessons from past and concurrent sectoral strategies and align with multi-agency and multi-scalar governance frameworks. This is particularly evident in the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016), which builds on earlier instruments such as the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2014), the Low Emissions Development Strategy, and broader macroeconomic frameworks like Zim Asset (2013–2018). The policy articulates an approach that mainstreams climate change into key sectors—including agriculture, water, energy, infrastructure, and health—and aligns with global commitments such as the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). This nested integration enables it to function as both a standalone climate policy and a cross-cutting enabler within Zimbabwe's wider development ecosystem.

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) similarly exemplifies reflexivity through its multi-sectoral coordination, led by the National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC). It incorporates dynamic inputs from agriculture, health, education, and social protection sectors and uses tools such as ZIMVAC assessments to integrate real-time vulnerability data into policy and program design (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). Furthermore, it references broader policy instruments such as Zim Asset and aligns with long-term national objectives under Vision 2030, reinforcing its role in a multi-dimensional governance framework.

A strong example of forward-looking reflexivity is found in the National Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF, 2019–2030). The NAPF builds upon the Comprehensive Agricultural Policy Framework (CAPF, 2012–2032) and aligns with regional and international commitments under the CAADP/Malabo Declaration, the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy, and the SDGs. It also integrates elements from gender, youth, climate change, irrigation, and migration policies, aiming to deliver a holistic, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder approach to agricultural transformation (Gukurume, 2013; Kotir, 2011). By embedding agricultural planning into the broader national development framework of Vision 2030, the NAPF serves as a blueprint for evidence-informed, reflexive policymaking.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020) and the Zimbabwe Diaspora Policy (2016) also demonstrate significant reflexivity. These policies place migration governance within the broader economic and development agenda, recognizing the contributions of labour migrants and diaspora communities to national transformation. They align with

continental strategies such as the AU Joint Labour Migration Programme and the SADC Labour Migration Action Plan, and emphasize inter-ministerial coordination across labour, foreign affairs, education, and economic planning sectors (Kotir, 2011). Both documents explicitly promote migration as a development asset, through remittances, diaspora investment, and skills transfer.

The National Gender Policy (2013–2017) further enhances reflexivity by mandating the mainstreaming of gender across all national development policies, including those in agriculture, climate, food, migration, and trade. It promotes gender-responsive budgeting, inter-ministerial collaboration, and institutional reform to ensure that equity and inclusion are embedded in all sectors of governance (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006). Complementary strategies, such as the National Renewable Energy Policy and the Disaster Risk Management Bill (2011), also reflect interconnected thinking, particularly in linking energy, climate adaptation, and disaster risk management (Government of Zimbabwe, 2024).

Despite these advances, operational fragmentation remains a major constraint. Many policies reference one another at the strategic level, but implementation remains siloed due to disjointed institutional mandates, non-aligned budgets, and inadequate inter-sectoral data systems. These challenges limit real-time policy responsiveness, inhibit learning across sectors, and restrict opportunities for community-informed innovation.

Institutional flexibility

Zimbabwe's policy frameworks reveal varying degrees of institutional flexibility, with some notable examples of adaptive design embedded in key national strategies. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) stands out for its deliberate emphasis on institutional adaptability. It establishes a multi-stakeholder governance structure that facilitates coordination across ministries—such as Environment, Agriculture, Water, and Energy—and explicitly supports periodic review mechanisms. These mechanisms enable institutions to revise their roles and strategies in response to emerging climate data, technological innovation, and shifting international obligations, particularly under the Paris Agreement and SDGs (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). Additionally, the policy promotes decentralized climate governance, empowering sub-national authorities and community-based organizations to lead localized adaptation efforts, thereby ensuring flexibility across vertical scales of governance.

The National Drought Plan also reflects institutional flexibility through its cyclical structure and reliance on real-time forecasting, vulnerability mapping, and preparedness protocols. By integrating institutions like the Meteorological Services Department, ZIMVAC, and the Department of Civil Protection, the plan supports adaptive operational coordination across spatial zones and administrative layers. However, the plan's effectiveness is often moderated by financial limitations and inconsistent data-sharing practices, which may delay timely responses.

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) embodies institutional adaptability through the coordination work of the National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC), which facilitates cross-sectoral integration and evidence-informed policy adjustments. The use of routine vulnerability assessments and nutrition surveillance allows the NFNC to influence programming in agriculture, health, and social protection sectors. However, gaps in institutional capacity—particularly at the district level—can hinder this responsiveness, especially during acute food crises or climate shocks.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020) demonstrates flexibility in the governance of human mobility, particularly through its emphasis on tripartite social dialogue involving

government, employers, and workers. The policy outlines structures for inter-ministerial coordination, regional harmonization, and the protection of vulnerable migrant populations. It responds to changing labour market dynamics and recognizes the need to align migration management with development priorities and climate resilience. However, while the policy promotes a progressive institutional vision, the operationalization of its frameworks remains constrained by limited inter-agency synergy, political fragmentation, and underfunding.

The National Agricultural Policy Framework (NAPF, 2019–2030) and the National Renewable Energy Policy further illustrate sectoral flexibility. The NAPF encourages adaptive management based on agro-ecological zoning, while the energy policy promotes institutional learning through public-private partnerships and technology uptake—both essential for adjusting to dynamic energy and food system transitions.

Despite these efforts, true institutional flexibility remains uneven across Zimbabwe's governance architecture. Challenges such as centralized authority, rigid bureaucratic structures, and fragmented resource allocation continue to limit the full realization of adaptive governance. Nevertheless, the reviewed policies provide a foundational blueprint for institutional flexibility, offering platforms and principles upon which dynamic, inclusive, and context-responsive governance systems can be built—particularly across the intersecting domains of climate, food, and migration.

Temporality

The review of Zimbabwean policies shows a deliberate, albeit uneven, appreciation of temporality, combining elements of short-term responsiveness and long-term strategic planning. Several policies—such as the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016), National Drought Plan, Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012), and the National Labour Migration Policy (2020)—are designed with an understanding of historical policy trajectories and future challenges. However, clarity on policy lifespans, review timelines, and renewal mechanisms remain inconsistent across most documents, which weakens their responsiveness to evolving national and global contexts.

Taking the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) for instance, the review shows that it aligns its long-term ambition with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, committing to reduce per capita energy emissions by 33% by 2030. While the policy references its support role to longer-term frameworks like the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2014) and the Low Emissions Development Strategy, it does not clearly define a validity period or a structured renewal schedule. Nevertheless, it incorporates periodic review mechanisms, guided by scientific evidence, vulnerability assessments, and international reporting standards—positioning the policy to remain adaptive considering future climate scenarios (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016).

The undated National Drought Plan follows a cyclical temporal logic, addressing the full drought risk management continuum—from early warning and preparedness to response, recovery, and mitigation. It draws on historical drought experiences and agro-ecological data and supports iterative assessments via platforms such as the Meteorological Services Department and the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC). However, its lack of a formal review timeline or defined expiration may undermine its effectiveness in rapidly evolving climate conditions (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006).

The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) similarly does not indicate a defined end date or scheduled renewal. Despite this, it operationalizes real-time vulnerability

assessments, including ZIMVAC surveys, and aligns with national and international priorities such as Zim Asset (2013–2018), Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Ngwenya & Van Niekerk, 2022). Yet, the absence of a mandated policy update mechanism presents risks of stagnation, particularly in the face of recurring climate-induced food insecurity.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020) is a more recent example of forward-looking policy design, emphasizing diaspora engagement, rights-based migration governance, and the developmental use of remittances. It aligns with continental and global agendas, such as the AU Joint Labour Migration Programme and the Global Compact for Migration and contributes to national strategies such as Vision 2030. Still, the policy lacks an explicit implementation timeline or review cycle, which limits its ability to adapt to emerging mobility trends such as climate-induced displacement and informal cross-border migration.

Other policies further enrich the temporal landscape. For instance, the Zimbabwe National Water Policy (2012) provides long-term guidance on integrated water resources management (IWRM) but lacks a stated update or review mechanism. By contrast, Zim Asset (2013–2018) stands out as a time-bound, results-oriented strategy with implementation matrices and clear performance targets—though it was not formally extended or followed by a successor framework.

In sum, Zimbabwe's policy architecture reflects varied temporal alignment—with many frameworks grounded in historical context and aligned with national development visions and global goals. However, the absence of clearly defined policy durations, review timelines, and renewal protocols remains a significant gap, reducing their adaptive potential and accountability in a fast-changing socio-environmental context.

3.3.3 Zimbabwe policy interplay

Role of food

The role of food in Zimbabwe's national policy architecture is central, cross-cutting, and deeply embedded in priorities related to climate resilience, national development, health, and social protection. The Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) defines food not merely as a sectoral concern, but as a national development imperative. It establishes a multisectoral framework led by the National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC) to coordinate actions across agriculture, health, education, and social protection sectors. The policy targets vulnerable populations—especially women, children, and low-income households—and emphasizes the promotion of climate-resilient agriculture, household food production, and improved storage and distribution systems (Government of Zimbabwe, 2012). These measures are intended to reduce malnutrition and build resilience against hunger and food system disruptions.

The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) reinforces this linkage by positioning food security as both an outcome of climate vulnerability and a strategic domain for adaptation. With over 80% of Zimbabwe's agriculture dependent on rain-fed systems, the policy highlights the sensitivity of food production to climate variability and extreme weather events, including droughts and floods. It promotes climate-smart agriculture, water harvesting technologies, early warning systems, and sustainable land-use planning—all of which aim to mainstream adaptation within the food system. By aligning with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the policy frames food as both a development target and a climate adaptation tool (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016; Moyo & Ncube, 2023).

The National Drought Plan further amplifies the role of food within a disaster risk management framework. It treats drought not merely as a meteorological event, but as a multisectoral hazard with serious implications for food availability, access, and nutrition outcomes. The plan emphasizes spatially differentiated vulnerability assessments, real-time drought monitoring, and targeted interventions through institutions such as the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and ZIMVAC. These measures are intended to prevent food crises and sustain agricultural productivity during shocks, especially in agro-ecological regions IV and V, which are chronically drought-prone.

In the Zim Asset (2013–2018) policy framework, food is elevated under the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster, which outlines goals such as increasing agricultural output, improving irrigation coverage, strengthening grain reserves, and enhancing nutrition indicators. Importantly, food security in this context is also tied to economic empowerment and infrastructure development, reflecting its role in broader rural transformation and employment creation (Government of Zimbabwe, 2013). Although Zim Asset concluded in 2018 without a direct successor, its framing of food within economic planning continues to influence sectoral thinking.

While the National Labour Migration Policy (2020) does not explicitly foreground food, it acknowledges the role of migration as a coping mechanism for food insecurity and rural economic distress. The policy recognizes remittances as a vital livelihood stream that supports household consumption and food access, particularly in rural communities affected by climate-induced agricultural losses. Migration, therefore, indirectly reinforces food security through both income diversification and transnational support systems.

Across these policies, food emerges not only as a development goal but as a cross-cutting theme integral to achieving climate resilience, human security, and inclusive economic growth. However, persistent challenges hinder the realization of food security goals. These include insufficient budget allocations, weak inter-sectoral coordination, and limited institutional support for smallholder farmers—who form the backbone of the national food system.

Role of migration

Migration occupies an increasingly prominent role in Zimbabwe's national policy discourse, reflecting its multifaceted significance as a social, economic, and adaptive process. The National Labour Migration Policy (2020) is the most comprehensive articulation of this migration-development nexus. It positions migration not simply as a population movement issue, but as both a driver and outcome of national transformation. Emphasis is placed on labour mobility, diaspora engagement, remittance flows, and the protection of migrant rights. The policy recognizes that large numbers of Zimbabweans—particularly youth and low-skilled workers—migrate to South Africa and other SADC countries due to structural economic challenges, high unemployment, and climate-induced rural stressors. Migration is reframed here as a development asset, particularly through diaspora investment, skills transfer, and remittance-backed livelihood resilience.

The policy also promotes inter-ministerial coordination among government bodies responsible for labour, home affairs, foreign affairs, and economic planning, and calls for the mainstreaming of migration into sectoral policies in education, trade, health, and rural development. In line with regional integration priorities, it aligns with instruments such as the SADC Labour Migration Plan and the AU Joint Labour Migration Programme, promoting bilateral labour agreements and regulated migration channels. A notable feature is the gender-sensitive lens, which highlights the specific vulnerabilities of female migrant workers to trafficking, domestic servitude, and exploitation, and recommends

gender-responsive protections across legal and policy frameworks.

Migration also features—though more subtly—in the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016), where it is referenced as a coping or adaptive response to climate variability. The policy acknowledges that rural livelihoods heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture are increasingly under threat from drought, erratic rainfall, and land degradation, which in turn prompt internal displacement and rural-urban migration. Although not elaborated in detail, the policy emphasizes the need to strengthen community adaptive capacities, reduce environmental vulnerability, and improve local resilience as strategies to mitigate forced migration (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016).

The National Drought Plan complements this perspective by identifying migration as a social consequence of prolonged climatic shocks, particularly in agro-ecological zones IV and V, where temporary or permanent migration is common during drought cycles. It recognizes that inadequate food, water, and livelihood options often drive households to seek alternatives elsewhere, which underscores the importance of anticipatory drought response and vulnerability targeting.

The Zim Asset (2013–2018) framework indirectly engages with migration by aiming to retain skilled labour, increase job creation, and mobilize diaspora remittances to support local economies and infrastructure. Although not formally extended, Zim Asset's migration references remain embedded in subsequent policy thinking. Similarly, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) does not explicitly reference migration but addresses its root causes—particularly rural poverty, food insecurity, and livelihood vulnerability—which are known to drive youth and gendered migration patterns.

Across these policy frameworks, migration is increasingly recognized as a critical demographic and economic dynamic, shaped by structural drivers (e.g., unemployment, economic exclusion) and environmental pressures (e.g., climate shocks, land degradation). However, while the policies reflect a shift from control-oriented migration governance to integrative and rights-based approaches, substantial policy fragmentation persists. There is a need for stronger coherence, particularly in linking migration governance to food security, climate adaptation, and rural development strategies.

Role of climate change

Climate change is increasingly acknowledged as a foundational and cross-cutting issue within Zimbabwe's national policy landscape, intersecting with priorities such as food security, water resources, migration, energy, and economic development. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) anchors this recognition by placing climate change at the center of national planning and institutional reform. It highlights Zimbabwe's acute vulnerability to rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, recurrent droughts, and flash floods, all of which threaten livelihoods in a country where over 80% of the population relies on rain-fed agriculture (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). In response, the policy promotes a transition toward low-carbon, climate-resilient development, emphasizing inclusive adaptation, indigenous knowledge systems, inter-ministerial coordination, and mainstreaming climate risks across sectors. The policy is aligned with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC, reflecting Zimbabwe's international commitments to address climate change (Brazier, 2015).

This strategic orientation is operationalized through the National Drought Plan, which addresses the full drought risk management cycle—from early warning and contingency planning to post-drought recovery and resilience-building. The plan recognizes that climate-induced drought is not merely an environmental crisis, but a multidimensional

governance challenge affecting rural livelihoods, food systems, and health outcomes. It calls for the deployment of real-time meteorological and vulnerability assessment systems and encourages decentralized, agro-ecological zone-specific planning to tailor responses where climate risks are most acute.

Climate change also features prominently in the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012), which treats climate variability as a core driver of food insecurity. The policy supports the implementation of climate-smart agriculture, improved post-harvest storage, and livelihood diversification, particularly for rural smallholders whose food security is increasingly undermined by extreme weather events. These measures are complemented by the Zimbabwe National Water Policy (2012), which links climate change to declining water availability and promotes integrated water resources management (IWRM), infrastructure investment, and water-use efficiency as strategies for climate resilience.

While not centrally framed around climate change, the National Labour Migration Policy (2020) indirectly addresses its effects. It recognizes that environmental degradation, agricultural decline, and resource scarcity—exacerbated by climate shocks—act as push factors for rural out-migration. This includes both internal migration to urban centers and external migration to countries such as South Africa and the Gulf states. Migration in this context is increasingly used as a coping mechanism for climate-induced livelihood collapse, though this dynamic remains underexplored in formal policy discourse. Yet, despite progressive policy articulation, implementation challenges persist—particularly at the local level, where the impacts of climate change are most severe but resources, data, and institutional capacity are limited.

Integration of food, migration, and climate change

Zimbabwe's evolving policy landscape reflects a growing awareness of the interlinkages between food systems, climate change, and migration, although the degree of integration across policies remains inconsistent. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) is the most explicit in connecting climate change to food system vulnerability, emphasizing how droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall patterns undermine agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. The policy promotes climate-smart agriculture, adaptive water management, and sustainable land use to improve resilience in food systems. However, migration is only indirectly referenced, with rural–urban migration portrayed because of environmental degradation, lacking a strategic framework to guide migration as an adaptive response (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016).

In contrast, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) is firmly rooted in multisectoral approaches to address food insecurity and malnutrition, recognizing the role of climate variability in shaping food availability and access. It advocates irrigation development, early warning systems, and livelihood diversification. Yet, migration is largely absent from its discourse—even though evidence shows that rural households in climate-stressed regions often migrate as a coping mechanism. This gap in policy articulation limits the capacity to coordinate food and migration strategies under climate stress.

The National Labour Migration Policy (2020), while comprehensive in regulating labour mobility and diaspora engagement, does not explicitly acknowledge climate change or food insecurity as migration drivers. Instead, it centers on economic hardship, unemployment, and institutional coordination among labour, trade, and foreign affairs ministries. The policy promotes remittance governance, migrant rights, and regional integration through SADC frameworks but misses the opportunity to position migration as an adaptation mechanism in response to climate-induced shocks.

The National Drought Plan offers the strongest point of convergence across the three themes. It explicitly identifies drought as a multidimensional crisis, disrupting food production, water supply, and rural livelihoods—often triggering temporary or permanent migration. The plan calls for risk mapping, early warning systems, and preparedness protocols, highlighting the uneven vulnerability across agro-ecological zones IV and V, where migration is prevalent. While the plan does not delve into migration governance, it implicitly integrates the climate–food–migration nexus by recognizing displacement as an outcome of environmental and socio-economic instability.

Despite these thematic overlaps, policy fragmentation remains a significant challenge. Most policies maintain a sectoral focus, addressing food, climate, or migration independently. For example, while the Climate Policy encourages intersectoral coordination, operational frameworks for cross-sector linkages—such as how climate adaptation interfaces with migration governance—remain underdeveloped. The lack of shared data systems, harmonized implementation timelines, and coordinated financing also weakens the potential for convergence.

The policies' adaptability to rapidly changing conditions further varies. The Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) and National Drought Plan demonstrate the highest degree of institutional flexibility. They incorporate periodic review mechanisms, decentralized implementation, and data-informed decision-making, enabling a degree of responsiveness to climate variability and socio-economic shifts (Government of Zimbabwe, 2016). These frameworks allow subnational actors to translate national priorities into localized interventions and align with international commitments such as the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

By contrast, the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012), while offering a multisectoral coordination structure, is more static. Its reliance on tools like ZIMVAC assessments provides useful data for vulnerability tracking, but the policy lacks clear mechanisms for frequent updates in response to food price volatility or localized production shocks. Similarly, the Labour Migration Policy (2020) focuses on long-term structural goals but offers limited tools for real-time feedback, monitoring, or dynamic adjustments in response to emerging migration pressures such as climate-induced displacement.

3.4 Comparative assessment of policy adaptability across Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe

Table 5 below presents a comparative summary of policy adaptability across Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The table captures the relative strengths and gaps for each country across the seven spirit dimensions. The analysis reveals several important trends:

- Kenya demonstrates comparatively stronger scalability, institutional flexibility, and fitting to local realities, largely due to its devolved governance structure and the capacity of counties to localize food security, climate adaptation, and migration strategies. Its moderate adaptive nature suggests some room for strengthening mechanisms that allow policies to evolve in real time.

- Ghana consistently performs at a moderate level across most SPIRIT dimensions, providing a relatively stable but cautious policy environment. However, weaknesses in adaptive nature and fitting local realities limit the ability of Ghana's policies to dynamically adjust to localized socio-ecological changes, constraining their overall responsiveness.

- Zimbabwe shows moderate scalability and reflexivity but faces more significant challenges with power-sensitive inclusivity, temporality, and adaptive nature. Weak

formal mechanisms for regular policy review, limited inclusivity of marginalized groups, and insufficient tailoring of policies to diverse local contexts reduce Zimbabwe's overall adaptability to evolving food, climate, and migration dynamics.

This comparative assessment highlights the varying capacities of the three countries to strengthen food system governance under conditions of increasing climate stress, migration pressures, and socio-economic transformation. It underscores the critical need for more integrated, inclusive, flexible, and locally grounded policy approaches across all three contexts to enhance resilience and sustainable development outcomes.

Table 5: Cross-Country SPIRIT synthesis for food security, climate change, and migration policies in Africa

SPIRIT Dimension	Ghana	Kenya	Zimbabwe
Scalability	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Power-sensitive inclusivity	Moderate	Moderate	Weak
Institutional flexibility	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Reflexivity	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Temporality	Moderate	Moderate	Weak
Fitting local realities	Moderate	-	-
Adaptive nature	Weak	-	-

Source: Authors' construct, 2025.

3.5 Utilizing existing policy documents in the SAFE4ALL Countries

The national policy frameworks in Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe offer important foundations for advancing the goals of the SAFE4ALL initiative. Although the policies display varying levels of scalability, reflexivity, inclusivity, and adaptability, they collectively provide strategic entry points for building resilient, climate-responsive, and migration-aware food systems. Strategic engagement with these existing documents can significantly enhance SAFE4ALL's impact, especially if efforts are tailored to leverage specific strengths and address critical SPIRIT-related gaps.

In Kenya, strong scalability, institutional flexibility, and fitting to local realities, enabled by devolved governance structures, present a robust opportunity for SAFE4ALL. Instruments such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and county-level Integrated Development Plans offer pathways to embed foodshed management, strengthen user-centered climate services, and develop LivingLabs that are responsive to local socio-ecological contexts. While Kenya shows moderate adaptive capacity, SAFE4ALL interventions can further strengthen policy responsiveness by institutionalizing real-time feedback loops and scenario-based local planning, especially linking food security and climate adaptation with migration patterns.

In Ghana, moderate performance across most SPIRIT dimensions reflects a relatively stable but cautious policy environment. SAFE4ALL can build on foundations such as FASDEP II and the National Climate Change Policy by promoting greater cross-sectoral integration and operational depth—especially connecting food security, climate resilience, and internal migration strategies. Strengthening local governance capacities, supporting district-level resilience programming, and fostering participatory approaches will be essential to improve the adaptability, reflexivity, and contextual fit of Ghana's food system policies.

In Zimbabwe, moderate scalability and reflexivity in key frameworks such as the Zimbabwe Climate Policy (2016) and the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2012) provide

entry points for action. However, significant weaknesses in power-sensitive inclusivity, temporality, and adaptive nature suggest that SAFE4ALL interventions must prioritize bottom-up, community-driven approaches. Emphasis should be placed on empowering marginalized groups—particularly smallholder farmers, women, and displaced populations—through LivingLabs and decentralized resilience programming. Additionally, enhancing institutional mechanisms for regular policy revision and fostering stronger links between food security, climate adaptation, and migration governance will be critical to overcoming systemic rigidities.

Across all three countries, the strategic utilization of existing policy frameworks can support SAFE4ALL's transformative ambitions by:

- Aligning project interventions with national development strategies and visions, thereby strengthening ownership, legitimacy, and policy sustainability.
- Fostering cross-sectoral coordination platforms, addressing integration and reflexivity gaps identified under the SPIRIT analysis.
- Enhancing local-level policy implementation through participatory planning, capacity building, and co-creation methodologies such as LivingLabs, ensuring a better fit with diverse local realities.
- Establishing dynamic policy feedback loops, enabling iterative learning and continuous adaptation of food, climate, and migration strategies based on evolving socio-ecological contexts.

By leveraging the strengths and addressing the structural gaps identified through the SPIRIT framework, SAFE4ALL can play a catalytic role in reshaping food system governance, promoting adaptive capacity, and enhancing resilience across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

4. Conclusion

This document represents the study on the policy interplay between food security, climate change, and migration within the three case-study countries – Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ghana. The analysis focuses on levels of interconnectivity, integration, and fragmentation within national policies. These policy areas are critical in shaping the country's socio-economic and environmental landscape, particularly in the context of increasing climate variability, economic challenges, and shifting migration patterns.

This report presents this policy assessment and provides insights by answering the following two questions:

1. To what extent do policy documents show a certain level of flexibility to be adaptive to change in current rapidly changing circumstances?

The report shows that the national policies are well-written texts, born out of specific (complex) settings geared towards complex realities. Each policy document provides strategies and solutions to its own mandate. While the policies appear to be adaptable through their own specific and detailed plans and strategies regarding their timeline, inclusion, reflexivity and scalability as well as inclusion and fitting local contexts, together with structured and detailed M&E plans, it also becomes clear that this only make a difference after implementation. Therefore, it can be stated that there are multiple commonalities between the policies and their language which, even though rather specific to each independent policy document, show a certain degree of willingness to be adaptable and flexible. However, their actual capability of being adaptable to changing circumstances depends entirely on the implementation process including actual M&E and the inclusion of these results in the further policy formulation and implementation process.

2. To what extent do the policy documents inhibit, support, overlap, conflict each other on the variable topics of the climate-food-migration nexus?

As becomes clear throughout the policy analysis of each country, while there is general understanding of a certain connection and relation between climate change, food security and migration, the three topics remain siloed. A stronger relation exists between food security and climate change, as these two issues are clearly interconnected. The role of migration in relation to climate change and food security is more uncertain. Hence, it can be stated that not a direct link is assumed (yet) between migration and climate change, while it is acknowledged that climate change can exacerbate migration due to various (in)direct mechanisms related also to development issues and vulnerabilities. In the documents that do present this link, the solution is considered to be found within agriculture: '*Invest in agriculture in vulnerable areas, such as developing crops and livestock that are pest and drought resistant, early yielding and culturally acceptable, and promoting irrigation, to help curb rural-urban migration*' (NCCP Ghana, pp 4 – 21, focus area 9, pp81). Hence, it can be stated that on the one hand, the three policy themes come from different sets of rules, norms and expertise, and remain in their respective field strengthening the silo-effect. At the same time, however, most likely this is also reflective of the actual relations between the three themes which are either strongly connected (climate change and food security) and potentially less clearly directly connected (migration and climate change). Meanwhile, it is important to address that internal migration receives remarkably little attention across the three countries other than the major focus on diaspora, remittances and labor migration. A focus is given to the economic aspects and potential of international migration and little attention provided to the complexities of internal migration and potential relations to different dynamics within each respective country.

Moreover, the national policies present a strong agrarian outlook on governing climate change, food security and, to some extent, (internal) migration. As such, agriculture is mainly proposed as the solution to many challenges but also as the way forward to reach middle income statues (e.g. in the case of Ghana). This focus includes improved water and soil management practices, value chain improvements (infrastructure and marketing) and, specifically, improved and modernized application of various technologies from different varieties of crops to high-tech machinery. While the policy documents clearly describe the importance of inclusion, participation, decentralization and specific local contexts, the solution is still primarily found in agriculture and agricultural production including food and cash crops through market-based solutions. Additionally, in some circumstances, it can be questioned to what extent such a focus takes local realities into account, potentially neglecting land tenure complexities and other farming/livestock styles in dryer areas where agriculture does not have much potential.

5. Recommendations

Building on the SPIRIT analysis across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, several recommendations emerge to enhance policy adaptability, inclusivity, and integration across food security, climate resilience, and migration governance:

1. Across all three countries, integration between food, climate, and migration policies remains partial or fragmented. Governments should establish formalized, multi-sectoral coordination platforms—linking agriculture, environment, migration, and social protection sectors—to foster joint planning, implementation, and monitoring. SAFE4ALL can support the creation or strengthening of inter-ministerial committees and cross-sectoral task

forces that bridge current policy silos.

2. Temporality gaps highlight the need for structured review and renewal mechanisms within national policies. Governments should institutionalize mandatory policy review intervals (e.g., every 5 years) aligned with medium-term development strategies. This would enhance policy dynamism and ensure responsiveness to emerging risks such as climate shocks, migration surges, and food system disruptions.

3. Marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, women, youth, pastoralists, and persons with disabilities, must be systematically included in policy design, implementation, and monitoring processes. SAFE4ALL should promote gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive participatory platforms (e.g., community dialogues, citizen advisory boards), and mechanisms for empowering traditionally excluded voices at national and local levels.

4. Devolution has proven critical, particularly in Kenya, in fostering scalability and flexibility. Ghana and Zimbabwe should deepen decentralization by providing local governments with greater autonomy, resources, and technical capacity to adapt food, climate, and migration strategies to diverse local realities. Investment in district-level and ward-level planning processes is essential to embed adaptive governance closer to communities.

5. Policies must avoid one-size-fits-all approaches by reflecting socio-ecological diversity. Governments should systematically integrate localized vulnerability assessments, traditional knowledge systems, and context-specific livelihood strategies into policy formulation and implementation frameworks. SAFE4ALL can facilitate LivingLabs and co-creation processes that bridge top-down policy frameworks with bottom-up innovation.

6. Migration remains insufficiently integrated into food and climate policies. Governments should mainstream human mobility considerations into climate adaptation plans, food security strategies, and rural development frameworks. This includes developing mechanisms to address climate-induced displacement, support migrant-inclusive resilience building, and harness diaspora contributions for local development.

7. SAFE4ALL countries should invest in robust data systems, early warning mechanisms, and iterative learning platforms that link policy to evidence. Embedding flexible monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems into policy cycles will enable real-time feedback, promote learning from implementation, and allow timely course correction.

8. Given the similarities and differences observed across Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, cross-country learning platforms should be institutionalized. SAFE4ALL can facilitate peer-learning exchanges where policymakers share best practices, innovations, and challenges in scaling food system resilience under climate and migration pressures.

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