

Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation at the Food Reserve Agency in Zambia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct an examination of the challenges affecting the implementation of strategies at the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) in Zambia. The study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed method design and involved data collection from 58 management employees selected through stratified and simple random sampling, as well as four key informants selected purposively. The research utilized a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data in SPSS version 26, while N-vivo 12 was utilized to analyse the qualitative data through content analysis. The study's results indicate that FRA faces various internal and external challenges that limit its ability to implement strategies successfully. These challenges comprise government funding, policy/political factors, stakeholders, environmental factors, economic factors, technological factors, disease outbreaks, industrial competition, legal factors, and social factors. Among these challenges, lack of financial resources was the most significant internal challenge encountered during strategy implementation at FRA.

Keywords: strategic planning, statutory institution, national strategic food reserves

1. Introduction

In a complex and dynamic global environment, organisations without a strategy for survival or goal achievement are placed in a highly challenging dilemma (Pereira et al., 2019). The business environment is increasingly competitive and ever-changing due to modified laws,

erratic weather patterns, economic changes, disease outbreaks, innovative technology or new behaviors of people or customers (Gitman et al., 2018). To be effective in dealing with unfamiliar situations, organisations take advantage of a managerial tool known as strategic planning (Sherman, 2019). Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organisation's direction in response to a changing environment (Ramer, 2021). In other words, in order to survive or grow in the present environment, organisations need clearer and contemporary strategic plans (Sherman, 2019).

This study focused on a statutory institution that develops and implements plans on national strategic food reserves in Zambia. Statutory institutions are generally established to perform specific functions which a government considers would be effectively performed outside the traditional departmental executive structure (Policy Monitoring and Research Centre [PMRC], 2018). In Zambia, FRA is a statutory institution tasked with ensuring national food security through the maintenance of strategic grain reserves. These reserves serve as a safety net in times of food shortages, as well as to meet emergency food needs in the event of a disaster such as drought or flood. The FRA was established in 1995 under the Food Reserve Act of 1995, with the mandate to purchase, store, and manage the national strategic grain reserve. The reserve is intended to ensure food security and price stabilization in the country, particularly in rural areas. The FRA is also responsible for grain marketing, price stabilization, and food security monitoring and evaluation.

This study aimed to examine the challenges faced by the FRA in implementing its strategic plans. Despite the importance of strategic planning, its implementation remains a major challenge for many organisations (Pereira et al., 2019). As previous literature suggests, the challenges may include inadequate funding, lack of political will, insufficient capacity, resistance to change, and poor communication and coordination among stakeholders (Harrington, 2006; Hendry & Kiel, 2004; Khan & Khalique, 2014; Kalali et al., 2011; Kabeyi, 2019). Moreover, studies also report that legal factors like regulations, laws, and policies may affect the organization's ability to implement its strategic plan. According to Salum et al. (2017), government policies and regulations play a critical role in shaping organizations' operations. For instance, the enactment of new legislation may require organizations to modify their strategic plans to comply with new regulations. Hrebiniak (2006) notes that stakeholders have the power to influence strategy implementation positively or negatively.

Given the critical role played by the FRA in ensuring food security and price stability in Zambia, it is imperative to establish the challenges it faces in implementing its strategic plans. This is particularly important because strategic planning is an essential tool for organizations to achieve their goals and ensure their survival in a rapidly changing environment. However, as the literature suggests, less than 10% of well-formulated strategies are effectively implemented, and like many other organizations, the FRA faces the major problem of failing to implement its strategic plans effectively due to unidentified challenges (Gurowitz, 2020). The institution's implementation of strategies was rated at 66.78% for the strategic period

2014-2018 (MDD, 2019), which has impacted its ability to meet gazetted national strategic food reserves, provide market access to smallholder farmers, and stabilize maize meal prices. Therefore, the study examined the challenges faced by the FRA in implementing its strategic plans in Zambia, and its findings can be useful to policymakers, development partners, and stakeholders in the agriculture and food security sector.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design (QUAN-qual) was employed to describe and comprehend the challenges impacting strategy implementation at FRA. This approach was suitable for contextualizing quantitative findings and gaining a more in-depth understanding of unexpected results. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data, collected through interviews with FRA management staff and a survey of FRA employees, to identify key challenges and possible solutions to improve strategy implementation.

2.2 Sampling Technique

Phase I - The study targeted a population of 70 employees from management positions at FRA. A sample size of 60 employees was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula with a 5% margin of error. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size required

N = number of employees in management (population)

e = allowable error (%).

$$n = \frac{70}{1+70(0.05)^2} = 59.57 \approx 60 \text{ Respondents}$$

To obtain a representative sample, proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling were used from each stratum. This technique was appropriate since the population of interest was not homogenous and could be subdivided into groups or strata. Table 1 below shows the sample size distribution for each management category.

Table 1. Sample Size

No.	Management Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Percent
1	Senior	5	4	7
2	Middle	17	15	25
3	Lower	48	41	68
	Total	70	60	100

Phase II – The study employed purposive sampling in selecting four (4) respondents or

subject matter specialists for in-depth interviews. The purposive sampling technique was used because the goal of this phase was to obtain a deeper understanding of the challenges that affect strategy implementation at FRA, and only individuals with expertise in the area were included. The four respondents were chosen based on their knowledge of the organization's operations and their experience in dealing with strategy implementation challenges.

2.6 Data Collection

The study utilised both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through questionnaires, personal interviews, and pragmatic workshop method. Self-administered survey questionnaire was developed reflecting the respondent's demographics and an assessment of the challenges faced in strategy implementation at FRA. An interview guide was developed and administered in person for both interview and workshop method through IPA. It was used because it was easier to analyse, since it was in an immediate usable form and allowed the researcher to corroborate the information collected from secondary sources. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), this kind of data collection was appropriate as it ensured that all data used were comprehensive.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data collected during Phase I of the study was categorical and collected through survey questionnaires. A five-point Likert-scale was used, but for clarity, the responses were reduced to a three-point scale during analysis and presentation by merging the responses in disagreement and agreement. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

The qualitative data collected during Phase II of the study was in textual form and collected through open-ended questions. The data was analysed using content analysis with the assistance of N-vivo computer package. The coding process involved generating categories and themes that emerged from the data to identify patterns, and trends in the responses. Both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated during the interpretation of the results.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

The study demonstrates a strong commitment to rigor through the careful establishment of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Firstly, a pilot test was conducted with 11 respondents, which is an appropriate sample size for testing the reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's alpha value, which was calculated to be 0.92. This value indicates excellent internal consistency, which is consistent with the literature. According to George et al. (2003), a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.90 is considered excellent for a Likert scale instrument.

Additionally, the researchers used methodological triangulation to validate the data collected in the study. This technique involves using both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings. If the conclusions from each of the methods

are the same, then the validity of the data is established. This is an important step as it ensures that the data collected is reliable and trustworthy.

Overall, the use of both techniques to establish the reliability and validity of the questionnaire strengthens the credibility of the research and ensures that the findings are accurate and meaningful.

3. Results Analysis

3.1 Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The study targeted a sample size of 60 respondents from lower, middle, and senior management staff at FRA out of which, 58 completed and submitted the survey questionnaires making a response rate of 97%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a response rate of 70% and over is considered as excellent and representative to make conclusions for the study. The good response rate was reached through use of self-administering questionnaires, constant follow-ups, as well as providing clarifications sought by the participants during the data collection process.

3.1.1 Gender of Respondents

The gender of the respondents is reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Female	13	22.4
Male	45	77.6
Total	58	100.0

The findings show that 78% male and 22% female staff participated in the study.

3.1.2 Respondent's Years in Current Position

The respondents spent an average of 7 years 8 months in their positions. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were in their positions in the 7 years study reference period, that is, 2014 to 2021.

3.1.3 Respondent's Familiarity with the 2019-2021 FRA Strategic Plan

Familiarity of the respondents to the 2019 – 2021, FRA strategic plan which was at the time a guiding document is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Familiarity with the current Strategic Plan, 2019 - 2021

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	96.6
Not Sure	2	3.4
Total	58	100.0

The findings show that the majority of the respondents were familiar with the 2019 – 2021, FRA Strategic Plan.

3.1.4 Respondent's Familiarity with the Previous FRA Strategic Plan

Further, the respondent's familiarity with the 2014 – 2018, FRA strategic plan is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Familiarity with the previous Strategic Plan, 2014-2018

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	70.7
No	11	19.0
Not Sure	6	10.3
Total	58	100.0

The findings show that the majority of the respondents were familiar with the 2014 – 2018, FRA Strategic Plan.

3.2 Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation at FRA

Study findings showed that strategy implementation at FRA is affected by both external and internal challenges. Survey findings and excerpts from key informant interviews are presented in the Tables below.

3.2.1 External Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation

Table 5 below presents results of external challenges affecting strategy implementation at FRA in Zambia.

Table 5. External Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts)
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
1	Government Funding	2%	10%	88%	<i>"FRA had reduced budgetary allocations in the period. Hence, sustainability interventions taken. FRA had no resource mobilisation strategy." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
2	Policy/ Political Factors	5%	14%	81%	<i>"There is interference in the quantities to buy, commodity pricing, purchase locations and employment of depot staff." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
3	Stakeholders	17%	21%	62%	<i>"Due to the distortional effect of our interventions in the market that has obviously created some resistance or opposition from some stakeholders on the manner that we have intervened in the market." (Interviews, 2022).</i>

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts)
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
4	Environmental Factors	19%	21%	60%	<i>"In certain areas particularly in years when we have had climate related challenges, we have not been able to achieve our targets in terms of purchases. We have had to release so much stock because of that, but that is of course within our mandate." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
5	Economic Factors	19%	29%	52%	<i>"The impact on Treasury affected funding - the fluctuations, and the deteriorating value of our local currency, high level of indebtedness as a country." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
6	Technological Factors	21%	29%	50%	<i>"I think we have spent considerable amounts to automate, but the benefit of that investment is again what one would probably question. Automation is supposed to enhance efficiency, but now it's opposite." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
7	Disease Outbreaks	24%	36%	40%	<i>"From 2020 physical training was affected by COVID-19. The whole world has been affected, institutions have collapsed, jobs have been lost. People in production have become less productive. Even policies have changed." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
8	Industrial Competition	34%	28%	38%	<i>"Competition is not much. The only thing killing competition is the road network in the rural areas, is very bad such that the private sector cannot enter and us as Government we are able to enter." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
9	Legal Factors	34%	36%	29%	<i>"Statutory Instrument No. 73 of 2017 on designation of agriculture commodities has not really affected us in any way. Public Finance Act of 2018, we came up with strategy of prudence in the finance management. Review of the Food Reserve Act of 2020 came at the tail end of the 2019 – 2021 strategic plan. I think if anything it has not presented challenges." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
10	Social Factors	50%	29%	21%	<i>"Maize is still the staple food. No one brings rice to us, even when we buy as FRA, we had challenges selling it." (Interviews, 2022).</i>

Table 6. Summary of Survey Findings on External Challenges

No	External Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Government Funding	58	166	2.86	0.395
2	Policy/Political Factors	58	160	2.76	0.540
3	Stakeholders	58	142	2.45	0.776
4	Environmental Factors	58	140	2.41	0.795
5	Economic Factors	58	135	2.33	0.781
6	Technological Factors	58	133	2.29	0.795
7	Disease Outbreaks	58	125	2.16	0.790
8	Industrial Competition	58	118	2.03	0.858
9	Legal Factors	58	113	1.95	0.804
10	Social Factors	58	99	1.71	0.795

3.2.2 Internal Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation

Table 7 below presents internal challenges which affect strategy implementation at FRA in Zambia.

Table 7. Internal Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts)
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
1	Lack of Financial Resources	2%	10%	88%	<i>"The challenge is that we are a grant aided institution. We don't have our own money." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
2	Resource Allocation for Strategy Implementation	7%	7%	86%	<i>"It was a challenge. Resources were not being allocated according to the demand. In the performance assessments employees were citing that to be a challenge for their failure to achieve their objectives." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
3	Coordination Within and Across Departments and Units	12%	3%	84%	<i>"The way that the budgeting is done, linking the activities to the budgets that's a grey area as well. Sometimes Unit Head or Departmental Head will not know that some of their activities were not funded because of the way we do our planning and budgeting." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
4	Employee Training	5%	10%	84%	<i>"Resources were not there for us to actualize training especially foreign. Also, lack of follow up on proposed training by user departments. No initiation for the process." (Interviews,</i>

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts) 2022).
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
5	Understanding of Strategies by Members of Staff	3%	12%	84%	<i>"It was a challenge because very few and only those close to what has to be done understand the strategies." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
6	Strategy Reviews	7%	14%	79%	<i>"We start the reviews at the end, terminal. The mid I don't remember." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
7	Leadership for Strategy	7%	19%	74%	<i>"It was a challenge. Human Resource Unit for 2 years, identified and facilitated leadership training." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
8	Organisational Policies to Support Strategy	9%	17%	74%	<i>"Policies have been there; I think the challenge is the implementation. Nearly every aspect of this institution, we have policies. But are we implementing them consistently and fairly?" (Interviews, 2022).</i>
9	Planning of Strategy	12%	14%	74%	<i>"Planning is fairly done. However, for me it's the planning of resources in form of finances, staff and equipment required to implement a given strategy. Sometime staff are asked to implement certain tasks without transport or adequate funds. (Interviews, 2022).</i>
10	Resistance to Change	7%	19%	74%	<i>"There are people in the institution who are used to this traditional way of doing things, may not want to embrace new ideas." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
11	Human Resources	9%	19%	72%	<i>"The fact that the Agency was not operating at 100% or optimum level suggests that staff were not enough to execute the plan. It took long to replace fired staff due to process of investigations." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
12	Prioritisation of Strategy Focus	5%	22%	72%	<i>"Not so much. We are always overwhelmed with our current situations. We are more of a traditional way of doing things." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
13	Reward and Motivation of Staff	7%	21%	72%	<i>"These are contractual and negotiated jobs. People in the same grade are not getting same salary. There those disparities based on how you came in and what you said and the like. There also disparities in salaries due to performance. Also, there disparities resulting from non-review of the organization structure since 2012, you find someone in SG5 (junior)</i>

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts)
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
					<i>getting more than in SG4 (senior) because they have been here longer." (Interviews, 2022)."</i>
14	Communication of Strategy	17%	14%	69%	<i>"There is no communication of programmes between departments. No communication strategy." (Interviews, 2022). "I think by and large, systems are there in place. The question is, are the systems effective?" (Interviews, 2022).</i>
15	Systems of the Organisation	17%	19%	64%	<i>"I think by and large, systems are there in place. The question is, are the systems effective?" (Interviews, 2022).</i>
16	Information System and Technology	14%	26%	60%	<i>"Adoption of ICT by members of staff was too slow. Software for information system like Enterprise Resource Planning, are adequate. However, we need to see how the system can be tailor made to suite our operations rather than our operations to suite the system. We are bending ourselves to suite the system instead of the system being designed to answer to the question in our operation." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
17	Targets and Measurement of Strategy	16%	24%	60%	<i>"We set targets for the maize, we have been measuring and sharing that information." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
18	Structure of the Organisation	21%	21%	59%	<i>"The structure is archaic, it is outdated. We need a structure that is resilient, reliable, and can stand the taste of time. The Job Evaluation started in 2012 not yet implemented." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
19	Stakeholder Involvement in Strategy Formulation and Implementation	21%	22%	57%	<i>"External stakeholder engagement we haven't done much because if we had done much for example, our position would have been understood better." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
20	Shared Values	22%	21%	57%	<i>"They were only shared in strategic plan committee and management. I don't remember sharing them with other employees." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
21	Non-alignment of Strategies to the Organisation	34%	10%	55%	<i>"They were aligned, and our individual work plans linked to them. We have aligned the strategies, example to reduce crop wastage, we plan to increase storage capacity by way of</i>

No	Challenge	Survey Results (n=58)			Lived Experience by Business Actors (Interview Excerpts)
		Disagree	Neither	Agree	
					<i>building more sheds." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
22	Guidelines for Strategy Implementation	19%	26%	55%	<i>"The 2014-2018 strategic plan had no Implementation Plan. Guidelines for 2019-2021 strategic plan provided at level of HoD/HoU." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
23	Time Limitation to Implement Strategy	22%	28%	50%	<i>"The 2019-2021 strategic plan, we never had time. If the period was like 5 years, you fail in year 1, you probably re-organise in year 2. Because in first year resources may not be available." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
24	Board of Directors	26%	26%	48%	<i>"FRA had no Board from April 2019 to May 2021. Decisions made by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
25	Culture	24%	29%	47%	<i>"On work culture we have challenges. Most people expect to be told what to do even when they know what they are supposed to be doing." (Interviews, 2022).</i>
26	Weak Strategies Formulated	24%	31%	45%	<i>"Not weak at all. A lot of work has been put in, we spent late evenings discussing strategy during planning. Maybe the issue is just on the evaluation, like have we done this?" (Interviews, 2022).</i>
27	Risk Averse to Strategy Implementation	14%	47%	40%	<i>"There are some expectations from various quarters, the stakeholders, staff inclusive, clients, government being the major stakeholder. Management may be interested to pursue a certain route but if the principal is not agreeable it cannot happen." (Interviews, 2022).</i>

Table 8. Summary of Survey Findings on Internal Challenges

No	Internal Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Financial Resources	58	166	2.86	0.395
2	Resource Allocation for Strategy Implementation	58	162	2.79	0.554
3	Coordination Within and Across Departments and Units	58	158	2.72	0.670

No	Internal Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
4	Employee Training	58	162	2.79	0.522
5	Understanding of Strategies by Members of Staff	58	163	2.81	0.476
6	Strategy Reviews	58	158	2.72	0.586
7	Leadership for Strategy	58	155	2.67	0.604
8	Organisational Policies to Support Strategy	58	154	2.66	0.637
9	Planning of Strategy	58	152	2.62	0.697
10	Resistance to Change	58	155	2.67	0.604
11	Human Resources	58	153	2.64	0.641
12	Prioritisation of Strategy Focus	58	155	2.67	0.574
13	Reward and Motivation of Staff	58	154	2.66	0.608
14	Communication of Strategy	58	146	2.52	0.778
15	Systems of the Organisation	58	143	2.47	0.777
16	Information System and Technology	58	143	2.47	0.731
17	Targets and Measurement of Strategy	58	142	2.45	0.753
18	Structure of the Organisation	58	138	2.38	0.813
19	Stakeholder Involvement in Strategy Formulation and Implementation	58	137	2.36	0.810
20	Shared Values	58	136	2.34	0.828
21	Non-alignment of Strategies to the Organisation	58	128	2.21	0.932
22	Guidelines for Strategy Implementation	58	137	2.36	0.788
23	Time Limitation to Implement Strategy	58	132	2.28	0.812
24	Board of Directors	58	129	2.22	0.839
25	Culture	58	129	2.22	0.817
26	Weak Strategies Formulated	58	128	2.21	0.811
27	Risk Averse to Strategy Implementation	58	131	2.26	0.690

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings suggest that the implementation of strategies at FRA is affected by both external and internal challenges. The external challenges affecting strategy implementation include

government funding, policy/political factors, stakeholders, environmental factors, economic factors, technological factors, disease outbreaks, industrial competition, legal factors, and social factors. Among these, the most significant challenge is government funding, as 88% of survey respondents agreed that reduced budgetary allocations have affected FRA's operations, and there is no resource mobilization strategy. The other significant external challenges include policy/political factors, stakeholders, and environmental factors. For example, the provision of assets, such as monetary or non-monetary resources, is critical in strategy implementation, as noted by Rani (2019). Additionally, FRA (2013) reported that the Food Reserve Agency faced funding challenges during the implementation of its 2019-2021 strategic plan.

Regarding internal challenges, lack of financial resources is the most significant challenge affecting strategy implementation at FRA. Almost 88% of survey respondents agreed that lack of financial resources is a challenge, and the institution heavily relies on grants from government. Additionally, staff performance assessments attribute failure to lack of financial or transport resources. Other internal challenges include inadequate leadership, skills and training, and poor communication and coordination.

One of the critical challenges faced by FRA in implementing its strategies is government funding. The reduction in budgetary allocations has significantly affected FRA's sustainability interventions and their ability to mobilize resources effectively. This challenge is particularly pertinent in developing countries like Zambia, where government funding is crucial for the implementation of development strategies. Therefore, this study suggests that FRA lack effective resource mobilization strategies that leverage its partnerships with various stakeholders and maximize the use of available resources. It is essential to engage with policymakers and other influential stakeholders to advocate for increased budgetary allocations and policy reforms that support FRA's strategic objectives. Furthermore, the study also suggests that FRA lacks a proactive approach to manage external challenges which could include developing contingency plans that mitigate their potential impact on strategy implementation.

The study identified several external and internal challenges that affect strategy implementation at FRA. Of the ten external challenges identified in the study, six were found to be valid for FRA at a 50% level of agreement. This suggests that external challenges such as government funding, policy/political factors, stakeholders, environmental factors, economic factors, and technological factors are significant challenges for FRA in implementing its strategies. Similarly, of the 27 internal challenges drawn from literature, 23 were found to be valid for FRA at a 50% level of agreement. This highlights that internal challenges, such as leadership, skills and training, communication, and coordination, are also significant factors affecting strategy implementation at FRA. By identifying and addressing these challenges, FRA can improve its ability to implement its strategies successfully and achieve its goals. Also, the findings were in conformity with other studies by Rani, (2019) on funding; Khumalo (2016) on political patronage; Wambui (2006) on stakeholders and Zakaria et al. (2014) on environmental challenges affecting strategy implementation. Other similar findings include Taylor et al. (2018) on lack of financial resources and Koseoglu et al. (2014)

on coordination. Overall, these challenges affect the achievement of FRA's strategic goal.

These findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Rani (2019), Khumalo (2016), Wambui (2006), Zakaria et al. (2014), and Taylor et al. (2018), who also identified similar challenges that organizations face in implementing their strategic plans. Political patronage and interference in operations of public organizations were identified as a challenge in Eswatini by Khumalo (2016). In addition, changes in government policies and priorities can affect organizations' strategic plans, as observed in Zambia by FRA (2013). Furthermore, another report by FRA and MDD (2018) also concluded that environmental challenges, such as droughts and floods, can affect production and supply of crops, which may impact an organization's strategic plan.

Overall, the challenges faced by FRA in implementing its strategies are both internal and external, and they can significantly hinder an organization's ability to achieve its strategic goals. To ensure successful strategy implementation, it is crucial for organizations to identify and address these challenges. The findings suggest that FRA needs to develop effective strategies that address both internal and external challenges to achieve its goals. For example, diversifying funding sources and developing a resource mobilization strategy can help FRA address the challenge of reduced budgetary allocations. Additionally, improving leadership, skills and training, communication, and coordination can help FRA address internal challenges. By effectively addressing these challenges, FRA can implement its strategies successfully and achieve its goals.

4.1 Conclusion

The study highlights the challenges faced by the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) in implementing its strategies, both external and internal. External challenges include government funding, policy/political factors, stakeholders, environmental factors, economic factors, technological factors, disease outbreaks, industrial competition, legal factors, and social factors. Lack of financial resources is the most significant internal challenge affecting strategy implementation at FRA, along with inadequate leadership, skills and training, and poor communication and coordination. The study's implications are that FRA needs to develop effective strategies to address both internal and external challenges to achieve its goals. Diversifying funding sources and developing a resource mobilization strategy can help address the challenge of reduced budgetary allocations. Additionally, improving leadership, skills and training, communication, and coordination can help address internal challenges. By addressing these challenges, FRA can effectively implement its strategies and achieve its goals. This study's findings can also help other organizations facing similar challenges to identify and address them, ensuring successful strategy implementation.

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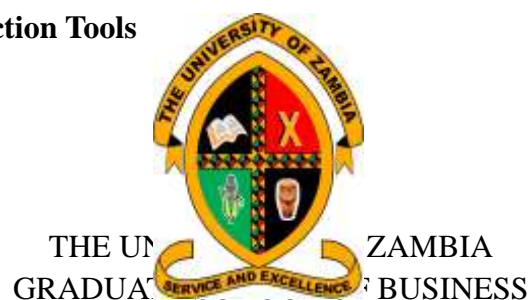
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Appendix 1: Data Collection Tools

Code:



Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation at the Food Reserve Agency in Zambia

PHASE I

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Musiwa Mukololo, a graduate student at the University of Zambia's Graduate School of Business (GSB), pursuing an MBA in Management Strategy. I am conducting a study to gather information on the challenges faced by the Food Reserve Agency (FRA). The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges that affect the successful implementation of strategies at the. The FRA is a key player in Zambia's food security, as it is responsible for

ensuring adequate food supplies through the purchase and storage of grains. However, despite its crucial role, the FRA has faced numerous challenges in implementing its strategies effectively. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated, as your responses will be valuable in providing insights into the issues affecting the successful implementation of strategies at the FRA.

Your responses will remain confidential, and no personal information will be collected. The information gathered will be used solely for academic purposes, and the findings will be presented in aggregate form, with no individual responses being identifiable.

(A) GENERAL INFORMATION

Please note that all responses are confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Gender: Male Female

Department:

Position:

Years in current position:

(B) FAMILIARITY WITH FRA STRATEGIC PLANS

1. Are you familiar with the current FRA Strategic Plan (2019-2021)?

Yes No Not Sure

2. Were you familiar with the previous FRA Strategic Plan (2014-2018)?

Yes No Not Sure

3. Have you ever been involved in strategic planning at FRA?

Yes No

4. Have you been involved in strategy implementation at FRA?

Yes No

5. FRA successfully implemented Strategic Plans

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

(C) EXTERNAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

On a scale from 1 to 5, rate how these identified challenges affect successful strategy implementation at FRA.

No	This is a challenge that affects successful strategy implementation at FRA	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
1	Government Funding (i.e., FRA budget funding)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2	Policy/Political Factors (i.e., Policy guides from Ministry of Agriculture)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3	Economic Factors (i.e., people purchasing power, exchange rate & interest rates)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

No	This is a challenge that affects successful strategy implementation at FRA	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
4	Social Factors (i.e., lifestyle, rural & urban migration)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5	Technological Factors (i.e., availability or lack of technological capabilities)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6	Environmental Factors (i.e., weather)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7	Legal Factors (i.e., changes in laws)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8	Stakeholders (i.e., MoA, farmers, grain traders, millers, farmer organisations)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9	Industrial Competition (i.e., competition in the grain industry)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
10	Disease Outbreaks (i.e., COVID-19)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

(D) INTERNAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

On a scale from 1 to 5, rate how these identified challenges affect successful strategy implementation at FRA.

No	This is a challenge that affects successful strategy implementation at FRA	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
1	Board of Directors (i.e., effectiveness in guiding strategy execution)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2	Communication Strategy (i.e., information sharing)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3	Coordination Within and Across Departments and Units		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4	Culture (i.e., values, expectations and practices that guide and inform actions of staff)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5	Employee Training (i.e., skills development)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6	Information System and Technology (i.e., adoption and use of technology)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

No	This is a challenge that affects successful strategy implementation at FRA	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
7	Human Resources (i.e., capacity to perform)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8	Financial Resources (i.e., funding or working capital)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9	Leadership for Strategy (i.e., influence and guidance of leaders)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
10	Organisational Policies to Support Strategy (i.e., procedures and processes drawn up by management)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
11	Planning of Strategy (i.e., process of defining strategy or direction and making decisions on allocating resources)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
12	Prioritisation of Strategy Focus (i.e., meetings or discussions on strategy)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
13	Resistance to Change (i.e., opposition to altered circumstances or modification of status quo)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
14	Resource Allocation for Strategy Implementation (i.e., link between strategy, financial and human resource needs)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15	Strategy Reviews (i.e., discuss progress of the goals and objectives and makes necessary adjustments)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
16	Reward and Motivation of Staff (i.e., performance of staff rewarded)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
17	Risk Averse to Strategy Implementation (i.e., preservation of capital over the potential for a higher-than-average return)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
18	Stakeholder Involvement in Strategy Formulation and Implementation (i.e., encourage participation)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
19	Structure of the Organisation (i.e., outline of how activities are directed)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

No	This is a challenge that affects successful strategy implementation at FRA	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
20	Systems of the Organisation		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
21	Targets and Measurement of Strategy (i.e., quantification of what is done)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
22	Time Limitation to Implement Strategy		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
23	Understanding of Strategies by Members of Staff (i.e., ability to interpret the strategies)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
24	Weak Strategies Formulated (i.e., unclear strategies)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
25	Non-alignment of Strategies to the Organisation (i.e., connection of Dept./Units and Individual strategic efforts to overall organisations strategy)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
26	Guidelines for Strategy Implementation (i.e., general rules, principles, or piece of advice on strategy implementation)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
27	Shared Values (i.e., organisation's values followed by staff)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation at the Food Reserve Agency in Zambia

PHASE II

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

This study aims to examine challenges that are faced in implementing strategies at the Food Reserve Agency (FRA). As a part of this study I, Musiwa Mukololo, a graduate student pursuing an MBA in Management Strategy, would like to conduct interviews with business actors to gather insights into the challenges faced by the FRA. Your participation in this study is appreciated, as your responses will be valuable in providing a deeper understanding of the issues affecting strategy implementation at the FRA. The findings will be presented in aggregate form for academic purposes only, with no individual responses being identifiable.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FRA MANAGEMENT

Interview Date:

AGENDA

1. Introduction – Participants.
2. Familiarity with FRA Strategic Plans.
3. Achievement of FRA Mandates through Strategic Plans.
4. Identifying External Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation.
5. Identifying Internal Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation.
6. Identifying Effects of the Challenges Affecting Strategy Implementation.
7. Closing Remarks – Appreciation.

(A) FAMILIARITY WITH FRA STRATEGIC PLANS

- a) How conversant are you with FRA’s strategic plans?

.....

(B) ACHIEVEMENT OF FRA MANDATES THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANS

- b) What is your perspective on overall achievement of FRA Strategic Plans?

.....

- c) What is your perspective on the achievements of FRA’s strategic plans based on:

- (i) Stabilizing grain prices on the market,
- (ii) Meeting local shortfalls,

- (iii) Correcting problems arising from manipulation or monopolistic trading practices, and
- (iv) Meeting food emergencies caused by droughts, floods, or other natural disasters.

(C) IDENTIFYING EXTERNAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

What are some of the external challenges that affect strategy implementation at FRA?

(D) IDENTIFYING INTERNAL CHALLENGES AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

What are some of the internal challenges that affect strategy implementation at FRA?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

Great East Road Campus | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka10101 | Tel: +260-211-290 258/291 777 Fax: (+260)-211-290 258/253 952 | E-mail: director.drgs@unza.zm | Website: www.unza.zm

APPROVAL OF STUDY

IORG No. 0005376

HSSREC IRB No. 00006464

2nd June, 2022

REF NO. HSSREC-2022-APRIL-029

Mr Musiwa Mukololo
The University of Zambia
Graduate School of Business
P.O. Box 32379
LUSAKA

Dear Mr Mukololo

RE: "ASSESSMENT OF THE CHALLENGES AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE FOOD RESERVE AGENCY, 2014 TO 2021"

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above.

The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC-2022- APRIL-029
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 2 nd June, 2022	Expiry Date: 2 nd June, 2023
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	2 nd June, 2022
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	<input type="checkbox"/> English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	- Questionnaire - Interview Guide	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

Conditions of Approval

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled "late submissions" and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.
- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on

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