

From Policy to Practice: Turning Mozambique's Nutrition Strategy into Action

Mozambique faces one of the highest rates of chronic malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 37% of children under five years of age stunted and more than half of women of reproductive age suffering from anaemia¹. At the same time, climate shocks, food insecurity, and limited dietary diversity continue to undermine household resilience.

The approval of Mozambique's Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Strategy (PESAN III) (2024–2030) marked a turning point. For the first time, Mozambique has a unified, multisectoral framework to align government, partners, and investments toward improving diets and reducing malnutrition.

¹ Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2022-2023: <https://dhsprogram.com/methodology/survey/survey-display-564.cfm>



Participants during a joint project monitoring visit by CASCADE team and Nacaroa District Government to farmer field business school

PESAN III's shift from a long pending draft to an approved national framework shows what coordinated action can achieve. Through focused advocacy and coalition building, CASCADE² helped bring government and partners into alignment ahead of the Council of Ministers' approval in August 2024 and now works with national and provincial authorities, particularly in Nampula, to put the strategy into practice. This brief highlights the steps taken to secure momentum around a national strategy and to translate its priorities into localized plans, tools, and actions that advance nutrition and household resilience.

With a population of 34.6 million (DHS 2022-2023), PESAN III has the potential to **reduce food insecurity for about 3.5 million people, and chronic malnutrition for more than 400,000 children under five years.**

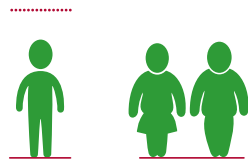


The Opportunity: Turning Policy into Results

PESAN III sets ambitious national targets by 2030:



Reduce chronic food insecurity from **24% to <14%**



Reduce child stunting from **37% to <30%** and overweight from **3% to <2.5%**



Reduce acute malnutrition in children under five years of age from **3.8% to <2.5%**



Reduce anaemia in women of reproductive age from **52% to <25%**

The main emphasis of PESAN III is on achieving the following results:

- Malnutrition reduction, particularly child stunting, wasting, and anaemia.
- Building resilient food systems through sustainable, climate resilient agriculture, dietary diversification, and reduced food loss.
- Strengthening multisectoral coordination across health, education, water, sanitation, and social protection sectors.
- Providing services and support for vulnerable populations through integrated programming and disaster readiness.
- Mobilizing strategic investments and resources, focusing on rural and vulnerable communities.
- Implementing evidence-based programmes to evaluate progress and improve service delivery.

Translating policy into measurable results requires strong cross-sector coordination, effective operational planning at provincial and district levels, and sufficient capacity to implement, monitor, and enforce standards, alongside fostering community-level behaviour change and ensuring accountability from both government and communities. This is where CASCADE plays a catalytic role.

² Catalyzing Strengthened policy aCtion for heAlthy Diets and resiliencE (CASCADE) (2022–2026) works to improve food security, reduce malnutrition, and strengthen resilience among women of reproductive age and children across Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and implemented by CARE Netherlands, CARE USA, and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the programme applies a food systems approach to support stronger nutrition policy implementation, promote multi-sectoral coordination, engage the private sector, and address structural and gender-related barriers to healthy diets.

CASCADE's Contribution: From Alignment to Action

At the start of CASCADE in 2022, the PESAN III framework existed only as a draft, limiting coordinated action across provinces and districts and slowing progress toward improving diets and the quality of services for the people of Mozambique. CASCADE helped unlock progress by bridging stakeholders, strengthening coalitions, and accelerating policy approval.

CASCADE PESAN III Focus Areas:

- **Coalition building:** Re-energized the National, Provincial and District Food Security Platforms and Nutrition Partners Forum, enabling UN agencies, NGOs and other civil society organizations and the private sector to align and advocate with a unified voice.
- **High-level engagement:** Leveraged the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) and SUN Business Network events to engage Ministers for Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Health and the Prime Minister's office. In August 2023, CASCADE signed an MOU with the Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN) to support PESAN III operationalization in Nampula Province.
- **Targeted diplomacy:** Coordinated participation at multi-stakeholder events such as an April 2024 CONSAN session, enabling civil and private sector partners to engage with Ministerial leadership and the Prime Minister directly.

These efforts contributed to the approval of PESAN III (2024–2030) on August 13, 2024, by Mozambique's Council of Ministers followed by its national launch in June 2025. The strategy provides a coherent, multi-sector framework to coordinate efforts, strengthen accountability, mobilize investment, and engage the private sector at scale.

From National Policy to Local Impact: Localizing PESAN III in Nampula

With approval in place, CASCADE shifted its attention in 2025 from national-level advocacy to implementation support in Nampula – where it has a major operational footprint and rates of chronic malnutrition in children are among the highest in the country, at 47%.³

Strengthening planning and governance: CASCADE supported the development of Nampula's first Provincial PESAN III Implementation Plan, helping the provincial government to clearly define its food and nutrition commitments for 2025-2030. The project facilitated the creation of an **implementation matrix** linking objectives to roles, actions, budget lines and monitoring. CASCADE also helped prepare the plan for presentation and validation by government stakeholders, the private sector and civil society leaders at **Nampula's International Nutrition and Agribusiness Conference** in July 2025. These efforts ensured that the plan is locally owned and understood, and actionable by district governments, health facilities, agricultural extension agents, and community structures across Nampula.

Capacity building for coordination platforms: To improve coordination across government bodies, CASCADE supported provincial and district councils for food and nutrition security (COPSAN and CODSAN) and technical working groups through regular planning meetings, joint reviews, and training sessions – reaching about 150 members. The project also supported districts to draft their own operational plans. Assessments conducted in 2025 revealed that 76-83% of stakeholders demonstrated improved workplan understanding and monitoring capacity.

Regulatory capacity for fortified foods: To ensure that fortified foods are compliant and meet PESAN III's micronutrient and food quality provisions, CASCADE strengthened the regulatory agencies responsible for food quality, including the National Inspectorate of Economic Activities, Provincial Directorate of Industry and Commerce, and National Institute for Standardization and Quality. Agency staff and private sector members were trained on fortification standards and quality control, portable iCheck testing devices were distributed to enable rapid on-site micronutrient monitoring, and a new inspection manual was drafted. These efforts aim to ensure that fortified foods on the market meet the nutritional standards required for population-level impact.



District Economic Activities Services Focal Point presenting Eráti District action plan in the PESAN dissemination event

“ Multisectoral coordination is fundamental in the fight against food insecurity and malnutrition. Partners like CASCADE, who help convene these dialogues, strengthen policies, and advocate for their implementation, are key allies in building a future where Nampula is free from chronic malnutrition.”
 – **Plácido Pereira**, Secretary of State of Nampula Province

Driving Change at the Household Level

Bringing PESAN III to communities and households: CASCADE also supported activities to change practices and behaviours at the household level, primarily through community-based platforms such as frontline health workers, 75 farmer field and business schools (FFBS), with 1,617 participants (1,082 women), and 74 village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), with 1,347 participants (919 women).

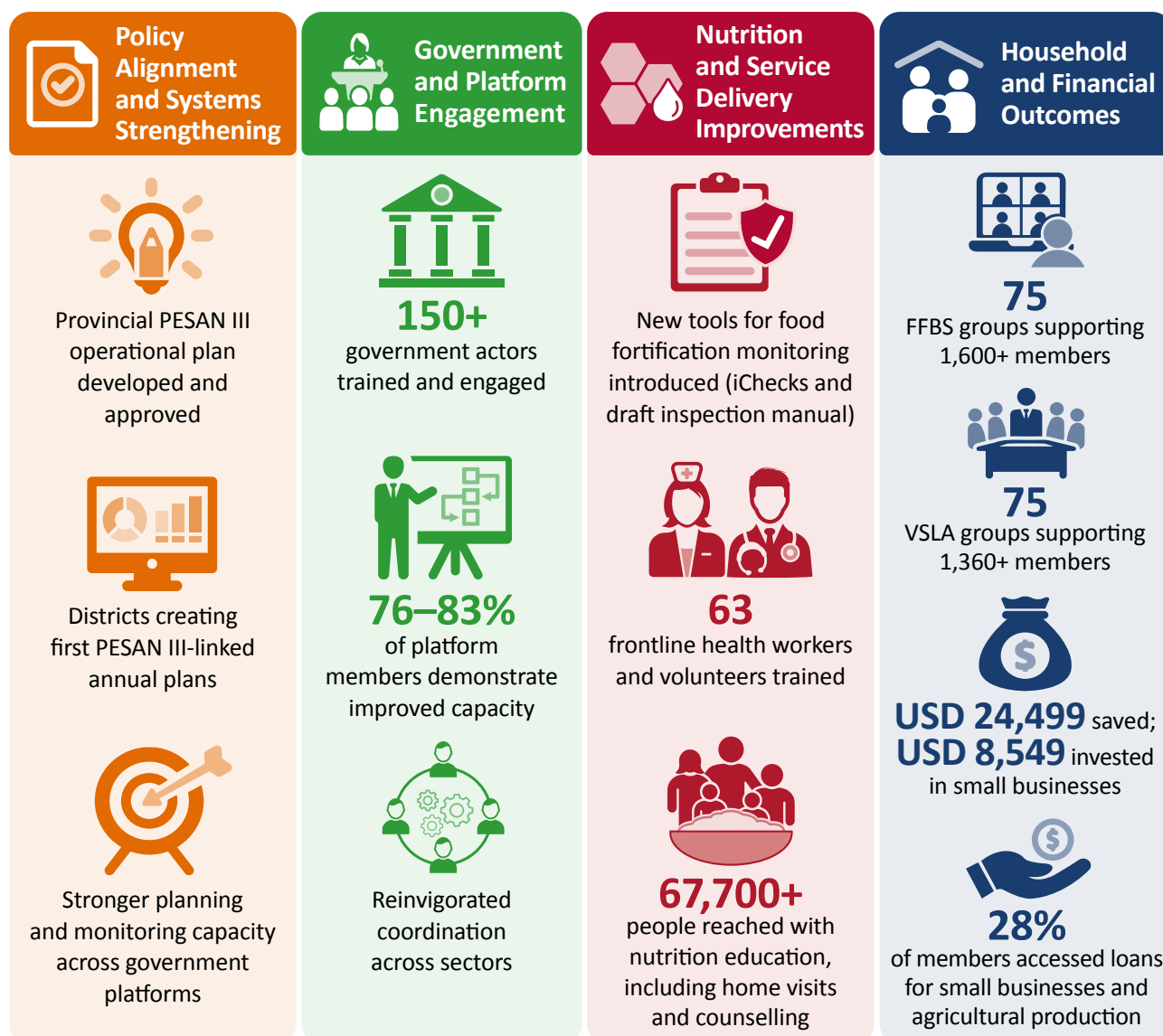
Some of the key activities included:

- Nutrition messages promoted the importance of healthy diets, responsive feeding, and meal frequency for young children. Cooking demonstrations showed families how to prepare nutrient-dense meals using affordable, locally available foods.
- FFBS groups promoted climate-resilient agricultural techniques, improved seed selection, and water saving techniques to enable year-round access to diverse, nutritious foods.
- VSLA groups promoted microfinance and emphasized the importance of setting funds aside to buy nutritious foods such as leafy greens, eggs and fortified foods.
- CASCADE used FFBS and VSLAs to strengthen information exchanges between agricultural extension and frontline health workers, identifying barriers to services such as growth monitoring sessions for children, referrals, and nutrition counselling.

Monitoring reports in 2025 indicate promising shifts in household nutrition behaviours, including child feeding practices, use of savings for healthy food purchases, and increased preparation of nutrient-dense meals.

Key Results: Building Systems That Last

CASCADE's approach delivers results at multiple levels as shown in the infographic below:



Lessons Learned

Adapting to a dynamic political and institutional context: To support PESAN III and the government's vision for food and nutrition security, CASCADE adapted to a changing political, economic and social environment in Mozambique. While the project initially focused on securing passage through national-level advocacy and coalition building, it shifted toward operationalizing PESAN III at the provincial level in Nampula. The 2024 elections and subsequent contestations required renewed investments in awareness raising and training, and emphasize the value of broad coalitions and non-partisan, evidence-based messaging.

Translating national policy into provincial action requires sustained local engagement: Government platforms like COPSAN and CODSAN operated more effectively when consistent technical support and clear tools were provided, and opportunities to jointly plan and review progress.

Continuous capacity building is essential in high-turnover environments: Early and repeated orientation is essential, given high staff turnover across government institutions. Ongoing capacity building ensures continuity, strengthens ownership, and maintains momentum in implementation.

Practical tools and hands-on training strengthen regulatory enforcement: Food fortification efforts revealed that regulatory enforcement improves most when inspectors receive hands-on training and equipped with practical tools to guide their work.

Moving Forward: Scaling for Impact

As Mozambique advances into the next phase of PESAN III roll-out, CASCADE will continue to help operationalize Nampula's implementation plan, strengthen monitoring systems under SETSAN's leadership, and support district planning and budgeting processes. CASCADE will also support the validation of the fortification inspection manual, expand iCheck – enabled inspections, and strengthen community-based service delivery and behaviour change.

Through these efforts, CASCADE is helping ensure that PESAN III delivers tangible improvements in healthy diets and resilience for women, children, and communities across Mozambique.

Why Continued Investment Matters

CASCADE demonstrates that coordinated policy action can translate into measurable improvements in nutrition and resilience. Continued investment is critical to scale these results beyond Nampula and ensure that PESAN III delivers nationwide impact. With proven approaches, strong government alignment, and growing community demand, CASCADE is well positioned to accelerate progress toward healthier diets and more resilient livelihoods across Mozambique.

With continued support, this model can:

- Reach millions more vulnerable households
- Strengthen national systems for long-term sustainability
- Accelerate progress toward national and global nutrition targets

Now is the moment to scale what works!



Community intervention during the community score card activity in Nampula District



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



Connecting People and Policies