



**COO**

**COORDINATION OF  
SOCIAL PROTECTION  
SYSTEMS**

**SUMMARY DOCUMENT**



TRANSFORM is the result of an iterative process of co-creation involving experts and practitioners from southern and eastern Africa. This manual is based on a document prepared by Andrew Kardan, Valentina Barca, and Andrew Wyatt (Oxford Policy Management) with contributions from Franck Earl (SASSA), Luis Frota, and Thea Westphal (ILO). The revised content on gender-responsive and disability-inclusive administration of social protection was prepared by Tia Palermo, Maja Gavrilovic, Morgon Banks, and Lusajo Kajula from Policy Research Solutions (PRESTO) LLC and reviewed by the TRANSFORM Advisory Group.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SSN	Social Safety Net
SP	Social Protection
SP MIS	Social Protection Management Information System
TOR	Terms of Reference

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# INTRODUCTION: CHALLENGES & BARRIERS TO COORDINATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

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The design and implementation of a social protection system will require coordination among all of the different organizations involved in the provision of social protection services and transfers. This includes different line ministries, decentralised structures and civil society organisations. However, most social protection programmes tend to be designed and implemented in silos with little, if any, linkages and complementarities between and among them.

This has contributed to the fragmentation of policies, programmes and overlap. There are many factors contributing to poor coordination and the fragmentation of social protection including:<sup>1</sup>

- Lack of a national framework or strategy for social protection
- Limited understanding of the most appropriate options to operationalize systems
- Limited awareness and a shortage of shared information
- Lack of coordination and dialogue between national efforts and non-state and informal systems
- Weak vertical coordination between central and local levels
- Weak horizontal coordination among multiple actors involved in managing (and financing) a wide range of policies and programmes
- Under-funding and limited organizational capacity of the lead agencies responsible for social protection<sup>2</sup>
- Implementation according to different timeframes and planning cycles
- Limited or non-existing links between contributory and non-contributory programmes
- The use of different administrative systems such as selection and identification, delivery, registry and/or monitoring and evaluation systems for each programme
- Complexities related to lines of responsibility
- Poorly coordinated performance systems
- Budget protection
- Issues of 'turf'
- Bureaucratic politics

There are general advantages and disadvantages of coordination and agencies need to weigh up the costs and benefits of working alone as opposed to coordinating their work, taking into consideration the best interest of the served population.

However, coordination is a necessity in the establishment of social protection systems for the following reasons:

- Ensuring the translation of the right to inclusive social protection into reality on the ground (vertical coordination) for all vulnerable groups of relevance to a specific country context
- Ensuring the efficiency of the system through the avoidance of duplication and synergies across various components of the system (social transfers should complement each other following vertical and horizontal dimensions of social protection extension to ensure universal coverage and benefit adequacy)
- Ensuring the effectiveness of the social protection system by addressing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, as well as drivers such as gender inequality, systemic exclusion of people with disability, discrimination or exclusion of other vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities, etc.
- Ensuring adequacy and consistency of the system, but also guaranteeing its financial sustainability and its efficiency.



### Editorial Note

Please note that a comprehensive version of this document with clickable links is available on the Transform Project website, visit [www.transformsp.org](http://www.transformsp.org) to access the file



1. Rawlings, L, Murthy, S. and Winder, N. 2013. *Common Ground: UNICEF and World Bank Approach to Building Social Protection Systems*. January 2013. UNICEF and The World Bank.
2. *The Presidency: Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (2013) Impact and implementation Evaluation of Government Coordination Systems – International Literature Review*, DPME: Pretoria.

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# THE NEED FOR COORDINATION IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

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## 2.1. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION COORDINATION

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Social protection coordination can be defined as the alignment and harmonization of all stakeholder activities (at the programme and administration level) coherently and holistically to reach identified and shared objectives (at the policy level). A vertical link (vertical coordination) is also required between the policy and the operational levels.

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## 2.2. THE SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR PROPOSES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

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The Social Protection Floor (SPF) approach, developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) offers an integrated set of social policies to promote a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to social protection (SP) to ensure that recipients are protected and empowered throughout their lives.

It is important to note that horizontal and vertical coordination occurs within the social-protection system in the SPF approach, and coordination also occurs between the social-protection system and other areas of public policy in the SPF approach.

### 2.2.1. Consistency between social protection and decentralisation policies

An increasing number of African countries are gradually devolving decisions around programming and resource allocation to sub-national levels. On the one hand, devolution can create opportunities for collaboration across sectors by ensuring that coherent policy and programming responses are closely adapted to local needs and specific contexts, but it can also create challenges. On the other hand, until adequate capacities are in place at local levels the initial steps of devolution (e.g. new laws, rules, and organizational structures) are unlikely to make much difference. Devolution without adequate capacity building may also lead to inconsistent and inequitable approaches to implementation. For example, determinations of disability for disability-targeted programmes can become inconsistent across administrative areas if programme staff are not adequately trained on disability. Moreover, where powers for social protection programmes are held at different levels, devolution can make collaboration across the sectors even more complicated.

## 2.3. THE CONTINUUM OF RELATIONSHIP

Coordination can range from the less complex or 'looser' arrangements – where two sectors may simply share knowledge and objectives whilst planning policies and programmes separately – to a more complex and integrated arrangement where objectives, activities and resources (human, financial and IT) are shared.

Thus coordination can be seen as part of a **continuum of relationships which require gradually increasing levels of trust and the sharing of resources, risks and rewards**. The continuum may start with networking (no sharing of resources), then move to coordination (minimal sharing of resources), to cooperation (some sharing of risks and rewards), to collaboration (sharing of risks, responsibilities and rewards) and finally to integration in the form of merging programmes and structures into one (see table 1 below).<sup>3</sup> There are also different types of approaches to strengthening programme coordination which are explored further in section 5 of this module.

Table 2. Continuum of relationships

NETWORKING	COORDINATING	COOPERATING	COLLABORATING	INTEGRATING
Exchange of information for mutual benefit	Exchange of information for mutual benefit	Exchanging information	Exchange information	Integrated sharing of information (e.g. one database of recipients)
Informal relationship	Formal relationship	Formal relationship	Formal relationship	Formal relationships reflect the diversity of skills and thinking
Minimal time and trust	Requires moderate time and trust	Substantial time and trust required	Extensive time and trust required	Extensive time and trust required
No sharing of resources	Minimal sharing of resources	Sharing resources to achieve a common purpose	Sharing resources and enabling the enhancement capacity of another to achieve a common purpose	Merging of resources (human, financial, IT facilities, property etc)
Limited alteration of activities	Alter activities	Alter activities and some sharing of risks and rewards	Alter activities and share risks, responsibilities and rewards	Integrated(joint) planning and delivery of programmes/ agencies/ structures

Source: Adapted from: "A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All", February 2004, ILO



# INTRODUCTION TO LEVELS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION COORDINATION

To be truly effective horizontal coordination needs to take place at three different levels: policy level, programme level, and administration level. In addition, a mechanism to ensure vertical coordination across these different levels has to be part of the coordination efforts. This will ensure a holistic approach from planning to implementation.

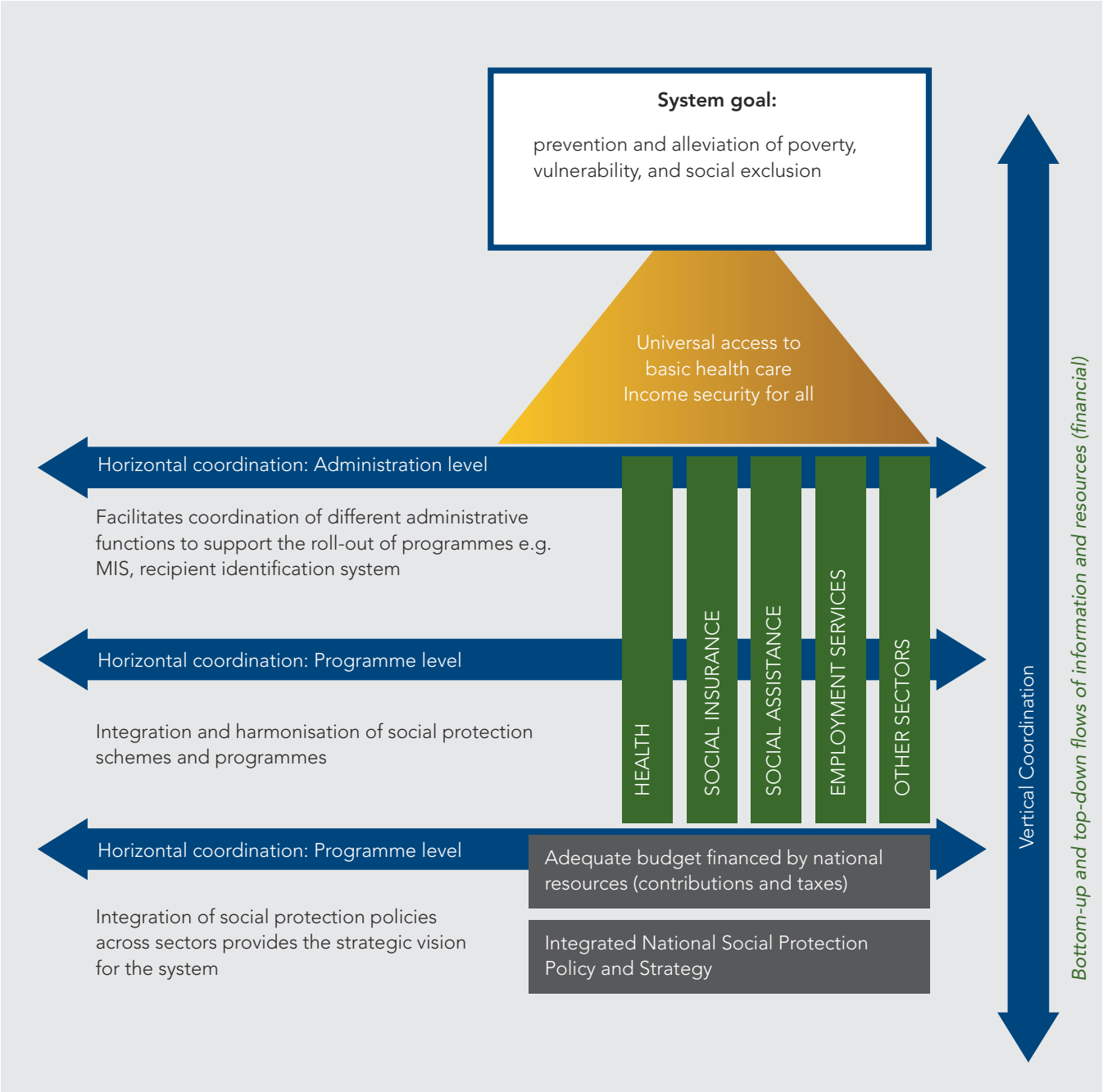
## 3.1. CONCEPT MODEL FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION COORDINATION

How the different levels of coordination work together to strengthen the overall social protection system is depicted in the following diagram, in the shape of a house.

- **The social protection system** is comprised of a set of components which can operate separately but are interlinked and complement each other as a system to achieve the overall goal of preventing and alleviating poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. Together, they ensure universal access to basic health care, and income security for all (child transfers, social protection during working age, and pensions)
- **The foundation** for the system is provided by integrated national social protection legislation, policies and strategies together with an adequate budget dedicated to social protection and financed by national resources (taxes and contributions). This is where horizontal coordination at the policy level is critical because it seeks to ensure overall policy coherence across government (different line ministries being responsible for different components of the system).
- **Horizontal coordination at the programme and administrative levels** cuts across these pillars and facilitates the alignment, integration and harmonization of programmes and the sub-systems that support them.

- **Vertical coordination** ensures the overall consistency between the foundations and the delivery of social protection programmes. It should include bottom-up and top-down flows of information and resources.

Figure 1: Different levels of coordination of the Social Protection System



Source: Authors

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# HORIZONTAL COORDINATION AT THE POLICY LEVEL

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**Aim: Ensuring overall policy coherence across government bodies**

The policy level is the highest level of engagement, where the objectives and functions of the social protection system are defined in the context of national goals and parameters.

The major objectives of the coordination effort at the policy level are to define the national SPF and create a road map for its implementation. The following instruments can be utilised to achieve policy coordination.

## 4.1. CONDUCTING A STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY THOSE WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE COORDINATION EFFORT AT THE POLICY LEVEL

An initial step in improving policy coordination is to establish who the relevant stakeholders are with regard to social protection to include them in the process of policy development or review. The main stakeholders in social protection should include government staff, development partners, and civil society organisations. Care should be taken to ensure that ministries, development partners, non-governmental organizations, and representative organisations of women and girls, people with disability, older persons, ethnic minorities and others are represented among these actors. Some points for consideration in the stakeholder analysis:

- **Early engagement with stakeholders can be both a benefit and a risk.** It takes time to build shared trust and understanding; therefore, it is important to start early to build a general sense of ownership and willingness to work together. At the same time, expanding a network too early can make consensus harder to build. As such, the initiators of a joint activity need to think carefully about who to engage and when. Intended programme recipients should be actively included in this engagement, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and other representative groups. Relatedly, it is important to conduct gender, disability and other vulnerability analyses early on, and to consider programme objectives, design, and implementation elements which can address drivers of poverty and exclusion such as gender inequality, disability exclusion etc. early in the programme development.
- **It is important to identify who the champions of social protection are.**
- **Senior leader investment of time and energy in supporting and modelling coordinated activity is a key factor for successful coordination.**
- **Civil society's role is often that of a watchdog.** As such, its vigorous advocacy for the poor sometimes creates tension with the government.
- **The organized business community can exert an important influence on policymakers,** notably by requesting strong government accountability for public service and public finance and expressing concern for value for money.

## 4.2. IMPROVING COORDINATION THROUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY DEVELOPMENT OR REVIEW

The identification of common goals is crucial to organize the coordination effort at the policy level. The facilitation of a national dialogue and the development/review of a social protection policy can be instrumental in establishing grounds for effective coordination at the policy level.

### 4.2.1. Setting up a social protection working group for social protection policy development or review

To ensure that the social protection policy is developed and reviewed in an integrated and comprehensive manner, a coordinating advisory structure could be established. This could be in the form of an inter-ministerial / inter-agency team or working group to provide a platform to share information and knowledge among social protection practitioners. The creation of such a team could also strengthen the impact of policy and technical advisory services provided to governments since this guidance would be collegially discussed.

Key issues to consider when setting up such a team or working group includes:

- **Leadership, mandate and accountability:** The team or working group should be led by a ministry with sufficient leadership capacity.
- **Membership:** The team or working group needs to be representative of various government institutions involved in the field of social protection, as well as representatives of other stakeholders, business and the labour movement, development partners, and relevant civil society organizations, including those working on issues related to gender inequality, the inclusion of people with disability, and other vulnerable groups. Direct representation of individuals from target groups (e.g. people with disability, women and girls) should also be mandated.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** Each of the coordinating structure members should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which could be spelt out in a Terms of Reference or a Memorandum of Understanding.





#### 4.2.2. Developing or reviewing social protection legal framework, policy and strategy, operational plan & monitoring and evaluation framework

The definition of shared priorities for the extension of social protection and the implementation of an SPF should be enshrined in a national social protection policy and strategic framework. The preparation of such a policy and strategy also forces a country to ensure the coherence of social protection development policies with other national policies, notably with respect to available funding (fiscal space allocation) and ensuring that they are adequately gender responsive and inclusive of people with disability, ethnic minorities, the elderly, or other marginalized groups. Ideally, the definition of the strategy should be completed using the results of a national dialogue, this would ease the adoption of the strategy and its implementation.

Key components of the social protection framework should be:

- **Policy document**

As social protection covers several different sectors, a national social protection policy needs to be comprehensive, responsive to the needs of different groups (e.g. women and girls, people with disability), and inclusive. A social protection policy needs to be aligned with the country's national development plan and policies for specific target groups (e.g. national disability legislation, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)). Coordination should be recognised as a guiding principle of the policy and it should contain details of the institutional arrangements required for both horizontal and vertical coordination of social protection.

- **Detailed operational plan.**

Once a national social protection policy and strategy has been developed, it needs to be operationalized through an operational plan. This plan will determine (i) the specific programmes and activities that need to be undertaken;

(ii) the ministries/departments responsible for completing these programmes and activities; and

(iii) the resources (both people and financial) to complete each of the programmes/activities.

- **Costing**

Costing of the operational plan should be undertaken as the development of the policy should be based on consideration of available financial resources and allocation of the required resources. Budgeting should include resources for gender equity considerations and disability inclusion in line with UNCRPD commitments (e.g. accessible communication, and infrastructure).

- **Legal framework**

- The various policies, strategies and plans can be consolidated into a comprehensive legal framework for social protection. Such a framework can reinforce a common vision of social protection and establish the basis for coordination between the key partner ministries.

- **Monitoring and evaluation framework and system**

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and system is an important tool for the effective coordination of social protection management and service delivery. It should contain a set of core indicators to measure the outcomes and impact of coordination and integration of social protection services at all levels of government. These outcomes should be tracked using an equity lens, disaggregating data by gender, disability status, ethnicity and other known vulnerabilities to ensure the programme is equitably reaching all recipients and leading to positive impacts. Regular evaluations should be conducted to assess the level of coordination of services and programmes at the national, provincial, district and local levels.

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### 4.3. STRENGTHEN COORDINATION IN FINANCING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

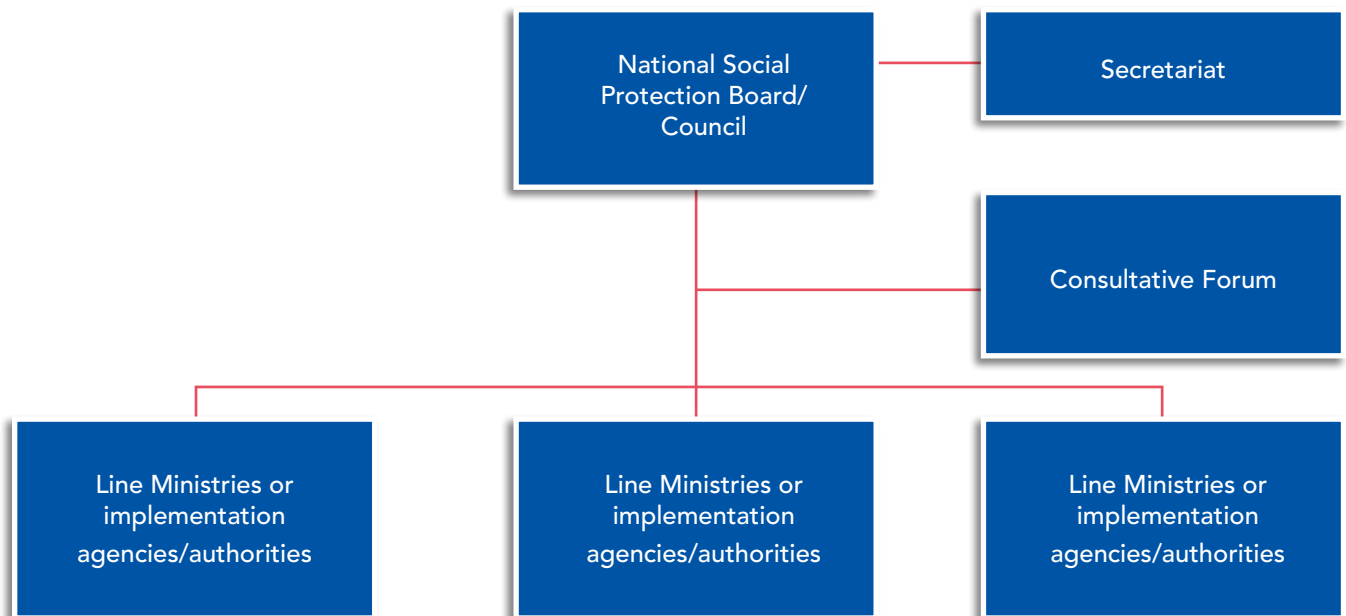
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Coordination in financing can be strengthened through cross-sectoral investment frameworks and pooling funds into basket funding.

#### 4.4. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR POLICY COORDINATION

Ultimately, the shared vision of social protection would be embodied in one entity which could be a National Social Protection Board or National Social Protection Council. This entity should be responsible for the provision of policy guidance and coherence; making decisions and recommendations around the design and financing of social protection programming and services, and overseeing the coordination of social protection at the policy level. It should be held accountable for the successful and efficient implementation of the Social Protection system and should report to the Head of government and the Cabinet. This entity should include diverse representation, including social protection target groups such as people with disability and women and girls. Informed by field experiences and different country cases (including Kenya, Zambia, but also the Philippines, Cambodia and others), figure 2 depicts a structure that should enable the different social protection stakeholders to coordinate their efforts at the policy level. Taken together, the structure presents a possible model against which institutional arrangements for social protection coordination may be measured.

Figure 4: Example of the organizational set-up for coordination at the policy level



In the organizational structure depicted above, the National Social Protection Board/Council would be responsible for the development of a national social protection strategy and the review of each line ministry's policy before submission to the prime minister's cabinet or president's office. The Board/Council would also consolidate national statistical and administrative data on the extension of social protection and produce or update national coverage indicators as well as the performance of key social protection schemes/programmes, as it oversees the implementation of the national social protection strategy.

##### Coordination of contributory and non-contributory social protection

A broader consideration of social protection beyond the non-contributory component is needed when designing institutional arrangements.

The different "components" of social protection systems - contributory non-contributory - have different stakeholder groups and interest groups and often respond to different ministry agendas. This makes it both difficult and critically important to develop a functional institutional structure that includes both of these components.

# HORIZONTAL COORDINATION AT THE PROGRAMME/ INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

**Aim: Improving the design of existing programmes and promoting harmonization across the portfolio of programmes**

At the programme/institutional level, efforts can be made in the design of programmes to render them better coordinated and linked to other programmes and sectors.

- Issues relating to the integration and harmonization<sup>4</sup> of similar social protection schemes and programmes are addressed at this level.
- The focus is on identifying and maximizing synergies and strengthening linkages between programmes in different sectors. For example, linking social assistance recipients to active labour market programmes, such as public works; or linking social assistance and social insurance schemes for workers in the informal economy.
- If a programme functions as part of a coherent system and network of responses, it is more likely to have a greater impact on welfare.<sup>5</sup>
- Well-coordinated social protection programmes can also go beyond a narrow focus on economic security to facilitate women, people with disability, and other vulnerable groups' empowerment, voice and agency, for more transformative effects and sustained poverty reduction.
- When social protection programmes are aligned with poverty reduction as well as social inclusion strategies, this results in more multi-sectoral coordination which enables countries to provide solutions in a more holistic and development-oriented manner.<sup>6</sup>

4. *Integration might entail the closing down of some programmes and the transferring of recipients to new or consolidated programmes, whereas harmonisation implies improving coordination across programmes (Robalino, Rawlings and Walker 2012: 17).*

5. *Rawlings et al 2013 6.Rawlings et al 2013*

6. *Rawlings et al 2013*

## 5.1. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR PROGRAMME COORDINATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Social protection programmes cover a range of contributory to non-contributory programmes which are often implemented by various ministries and institutions. Hence a coordination structure must be in place at the national level to lead integrated social protection programme planning, budgeting, and harmonisation of programmes as well as integrated and coherent implementation.

This could take the form of different modalities like a National Social Protection Unit as suggested in the Social Protection Bill in Zambia or full integration where an agency is established that integrates programmes under one implementation structure like the model of South Africa Social Security Agency (SASSA).

### 5.1.1. Key success factors for national programme coordinating structure

The following critical factors should be considered when formalizing this type of high-level structure to support its successful functioning:

- The structure needs to be representative of all relevant ministries, civil society (including OPDs and women's organisations), labour and business.
- The structure is led by a strong technical ministry with the capacity to lead coordination or by a neutral ministry like the Ministry of Finance. It could be considered to have the unit as a department in the Cabinet Office.
- The coordination structure has clear decision-making power and is designed in a participatory manner to ensure adequate involvement by all stakeholders.
- There are guidelines or an operational manual in place to guide cooperation between partners.
- The structure is supported by a secretariat that provides support with administrative issues and in running day-to-day functions.
- There is an agreed, yearly meeting plan for the structure and regular attendance of committee members.
- There is a clear Memorandum of Understanding which includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities and there are clear lines of accountability for all members.

## 5.2. INTEGRATED PROGRAMME PLANNING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

An **integrated framework for social protection** programmes should be developed to give explicit detail on the operationalization of the policy, improve coordination and reduce the fragmentation of social support programmes across national counterparts as well as, optimize the allocations for social protection interventions. The aims of the integrated framework for social protection programmes are:

- A clear definition of programme targets, the programmes that will be expanded and their roll-out plan, but also the programmes that will be phased-out, introduced, integrated or merged, and the key linkages between social protection programmes and interventions in other policy areas, including, for example, labour market programmes (such as public works or vocational training), agricultural support, efforts to increase women's financial inclusion, childcare, legal aid, disability-related services (e.g. community-based rehabilitation, assistive devices, personal assistance) and support for survivors of gender-based violence;
- Rationalizing the provision of Social Protection and reducing fragmentation, leading to an increase in the impact of government intervention;
- Ensuring that programme delivery is anchored on a coherent system structure interlinked from the policy, administrative and implementation levels;
- Providing an improved framework for resource mobilization for social protection.





### 5.3. INTEGRATED MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

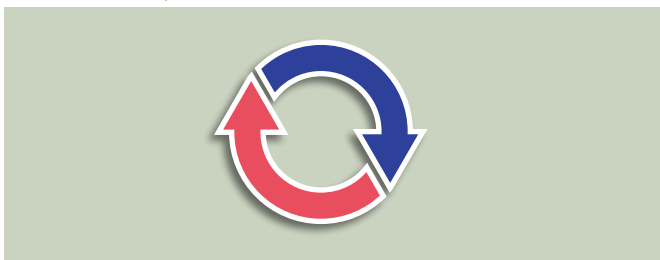
A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is another tool for the effective coordination of social protection management and service delivery. This M&E framework and system would contain a set of core indicators (tracked using an equity lens, disaggregating data by gender, disability status, ethnicity and other known vulnerabilities, and exploring issues of concern to particular groups) that would be used to measure the outcomes and impact of coordination and integration of social protection services at all levels of government. Regular evaluations should be conducted to assess the level of coordination of services and programmes at the national, provincial, district and local levels.

### 5.4. LEVEL OF PROGRAMME INTEGRATION, LINKAGES AND HARMONISATION BETWEEN PROGRAMMES OF DIFFERENT SECTORS

To ensure that programmes address the different needs of recipients across their life cycles, there need to be strong linkages between programmes of different sectors, for example, cash transfers and interventions related to nutrition, agriculture, health, labour market programmes (such as public works or vocational training), literacy training, efforts to increase women's financial inclusion, childcare, legal aid, disability-related services (e.g. rehabilitation, assistive devices, personal assistance, inclusive education) and support for survivors of gender-based violence. These linkages may simultaneously require supply-side strengthening of the provision of these services. An initial step could be to first determine the degree of integration or coordination that needs to take place. Below is a categorisation of possible degrees of integration or approaches that could be applied and the pros and cons of each approach.

#### 5.4.1. Categorisation and approaches to strengthening coordinated programmes<sup>7</sup>

##### *Design or adapt standalone interventions*



Design or adapt stand-alone interventions

This is where freestanding programmes can be designed or adapted to maximise coordination between two sets of objectives. For example, agricultural programmes can be designed to incorporate social protection into their designs; and social protection interventions can be designed to be coordinated with agricultural livelihoods programmes. Such programming approaches can be effectively used to promote specific outcomes among particular groups of recipients. For example, cash top-ups or food rations targeted at girls within recipient households can be used to promote gender-responsive educational outcomes by addressing financial barriers to school attendance (including costs for tuition, boarding, books, or uniforms) as well as hunger, which can reduce learning or create incentives for girls to drop out of school in favour of income-generating activities.

7. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2016), "Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection to combat poverty and hunger in Africa: Framework for analysis and action"

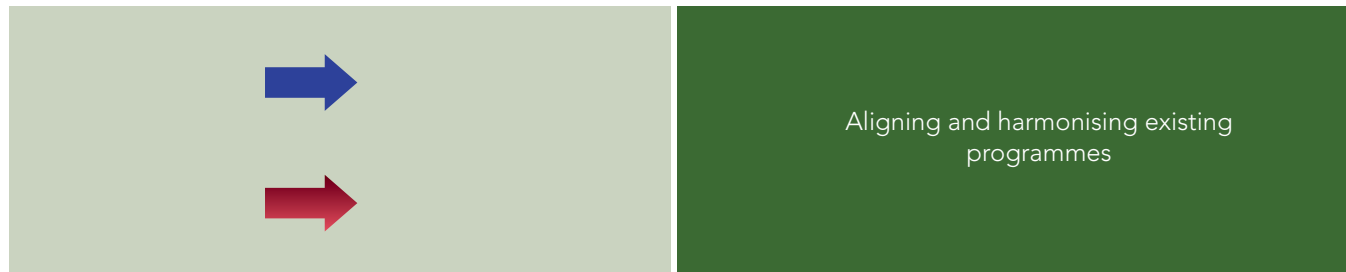
### Combine multiple interventions into one programme



Two sets of interventions can be combined into **one programme** so that targeted households participate in both interventions. The single programme is **implemented by a single agency**. Different components/programmes can be provided to the same household simultaneously (e.g. including public works and agricultural support components in a food security programme; providing access to health insurance scheme to cash transfer recipients; linking different disability-targeted programmes into a single application) or sequenced over time depending on what the household needs. For example, programmes can be expanded and bundled with messaging and awareness-raising activities to address specific gender-, and social development outcomes.

When interventions are sequenced over time, as a household's welfare status improves, the package of interventions could expand from social transfers to include a broader menu of complementary interventions. There must be a clear shared vision across different components of the programme regarding how interventions can transition households across different welfare thresholds and interventions.

### Coordinate and align multiple programmes and policies



Synergies between many different social protection interventions can be established even when these interventions are not delivered in the same locations or targeted to the same recipients. It could involve interventions being coordinated to reach the same households but through **two independent programmes**. For example, in Lesotho, agricultural livelihood and cash transfer interventions are being coordinated to reach the same households, but through two independent programmes and **implemented by a number of agencies**. Potential conflict can also come in the form of backlash from certain community members when attempts are made to integrate programmes. For example, integration of some interventions to address gender inequalities, such as family planning, civil registration for women, or access to banking services may challenge gender norms. To reduce adverse consequences, efforts should be made to engage men and local leaders to build support for women's access to these complementary services.

In conclusion, it is important to be mindful of the degree of integration or coordination that needs to take place

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# HORIZONTAL COORDINATION AT THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL<sup>8</sup>

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**Aim: Improve efficiency in delivery, enhance the quality of service from the perspective of users, reduce duplications and transaction costs**

The aim of coordination of social protection at the administrative level is to build basic sub-systems to support one or more programmes. The administrative level focuses on developing the 'nuts-and-bolts tools' that facilitate the core business processes of social protection programmes.<sup>9</sup>

8. Rawlings et al 2013

9. The World Bank and UNICEF (2013) *Common Ground: UNICEF and World Bank Approaches to Building Social Protection Systems*.

## 6.1 TOOLS FOR IMPROVING COORDINATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AT THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL: FRONT AND BACK OFFICE SERVICES

Social protection services at the administrative level are usually provided through the front and back office services. Activities which afford interaction with the client belong to the front office, while tasks that officials or service providers can carry out without direct contact with the client are back-office activities. The following reflects the most common activities of each level.<sup>10</sup>

FRONT OFFICE ACTIVITIES	BACK OFFICE ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking for information from responsible entities of different programmes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support of registration process (provision of registration forms, support to complete forms, submission of the registration form, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data entry (where needed) and checking documents for validity, correctness, and completeness. In some cases the determination of eligibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validation/finalisation of eligibility determination and support to the enrolment process (additional data collection).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional data entry and data management, and transferring of data to other entities where relevant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notification and hand-out of identification documents/ tokens (e.g. smart cards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up and communication with responsible entities, further processing and data management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive complaints and appeals and communicate results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow up on complaints and appeals with responsible entities for the respective programme.</li> </ul>

Administrative integration across programmes could happen at the level of the front or back offices or both. The back and front offices do not necessarily have to be in the same place. Service integration between the back and front office can produce positive outcomes for the client as it can create the conditions for services to provide a comprehensive person-centred approach and respond more quickly and effectively to clients' needs. Services integration between front and back offices can avoid the duplication of tasks

### 6.1.1. Back office integration

#### Shared identification of recipients<sup>11</sup>

Identification systems are used to identify recipients, ensure identified recipients have access to social protection benefits, and ensure a well-functioning delivery system. However, many countries have weak identification systems that are not conducive to social protection programme delivery. The management of shared identification systems is both the result of coordination efforts and a means to foster collaboration. Shared identification systems have a range of advantages including, it improves the transparency of the system, forcing various ministries to share information on their recipients, allowing for the identification of uncovered populations, simplifying access to services and creating better links between programmes. However, it is important to take into consideration the respect for people's privacy as well as to clearly define the use of the database to prevent any misuse.

10. Ebken, C.(2014) "Single window Services in Social protection: rationale and design Features in Developing Country Contexts".

11. International Labour Organisation and United Nations Development Group (2016), "UNDG Social Protection Coordination Toolkit - Coordinating the Design and Implementation of Nationally Defined Social Protection Floors



## Shared recipient selection systems<sup>12</sup>

In many countries, each programme has developed its tools and processes to collect data and select recipients. Recipient registries are often independent of each other, even within the same ministry or agency. As a result, the social protection landscape is scattered and inconsistent, which results in limited outreach and numerous inclusion and exclusion errors. One possible way to tackle this issue is to develop joint registries to select recipients. Developing a common selection system necessarily aligns stakeholders' understanding of the factors that define poverty and vulnerability (when it comes to social assistance), as well as requires the development of a shared database on the population. It also enables local governments and policy-makers to better understand these populations and develop appropriate and coordinated programmes, while it at the same time can contribute to increasing the outreach of social assistance programmes and installing transparency in the selection criteria.

## Management Information System (MIS)<sup>13</sup>

A database and MIS of a programme can be used to manage the registration of recipients, identification and authentication, collection of contributions, payment of benefits and delivery of services, and other key administrative functions. Further, looking at the entire social protection system in a country, information systems and databases can be used to better coordinate among and ensure consistency across different schemes and institutions involved in social protection or employment services. Examples have included integrated MIS/Recipient registers and/or specific interoperability with available disability registries. All of these initiatives need to be designed with explicit inclusion objectives in mind to ensure women and people with disability have equitable access to programmes and are enrolled in the right programmes and referred to complementary interventions.

## Integrated Management Information Systems (IMIS)

An Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) is a common software used by several social protection programmes to manage part or all of the administrative functions jointly: registration of recipients, identification and authentication, collection of contributions, payment of benefits and delivery of services, complaints and appeal and so on.

## Centralised recipient database system or single registry of recipients as an example of integration of front and back offices

A single registry is a shared database of individuals between two or more programmes. Information contained in the single registry can be used to identify and select recipients. In most countries, a single registry will contain selection indexes (i.e. ways to select recipients) used by the different programmes. The use of a single registry does not affect the normal administrative functions of the different programmes, which will continue to use their own MISs. The advantages of a single registry of recipients are that it can reduce the ministries' duplication of data collection, it allows for a coordinated approach and fosters transparency in the identification of recipients, and contributes to securing the complementarity of the different programmes, and it serves as a tool for coordinated monitoring and evaluation and coordinated planning.

## Grievance and redress feedback

A grievance, redress feedback and appeal system is another tool of coordination that furthermore integrates front and back offices. Grievance mechanisms help ensure that citizens and recipients can "voice" complaints regarding programme administration, and seek redress for grievances related to the quality of programme delivery or payment of benefits. An integrated complaints/grievance mechanism across programmes can enable the proper tracking and redress of complaints and the systematic analysis of the nature and type of complaints. These systems must be developed for easy access by different marginalised groups (e.g. accessible to people with disability, widespread awareness about their existence and how to use). This data can be used to improve the overall programme implementation and administration. An integrated grievance mechanism could be established with clear guidelines. This could be part of a Single-Window Service (see below).

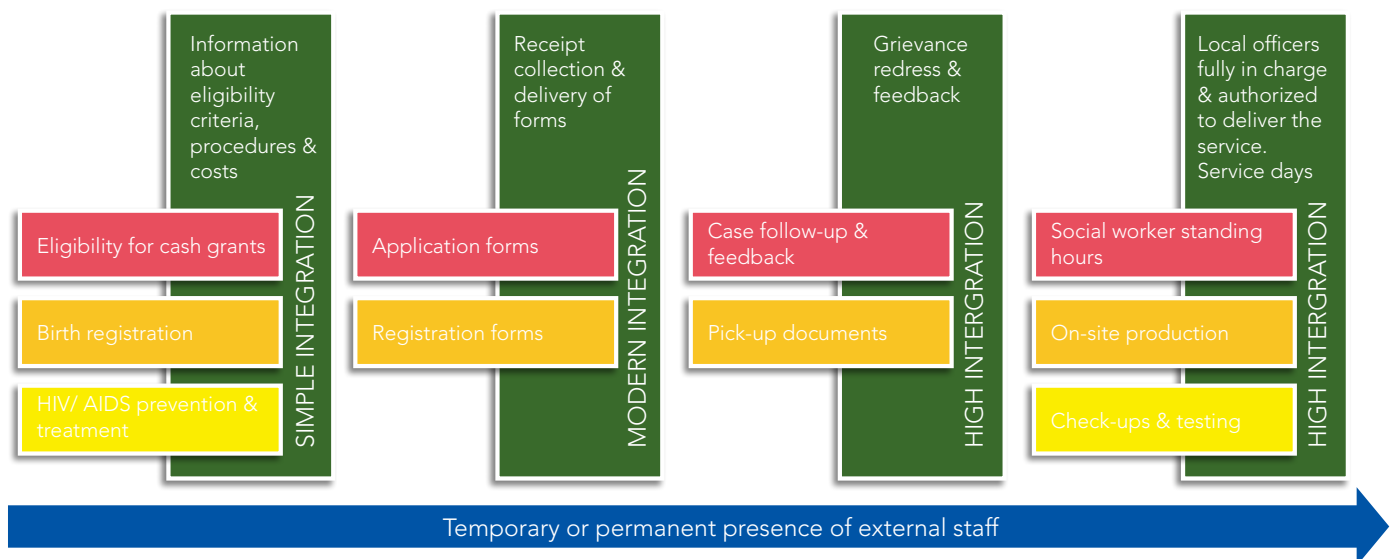
12. International Labour Organisation and United Nations Development Group (2016), "UNDG Social Protection Coordination Toolkit - Coordinating the Design and Implementation of Nationally Defined Social Protection Floors"

13. International Labour Organisation and United Nations Development Group (2016), "UNDG Social Protection Coordination Toolkit - Coordinating the Design and Implementation of Nationally Defined Social Protection Floors"

### 6.1.2. Front office integration: Referral and Case management systems

Interaction with clients takes place in the front office. Front office integration does not necessarily require a shared facility by various ministries and service providers but should have as its primary objective to coordinate and provide effective service delivery to its clients. This requires willingness by the various ministries and service providers to come together and map out how they can streamline the services. Front offices' level of integration can be classified as follows depending on complexity and capacity on the ground.<sup>14</sup>

1. Simple engagement: Information about eligibility criteria, procedures and costs (knowledge of the officers, announcement boards, leaflets).
2. Moderate engagement: Registration/application forms available.
3. High engagement: Case management.
4. Full engagement: Full processing of service on-site on a permanent or periodical basis



#### Referral system

Critical for the harmonization between social protection programmes is an effective referral system.

- It is recommended that a formal referral mechanism be developed together with a clear set of guidelines for referral between the various social protection programmes and between these and other relevant services, such as health or education. As part of the referral system, standardized forms should be developed.
- This should be accompanied by a capacity-building strategy targeting all governmental and non-governmental actors involved in direct service provision at the district and local levels.
- It is also important to have a counter-referral process or feedback, where the receiving programme/service provides feedback to the programme/service first accessed by the recipient. This completes the referral loop between all programmes and services.

#### Case management

Good coordination patterns at the local level should result in the empowerment of local social officers/agents, enabling them to develop a case management approach (at individual or family levels) to social protection delivery. However, besides the human resources necessary to run the scheme, there may be resistance to organisational reorganisation as well as technical limitations (e.g. managing an integrated recipient registry) which can become barriers to implementing the approach.



The development of a case management approach and the empowerment of local social officers not only requires a strong delegation of responsibilities (partial management of the recipient list at the local level), but also the development and establishment of shared tools that will allow the local social officers to develop a broad vision of available social protection transfers. As increasing demands are made on case management, resources should be increased to support social workers in referring programme participants to other available services, including health and education, or other services that address vulnerabilities related to gender, disability or others. In addition to referrals to these services, follow-up should be performed to ensure that services were accessed and that the services are meeting the needs of programme recipients.

### **One-stop shops and other integrated front-office solutions**

A very simple yet efficient way to foster collaboration is to establish shared facilities where different line services are represented and serve the people. These delivery mechanisms simplify access to services for recipients while at the same time building a basis for collaboration between the service providers/ministries through a better understanding of each other's activities and mandates. A one-stop shop is an example of this type of collaborative delivery mechanism. The delivery of several services in a single location contributes to increasing transparency and efficiency, reducing transactional costs for both government and citizens. It can also improve access for groups who face time and cost limitations, and difficulties travelling to application points, such as people with disability.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

#### **SINGLE WINDOW SERVICE AS AN ADVANCED MODEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE INTEGRATION**

The Single Window Service (SWS) is a mechanism for the coordinated development and delivery of social protection programmes and other support services (e.g. employment). Embedded in government institutions and operated by the subnational administration, the SWS is linked to the central level via a formalized reporting system based on an integrated MIS. This reporting system ensures the transparency and traceability of the social protection system. It also facilitates better coordination between the local level (responsible for service delivery) and the central/national level (responsible for policy development, planning, and monitoring and evaluation).

The SWS can provide a coherent framework for the implementation of national social protection strategies in an integrated, effective, and efficient way by establishing a management system and a reporting mechanism that links the central government to provinces, districts, communes, and villages.

In the African context, there are serious challenges with decentralizing front-office capacity and there is a lack of resources in the rural areas. Government lacks resources at the local level and each ministry provides an implementation of social protection programmes in a silo and with no cooperation with other relevant ministries. As a result of the lack of capacity of government to offer decentralised services, potential recipients face barriers like high transportation costs. These barriers may be particularly high for people with disability (e.g. due to lack of accessible public transportation, and need for assistance). Women also face mobility constraints due to time restrictions, work burdens or autonomy to leave their home and visit public spaces and engage with authorities. Coupled with insufficient awareness amongst community members of procedures and eligibility criteria for social protection programmes and a lack of reliable communication channels this can result in low uptake of services.

One possibility to reach clients in smaller villages and more rural settings is through mobile units either through agents or by using specially outfitted trucks and buses. This proves particularly useful for serving populations living in isolated or peripheral areas and for allowing poor and vulnerable groups easier access to services.

A mobile one-stop shop using specially outfitted vehicles has been successfully implemented in South Africa, while in Lesotho One-Stop Shops have recently been piloted at the Community Council level and by offering special service days, clients can reach several services at their doorsteps.

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# VERTICAL COORDINATION

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**Aim: Ensure consistency, responsiveness to local context and accountability in programme implementation**

Coordination is considered to be 'vertical' when it takes place between the different levels of government (federal, national, provincial/regional, district, and commune/village) to guarantee the implementation of the defined policies, the financial sustainability of the social protection system, and the decentralized delivery of social transfers to recipients.

Vertical coordination is based on the recognition that each layer of the social protection system depends on the other layers to perform its duties. For instance, the operational layer needs to respect the parameters of the schemes defined at a higher level. Reversely, the planning layer requires certain types of information from the field to be accurately completed.

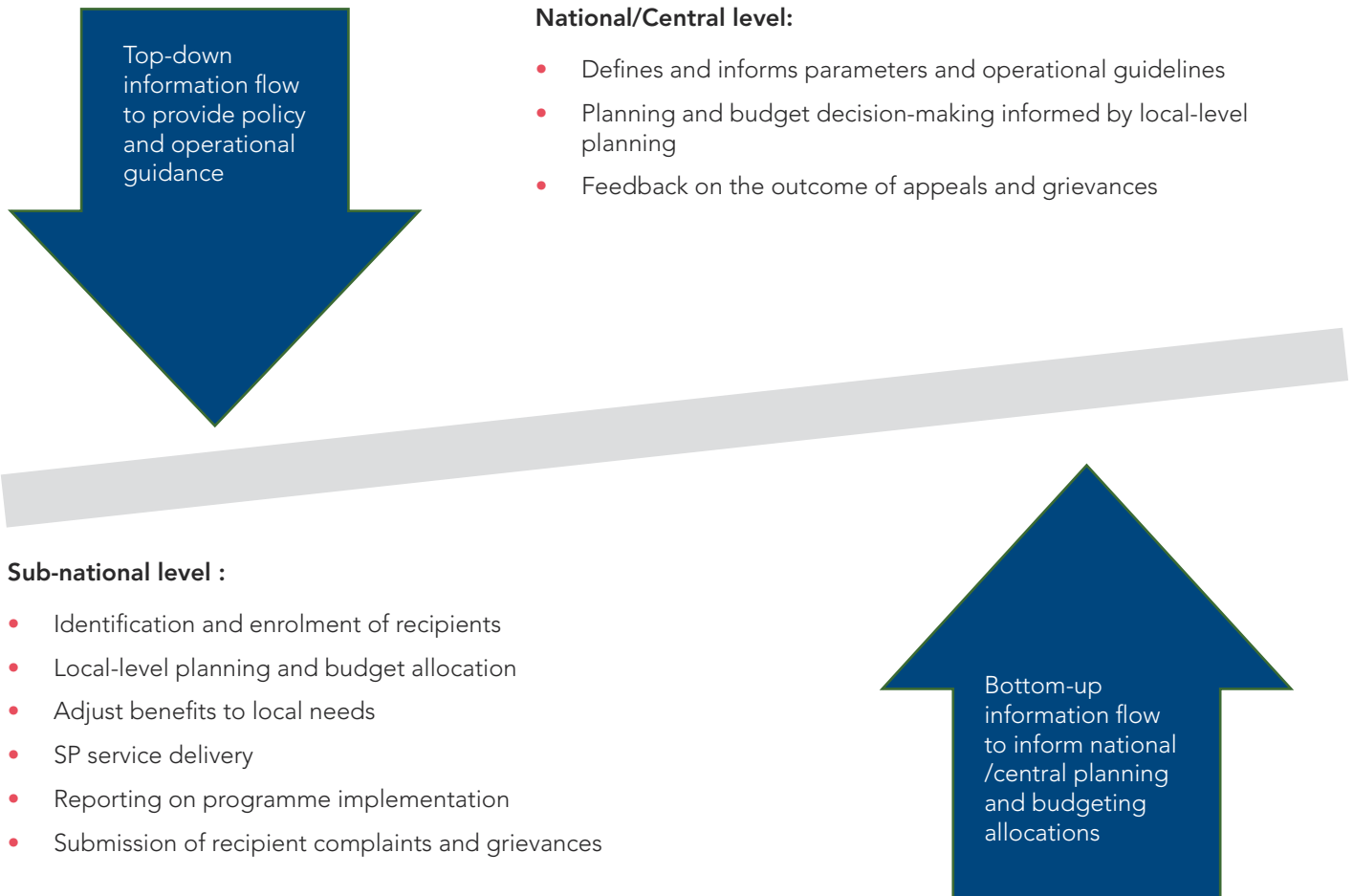




## 7.1 VERTICAL FLOWS OF INFORMATION ACROSS THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS

Vertical coordination consists of ensuring a flow of information both downwards and upwards.

Figure 7: Vertical flows of information across the administrative levels



## 7.2. IMPROVING VERTICAL COORDINATION

### 7.2.1. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different administrative layers<sup>15</sup>

It is generally accepted that the decentralization of certain functions of the social protection system should lead to better services for residents. The process of decentralization can substantially improve the efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness of service provision compared to centralized systems. However social protection systems, as most public service delivery systems, generally require a certain degree of uniformity and standardization in the way in which services are defined and delivered. It is therefore generally a necessity that key parameters and procedures of social protection schemes are established centrally. What is critical is defining the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at different levels.

### 7.2.2. Streamlining vertical coordination structures

To facilitate vertical coordination, the national coordination structure should be mirrored through to the provincial, district and local levels.

15. UNDP; UNCDF. 2013. *Strengthening the governance of social protection: The role of local government – Regional Analysis (Bangkok)*. Available at: [http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/democratic\\_governance/RBAP-DG-2014-Strengthening-Governance-of-Social-Protection.pdf](http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/democratic_governance/RBAP-DG-2014-Strengthening-Governance-of-Social-Protection.pdf)

The institutional arrangements selected to facilitate vertical coordination will largely depend on how social protection programmes are currently implemented. For example, social protection programmes may be implemented in a centralized (e.g. via a national agency) or decentralized manner (see Governance module). Determining appropriate institutional arrangements is often an evolving process based on lessons learned, changing programme needs, stakeholder participation, and government leadership. It may be necessary to harmonise already existing programme-based coordination mechanisms as there is often a proliferation of coordination mechanisms resulting in fragmentation of actions.

This could be addressed by streamlining district or community-level structures to improve programme coordination.

### 7.2.3. Ensuring that coordination mechanisms have the necessary mandates and capacity to coordinate

This includes a combination of political leverage, power to coordinate and adequate technical and functional capacity and incentive systems in place to effectively nudge actors towards multi-sectoral collaboration.

To operate effectively and efficiently, the staff on these structures across all levels (national through to community level) require orientation and capacity building on social protection coordination and different ways in which to achieve coordination (e.g. adapting single interventions, combining interventions into a single programme, coordinating and aligning policies and programmes) (for details, see section 5).

### 7.2.4. Developing guidance/operational manuals to guide vertical coordination of social protection

It can be useful to have a manual of operations to guide vertical and horizontal coordination. This manual should:

- Describe in detail the various structures, functions and capacities of the coordination structures at the different levels of the system (from national through to community level) - an organogram can be used to depict these structures and the development of a national coordination strategy could also assist here.
- Specify and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all actors at all levels of the system
- Provide guidelines on the two-way flow of information between national to community level which should be both top-down and bottom-up - this would include guidance on the communication flows around planning and budget allocations; and appeals and grievance mechanisms.
- Provide guidelines on how different stakeholders coordinate at different levels in implementing the social protection programme, and how it is linked with other types of social protection programmes.

### 7.2.5. Creating incentives for coordination

Incremental financing, provided on the condition of achieving targets for coordination can be used by ministries of finance to create incentives for working together.



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# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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The TRANSFORM Learning Package is organized in a modular structure, and reflects the key building blocks of a holistic & interdependent social protection system.

The TRANSFORM modules that are currently available are listed below. Other modules are under development and will be added to the curriculum.

 <b>LEG</b>	<b>Legal Frameworks</b>
 <b>S&amp;I</b>	<b>Selection &amp; Identification</b>
 <b>ADM</b>	<b>Administration and Delivery Systems</b>
 <b>COO</b>	<b>Coordination</b>
 <b>GOV</b>	<b>Governance, Institutions &amp; Organizational Structure</b>
 <b>MIS</b>	<b>Management Information Systems &amp; Approaches to Data Integration</b>
 <b>FIN</b>	<b>Financing &amp; Financial Management</b>
 <b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>

All TRANSFORM materials are available at:

[www.transformsp.org](http://www.transformsp.org)

## WHAT IS TRANSFORM?

TRANSFORM is an innovative learning package on the administration of national social protection floors in Africa. The prime objective of TRANSFORM is to build critical thinking and capacities of policy makers and practitioners at national and decentralized levels to improve the design, effectiveness and efficiency of social protection systems. TRANSFORM aims not only at imparting state-of-the-art knowledge that is appropriate for the challenges faced by countries in the region, but also to encourage learners to take leadership on the change and transformation of nationally defined social protection systems.

## WHY TRANSFORM?

Many training curricula exist in the field of social protection and thus fundamental ideas, concepts, approaches and techniques are accessible. And yet, institutions and individuals struggle with the complexity of developing a broad, encompassing social protection system.

This complexity requires a transformational approach to teaching and knowledge sharing. It is far from enough to impart knowledge, to fill heads. It requires learners to grapple with the features of complexity, to stimulate creativity, to appreciate diversity and uniqueness, to be involved as a key element of ownership –elements which are at least as important as the factual knowledge itself. This learning package aims at just that: TRANSFORM!

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See more on cover page.

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