

# Social Protection Strategy

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**Irish Aid**

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



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# Executive Summary

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Across the world the gap between the rich and the poor is rapidly increasing. Almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just one percent of the population, and seven out of ten people live in countries where economic inequality has increased in the last 30 years. The World Economic Forum has identified economic inequality as a major risk to human progress, impacting social stability within countries and threatening security on a global scale. Findings also suggest that chronic inequality stunts long-term economic growth, and makes it more difficult to reduce poverty<sup>1</sup>.

The experience of middle-income countries such as South Africa, Brazil, India and China have shown that even with impressive growth, pockets of extreme deprivation often remain. Rapid growth across Least Developed Countries since the 2000s – including in Irish Aid's partner countries in Africa – has also been marked by rising inequality and persistently high poverty levels. Not tackling such deprivation and the inequality it brings is dangerous: it can lead to social tension, violence and sometimes even flare up to full-blown conflict.

Growing inequality and the persistent exclusion of the poorest from the benefits of economic growth increases their vulnerability to the negative effects of a number of global trends and challenges. These include climate change, natural disasters, population growth, and the globalisation of financial and commodity markets. These vulnerabilities, in turn, further increase inequality, undermining livelihoods and food security, and compounding the initial exclusion. Within this context social protection has become a highly relevant policy instrument.

Social protection has been defined globally as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised<sup>2</sup>.

In the context of a strong focus on delivering to the poorest and most vulnerable people Irish Aid defines social protection instruments as 'non-contributory systems and programmes, including public works and employment guarantee schemes, of regular and predictable social transfers, both in cash and in kind to poor and vulnerable individuals and households'. Working from this Social Protection definition this strategy document has been developed to inform Irish Aid's future social protection engagement and investment.

In almost all of Irish Aid's Key Partner Countries and through its work with civil society organisations, humanitarian partners and multilateral agencies there is an increasing engagement on Social Protection issues. In Irish Aid's Key Partner Countries alone there has been an increased investment in Social Protection policy and programmes from an estimated €7.2 million in 2006 to €20 million in 2016. Funding for food transfers is typically in the region of €6 million annually and in particular years can be far higher.

The SDG's and agenda 2030 help define the global development context, and the process of their development has resulted in the OECD, G8, UN and most multi-lateral finance institutions committing to deliver universal access to social protection by 2030, in accordance with respective Government's capacities and resources.

This strategy builds off Irish Aid's engagement in Social Protection to date, it provides a strategic framework and identifies six strategic priority areas for our future Social Protection engagement. Under each of these six priorities the rationale for, approach to, associated risks and expected results are detailed.. The strategy highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and value for money. It is expected to inform Irish Aid's Social Protection engagement for a five year period, 2017-2022, and will be reviewed towards the end of that period to ensure that Irish Aid continues to optimally contribute to the global SDG movement to achieve universal access to Social Protection by 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> Berg and Ostry (2011); Ravallion (2005)

<sup>2</sup> Stephan Devereux and Rachel Sabate Wheeler (2004).

## 1.1 Purpose of the strategy

Irish Aid sees social protection as an important policy instrument to reduce extreme poverty in partner countries, in humanitarian responses, and across our programmes. Social protection shelters the poorest and most vulnerable from natural and man-made disasters, it increases and improves the involvement of poor women and men in economic activity, and it contributes to equity and social accountability. In particular Irish Aid recognises that social protection contributes to building resilience, improving access to essential services, unlocking productive capacity, and promoting social cohesion. Social protection programmes are affordable, even in the poorest countries, and – as a direct transfer from State to citizen – represent good value for money.

‘The Global Island’, Ireland’s foreign policy and our statement of strategy clearly sets out five goals which inform all of the Department’s work. One of the goal’s, ‘our values’ commits us to work for a fairer, more just, secure and sustainable world.

Ireland’s Policy for International Development, “One World, One Future”<sup>3</sup>, underlines the importance of social protection, and commits to supporting it as a key instrument for reducing poverty and inequality while achieving inclusive growth:

*“Improving access to quality essential social services such as health, education, services related to HIV and AIDS, and social protection is key to the realisation of human rights, the reduction of poverty, hunger and inequality and the promotion of inclusive economic growth”*

Priority is given to:

*“appropriate and sustainable social protection programmes that address inequality by focusing on the very poorest households”*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the UNGA in September 2015, identify social protection as a key instrument for ending poverty and achieving gender equality. The Addis Ababa Agenda for Action on Financing for Development committed countries to provide fiscally sustainable and nationally appropriate social protection systems focusing on those furthest below the poverty line and other vulnerable groups. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit Ireland specifically committed to building national social protection systems as a means of integrating longer term resilience building with humanitarian assistance. The ‘Grand Bargain’ / agenda for humanity has, as one of its 10 goals, a commitment to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming.

Social protection, as well as addressing poverty, inequality and vulnerability, also has the potential to deliver on policy objectives across a number of thematic areas – for example, health and education, but also agriculture and employment. Social protection has emerged as a key instrument of public policy and is already an important component of social and economic policy as well as development partner programming in almost all of Irish Aid’s Key Partner Countries (KPCs). Social protection is already an important element of our engagement in fragile states and situations and will be central to delivering on One World One Future’s commitment to increase our focus on fragility.

This strategy responds to the growing demand for guidance on how to engage with and support partner governments’ and other partners’ initiatives, and the need to ensure coherence and complementarity across partnerships and modalities.

The strategy, while largely based on needs and experiences in Ireland’s KPCs, is relevant and applicable across all Irish Aid programmes: it will facilitate support for the establishment and implementation of partner governments’ national social protection policies and programmes, inform our approach to humanitarian action

<sup>3</sup> Government of Ireland (2013a) “One World, One Future”: Ireland’s Policy for International Development’.

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and provide an agenda for dialogue with NGO and multilateral partners, while at the same time reflecting Irish Aid's values, mandate and international commitments. To do this the strategy provides specific guidance on strategic priority areas within social protection that will be used in developing KPC missions' programmes and policy dialogue agendas, in appraising and negotiating programme grant and humanitarian partnerships with NGOs and multilateral partners and in promoting Irish Aid priorities in relevant international policy fora.

The strategy is intended to guide the content and set the policy parameters for the strategic plans developed and implemented by Embassies and business units. It does not seek to establish resource allocation targets but to assist the definition, in those strategic plans, of the objectives, outcomes and outputs, which the application of Irish Aid resources will achieve and to provide guidance on the approaches through which the resources will be applied. Strategic priority five of this strategy is focused on ensuring a sustainable and progressively domestically funded social protection financing framework. Progress in this area will be essential for the longer term sustainability of national SP programmes.

This strategy document outlines Irish Aid's priorities and approach to social protection and lays out how Irish Aid will deliver in practice on OWOF policy objectives and provides guidance for all Irish Aid programmes on planning and managing support for social protection and on associated policy dialogue with KPC governments and other partners. This strategy will be implemented for an initial five-year period, from 2017 to 2021 after which it will be reviewed and adjusted in light of expected progress and the changing context.

## 1.2 Methodology

The strategy is based first and foremost on experience and practice from Irish Aid's social protection programmes in KPCs, as well as interventions through civil society and humanitarian partners. It also draws from information on national policies and institutional capacities, from the partnership with the ILO, and on the research lessons from the Irish Aid/IDS research partnership on social protection, which has drawn together a significant body of information and analysis.

The strategy was developed through an intensive consultation process. Internal policies and other agencies' strategy documents were reviewed<sup>4</sup>. Two technical consultation workshops were held at Irish Aid offices in Dublin and Limerick in 2015, involving all relevant policy teams, as well as programme officers and advisors from 10 partner countries. The first workshop discussed Irish Aid's vision and goals for social protection, partnerships, risks and value-for-money. The second workshop reviewed the draft Social Protection Strategy and made proposals for improvement. Additional information and inputs to the strategy were collected through interviews with Irish Aid staff and other stakeholders in the social protection sector in eight countries. Details of the methodology and process can be found in Annex One.

## 1.3 Structure

**Chapter Two** sets out the international context and trends in social protection, and how social protection is reflected in the goals and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some of the principal challenges and opportunities for aid agencies working on social protection are discussed.

**Chapter Three** presents how the objectives of social protection relate to Irish Aid policy priorities: reducing hunger and strengthening access to essential services, promoting inclusive economic growth, and better governance and accountability. A table is presented that illustrates the direct and indirect links with the High Level Outcomes and Key Result Areas in the Framework for Action. It concludes with an overview of and lessons learnt from Irish Aid's experience in social protection.

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex 1 for details.

**Chapter Four** develops Irish Aid’s approach to social protection, building on the previous chapter. Ireland’s strategic approach to social protection is set out and six strategic priorities are identified under three key principles underpinning the strategy:

- a) the importance of social protection as a long-term policy instrument;
- b) taking a long-term approach to building national systems;
- c) supporting social protection with other policies and programmes.

A summary of the overall results for each of the strategic priorities and an approach for evaluating progress is then given. Finally, a concise guide to the implications of the strategic priorities for different ways of working on social protection is provided. In turn, this focusses on Irish Aid’s work at global level, at country level and with other partners, highlighting priority actions for each.

**Chapter Five** offers a detailed description of how to implement Irish Aid’s approach, setting out the rationale, methodology, risks and results for each of the six strategic priorities. Finally a detailed risk management framework is provided.

**Annex One** sets out the methodology used to draft the strategy. **Annex Two** provides further specific guidance on financing and value for money in social protection programming. **Annex Three** provides a structured guide to available literature and resources on social protection, including the bibliography for the strategy. **Annex Four** sets out Ireland’s World Humanitarian Summit Commitments. **Annex Five** Irish Aid’s resilience building guidance note sets out IA’s approach to resilience building across our programmes. Irish Aid’s forthcoming Climate and Social Protection Brief (2017) will also be of relevance.



**Woman receiving payment under the Basic Social Cash Transfer programme in Mozambique (Image courtesy of the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Social Protection during their independent monitoring activity)**

## 2.1 Global challenges: inequality, marginalisation and vulnerability

Across the world the gap between the rich and the poor is rapidly increasing. Almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by just one percent of the population, and seven out of ten people live in countries where economic inequality has increased in the last 30 years. The World Economic Forum has identified economic inequality as a major risk to human progress, impacting social stability within countries and threatening security on a global scale. Findings also suggest that chronic inequality stunts long-term economic growth, and makes it more difficult to reduce poverty<sup>5</sup>.

The experience of middle-income countries such as South Africa, Brazil, India and China have shown that even with impressive growth, pockets of extreme deprivation often remain. Rapid growth across Least Developed Countries since the 2000s – including in Irish Aid's partner countries in Africa – has also been marked by rising inequality and persistently high poverty levels. Not tackling such deprivation and the inequality it brings is dangerous: it can lead to social tension, violence and sometimes even flare up to full-blown conflict. Growing inequality and the persistent exclusion of the poorest from the benefits of economic growth increases their vulnerability to the negative effects of a number of global trends and challenges. These include climate change, natural disasters, population growth, and the globalisation of financial and commodity markets. These vulnerabilities, in turn, further increase inequality, undermining livelihoods and food security, and compounding the initial exclusion.

Within this context social protection has become a highly relevant policy instrument. Substantial and growing evidence shows that investments in appropriate and well designed and delivered social protection systems and programmes can lead to substantial positive outcomes. These range from improvements in measures of household wellbeing (in terms of income, assets, dignity and food security), to better access to services, better nourished and educated children, reduced vulnerability and improved resilience to shocks, and more sustained and sustainable local and national economic growth. Cash and food transfers are also associated with a decline in early marriage and pregnancy, recourse to transactional sex and HIV infection among young women and girls. In sum, social protection works for the poor; and, it is a central element of a policy frameworks for more inclusive and equitable economic growth.

## 2.2 Social protection and international development policy

Social protection for the poor and vulnerable has received substantial and increasing economic and political attention from a diverse range of stakeholders over the last 10 to 15 years. Social protection programmes are seen as increasingly relevant across many regions of the world. Social protection systems are being designed and increasingly prioritised as multi-sectoral initiatives for supporting livelihoods. And, progressive social protection policies and strategies are being taken up by many governments and development partners. Organisations as prominent as UNICEF, The World Bank, the European Union, G20, the African Union and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the African Union<sup>6</sup> have adopted policies and strategies not only highlighting the role of social protection in economic growth and economic empowerment, but also emphasising the importance of social protection for addressing human, social and political rights.

In a joint statement on universal social protection in June 2015, the ILO and World Bank called on world leaders to promote universal social protection, which they define as:

*“adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons”*

<sup>5</sup> Berg and Ostry (2011); Ravallion (2005)

<sup>6</sup> Please see bibliography for references

The focus on ‘universality’ in the statement represents a significant shift in the rhetoric of the World Bank around safety nets and universal access to Social Protection as a concept has been endorsed by most of the key development institutions.

Social protection features in the sustainable development goals (SDGs), where it is central for ending poverty, achieving gender equality and leaving no-one behind:

**Table 2.2.1. Sustainable Development Goals & Targets on Social Protection**

Goals	Targets
1.End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
5.Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters  5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul had a focus on ‘Changing People’s Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need’. The core commitments reflect the need for humanitarian assistance to be embedded in the building of resilience. The major commitments, and Ireland’s specific commitments are detailed in Annex 4 below. Ireland made a specific commitment to:

*“...support and build flexible and responsive national systems, such as health systems and social protection systems, that can strengthen targeting and entitlement for citizens based on need and can be scaled up or adjusted in times of greater need. We will continue to advocate with our partners for the increased use of cash programming in humanitarian crises where it is appropriate, and to invest in national registration systems.”*

### 2.3 Challenges and opportunities

Recent commitments by the United Nations and the G20 to support the expansion of social protection in developing countries marked a new turning point in efforts to ensure a minimum level of protection to all citizens of the world. But while new forms of social protection have developed quickly in Latin America, progress in other parts of the developing world remains slow.

In sub-Saharan Africa, over the last twenty years there has been a shift from humanitarian relief interventions, such as food aid, as the primary form of social protection to an array of unconditional social transfer projects, and more recently large scale graduation model programmes. While overall, social protection coverage in the region remains low, there has been a proliferation of policies, strategies and regional frameworks that is contributing to ensuring that social protection remains a strong pillar of country growth agendas. For example, in 2008 members of the African Union endorsed the Social Policy Framework<sup>7</sup> highlighting social protection as an important element of inclusive growth strategies<sup>8</sup>. The challenge is to harmonise the diverse approaches of different actors into a shared vision, and translating this into political commitment to design, strengthen and expand social protection programmes and systems at national level.

<sup>7</sup> African Union (2008)

<sup>8</sup> Devereux et al. (2015), p.18

Building national systems and capacity, and securing sufficient funding for large scale social protection programmes are ongoing tasks. Sustainable social protection systems will require further expanding and strengthening to address chronic vulnerabilities and develop the capacity to respond effectively to sudden and slow onset shocks including climate impacts, disasters, market shocks and conflict. There is a lack of technical expertise in this area which can lead to poor quality of social protection interventions and a multiplication of diverse and fragmented initiatives. Bringing the different initiatives and actors together into a coherent, comprehensive and effective national system is a key challenge. Alongside administrative capacity challenges, governance and political economy considerations are critical factors influencing the targeting, coverage and efficiency of Social Protection interventions.

To deliver for women, social protection programmes need to economically empower women and increase their power and agency. Conditional cash transfers and public works programmes can be designed to provide positive opportunities to increase women's capacity and their control over assets and opportunity. However they also have the potential to increase women's work burden unless specifically designed to facilitate access for women and to be gender aware and child-sensitive, for example by ensuring safe and easy access to pay-points, by providing child minding options at Public Works sites, and linking social protection to early childhood development services. Full family targeting is essential to ensure that resource transfers are adequate.

Some trends in aid may facilitate the allocation of resources to social protection programmes: for example, programme aid modalities and the growth in the proportion of aid reflected in government budgets can provide flexibility and a greater degree of government discretion over spending choices, which in turn can be used to prioritise social protection expenditures.

In the context of growing concern over the poverty reduction performance of programme aid instruments, particularly general budget support (GBS), and the desire to see direct linkages between donor support and outcomes for poor people, social protection has a lot to offer. Where donors are directly supporting national budgets, the existence of significant allocations to well-targeted social protection programmes are a clear demonstration of the pro-poor nature of the budget. In contexts where donors are moving away from GBS, funding to national social protection systems can provide an alternative way of visibly, transparently and directly channelling significant resources to the poorest and most vulnerable.

Additionally, climate-resilient social protection systems are recognised as valid climate adaptation investments, therefore climate finance can also be used to add resources to social protection programmes. Social protection systems that adequately account for climate risks, support climate adaptation through public works, and-or have surge capacity for responding to climate-related shocks may be among those considered climate-resilient.

In the longer term, ensuring both the institutionalisation of social protection systems and national financing is critical. Only as part of broader national development strategies and with integrated national economic and social policies can the efficacy and impact of social protection policies and systems be maximised for reducing hunger and extreme poverty, enhancing access to essential services, promoting inclusive economic growth and contributing to social cohesion.



**Community Development officer assisting potential beneficiary of cash transfer to register using mobile technology. Kasama Musenga Village, Northern Province, Zambia in 2017. Image courtesy of the ILO)**

## 3.1 Irish Aid’s policy approach

Irish Aid’s approach to social protection is based on the concept that social protection serves four main functions: provision, prevention, promotion and transformation. These four functions reflect priority policy areas for Irish Aid in development:

- reducing food and nutrition insecurity,
- fostering and building resilience,
- promoting inclusive growth,
- enhancing equity and social accountability.

The purposes of social protection contribute to achieving progress across the range of High Level Outcomes in the OWOF Framework for Action, as demonstrated in the figure below.

**Figure 3.1.1. How the purposes of social protection contribute to the goals of One World One Future**



Social protection alone cannot compensate for or address the inadequate provision of key public services or the impacts of economic exclusion. For example, improvements in health and education will depend on the proximity and quality of services. Without access to land, productive assets, markets or economically viable prices for their produce, social transfers alone will not help people develop more sustainable livelihoods. **Social protection is most effective and transformational when policies and programmes in other key areas are supportive and take into account the needs of social protection recipients.** These areas include agriculture, education, health, public investment, employment and markets. Cash transfers can provide resources and the security that poor households need to invest in more productive technologies and livelihoods systems. Nonetheless, social protection is not a substitute for essential services and should not be financed at the expense of allocations to the provision of services in areas such as health, education, water supply and sanitation.

The following discussion sets out the relationships between social protection and the overarching goals of One World One Future in more detail, followed by a table that demonstrates the direct and indirect relationships with the High Level Outcomes and Key Result Areas in the Framework for Action.

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### *Provision and prevention*

#### Reduce global hunger and promote access to essential services

**Irish Aid's primary purpose in supporting social protection is to first build and then prevent the eroding of assets and capacities at individual, community and national levels by stresses and inequalities.** These stresses and inequalities include poverty, corruption, exclusion, gender inequality, under-nutrition, restricted access to essential services and natural resources, and climate change. The poorest are disproportionately negatively affected by stresses and inequalities. Their high vulnerability is based on several factors: these can include lack of access to quality essential services (education, health, water, and nutrition services), inadequate housing, limited or no access to formal credit and heavy dependency on agriculture or natural resources. Long-standing gender inequality and discrimination mean that, within poor and vulnerable communities and households, women and girls are most vulnerable to and disadvantaged by stresses and inequalities. This means that they are less able to absorb and recover from the impact of stresses. In trying to cope with stresses and shocks, poor people are often forced into measures which further undermine their livelihoods. For example, they may sell productive assets such as farm equipment or livestock, accumulate unserviceable debt, pull children out of school to save on school fees, engage in commercial sex work, other dangerous forms of employment or crime, all of which may leave them locked into a cycle of poverty.

**Relevant social protection tools, in particular well designed, delivered and targeted social cash transfers, support poor people in building their resilience to stresses and develop less risky coping mechanisms.** Regular and predictable cash transfers to poor households have significant and positive changes on asset retention and creation, subscription to informal and formal insurance mechanisms (such as livestock or crop insurance), and experimentation and uptake of new kinds of agricultural practices that have the potential to make farming more profitable.

**Social protection is also relevant for humanitarian crises.** The countries most in need of humanitarian assistance are often the same as those with most pressing needs for social protection. Social protection systems address chronic vulnerabilities and can prevent shocks from turning into emergencies. The timely expansion and scale up of social protection is potentially an effective means of responding to disasters, protracted crises and extreme weather events.

**An increase in social protection spending, through easing the income constraint, can have the knock-on effect of making spending in other sectors, such as health and education, more efficient.** Lack of income is a common constraint in accessing public services, particularly health and education. Even when these services are free at the point of use there are costs involved in accessing them – such as the purchase of medicines, schoolbooks or uniforms, the opportunity cost of lost labour and, not infrequently, the requirement to bribe. Social protection is a means of fighting exclusion and marginalisation at all levels in society...including transformation in the context of gender relations.

### *Promotion*

#### Make economies in our KPCs more inclusive and promote entrepreneurship

**Social protection has the potential to unlock productive and entrepreneurial capacity, increase productivity and improve labour market participation, and boost local development and job creation.** Social protection can contribute to economic inclusion in a number of ways.

Firstly and most directly through wealth transfers, **social protection ensures that the poorest and most vulnerable have access to some, albeit a small proportion, of the benefits of growth.** This helps directly reduce or limit income inequality, which in turn, as evidence shows, will help ensure that future growth is more inclusive and poverty reducing.

Second, **regular and reliable income transfers can also help to unlock productive and entrepreneurial capacity**, increase productivity and labour market participation, and boost local development and job creation. Poor households receiving transfers increase their productive investments, are able to negotiate better prices for their produce and better wages and working conditions, when employed. At an aggregate level cash transfers give rise to increased demand in local markets, stimulating production and employment and delivering multiplier effects in local economies.

Third, **'new generation' cash transfer programmes attempt to combine multiple interventions** – often requiring cross-sectoral coordination – into what are being labelled graduation model programmes, where cash transfers are accompanied by other services, such as literacy and numeracy training, agricultural extension or health interventions, and subsidised access to, or for productive assets. Emerging evidence shows that these programmes can deliver lasting positive impacts for people's livelihoods (in terms of food security, nutrition and social connectedness) as well as poverty reduction (in terms of income, consumption and asset creation)<sup>9</sup>. These programmes focus on building resilience and enabling households to move out of poverty, and out of programme dependence hence the term "graduation". The replication of this approach through national social protection systems will require policies and programmes across different sectors that are complementary to national social protection programmes and target the needs of social protection recipients. Care is needed to ensure that the desire to achieve "graduation" does not serve to exclude or remove those who cannot "graduate" from social protection.

### *Transformation*

#### **Strengthen the citizen-state relationship and promote accountability**

**Social protection can also be critical for promoting social cohesion** and strengthening the social contract between citizens and government.

Social protection interventions can **play a role in broader social accountability by strengthening the state-citizen contract and transforming the social relationships which entrench poverty and vulnerability**. In many developing countries, social provisioning in the form of transfers, health and education, are failing to serve the needs of a large majority of the population who are poor. Part of this is attributable to a lack of public funds, yet a more significant reason for the problem is to do with the lack of accountability between citizens and politicians through democratic electoral processes. The establishment of a social protection system is an opportunity for strengthening direct accountability not only on social protection but also more generally between service providers and eligible populations.

Community involvement and participation in designing, implementing and monitoring a social protection programme has positive effects on beneficiaries' understanding and buy-in. The ability to hold providers accountable **strengthens demand side accountability** and enables citizens to hold providers and policymakers accountable, through feedback and responding to complaints which in turn improves the quality of provision and human development outcomes.

Alongside formal processes such as complaint hotlines and citizen charters, **informal social accountability** mechanisms can be particularly effective. These include community monitoring, citizen report cards, social audits, and community scorecards. However, formal **grievance and redress mechanisms** are critical in cash transfer programmes for managing risks and ensuring effective programme implementation.

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<sup>9</sup> see Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2015) for a review of some of the recent evidence including from Ethiopia [This is also relevant to Irish Aid guidance on Integrated Multi-Sector Systems led by Essential Services]

**Table 3.1.1: Irish Aid Policy and Social Protection**

Social protection is relevant for all of the goals and the priority areas for action of One World One Future. This table also identifies the High Level Outcomes and Key Result Areas in the Framework for Action that relate (in **BOLD**) and (in *italics*) to social protection:

VISION									
A sustainable and just world, where people are empowered to overcome poverty and hunger and fully realise their rights and potential									
GOALS									
Reduced hunger, stronger resilience Sustainable development, inclusive economic growth Better governance, human rights and accountability									
PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION									
Humanitarian assistance	Fragile states and situations	Global hunger	Climate change and development	Trade and economic growth	Essential services	Human rights and accountability			
HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES									
Outcome 1 <i>When crises and conflicts occur, the loss of life is minimised and human suffering is alleviated</i>	<b>Outcome 2</b> <b>Poor citizens, communities and states are better prepared for, better able to cope with, and recover from stresses and shocks</b>	<b>Outcome 3</b> <b>Poor individuals, families, and communities have improved food and nutrition security</b>	Outcome 4 <i>Better functioning, climate resilient food systems and markets are accessible to rural poor and benefit the rural poor</i>	Outcome 5 <i>Developing country economies are more inclusive and sustainable (social, economic and environment)</i>	Outcome 6 <i>Developing countries are better able to use domestic resources and to reduce poverty</i>	<b>Outcome 7</b> <b>Poor and marginalised citizens are better able to attain a decent living, including improved health and education, and improved employment opportunities</b>	<b>Outcome 8</b> <b>Reduced inequalities between women and men in accessing resources and benefits of development</b>	Outcome 9 <i>Public governance systems and structures are more responsive and accountable to citizens, in particular to the poor and the marginalised</i>	<b>Outcome 10</b> <b>Poor and marginalised citizens realise their rights and actively participate in the development of their societies</b>
KEY RESULT AREAS									
1.2 <i>Global humanitarian response is effective and timely</i>	<b>2.1 increased capacity of poor citizens to respond to stresses and shocks without resorting to negative coping mechanisms</b> <b>2.3 Ability of poor citizens and states to recover from stresses and shocks is strengthened</b>	<b>3.1 Progress on food and nutrition security</b> <b>3.2 Strengthened capacity of poor individuals, families and communities to improve food and nutrition security</b>	4.1 <i>Increased benefit to the rural poor of food systems and markets</i>	5.1 <i>The personal and household economies of poor people grow and their livelihoods become more productive, profitable and sustainable</i>	6.1 <i>Inclusive and sustainable public expenditure targeted towards poverty reduction</i>	<b>7.1 Improved employment opportunities</b> <b>7.2 Improved access to and attainment of quality education outcomes by poor and marginalised citizens</b> <b>7.3 Improved access to and attainment of quality health outcomes by poor and marginalised citizens</b>	<b>8.2 Equal access to quality essential services</b>	9.1 <i>Public governance is responsive to the needs of the poor and marginalised</i>	<b>10.1 Poor and marginalised citizens are informed and empowered to realise and protect their rights</b>

## 3.2 Ireland's experience with social protection

Irish Aid has been actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of social assistance programmes through our development assistance programme. Ireland has also supported partner countries to establish their own social protection systems as long-term and sustainable instruments integrated into national poverty reduction frameworks and strategies. Irish Aid is appreciated and valued as a development partner by governments and other agencies, not only because of the financial resources provided, but because of our genuine commitment to poverty reduction and the fact that Irish Aid is regarded as a cooperative and transparent partner to work with.

### Ireland's Social Protection Expenditure

Analysis of Irish Aid's support for Social Protection since 2006 there has been a steady increase over the decade with in country support increasing from approx. €7 million to over €20 million in 2016. In 2006 one KPC was active in supporting social protection provision, and this has grown to seven in 2017. Within our support to civil society organisations there is a similar positive growth projector. Support for Social Protection measures in humanitarian contexts has fluctuated from year to year, linked to the global humanitarian situation with a peak of over €10 million in 2009.

Irish Aid's approach when working in-country, is typically that of a smaller funding partner but a catalytic policy actor, **contributing to decision-making processes and programmes that involve national governments and larger funding partners**. Irish Aid is an active member of social protection forums convened by the government or development partners in several countries:

- In Mozambique, the Social Action Working Group has provided an institutional framework for overseeing a national costed plan of action since 2013. Irish Aid contributed to the policy process by participating in Working Group meetings and the consultation processes linked to the evaluation and redesign of the national strategy on social protection.
- In Ethiopia, Irish Aid was one of the founders of the National Social Protection Platform (NSPP) in 2010, and remains a leading agency. Irish Aid has provided technical support to the government of Ethiopia in the development of a National Social Protection Policy and Strategy, and in the design of successive rounds of the flagship Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP).
- In Uganda, Irish Aid contributes to efforts by the donor group to develop a national social protection system that is valued and fully funded by the government; and has also successfully lobbied for extending coverage of social cash transfers to the conflict-affected Karamoja region and has supported the piloting of different targeting mechanisms.
- In Zambia, Irish Aid is an active participant in the sector advisory group centred on the implementation of the social protection policy and supports the work of the social cash transfer technical working group.

Other approaches and partnerships have also been adopted to support social protection:

- In some countries Irish Aid contributes mainly towards **financing and rolling out implementation**. Often this support takes the form of financial assistance directly to governments, to UN agencies, or to NGOs (such as Concern Worldwide and HelpAge).
- In Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, Irish Aid is financing the ILO to **strengthen government capacity** to effectively implement, coordinate and evaluate social protection programmes. Irish Aid is also supporting a cash transfer project run by the Ministry of Gender in Malawi, and pilot testing electronic payments options in one district.
- In Mozambique Irish Aid, in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development, is developing practical local level approaches to **enable social protection programmes to respond to climate change** by supporting poor and vulnerable people to adapt their livelihoods to be more climate resilient.

- Another important aspect has been **to build linkages across programmes and with related sectors** – in Malawi, for instance, the resilience pillar of Irish Aid's CSP is comprised of programmes in Social Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction, Humanitarian Assistance, Climate Change and Energy, which are conceptually linked and managed by one Vulnerability Advisor.
- Sometimes greater policy leverage has been achieved by **focusing efforts on specific vulnerable groups or regions** within a country. In Vietnam, for instance, Irish Aid has supported the development of a new national poverty reduction programme, with a special focus on ethnic minorities, and has strengthened the capacity of the Committee for Ethnic Minorities.
- Through the programme grant, Irish Aid has supported civil society partners to implement pilot and targeted cash transfer programmes. Irish Aid also **supports civil society organisations directly**, with a view to strengthening accountability mechanisms in social protection. For example in Zambia, Irish Aid has supported the Platform for Social Protection since it began in 2009, with core funding and regular technical support and in Mozambique supported independent monitoring of social protection programmes and advocacy on budget allocations.
- Through **humanitarian assistance**, Irish Aid has used a range of social protection instruments including cash and food transfers, vouchers schemes and schools feeding programmes. We have also supported nascent social protection systems through cash transfer programmes, including e-transfers in Somalia and with internally displaced populations in Jordan.

Irish Aid funding for social protection has grown steadily over the last decade. In KPCs social protection budgets grew from approximately €7 million in 2006 to over €20 million in 2016. Significant funding for social protection instruments is also provided through civil society partners and humanitarian programmes. In the latter, specific funding for food transfers is typically in the region of €6 million annually and in some years significantly higher. With a move towards an increasing use of unconditional cash transfers in humanitarian responses it can be expected that the SP expenditure in humanitarian responses is likely to be maintained or may increase. Many of the multilateral organisations, supported by Ireland, such as the World Bank (IDA), EU and WFP are also significant funders of social protection instruments.

### 3.3 Lessons from Ireland's experience with social protection

Irish Aid has drawn a number of key positive and negative lessons from our engagement with social protection, which have informed the development of this strategy. These are summarised below:

**Social Protection works:** Social protection instruments, especially food and cash transfers, are a viable means for directly alleviating deprivation and food insecurity; for protecting vulnerable people and helping them recover from shocks; for improving access to essential services and for countering the gender and other inequalities and economic exclusion that keeps people in poverty.

**More coordination and coherence is needed:** Although national policies and systems are in place or being developed in KPCs, social protection provision is characterised by a multitude of providers, both state and non-state, using a variety of social protection instruments and differing targeting and delivery approaches. The result in some countries is a somewhat disparate and uncoordinated system which fails to maximise efficiency and resource use and allows many people to fall between the gaps.

**Strengthening national capacity is essential:** National and nationally owned social protection policies and systems are essential in order to equitably and effectively reach and benefit all those in need. However, institutional capacity is still weak and responsibilities and mandates across Government are unclear and underdeveloped. As a result, quality outcomes are difficult to achieve when other policy objectives are linked to social protection, such as in some public works programmes.

**Funding, especially domestic funding, must be built:** Social protection in KPCs is largely donor and NGO funded, resulting in weak national ownership and a multiplicity of programmes and approaches. Externally funded social protection programmes are inherently unsustainable, vulnerable to changing donor funding priorities and, while providing essential resources to meet immediate needs, are unlikely to be able to provide the long-term stable support necessary to achieve transformative change. KPC Governments are reluctant to commit to national social protection policies and programmes due to uncertainty of their ability to finance them with domestic revenues and their lack of confidence in the stability of donor funding.

**Social protection must be context specific, flexible and responsive:** Social protection instruments need to be designed for, and flexible enough to respond to, poor people's specific circumstances and needs, particularly in relation to the choice of the type of transfer and the delivery mechanisms. Externally designed and prescriptive approaches are rarely appropriate in KPCs and can result in exclusion of some of the poorest people, increased burden of work, especially for women, and unintended negative impacts in local economies. Involving recipients in programme design is essential.

**Support for social protection grows rapidly:** Once social protection programmes are implemented, become visible and their impacts understood, the demand among citizens and politicians for more comprehensive and inclusive social protection grows. Citizens' expectations of Government also grow and the recognition of entitlement that is inherent to most social protection instruments encourages demands for access and accountability around other public service provision.

**Social protection cannot do everything:** Social protection delivers greatest impacts when it is accompanied by supportive policies and actions in social and economic sectors. The ability of social protection to engender sustained positive change in poor people's lives and livelihoods is greatly enhanced, when services, such as health, education and agricultural extension, cater specifically for their needs; and when economic policies, such as those on land tenure, labour and agricultural markets, protect their rights and interests.

**Social protection is a highly credible use of Irish ODA:** Social protection, particularly social transfers, are strongly supported in Ireland as a credible instrument through which Ireland's ODA can directly benefit the poor and vulnerable people, who are the primary target group for our development programmes.



**Group of woman cash transfer participants in Balaka District Malawi (IA images) Left to Right, Patuma Ali, Odeta Lafaelo, Wema Kimu, Ida Andrea, Eneresi Eliasi, Magret Chitalo, Tuweni Kabichi, Hawa Iodine, Mirriam Wilson.**

### 4.1 Strategic approach on social protection

Social protection is a broad concept covering a range of policies and instruments including social assistance to the poor, children's allowances, pensions for the elderly, health insurance, unemployment assistance and insurance, disability assistance, public works and employment guarantee schemes, the provision of social services and linkages to livelihood promotion. Irish Aid sees the progressive establishment of a comprehensive national social protection system as a key element of the development process. Irish Aid therefore supports the principle of universality, but recognises that in KPC contexts the ability of poor and excluded people to realise their rights to access and benefit from universal systems is limited and affected by more powerful groups. Delivering on OWOF commitments and on the SDG principle of ensuring that "no-one is left behind" means, therefore, that the process of developing national social protection systems must start with, and build from, the establishment and implementation of social protections mechanisms that specifically target and deliver for the poorest and most vulnerable individuals and households. **Irish Aid's Strategic Approach on Social Protection**, therefore, is:

*To contribute to the development of Irish Aid support for social protection contributes to the development of sustainable and accountable national social protection systems, policies and programmes that, starting with the poorest and most marginalised, build resilience, increase access to and use of quality essential services, reduce food and nutrition insecurity and gender and income inequalities and promote inclusive economic growth and social cohesion.*

The priority we place on delivering for the poorest and most vulnerable people demands, in the current context of our KPCs and of Least Developed Countries more generally, that we focus our efforts on those social protection instruments most relevant to this target group. For the purposes of implementing this strategy, therefore, **Irish Aid defines these social protection instruments** as:

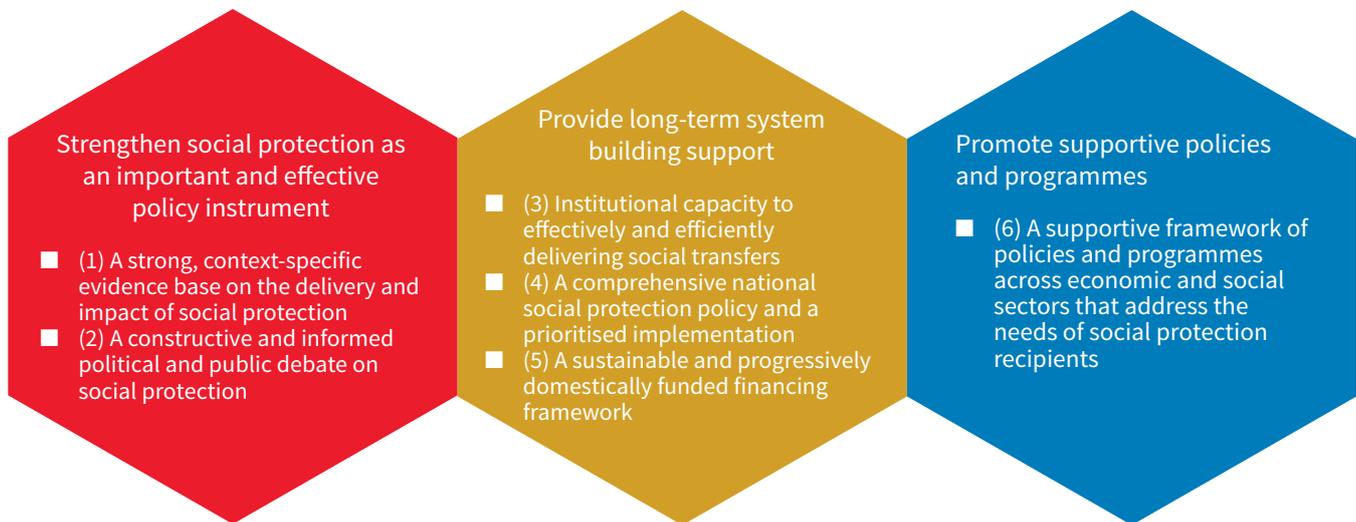
*Non-contributory systems and programmes, including public works and employment guarantee schemes, of regular and predictable social transfers, both in cash and in-kind to poor and vulnerable individuals and households.*

Ireland supports, and will continue to support small-scale and local social protection initiatives, both directly delivered and implemented through partners. These provide important opportunities to directly reach poor and vulnerable target groups and to build the capacities, skills knowledge and political will necessary for establishing national systems and our support to them will be designed specifically for these purposes.

### 4.2 Key principles for working on social protection

Drawing from Irish Aid's policy approach, experience and statement of strategy, a number of key framework principles are identified that underpin our approach in this strategy. These are based on a thorough understanding of the contexts in which poor and vulnerable people – our target group – live and make their livelihoods. The principles are grounded in the substantial experience and evidence gained from supporting and using social protection in those contexts. The key framework principles, and the strategic priorities relating to each of these principles are depicted in the figure below:

Figure 4.2.1 Key principles and strategic priorities



First, **Irish Aid sees social protection as an important and effective policy instrument** in Least Developed Countries to reduce extreme poverty. This happens through the protection of the poorest and most vulnerable from natural and man-made disasters, through improved access to essential services, through increased and more beneficial involvement of poor women and men in economic activity, and through a contribution to equity and social accountability. Due to Ireland's focus on reducing poverty and inequality in least developed countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Irish Aid's efforts are concentrated on the poorest and most vulnerable people. The political economy of social protection is challenging and significant opposition within public services, the political system and more broadly is evident and to be expected. The availability of robust, locally-generated and context specific evidence to support the case for affordability and effectiveness of social protection is essential for generating demand and national and international political commitment. Therefore the first two strategic priorities are:

1. Build a strong, context-specific evidence base on the delivery and impact of social protection.
2. Support a constructive and informed political and public debate on social protection

Second, **Irish Aid believes in the importance of adopting a long-term system building approach** in Key Partner Countries. Irish Aid recognises the guarantee and provision of social protection as a responsibility of government, which can only be delivered through comprehensive, nationally owned policies and sustainable and effective delivery systems. Irish Aid also recognises that governments face constraints and that social protection must be progressively realized. Establishing the capacity to deliver the core functions of social protection, to consistently and predictably deliver timely and adequate transfers to the right people, is critical for confidence in the system and for delivering any of the expected impacts. This may involve establishing capacity to manage and regulate private sector entities charged with delivering public programmes. Stable and predictable financing, both domestic and external, is essential. For Irish Aid, achieving the goal of comprehensive national social protection policies and systems is a long-term project, which must, however, start by delivering quickly for the poorest and most vulnerable and build from there. Therefore the next three strategic priorities are:

3. Establish institutional capacity for the core functions of effectively and efficiently delivering social protection transfers.
4. Support a comprehensive national social protection policy and a prioritised implementation plan
5. Support a sustainable and progressively domestically funded social protection financing framework.

Third, **Irish Aid recognises that social protection works best with other supportive policies and programmes.** There is a need to strengthen capacity across partner governments and development partners, including Irish Aid, to recognise social protection recipients as key target groups and to address their needs in sectoral development and investment programmes and service delivery. In this way the complementarities between social protection and programmes in other policy areas can be maximised. Irish Aid recognises that social protection is not on its own the answer to poverty and that well-funded programmes of essential service provision and appropriate policies in key economic sectors are required to build impact and effect transformative change. Established social protection systems can quickly scale up targeting and delivery for a faster and more effective humanitarian response to emergencies. Humanitarian assistance can also be designed so as to be developed into longer term social protection programmes as an effective means of linking relief to development. The final strategic priority, therefore, is:

- 6. Establish a supportive framework of policies and programmes across economic and social sectors that addresses the needs of social protection recipients.

### 4.3 Principles, strategic priorities and results

This section sets out a summary of the implications for these principles and strategic priorities for Irish Aid’s work on social protection at global level, at country level through governments, and working with other partners through projects and humanitarian assistance. The strategic priorities identified in this strategy should be viewed as together being the key building blocks that Irish Aid considers are necessary for the establishment of national social protection systems in the current context of our partner countries. The presentation here does not indicate a hierarchy among the priorities. Neither will Irish Aid, necessarily, itself, address all of the strategic priorities in every country. The individual context and the actions of Government and other partners will influence our choices on which of the priorities to focus our efforts.

The following table summarises the overall results for Irish Aid’s social protection strategy across different ways of working; more details are provided in the rest of this section.

#### Summary of Results

Results				
Principle	Strategic Priority	Global	Country	Partnerships
<i>Strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument.</i>	<b>(1) Build a strong, context-specific evidence base.</b>	Stronger international commitment to social protection.	Policy changes.  Greater political commitment to social protection at national level.  Demand and accountability.	Research and evidence from projects and interventions foster demand and accountability.
	<b>(2) Support a constructive and informed political and public debate.</b>			

Results				
Principle	Strategic Priority	Global	Country	Partnerships
<i>Provide long-term system building support.</i>	<b>(3) Establish institutional capacity.</b>	Cross-country learning and capacity building takes place.	Effective and efficient delivery.  Robust targeting, monitoring and evaluation	Linkages exist with national systems.  Nascent social protection systems begin to evolve Integration of social protection, and humanitarian response mechanisms.
	<b>(4) Support comprehensive national social protection policy.</b>	International coordination to promote national systems, policies and programmes.	Thriving social protection policy coalitions exist.  Policy and legal frameworks institutionalised.	
	<b>(5) Support a sustainable financing framework.</b>	Donor coordination to increase and stabilise finance for social protection and to incentivise domestic resource allocations.	Increased coverage.  Predictable donor financing.  Domestic resource allocations and commitment to social protection.	
<i>Promote supportive policies and programmes.</i>	<b>(6) Establish a supportive framework of policies and programmes across economic and social sectors.</b>	Active community of practice on social protection voicing Irish Aid's approach/ experience with social protection.	A comprehensive approach to social protection across government and across CSPs.	Linkages between social protection and other areas exist across partnerships and modalities and across our development and humanitarian work

### Accounting for our performance

The Policy Unit will be responsible for monitoring progress in the implementation of the strategy. The results across the different ways of working will be collected on an annual basis through a reporting template, and evaluated on an annual basis. This template will reflect the principles, strategic priorities and results set out in the table above to provide a monitoring framework. An annual meeting of country advisors and relevant DCD staff from other units – the community of practice – will take place to appraise the collective implementation of the strategy by Irish Aid. Accountability for social protection expenditure and specific programme and project results across different modalities and partnerships will remain the responsibility of the relevant budget holders. The strategy will be subject to a full review, based on assessing the results set out above, in 2020.

#### 4.4 Social protection at global level

Irish Aid works at global level on social protection in a number of ways:

- > Participating in relevant donor policy forums on social protection, and by supporting partners to carry out capacity building, training and learning;
- > Supporting research on social protection and development, and by funding training and learning for Irish Aid staff;
- > Supporting and engaging with international agencies with a strong focus on social protection.

Priority actions for delivering on the strategic priorities across each of these areas include:

PRINCIPLE	Priority Actions		
	Policy Engagement	Research	International Agencies
Strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument.	<p>Use the evidence from KPCs to promote the importance of social protection.</p> <p>Disseminate relevant evidence to KPCs.</p>	<p>Support research that builds the evidence base on social protection.</p> <p>Disseminate relevant evidence to KPCs.</p>	<p>Use the evidence from KPCs to promote the importance of social protection.</p> <p>Directly support agencies that prioritise work on social protection.</p>
Provide long-term system building support.	<p>Support partners for capacity building at regional level and across countries for developing cross-country learning on social protection systems.</p>	<p>Support research that examines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Technical capacity.</li> <li>■ Financing and Value for Money.</li> <li>■ Political commitment and governance issues</li> </ul> <p>Disseminate relevant research to KPCs.</p>	<p>When engaging with international agencies involved in social protection, advocate for a long term approach: capacity building, national systems and sustainable financing (Priorities three, four and five).</p>
Promote supportive policies and programmes.	<p>The Social Protection lead works across the Policy Team and with other units to ensure a strong coherent message on social protection and to build a community of practice.</p>	<p>Dedicate training resources to build capacity and learning across Irish Aid.</p>	<p>Use engagement with international agencies to inform Irish Aid thinking and capacity on social protection.</p> <p>Integrated approach with WHS commitments.</p>

## 4.5. Working in KPCs and other developing countries

Irish Aid works at national level in KPCs and other countries on social protection in a number of ways:

- > Contributing directly to national social protection programmes and systems through, or in coordination with, national and local governments, including Ministries and implementing agencies;
- > Participating in relevant donor policy forums on social protection at national level;
- > Supporting partner organisations to build capacity on social protection and to implement and evaluate pilot programmes, including international agencies, management consultancies, and NGOs;
- > Directly supporting research and civil society projects on social protection and development.

Priority actions for implementing the strategic priorities across each of these areas include:

PRINCIPLE	Priority Actions			
	National and local governments	Donor coordination	Partnerships	Research and civil society
Strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument	<p>Consider strategic financial support</p> <p>Support pilot projects</p> <p>Encourage public debate (Priority two)</p>	<p>Actively participate to strengthen policy influence, promote financial support and encourage public debate</p>	<p>Support pilot projects</p> <p>Support special focus activities with specific groups or regions</p>	<p>Finance pilot projects and evaluations (Priority one)</p> <p>Strengthen space for civil society participation (Priority two)</p>
Provide long-term system building support	<p>Use policy influencing to make the case for national and local systems</p> <p>Provide advisory and technical support</p> <p>Devise fund matching agreements (Priority five)</p> <p>Encourage intra- and cross-country learning</p>	<p>Promote the use of joint systems for coherent comprehensive approaches to social protection, and predictable financing in the medium terms</p> <p>Support policy coalitions and civil society activities around social protection</p>	<p>Ensure an understanding of national and local systems and integration</p> <p>Tailor interventions to complement national social protection</p>	<p>Ensure interventions inform and/or complement emergent and existing national and local social protection policies and programmes</p>
Promote supportive policies and programmes	<p>Invest in technical capacity/expertise</p> <p>Build Capacity for all mission staff on the comprehensive and complementary nature of social protection systems</p> <p>Understand and apply value for money criteria (see Annex 2); effective risk appraisal and vulnerability assessments.</p>	<p>Actively engage at national and local level to ensure coordination across different interventions</p> <p>Learn from other donors' experiences</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate in relation to priorities one-five and for complementarities with other CSP priorities</p> <p>Learn from partner experiences</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate in relation to priorities one-five and for complementarities with other CSP priorities</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation of the contribution of social protection instruments to the eradication of under-nutrition.</p>

## 4.6. Working with other partners, including civil society and humanitarian assistance

Irish Aid works with other partners on social protection in a number of ways:

- > Through the **programme grant mechanism, Irish Aid disburses funding to civil society partners** to carry out social protection programmes in developing countries, or to engage in advocacy activities related to social protection
- > Cash transfers are an important part of Irish Aid's **humanitarian programmes** in a number of contexts

Priority actions for implementing the strategy goals across each of these areas include:

PRINCIPLE	Priority Actions	
	Civil Society Programme Grant	Humanitarian Assistance
Strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument	Channel pilot programmes and research on impact of social protection towards generating greater public debate and demand for social protection and strengthening advocacy and independent monitoring.	Identify, support and share relevant evidence of the opportunities for cash transfers to be a catalyst for social protection
Provide long-term system building support	Work with national civil society partners as a priority  Alignment and engagement with national systems	Explore humanitarian support being a catalyst for 'nascent' social protection frameworks  Consider the use of social protection systems as vehicles for responding to chronic vulnerabilities and shocks
Promote supportive policies and programmes	Use social protection strategic priorities and outcomes in monitoring and evaluation of partners  Understand and apply value for money criteria (see Annex Two)  Effective risk appraisal	Strengthen knowledge of the linkages between humanitarian assistance and social protection  Monitor and evaluate in relation to strategic priorities one to five and for complementarities with social protection programmes goals  Monitoring and evaluation of the contribution of social protection instruments to the eradication of under-nutrition.  Understand and apply value for money criteria (see Annex Two)  Effective risk appraisal

## 4.7. Working with Irish institutions

Social Protection is a key domestic public policy area in Ireland underpinning our welfare system and countering inequality and exclusion. It has developed and evolved through political processes involving Government, academia, research institutions and the social partners. While the social and economic contexts and histories in Irish Aid KPCs differ significantly from those in Ireland, the potential for establishing mutually complementary linkages between Irish institutions, both statutory and non-statutory, with interests, involvement and relevant expertise in social protection, with similar institutions in our partner countries will be explored and facilitated.

# Chapter 5 Implementation

## 5.1 Guidelines for delivering on the strategic priorities

This section sets out in detail guidance on implementing the strategic priorities for delivering on Irish Aid’s social protection strategy. A summary table is presented here, and the following pages describe the rationale, method, results and risks relevant to each of the strategic priorities.

Principle	Strategic Priority
<i>Strengthen social protection as an important and effective policy instrument</i>	(1) Build a strong, context-specific evidence base on the delivery and impact of social protection.
	(2) Support a constructive and informed political and public debate on social protection.
<i>Provide long-term system building support</i>	(3) Establish institutional capacity for the core functions of effectively and efficiently delivering social protection transfers.
	(4) Support a comprehensive national social protection policy and a prioritised implementation plan.
	(5) Support a sustainable and progressively domestically funded social protection financing framework.
<i>Promote supportive policies and programmes</i>	(6) Establish a supportive framework of policies and programmes across economic and social sectors that addresses the needs of social protection recipients.



Mary Banda, social cash transfer participant. Image courtesy of the ILO

### Rationale

**Building a strong and country context-specific evidence** base will strengthen the case for social protection in partner countries and lead to improvements in programme design and increased demand-led accountability, in a number of ways by:

- > Demonstrating that social protection is effective and affordable, and good value for money in both development and humanitarian interventions;
- > Providing evidence of building resilience and delivering impacts in household income, food security and improved nutrition, essential services, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, humanitarian / emergency response and other policy areas;
- > Highlighting broader multiplier impacts within local economies and increasing effectiveness of other areas of public expenditure;
- > Informing policy-makers and implementers, enabling review of programme delivery and impact so that social protection instruments are appropriate, flexible and responsive;
- > Informing recipients and other citizens on social protection delivery and impact and on, targeting procedures, coverage and eligibility criteria.

### Approach

**Use in-country data.** Research on existing in-country programmes will yield context-specific evidence which will, therefore, be the most convincing. Embassies should ensure that relevant research is undertaken, and evidence produced, from programmes in which Irish Aid is involved. Irish Aid should continue to support related areas of research, including vulnerability assessments and climate scenario modelling, which contribute to effective social protection design and targeting.

**Do research jointly.** Buy-in from decision-makers in partner governments is critical for acceptance and use of research evidence and findings. Undertaking research jointly with ministries and institutions responsible for social protection policy and budget decisions will help establish buy-in.

**Get agreement on the research agenda.** National research agendas on social protection do not have to be formalized, but it is important that they are widely known and accepted so that research supports national priorities and duplication is avoided. This requires working closely with national and local government partners, international organisations, other donors, civil society organisations, and research and educational institutions.

**Establish processes to use data.** Annual reviews of social protection instruments which use the evidence gathered are ideal. These reviews should be as transparent as possible, allowing for flexibility and responsiveness in the delivery of social protection without compromising commitments that have been made.

**Support independent research on social protection.** Complementary research by national and international research institutes, universities, NGOs and think-tanks on social protection will be important for input to effective programme design and contributing to accountability.

### Risks

**1. Limited research capacity in partner countries:** mitigated through support for capacity building activities, e.g. making funding available for external research support to national researchers working on projects associated with the research agenda.

**2. Potential political sensitivity of research:** addressing political economy issues in the formulation of research and conducting the research with appropriate partners will increase its likely acceptance.

**3. Political resistance to social protection undermines the case for social protection:** identifying and working with key actors and potential policy coalitions to champion social protection within government is essential.

### Results

- An increase in the amount and quality of general information, reports, research papers and other relevant studies of social protection.

- A greater focus on social protection in third-level education and research institutions in KPCs.

- Social protection is included in regular instruments of national statistics office such as household budget surveys.

- Government-led, sector-wide reviews of social protection are undertaken annually.

- Policy impact is evident in changes to the social protection systems, especially in relation to targeting, criteria for eligibility, and delivery mechanisms.

**Rationale**

**Well-informed political and public debate** on social protection can increase:

- > The demand for social protection as part of national development strategies.
- > The political acceptability of social protection and willingness to develop comprehensive social protection packages.
- > Institutionalisation of social protection programmes and of public expenditure allocations to implement them.
- > Awareness among citizens about their entitlements, leading to greater accountability and more eligible citizens accessing social protection.
- > The strength of the political contract between state and citizens.

**Approach**

**Publicise information about social protection.** Work with governments, civil society organisations, media, citizen information bodies and donors to support information campaigns on existing social protection programmes. This information should include details on entitlements and eligibility, as well as the coverage and impact of social protection, and be accessible to citizens who may be eligible.

**Support increased quality of debate.** Well-informed political and public debate requires a strong, context-specific evidence base and an active, credible network of experts (see Priority One). Sponsoring media coverage is a further way to increase the quality of the national discussion.

**Strengthen national civil society platforms on social protection** by resourcing networking and capacity building activities. Embassies should also support the establishment and functioning of CSOs that, representing the interests of target groups, lobby the Government on social protection and build awareness of entitlements.

**Jointly develop an informed advocacy strategy.** Conduct political economy analysis on social protection with relevant non-government partners, including civil society actors and other donors participating in the single funding mechanism (see Priority Five). Use this analysis as a basis for drawing up a joint advocacy strategy and for identifying and strengthening potential policy coalitions around social protection (see Priorities Three and Four).

**Promote South-South knowledge exchange.** Facilitate and resource exposure visits by politicians, officials, policy-makers, and civil society representatives to other developing countries where there are lessons to be learned. Inter-governmental peer review mechanisms may also be appropriate.

**Risks**

**1. Potential political sensitivity of research:** addressing political economy issues in the engagement with government partners, civil society, media and the formulation of advocacy strategies would limit the impact of this issue.

**2. Perception of political bias:** avoid engaging in, or responding to, party political discussion on social protection in particular around election times.

**3. Undermining political will on other important issues:** ensure the conversation is balanced and remains focused on the ultimate goals of social protection and does not distract attention from other pressing areas of public expenditure and reform. (See Priority Six)

**4. Creation of donor-driven and unrepresentative NGO fora:** appraise and support internal governance of civil society partners and support social organisation among social protection recipients

**Results**

- An increase in public information products relating to social protection and their dissemination; newspapers, magazines, and talk shows have opinion pieces about social protection.
- Political manifestos, speeches, press releases, and campaign material include references to social protection. Increased activity of national social protection platforms
- Key civil servants and government ministries demonstrate the increased acceptability of social protection programmes and policies.
- Parliamentary committees on social protection and local government bodies with oversight responsibilities are established and function in accordance with their mandates.
- Governments report on delivery against national and international commitments on social protection

### Rationale

**Effective institutional capacity is essential** for the design and delivery of social protection transfers, in both development and humanitarian contexts for a number of reasons:

- > Getting adequate transfers to the right people is critical for direct impact on food and consumption entitlements; and this is an essential pre-condition to be established if any supplementary support programmes or conditionality approaches are to be successful;
- > Recipient confidence in the system is central for impact and credibility; this depends critically on the capacity to consistently and predictably deliver timely and adequate transfers;
- > Sustainability, political will and public support requires effective targeting of recipients and managing grievance processes;
- > Flexibility to respond to changes and shocks matters, for example using index-linking to deal with inflation, or scaling up to respond to disasters;
- > The efficiency of payment modalities and monitoring activities are important for mitigating against financial risk and other avoidable losses.

### Approach

**Support the establishment of a mandated institution for social protection delivery.** Irish Aid, together with other donors, should support the establishment of an institution mandated to deliver social protection transfers, situated in a key Ministry, with a legal basis for policy.

**Support the creation of a Charter on social protection delivery.** This should cover: timeliness, value, targeting fairness and equity, and grievance management. The Charter (or Standard) should be drawn up by the institution responsible for the delivery of social protection transfers.

**Support the design and implementation of Management Information System (MIS).** Comprehensive and integrated MISs are useful tools for reducing the risk of fraud, facilitating monitoring and evaluation activities, and streamlining transfers across multiple social protection instruments (e.g. state pension, disability allowance).

**Promote coherent and complementary capacity building activities.** Working with the government and other donors can ensure that capacity building activities are complementary and coherent so as to increase the effectiveness of funding. Supporting the establishment of a single capacity building plan and funding mechanism in the responsible institution will be an important option (see also Priority Five), and the development of human resources development strategy for the sector

**Promote South-South knowledge exchange.** Facilitate and resource exposure visits by politicians, officials, policy-makers, and CSO representatives to other developing countries where there are lessons to be learned about core social protection delivery systems. Technical assistance could be sourced from other developing countries (see also Priority Two)

### Risks

**1. High staff turnover or frequent staff transfers undermines capacity building:** identify staff that have made medium-term commitments to working for the social protection delivery agency; and ensure ongoing availability of operational guidance and training materials and opportunities.

**2. Delivery of transfers is vulnerable to corruption or politicisation** in the targeting stage: ensure that there is clarity and transparency in relation to targeting; promote an appropriate role in delivery or oversight for an independent statutory body.

**3. Sudden changes in financing undermines the benefits to beneficiaries:** a focus on predictable and sustainable financing can help to avoid 'stop-start' issues

**4. Fiduciary risks** from a negative PFM environment: focus efforts to improve PFM on social protection specifically and explore the potential of moving from manual to mobile or electronic transfers

**5. MISs create significant dependence on ICT assets:** promote and support MIS design that is contextually appropriate.

**6. Weak ethics handling data on citizens:** data protection and ethics should be a high priority in the design of MISs and in capacity building.

- A responsible agency is identified and given the necessary status and legal basis
- Social protection Charter or Standards are established; and government reports and CSOs engage on performance ;
- Transfers are consistently delivered on time, regularly adjusted to maintain value and reach all those who meet eligibility criteria
- A contextually appropriate MIS is in place with staff capacity to use it;
- A joint capacity building fund established and carrying out activities with relevant personnel; a human resources development strategy exists
- South-South learning activities are undertaken, found to be useful by participants, with impacts demonstrated in their subsequent work.

## PRIORITY FOUR

**Support a comprehensive national social protection policy and a prioritised implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan.**

**National social protection policies are the expression of national ownership and provide a unifying framework for social protection** and:

- > Define national social protection objectives, target groups, institutional mandates and delivery mechanisms and layout a roadmap for the establishment of the national social protection system.
- > Are the basis for coordinated support in both development and humanitarian contexts, joint government-donor programmes and common standards, limiting conflicting approaches and duplication across social protection providers;
- > Institutionalise complementarity of social protection activities across development and emergency / humanitarian programmes and strengthen the capacity to respond to both chronic vulnerabilities and shocks;
- > Offer an entry point for citizen and donor participation in policy dialogue, helping ensure policies that are inclusive, acceptable and realistic;
- > Ensure greater political will, public support and sustainable financing; and the integration of social protection objectives into national development strategies and other sectoral policies and programmes (see Priority Six).

**Support an inclusive policy process that facilitates effective citizen and civil society participation in the formulation of social protection policies** including civil society providers of social protection, as well as those representing the interests of those eligible for social protection transfers and other vulnerable groups (see Priorities One and Two)

**Promote a joint donor approach** that is compatible and responsive to the Government, through policy dialogue and influence, and strengthen sector working groups and donor platforms on social protection and financing framework for social protection (see Priority Five), as well as pooled funding for capacity building related to social protection transfer delivery (see Priority Two).

**Develop a single registry and targeting system** in order to maximise complementarity across different services and across both development and humanitarian contexts. Promote the establishment and use of such a registry, and support the capacity required for its design, use and maintenance (see Priority Three) and for effective, coherent and transparent targeting.

**Integrate social protection expenditure commitments into public plans.** These include the MTEF and medium-term public planning to support the implementation of the financing framework in the medium-term (see Priority Five).

**Work with multilateral and civil society development and humanitarian partners** active in social protection to strengthen their contribution to and support for national social protection processes.

**1. Political will to develop national systems is weak:** adopting effective and realistic policy influencing strategies, and working with actors beyond the government to create awareness, evidence and demand for national systems (see Priorities One and Two)

**2. The capacity to develop national systems is undermined by lack of ownership and financing constraints:** identify key agents in government and relevant agencies at national and local level that can help to build a sustainable policy coalition around social protection

- A national social protection policy is agreed upon and disseminated with clear roles and responsibilities for actors in social protection;
- Social protection expenditure, delivery and impact targets are incorporated in national development policy and budgets;
- An implementation strategy is in effect with detailed coverage targets and timeframes, work plans and financial requirements;
- A single registry and targeting system exists and is used in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection programmes;
- An inclusive periodic policy review mechanism is in place, for implementation delivery and impact; and work plans, targets, criteria and entitlements are adjusted as appropriate.
- Civil society contributions are evident in implementation strategies.

## PRIORITY FIVE

Support a sustainable and progressively domestically funded social protection financing framework.

**National social protection programmes require a sustainable financing framework in the medium and long term:**

- > Predictable financing in the medium term from donors and domestic resources can help to generate political will and an effective, comprehensive, institutionalised approach to social protection;
- > Moving to funding by public resources in the long-term is essential for providing the basis for a significant, long-term, and specific commitment from a state to its citizens.
- > Establishing national social protection policies and systems constitute an irreversible political commitment by the state to citizens. Secure future financing is a prerequisite if Governments are to make this commitment.
- > An appropriate and rules based procedure for providing external support will help avoid interruptions in funding which ultimately prejudice social protection recipients in the event of policy differences or financial management failures.

**Share commitments from donors and government.** Ensuring that partner governments are not dependent on unpredictable financing from donors is important. The financing framework should include plans to increase the government share of financing over the medium- to long-term. The commitments should be strong, clear and for a minimum five-year period. Details on proportionality of government to donor funding over time as well as the details on matched funding agreements should be outlined.

**Work jointly to create appropriate funding mechanisms.** Ideally, formulating a financing framework would require establishing a single funding mechanism. Embassies should cooperate closely with other donors and international organisations on this. In practise the mechanism's design may have to be flexible to allow for earmarked funding. Clear rules and procedures for dispute resolution are critical.

**Integrate commitments into public plans.** Incorporating social protection expenditure into the MTEF and medium-term public planning processes will require lobbying efforts together with other development partners. This will support the implementation of the financing framework in the medium-term (see Priority Four).

**Catalyse support for social protection through sourcing international climate finance** for initiatives that scale-up climate resilient social protection systems.

- 1. Government financing commitments may not be met:** establishing favourable fund-matching policies between donor and government financing can help to mitigate this.
- 2. Unpredictable aid flows and changing donor policies on joint approaches:** steps can be taken in the design of the funding mechanism to allow for separate or earmarked funding; pooling resources will mitigate the impact of unexpected changes in external finance

- A financing framework covering the medium- to long-term is drawn up, agreed upon and implemented.
- Five-year financing commitments are agreed upon and implemented.
- Social protection expenditure is incorporated into MTEF and evident in other medium-term public planning processes.
- Overall financing increases over the medium- to long-term.
- Government share of financing increases over the medium- to long-term.
- Total government funding increases over the medium- to long-term.

## PRIORITY SIX

**Establish a supportive framework of policies and programmes across economic and social sectors that address the needs of social protection recipients.**

**Complementary supports in key sectors and a conducive environment for social protection beneficiaries to best utilise the transfers they receive** will significantly increase the impact of social protection:

- > Public services and programmes targeted at and tailored to the needs of social protection recipients can lead to multiplier effects in terms of household income, resilience and local economic and social development.
- > Tackling barriers to accessing essential services and ensuring that services to marginalised communities are adequately resourced can increase the direct impact of social protection;
- > Integrating public work schemes and employment guarantee programmes into broader public infrastructure investment and maintenance planning can also increase the quality, efficiency and value of the works undertaken.;
- > Integrating social protection with emergency planning can facilitate a faster and more effective humanitarian response. Humanitarian assistance can also be designed so as to be developed into longer term social protection programmes and act as an entry point for strengthening national systems for addressing hunger and poverty reduction and strengthening social cohesion. Information from early warning systems will assist planners to build responsive, climate-resilient social protection systems;
- > Information and awareness campaigns on national and local public expenditure and service delivery can be channelled through the social protection delivery system.

**Identify complementary actions to increase the impact of social protection.** Analyse critical factors constraining the livelihoods opportunities of social protection beneficiaries, their access to public services and their ability to benefit from public investments and policies.

**Appraise and adjust sector policies.** Raise awareness of social protection programmes with government who are responsible for the delivery of essential services, such as health, education, water supply and sanitation, and for public policies and programmes in economic sectors. Encourage and support the review of relevant sector policies to assess and strengthen their ability to address the needs of social protection target groups, and to ensure they are currently addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

**Establish an integrated policy approach** by working with government partners, humanitarian projects and NGOs to pilot integrated policy approaches to social protection target groups. The lessons learned from pilots can be incorporated into sector and national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers as appropriate.

**Within Irish Aid at country level, integrate social protection across mission programme planning processes.** Ensure that policy dialogue and programme design across social, economic and governance areas of the programme incorporate social protection recipients as a key target group and establish performance targets in terms of results for this group. This should be reflected in country strategy papers (CSPs) and performance management development systems (PMDSs), especially in the results and deliverables sections.

**Work with humanitarian, multilateral and civil society partners** to encourage an integrated approach across their programmes that is supportive of national social protection systems and of targeting and achieving impact for social protection recipients.

**At global level, Irish Aid’s approach to social protection informs policy dialogue, implementation and partnerships.** Policy coherence is essential for the strategy to inform policy dialogue and implementation at global level. The institutional lead has a role in liaising across policy teams and divisions, and with advisors in country programmes to strengthen knowledge and awareness and ensure institutional learning on social protection.

**Promote an Irish Aid community of practice around social protection.** Building a community of practice will strengthen institutional commitment and knowledge on social protection and will mobilise and use the experience from the network of KPC-based advisors as well as experience from across Irish Aid sections and units.

**1. Sector ministries do not recognise social protection recipients as a significant part of their client group.** Ensure that national social protection policies establish line ministry responsibilities in relation to social protection target groups.

**2. Deteriorating conditions for programme aid jeopardises financing of social protection programmes and partners:** adopting a learning approach to social protection can ensure that Irish Aid learns from the evolving context of social protection, and avoid sudden reversals in financing

**3. Time and resource constraints limit the potential of a supportive policy and programme approach to social protection in Irish Aid:** an institutional lead at HQ, and effective liaison across divisions and with advisors in KPCs can maximise opportunities.

4. Spending on social protection and other social sectors become viewed as substitutes: a comprehensive approach to economic and social policy will help to avoid competing claims

- Sector policies and plans identify social protection recipients as a specific target group for appropriate services and investment;
- Models of integrated policy approaches are developed, piloted and adopted for public service and social protection delivery at local level;
- The social protection strategy is coherent with Irish Aid policies and programmes, and informs policy development and implementation.
- Irish Aid’s approach to social protection is voiced and recognised at global level by other development partners.
- Country planning processes incorporate a clear focus on social protection issues, especially on the complementary actions that can increase the impact of social protection programmes.
- Learning exists on social protection and other areas: for example with integrated multi-sector services and climate change programming
- Irish Aid’s partners are aware of Irish Aid’s approach to social protection and Irish Aid incorporates social protection issues and indicators in performance assessment and appraisal of its partners.



Women beneficiaries waiting for their payment under the Mozambique’s Basic Social Protection Programme (Image courtesy of the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Social Protection)

## 5.2 Consideration of risk

Working on social protection entails managing a range of risks. However direct payments and transfers to beneficiaries inherently pose a lesser risk, particularly fiduciary, than the many risks involved in the multiple transactions at different levels required to finance and deliver services, infrastructure or assets to local and household level. The table below sets out potential risks under four categories: strategic, operational, fiduciary and political risks and approaches to be used to mitigate them.

Strategic Risk	Mitigation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner governments policies and priorities on social protection may differ from the values and objectives embodied in ‘One World, One Future’ (OWOF) and the Framework for Action (FFA).</li> <li>2. Policy processes and decisions at national level are overly driven by the government or other development partners and not inclusive of poor citizens.</li> <li>3. The social protection policy process is excessively ‘donor-led’ rather than ‘country-owned’, and fails to generate the necessary national ownership and political buy-in from the government.</li> <li>4. Irish Aid’s policy influence is limited by the size of its financial support.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Irish Aid advisors engage in the design stage of new programmes or strategies at country level, through Social Protection Working Group.</i></p> <p><i>The quality and inclusiveness of national policy processes should be a key part of Irish Aid policy dialogue with Governments and other partners.</i></p> <p><i>Supporting research and promoting public and political debate and facilitating South-South cooperation will help strengthen national ownership.</i></p> <p><i>Making social protection funding a significant element of CSP budgets, forming. Alliances with other funding partners and demonstrating the value-added by Irish social protection spending and policy work will strengthen influence.</i></p>
Operational Risk	Mitigation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited capacity of government to implement social protection programmes, especially if the responsible ministry is politically weak with limited human resources and budgetary allocations.</li> <li>2. Development partners, provide technical assistance but sustainable capacity is never built or staffing rotation means that strengthened capacity is lost.</li> <li>3. Government financing remains low because it is unwilling or unable to pay while donor money is available or because of fiscal constraints.</li> <li>4. The impacts of social protection programmes is limited, because transfer payments are too low or devalue over time.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Engagement at the highest political level, including parliamentarians and government ministers.</i></p> <p><i>Integrate implementation capacity building into agreed national policies and programmes.</i></p> <p><i>Agreeing on co-financing protocols and identifying options for domestic resource mobilisation;</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening accountability mechanisms, such as a social protection platform that harmonises responses by development</i></p>

Fiduciary Risk	Mitigation
<p>1. A weak overall public financial management context may imply fiduciary risks to social protection programmes delivered through national systems, including fraud by claimants, (including duplication / multiple inclusion) corruption or mismanagement by officials, robbery by criminals.</p>	<p><i>Ensure that rigorous ex-ante and periodic risk assessment of targeting and financial management systems is integrated into capacity building for delivery.</i></p> <p><i>Using non-state financial service providers and electronic or ‘mobile money’ cash delivery mechanisms can reduce fiduciary risk and improve traceability.</i></p> <p><i>Establish social accountability mechanisms such as social audits, civil society oversight and grievance procedures.</i></p>
Political Risk	Mitigation
<p>1. Social protection is perceived as unaffordable ‘hand-outs’ that create dependency and politically opposed in favour of investment in ‘productive’ sectors such as agriculture and infrastructure.</p> <p>2. Social protection becomes politicised. Beneficiaries may be selected on the basis of political affiliation or governments might seek electoral advantage by rolling out or scaling up benefits before elections and demonstrating less commitment between elections.</p>	<p><i>This scepticism can be overcome by informing officials and politicians about the evidence on the economic and social returns to investment in social protection, and by running pilot projects to demonstrate what works before scaling them up to national coverage.</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring widespread public knowledge on the needs-based eligibility criteria for targeting and allocation of social protection resources.</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring that coverage rates and value of transfers are explicit in policies and plans and that budget allocations are included in MTEFs.</i></p>



Community gathering for social protection event in Zambian Village (Courtesy of ILO)

The development of this strategy was led by the Inclusive Economic Growth team at Irish Aid. It is the product of an intensive consultation process, including two workshops involving Irish Aid staff, interviews at country level with stakeholders in the social protection sector, and a review of relevant documents.

## A1.1 Documents review

Documents consulted in preparing this draft Social Protection Strategy included:

- internal documents, notably Ireland's Policy for International Development and its associated Framework for Action, as well as working documents on social protection, inclusive economic growth, and resilience;
- other agency documents, including social protection strategies or frameworks from Germany, the Netherlands, and FAO, and publications on inclusive growth by the OECD; (please see bibliography for further details)
- academic publications on social protection and on resilience.

## A1.2 Consultation workshop

On 26 May 2015, the Inclusive Economic Growth Policy Team hosted a consultation workshop at Irish Aid in Dublin, facilitated by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), as part of the process of developing Irish Aid's Social Protection Strategy. The 11 participants included the Team Leaders of the Resilience, Essential Services and Inclusive Economic Growth Policy Teams; the Head of the Policy, Coherence and Research Unit; the Deputy Directors of the Bilateral Cooperation Units for West and East Africa and for Southern Africa, Asia and Palestine; the Gender Focal Person from Governance, Human Rights and Gender Equality; and the Desk Officer for Malawi and Mozambique. From IDS, the workshop was led by the Director and Co-Director of the Centre for Social Protection (CSP).

Discussions during the workshop were structured around the draft outline of Irish Aid's Social Protection Strategy, and was organised into 4 sessions.

- 1. Vision, definition and goals:** Participants discussed three alternative visions and three proposed goals for social protection, as well as a definition of social protection contained in the Inclusive Economic Growth concept note, in terms of their relevance for Irish Aid.
- 2. Roles and partners:** Participants were asked to rank Irish Aid's priority roles in supporting social protection in key partner countries (policy influencing, financial assistance, technical assistance, capacity building and implementation support), and to rank key partners for Irish Aid to work with in-country (government ministries, UN agencies, international NGOs, local civil society organisations, and management consultancy firms).
- 3. Risks and value-for-money:** Participants listed various risks (fiduciary, political, etc.) that could negatively affect the delivery of social protection support by Irish Aid, and identified ways in which each risk could be addressed. They also brainstormed on how to assess value-for-money in the support that Irish Aid provides to social protection in key partner countries.
- 4. General discussion:** This was an open session in which participants raised any issues they felt needed particular attention in the Social Protection Strategy. Examples of topics raised included: that Irish Aid's support to social protection programming should be evidence-based, that the strategy must have policy coherence, and that the strategy should not be overloaded with lists of desirable activities to support but needs to prioritise.

### A1.3 Consultation interviews

As part of the consultation process, in June and July 2015, IDS conducted long-distance interviews with a total of 33 Irish Aid staff and social protection stakeholders in 7 countries in Africa – Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia – and 1 country in southeast Asia – Vietnam. These countries were selected because they represent key partner countries for Irish Aid in social protection. Half of the interviewees were Irish Aid staff members (Head or Deputy Head of Development or Mission, Programme Managers or Officers, and Advisors), while the other half represented development partners (UNICEF, DFID, ILO, World Bank), international NGOs (Concern, Goal, HelpAge), civil society (Africa Platform for Social Protection) and national government officials.

#### Interviewees for consultation interviews

Agency	Countries	Number
Irish Aid	Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Vietnam	16
UNICEF	Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam	5
DFID	Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia	3
ILO	Mozambique	1
World Bank	Tanzania	1
Concern	Ethiopia	1
HelpAge	Mozambique	1
Platform for Social Protection	Zambia	1
Government Ministries	Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda	4

Two complementary questionnaires were developed: one for ‘internal stakeholders’ (Irish Aid staff) and one for ‘external stakeholders’ (other development partners, NGOs, civil society and governments). The purpose of the interviews was to elicit views about the work that Irish Aid is already doing to support social protection in each country, and suggestions on what Irish Aid should do in future to build on this work, both strategically and operationally. Key issues discussed with both internal and external stakeholders included the current status of social protection in each country, the nature of current Irish Aid support to social protection (policy influence, building capacity, financial assistance, etc.), and whether Irish Aid should do anything differently in future. ‘Internal stakeholders’ were also asked about the relationship between headquarters and country offices in terms of policy support, about Irish Aid’s social protection vision and goals, key partners, risks and how to mitigate them, and how to define and measure value for money in social protection.

### A1.4 Technical workshop

On 25–26 August 2015, the Inclusive Economic Growth Policy Team hosted a second workshop, at Irish Aid’s offices in Limerick. The workshop was co-facilitated by the Director and former Director of the Centre for Social Protection from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). The purpose of this technical workshop was to review the draft Social Protection Strategy. In addition to head office staff, participants included 12 programme officers and advisors from 10 countries: Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Vietnam. Many of these staff members were interviewed during the consultation process, so this workshop gave them an opportunity to engage directly with the formulation of the strategy and to contribute to its revision.

The first day of the workshop set the context for the Social Protection Strategy, with presentations by the Inclusive Economic Growth Policy team and other teams – Resilience, Human Rights and Accountability and Essential Services – and country advisors on the links of social protection to their work. This was followed by feedback from the IDS consultants on the consultation workshop held in Dublin in May and on the interviews conducted with staff and stakeholders during June and July. The draft of the Social Protection Strategy was then presented and discussed. On the second day of the technical workshop, working groups reviewed each chapter in detail and offered suggestions on how the text could be improved. The feedback was compiled and used to revise the draft strategy.



Female beneficiary of social cash transfer programme in Posa Village, Northern Province, Zambia in 2017.  
Image courtesy of the ILO

## Annex 2 Costs and Financing

Financing social protection programmes is a major policy challenge in low-income countries. Irish Aid is committed to working on domestic resource mobilisation within its key partner countries, “including taxation of extractive industries and curbing illicit financial flows which are important for funding national social protection programmes”.<sup>10</sup> Irish Aid also engages with governments and with other development partners at country level, in providing financial support to domestic social protection programming. The issue of external financing versus national ownership of social protection – which is about accountability as much as domestic resource mobilisation versus international aid flows – is an unresolved debate that is central to Irish Aid’s positioning as a donor agency. This Annex provides a summary guide to issues of financing and value for money in the implementation of the strategy.

### A2.1 Financing

Mobilising adequate and sustainable financial resources for social protection programmes is a major challenge, especially in low-income countries, where it is compounded by the low fiscal base available for redistribution, as against the expensive commitment implied by institutionalising cash transfers and other programmes at national scale and on an indefinite or permanent basis.

For this reason, and because many governments are sceptical, at least initially, about the costs and impacts (both positive and negative) of social protection, development partners – including Irish Aid – often assume the burden of responsibility for financing these programmes, with the explicit agreement or implicit assumption that government will take over the financing in due course. As noted above, there is a risk that the government will renege on this expectation or agreement, leaving development partners with a dilemma: to cut their support to these programmes or to continue funding them indefinitely?

Delivering social protection is part of every government’s mandate and implies a social contract between the state and citizens, for which citizens should be able to hold their government to account. Irish Aid support to financing social protection will focus primarily on technical components such as establishing management information systems (MIS) or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units, capacity building and lesson-learning.

At the same time, Irish Aid will lobby governments to expand their financial commitment to social protection, recognising that social protection is a right and that progressive realisation towards universal coverage is the ultimate goal of Irish Aid support. Lobbying can take several forms, including:

- (1) convincing governments through the evidence base that social protection generates numerous positive economic and social benefits and has only limited social costs (such as dependency);
- (2) persuading governments that social protection is an investment in the achievement of several fundamental development goals, including poverty reduction and economic growth; rather than a costly ‘hand-out’ that retards growth and generates zero returns;
- (3) demonstrating that substantial fiscal space is available to most governments for expanded social protection programmes through relatively minor reallocations of public spending priorities;
- (4) increasing the revenue base by strengthening the fiscal system so that taxes are collected and tax evasion, tax avoidance, corruption and financial mismanagement are minimised,
- (5) identifying innovative sources of funding for social protection, such as ring-fencing certain taxes (e.g. airport taxes) or introducing a ‘solidarity tax’ as Madagascar is currently considering.

<sup>10</sup> Irish Aid (2015a), page 4.

## A2.2 Value-for-money

Value-for-money can be intuitively understood as delivering tangible benefits for poor and vulnerable people in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

One way of assessing value-for-money in social protection programmes is to calculate what proportion of total spending goes directly to beneficiaries or programme participants – also known as the alpha-ratio (administration costs as a percentage of total costs). As a rule of thumb, at least 80% of the budget should be transferred as benefits, while recognising the importance of investing in sound administrative systems to ensure efficient delivery and to minimise fiduciary risk. Subnational projects generally have smaller total costs, but higher alpha-ratios, than national scale programmes. Setting up new projects and systems is always expensive, but as projects are scaled up the costs per beneficiary tend to fall. In Uganda, for example, the administration costs of an Irish Aid-supported cash transfer pilot project were initially high, at 28%, but the Ministry of Finance wants to lower this to 6–7%.

Another way of improving value-for-money is to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of each intervention, and to compare the returns to alternative interventions, in order to identify the most cost-effective interventions for Irish Aid support. Cost-benefit analysis is a useful tool but needs to be used cautiously. It is not always straightforward to estimate full administrative costs. For instance, if government officials deliver cash transfers directly this looks cheaper than subcontracting a private company or a commercial bank, but the opportunity costs can be high but unquantifiable – for instance, if social workers are diverted from their case management responsibilities to make cash payments and monitor compliance with conditionalities. On the benefit side, quantifying the full range of benefits from an intervention is also problematic, often requiring rigorous longitudinal evaluation surveys to assess impacts on individual and household income and assets, food security and nutrition, both immediately and in the long-term, as well as ‘social’ impacts such as intra-household decision-making and women’s empowerment, social status and self-esteem, social exclusion and community cohesion.

A well-functioning M&E system can generate some of the information needed to assess whether a particular intervention is delivering the intended impacts, and its cost-effectiveness relative to alternative interventions. However, any value-for-money assessment or cost-benefit analysis must recognise the importance of context. Administrative costs within and across countries can vary widely, depending on logistical factors such as roads and transport infrastructure, population density, bank fees and mobile phone charges. The people most in need of social protection are often those living in the most remote and inaccessible communities, so delivery costs will be highest. The political economy context also influences which interventions are feasible to support, which is not determined only by cost-effectiveness calculations. Although guiding principles are useful, discretion and judgement should be used by each country programme in deciding which interventions to support.

# Annex 3 References and Further Reading

## Introduction

This resource annex is presented in the form of an annotated bibliography. It is organised around themes that emerge from the strategy. Under each topic we identify key publications and explain why these are useful or important sources for interested readers.

The structure of this annex is as follows. First we examine four social protection frameworks and approaches: transformative social protection, humanitarian linkages, graduation model programmes, and the social protection floor. Next we consider global commitments relevant to social protection: the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

The evidence base resources are organised around the four priority areas for Irish Aid in development policy: reducing food and nutrition insecurity, fostering and building resilience, promoting inclusive growth, and enhancing equity and social accountability. Two large-scale comprehensive reviews of evidence are also presented. The last section of the annotated bibliography discusses key documents that reflect the organisational position on social protection of four major international agencies: UNICEF, the World Bank, the European Commission, and ILO.

Finally, we include a range of sources and links to social protection-related blogs, newsletters and training courses.

## Social protection frameworks and approaches

### *Transformative Social Protection*

Devereux, Stephen, and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler. “Transformative social protection.” (2004).

Sabates-Wheeler, Rachel, and Stephen Devereux. “Transformative social protection: the currency of social justice.” *Social Protection for the Poor and Poorest*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008. 64-84.

These articles argue against the popular perception of social protection as “social welfare programmes for poor countries”, consisting of costly targeted transfers to economically inactive or vulnerable groups. The authors define social protection as ‘all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised’. This definition moves the objective of social protection away from purely an economic one to one that also includes efforts to address the social vulnerabilities of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups. The framing of social protection in these papers has substantially influenced the international debate and policy agenda on social protection over the last 10 years.

[http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Transformative\\_Social\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Transformative_Social_Protection.pdf)

### *Humanitarian-SP linkages*

Oxford Policy Management (2015) Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems, A research programme for DFID, Working paper 1: Conceptualizing Shock-Responsive Social Protection. Oxford: Oxford Policy Management.

A new focus on shock-sensitive social protection means that donor and development agencies are supporting Governments to build national programmes that are able to scale up and down according to seasonal needs and in response to shocks. This recent paper by OPM (2015) reviews the literature on a range of social protection programmes that are increasingly being designed with specific mechanisms that enhance their flexibility to respond in the event of crises. These mechanisms include, contingency funds, price indexing to respond to seasonal or unexpected variability, expanded management and information systems (MIS), as well as pre-determined plans to be able to scale up (eg: expansion in number of beneficiaries and/or increase in size of transfer). Definition: ‘Shock-responsive social protection means that programmes and systems are designed to be able to respond to what is traditionally understood as an ‘emergency’ by the humanitarian community: a covariate shock that affects a large number of people at once such as a natural disaster or conflict.’

<http://www.opml.co.uk/sites/default/files/WP1%20-%20Shock-resp%20SP%20concept%20note.pdf>

### Graduation model programmes

'Graduation model' programmes deliver sequenced packages of support to poor households over a period of two years or longer, with the objective of 'graduating' them sustainably out of extreme poverty. The standard package includes regular cash transfers, access to savings, productive assets (e.g. livestock), livelihood training and coaching that includes behaviour change communication (BCC). Here we review four seminal contributions to the graduation literature.

Sabates-Wheeler, R. and Devereux S. (2013), *Sustainable graduation from social protection programmes*, **Development and Change**, 44(4): 911–38.

This article draws a distinction between 'threshold graduation' – which occurs almost by definition if substantial resources are transferred to poor people – and 'sustainable graduation' – meaning that improvements are sustained after programme support ends. The authors identify five factors that can either 'enable' or 'constrain' household trajectories towards graduation: market context, initial conditions (at local and household levels), scale and coverage of transfers, household-level incentives (including dependency and dilution effects), and the environmental context. A key conclusion is that some of these factors are within the control of the beneficiary or participating household, but others are not and require complementary interventions.

de Montesquiou, A. and T Sheldon (2014), **From Extreme Poverty to Sustainable Livelihoods: A Technical Guide to the Graduation Approach**, CGAP and Ford Foundation.

As the title suggests, this technical guide provides a manual for any organisation or government planning to implement a 'graduation model' programme. The guide begins by describing the theory of change informing graduation programmes, before explaining why to target the extreme poor and how to reach them. The main section of the guide is called 'Launching a Program', and covers the planning process, key steps in implementing the five building blocks of the Graduation Approach, which monitoring data to gather and when, and reaching graduation. This is a user-friendly publication, easy to navigate with useful links to other online resources.

Devereux, S. and R. Sabates-Wheeler (edited volume) (2015), *Graduating from social protection?* **IDS Bulletin**, 46(2).

This edition of the IDS Bulletin compiles 13 papers from an international conference on graduation held in Rwanda in 2014 to review lessons learned from graduation programmes worldwide. The conceptual section (titled 'what is graduation?') discusses concepts like 'exogenous', 'endogenous', 'developmental' and 'intergenerational' graduation. Next, a cluster of empirical papers (titled 'does graduation work?') presents evidence on impacts from interventions in several countries, including Bangladesh, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti. Finally, selected operational issues (titled 'how to do graduation?') are discussed, such as targeting eligible participants, measuring graduation, monitoring, labour market linkages and political aspects of graduation programmes.

### Social Protection Floor

The Social Protection Floor is a set of basic social security guarantees, defined at national level, which are aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. The initiative was led by ILO and evolved out of its 'Extending Social Security' (ESS) programme, with the support of WHO.

ILO (2011), *Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalisation*, **Report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group**. Geneva: International Labour Office.

The 'Bachelet report' made a persuasive argument for social protection floors (SPF) and laid the foundations for the drafting and adoption of Recommendation 202 in 2012. The case for the SPF is grounded in social justice and the operationalisation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The SPF aims to provide social

assistance and/or social insurance to alleviate poverty and protect against economic and social risks, at every stage of the life-cycle. Although income security and access to health care for all are expensive ambitions, this report argues that fiscal space can be created by economic growth and political will.

ILO (2012), **Text of the Recommendation Concerning National Floors of Social Protection**. Geneva: International Labour Conference.

In June 2012 the International Labour Conference adopted Recommendation 202, which commits Members to extend social protection to all residents and children. Specifically, a social protection floor comprises four guarantees that should be progressively realised and established by law: access to essential health care; and basic income security for children, adults who are unable to earn sufficient income, and older persons. Importantly, Recommendation 202 provides for a ‘floor’, not a ‘ceiling’: the intention is first to move progressively towards universal coverage, and second to progressively ensure higher levels of social protection, by raising benefit levels and quality of health care.

## Global commitments

### *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

There is global level political commitment to social protection, as recognized by a specific target under the Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs): ‘to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable’. The Agenda 2030 central focus of ‘leave no one behind’ has provided a clear framework for action, whereas development and future growth must be inclusive of all, including women, children, marginalized groups, and people in crises.

Explicit reference to social protection within the SDGs is made in relation to Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere) and Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

Relevant targets include:

- 1.3 **Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems** and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and **social protection policies** and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

### *The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit*

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul had a focus on ‘Changing People’s Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need’. The World Humanitarian Summit’s global consultation process yielded insights into the role of social protection in humanitarian contexts. Social protection is recognized as contributing to three of the core discussions at the WHS: (i) managing disaster differently, (ii) leaving no one behind, (iii) changing people lives<sup>11</sup>. Specifically, there is an ambition to: “...support and build flexible and responsive national systems, such as health systems and social protection systems, that can strengthen targeting and entitlement for citizens based on need and can be scaled up or adjusted in times of greater need. We will continue to advocate with our partners for the increased use of cash programming in humanitarian crises where it is appropriate, and to invest in national registration systems.” (See Annex 4)

<sup>11</sup> SPIAC-B (2016) Leaving no one behind: How linking social protection and humanitarian action can bridge the development-humanitarian divide: A joint statement of social protection actors to the World Humanitarian Summit

## Evidence

Irish Aid's approach to social protection is based on the concept that social protection serves four main functions: provision, prevention, promotion and transformation. These four functions reflect priority policy areas for Irish Aid in development:

### *Reducing food and nutrition insecurity*

HLPE (2012). **Social Protection for Food Security**. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition. Rome: Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

The CFS commissioned the HLPE to produce a report on the contribution social protection can make towards achieving household food security. The report reviews the evidence of several instruments, including agricultural input subsidies, crop and livestock insurance, public works, food price subsidies, grain reserves, and conditional or unconditional cash transfers. The report argues that these instruments should not operate in isolation but as components of an integrated system, and it examines cross-cutting implementation issues including: targeting, cash versus food transfers, 'dependency syndrome', affordability and scalability. One critical conclusion is that well-designed social protection is an effective investment in food security.

European Commission (2012). **Social Transfers in the Fight against Hunger: A Resource for Development Practitioners**. Brussels: European Commission.

This Reference Document is designed as a resource for development practitioners and aid administrators who have limited familiarity with social transfers. It aims to support the integration of social transfers into anti-hunger programming, by improving the understanding of the role of social transfers, drawing from academic literature, practical experiences, and case studies of good practices. The resource is structured around a series of questions, starting with 'What are social transfers?' and 'When is it appropriate to use social transfers in the fight against hunger?' while also offering practical guidance on how to design, manage and finance a social transfer scheme.

FAO (2015). **Nutrition and social protection**. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

This paper argues that social protection has an important role to play in addressing the multiple dimensions of malnutrition, but it needs to be well targeted at malnourished and nutritionally vulnerable individuals, and it must be designed in nutrition-sensitive ways to maximise the linkages. Key principles include: make women recipients of social protection benefits; favour local purchases for food transfers; improve the nutritional quality of school feeding programmes; strengthen linkages to health and sanitation services; integrate nutrition education, and scale up safety nets during crises. Importantly, an integrated approach is essential to exploit the synergies between programmes and policy instruments.

### *Fostering and building resilience*

Daidone, Silvio, et al. **Is Graduation from Social Safety Nets Possible? Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa**. *IDS Bulletin* 46.2 (2015): 93-102.

As a reaction to the limited evidence available on graduation impacts, this paper provide a cross-country comparison of the potential effects of social cash transfers on graduation, drawing from impact evaluation results of cash transfer programmes in Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia. The analysis looks at whether social cash transfers have improved the likelihood of graduation, through increased productivity, income generation and resilience to shocks. The article shows that cash transfers have significant impacts on the

livelihoods of beneficiary households, as well as on the communities in which they live. However, while cash transfers can relax some liquidity and credit constraints, but cannot replace a holistic economic development strategy. The authors conclude that cash transfers require complementary programmes, whether existing or specific add-ons, to sustainably bring households out of poverty.

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/p2p/Publications/Graduation\\_from\\_Social\\_Safety\\_Nets\\_Daidone\\_et\\_al.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/p2p/Publications/Graduation_from_Social_Safety_Nets_Daidone_et_al.pdf)

Banerjee, A.; Duflo, E.; Goldberg, N.; Karlan, D.; Osei, R.; Parienté, W.; Shapiro, J.; Thuysbaert, B. and Udry, C. (2015), *A multifaceted program causes lasting progress for the very poor: evidence from six countries*, **Science**, 348: 1–16.

Following the success of BRAC's 'Targeting the Ultra-Poor' programme in Bangladesh, the Ford Foundation and CGAP commissioned pilot projects in eight countries to test its replicability. Six randomised control trials (RCTs) were conducted in Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, India, Pakistan and Peru. Evaluation findings are extremely positive: statistically significant gains were recorded on almost all outcome indicators (which included household consumption, food security, assets and income), both at endline and one year later. Also, discounted extra earnings exceeded programme costs in most countries. The authors conclude that graduation model programmes, if they are properly designed and implemented, are sustainable and cost-effective.

### *Promoting inclusive growth*

OECD (2014). **All on Board: Making Inclusive Growth Happen**. Paris: OECD.

This report shows that social protection has an important role to play in ensuring that economic growth is more inclusive and reduces income inequality and non-income outcomes, by spreading the benefits of growth more evenly across social groups. For example, unemployment insurance should be linked to efforts to help the unemployed back into productive employment, and tax revenues to finance redistributive spending should be increased as national prosperity rises. In developing countries, social security covers mainly government and private sector workers, while informal sector workers in low productivity jobs lack access to social security, so non-contributory schemes must be extended.

Commonwealth of Australia (2014). **Social protection and growth: Research synthesis**. Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

This desk review finds positive empirical evidence for several pathways from social protection to economic growth. Many social protection programmes promote labour market linkages and generate income directly. Others diversify livelihoods against risks and shocks, which reduces the need for negative coping strategies such as selling productive assets, while others promote access to health care and education, which benefits both immediate and future labour productivity. Even social assistance programmes that protect consumption have multiplier effects on local incomes and employment. The report notes that social protection programmes that target the poor are especially important, because this promotes more inclusive growth.

### *Enhancing equity and social accountability*

World Bank (2007) **Control and Accountability Mechanisms in Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: a Review of Programs in Latin America and the Caribbean**.

This document details the accountability mechanisms required to ensure that social protection services are delivered in a transparent and fair manner. These relate primarily to grievance and redress mechanisms. In cash transfer programmes these mechanisms are critical to managing risks and ensuring effective programme implementation. The authors argue that maintaining a positive public reputation for effective prevention of fraud and errors can also build programme credibility and public support.

Malena, C. with Forster, R. and Singh, J.(2004), *Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice. Social Development Paper 76.*

An increasingly popular way to strengthen accountability is through informal social accountability mechanisms, as opposed to through formal mechanisms such as complaint hotlines and citizen charters. In this article, social accountability is defined as the efforts of collective actors to demand accountability for the provision of public goods from the state through non-traditional mechanisms. These accountability mechanisms include 1) community monitoring, 2) Citizen report cards, 3) social audits, and 4) community scorecards.

### *Large-scale evidence reviews*

DFID (2011). **Cash Transfers Evidence Paper.** London: Department for International Development.

This paper compiled the evidence base globally on cash transfer programmes in 2011, after the first 10–12 years of implementation experiences and impact evaluations. Several conclusions drawn remain relevant, including the following. Firstly, cash transfers can reduce inequality and the severity of poverty, but are unlikely to graduate people out of poverty without complementary interventions. Secondly, cash transfers improve access to health and education services, but rarely improve health and education outcomes without supply-side investments in these services. Thirdly, while cash transfers stimulate local economic activity, there is little evidence of impacts on aggregate economic growth at national level.

World Bank (2015). **The State of Social Safety Nets 2015.** Washington DC: World Bank.

This report compiles and analyses statistics from the World Bank’s ‘Atlas of Social Protection: Indicators of Resilience and Equity’ (ASPIRE), an international database of cash and in-kind transfers. The database finds that 1.9 billion people have access to social safety nets, that 40 out of 48 countries in Africa have unconditional cash transfers, and 64 countries have conditional cash transfers (CCTs). Nonetheless, coverage of the poor and urban areas remains low, partly because low-income countries spend only 1.5% of GDP on safety net programmes. Higher payments, better pro-poor targeting and more effective coordination mechanisms are needed, including building social registries.

Bastagli, F., Hagen-Zanker, J., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G. and Schmidt, T. (2016). **Cash transfers: what does the evidence say? A rigorous review of programme impact and of the role of design and implementation features.** London: ODI.

This review was commissioned by DFID and effectively updates the ‘Cash Transfers Evidence Paper’ of 2011, drawing on the growing evidence base from evaluations of cash transfer programmes. Many key conclusions are similar – for example, that cash transfers increase the use of services but not necessarily education, health and nutrition outcomes, and that complementary interventions and investments tend to enhance impacts. This paper also finds that cash transfers are associated with a reduction in child labour and with economic empowerment of women. Design features are crucial: the size of cash transfers, their duration, frequency and payment mechanisms all influence impacts.

### **International Organisational positions on social protection**

#### **UNICEF**

*UNICEF (2012) Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing Equity for Children, New York: United Nations Children’s Fund*

UNICEF’s strategic framework advocates for child and gender-sensitive social protection and argues for the expansion of inclusive, integrated social protection systems. The thematic focus of the framework is on equity for all in line with a human rights approach, with a specific focus on children and their carers. A clear value added of the UNICEF approach is the central emphasis on the constituent parts of effective integrated systems which

rely on a multi-sector and a systems approach. The framework also highlights emerging challenges in areas such as humanitarian action, adolescence, migration, and urban settings.

[http://www.unicef.org/socialprotection/framework/files/Full\\_Social\\_Protection\\_Strategic\\_Framework\\_low\\_res\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialprotection/framework/files/Full_Social_Protection_Strategic_Framework_low_res(1).pdf)

### *World Bank*

World Bank (2012) *Managing Risk, Promoting Growth – Developing Systems for Social Protection in Africa: The World Bank’s Africa Social Protection Strategy 2012–2022*, Washington DC: World Bank

As with the UNICEF strategy, the World Bank’s 2012 Social Protection and Labour Strategy takes a systemic approach, emphasising the need to move from fragmented, isolated interventions to a ‘coherent, connected portfolio of programs’ (2012, p3.). The Strategy also emphasises the importance of financing and governance solutions to helping make social protection work for the poor. The role of social protection in ‘improving people’s productivity and incomes, through preserving and building their human capital, and through access to better jobs’ (2012, P3.) is also of critical concern to the World Bank.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRICA/Resources/social-protection-full-report-EN-2012.pdf>

### *European Commission*

European Commission (2012) *Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, Brussels: European Commission

The EU Communication (2012) identifies significant challenges in partner countries in establishing and developing their social protection systems. They attribute this to low budget allocations, weak institutional capacity, low tax bases or high levels of informality in their economies. The communication, therefore, emphasises the importance of donor coordination, technical assistance, sustained funding commitment and support to national processes on a demand-driven, rights-based approach.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0446&from=EN>

### *ILO*

ILO (2011) *Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization, report of the Advisory Group chaired by Michelle Bachelet*, Geneva: International Labour Organization

The ILO uses a rights-based approach to motivate its strategy on comprehensive social security for all. The strategy provides guidance on how to establish and maintain social protection floors as a fundamental element of national social security systems. It also outlines approaches for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible. Together, these two elements can be developed to support the establishment of country-specific comprehensive social security systems.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_165750.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_165750.pdf)

### *ILO/WB joint statement on universal social protection in June 2015*

This joint statement calls on world leaders to promote universal social protection, which they define as “adequate cash transfers for all who need them, especially children; benefits and support for people of working age in case of maternity, disability, work injury or for those without jobs; and pensions for all older persons”. The focus on ‘universality’ in the statement represents a significant shift in the rhetoric of the World Bank around safety nets.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/documents/statement/wcms\\_378989.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/documents/statement/wcms_378989.pdf)

### Blogs and Forums

**Development Pathways** is a consultancy firm specializing in social policy in international development. The company brings together a group of international development practitioners – and an expanding network of consultants – with extensive experience of working on social protection, social development, management information systems, gender and social inclusion across Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim is to provide creative, evidence-based and context-specific solutions to the social and economic policy challenges facing developing countries.

Website: <http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/>

Blog: <http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/resources/category/blog/>

The Southern African Social Protection Experts Network (**SASPEN**) is a not-for-profit loose alliance of stakeholders, scholars and consultants who engage with social protection in the SADC region. SASPEN was founded in 2012 as an initiative of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, with a secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia. SASPEN promotes social protection in SADC countries and beyond, provides platforms for exchange to foster sensitisation and dissemination, and links social protection experts and institutions with each other in a network. SASPEN conducts workshops, international conferences, seminars, publications and joint research. SASPEN publishes a series of briefing papers called SASPEN brief (up to 2500 words) and a blog series called SASPEN INSIGHTS. SASPEN has grown rapidly since its inception and its annual conference has become a flagship event for social protection practitioners and researchers in southern Africa. The October 2016 conference in Johannesburg was on the theme of ‘comprehensive social protection’ and attracted 170 participants. SASPEN is strongest as a networking and dissemination mechanism. The website posts useful links to relevant events and summaries of new publications, but the blog series only posts occasional contributions.

Website: <http://www.saspen.org/home/en/>

Blog: <http://saspen.org/blog/>

**‘socialprotection.org’** aims to facilitate knowledge-sharing on effective social protection policies and programmes, as well as contribute to capacity-building of Low-Income Countries (LICs) and Middle-Income Countries (MICs). The portal has four sections. ‘Discover’ hosts documents, links, and profiles of members, programmes and stakeholders. ‘Connect’ hosts a discussion forum, online communities, an events calendar and a social space. ‘Learn’ provides a virtual campus, a social protection glossary, news from the field and learning tools on how to design and deliver social protection. ‘Share’ is an interactive platform for creating online communities, sharing documents and proposing webinars. ‘socialprotection.org’ is relatively new but announced its intention to become the leading global portal and ‘go to’ website for social protection. It is maintained very actively so it is up to date and provides timely information about new publications and upcoming events. Its highest profile activities are the very informative webinar series, which are often themed – for example, an ongoing series of four webinars discusses Brazil’s experience of social protection programmes.

Website: <http://socialprotection.org/>

Webinars: [http://socialprotection.org/search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=webinar](http://socialprotection.org/search?search_api_views_fulltext=webinar)

**International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.** The IPC-IG ([www.ipc-undp.org/](http://www.ipc-undp.org/)) was founded in 2004 as a global forum for South-South dialogue on innovative development policies, under a partnership agreement between UNDP and the Government of Brazil. The IPC-IG's mandate is to promote the production and dissemination of research studies, policy analysis and recommendations, the exchange of best practices in development initiatives and expansion of South-South cooperation, and to provide services and tools to strengthen government capacities in issues of social protection, inclusive growth, and the monitoring and evaluation of public policies. The Centre produces policy briefs, working papers, a magazine called Policy in Focus and a highly influential series called the [IPC-IG One-Pager](#) (over 330 to date) that distils research findings and policy lessons in a reader-friendly format. The IPC-IG was initially known for its efforts to export Brazil's innovative approaches to social protection (such as Bolsa Familia and the single registry) and adapt them to other countries, especially in Africa. It has become broader but the website remains the leading platform for up-to-date information and analysis of social protection in Latin America.

Website: <http://www.ipc-undp.org/>

One-pager: [http://www.ipc-undp.org/search\\_one\\_pager](http://www.ipc-undp.org/search_one_pager)

In 2010, UNICEF initiated an e-discussion called '**A Recovery with a Human Face**', echoing its work on 'Adjustment with a Human Face' in the 1980s. The e-discussion was a response to concerns about the social impacts of the world economic crisis that started in 2008, and was intended to provide a platform for exchange knowledge and ideas. The discussion was moderated first by UNICEF and now by ILO, but the views expressed by contributors do not reflect the opinions or policies of either agency. Although the discussions on 'recoveryhumanface' are quite wide-ranging, social protection features prominently. There have recently been lively exchanges on graduation programmes, universal social protection, extending social security to the informal economy, social protection floors and financing. The main limitation is navigational: the posts are not categorised or indexed, and the online archive (at [www.recoveryhumanface.org/](http://www.recoveryhumanface.org/)) simply compiles all posts chronologically.

Website: <http://www.recoveryhumanface.org/>

Email: [recoveryhumanface@socpro.list.ilo.org](mailto:recoveryhumanface@socpro.list.ilo.org)

### Newsletters

#### *Centre for Social Protection – IDS*

Email: [socialprotection@ids.ac.uk](mailto:socialprotection@ids.ac.uk)

Website: [www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/centre-for-social-protection](http://www.ids.ac.uk/idsresearch/centre-for-social-protection)

#### *Social Protection Programme at ODI*

Website: <https://www.odi.org/programmes/social-protection>

Newsletter: <https://www.odi.org/programmes/social-protection>

#### *FAO- Social Protection Newsletter*

Website: <http://www.fao.org/social-protection/en/>

#### *Social Protection OUTLOOK - ILO*

Website: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowMainPage.action>

Newsletter: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowNewsletter.action>

Blog: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowWikis.action?sid=3&ctx=0>

### Online Communities

On the subject of financing social protection, you can join the Online Community (OC) on [Fiscal space for social protection: knowledge sharing initiative](#). This OC is supported by HelpAge International and the IPC-IG.

[Gender and Social Protection](#), the creation of which was prompted by the Gender and Social Protection Webinar Series. It is organised by the IPC-IG and the FAO.

### Short Courses and Training

*Centre for Social Protection short course* **[‘Social Protection: policies, programmes and evidence’](#)**

*IDS, Brighton*

The Centre for Social Protection (CSP) is pleased to offer a third round of our short course ‘Social Protection: policies, programmes and evidence’. This 4-day course focuses on getting you up to speed with current knowledge, evidence and practice of social protection. It offers a unique opportunity for those already working on social protection or who will be working in the field in the future to broaden their knowledge base and gain critical insight into the most recent thinking about social protection. Applications are now closed but if you are interested in being informed about future courses please contact us at [CSPcourse@ids.ac.uk](mailto:CSPcourse@ids.ac.uk)

### [Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes](#)

*Chiang Mai, Thailand, EPRI*

The Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and HelpAge International, together with the UNU-MERIT/Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, are offering a two-week course including a number of specialised modules aimed at providing participants with an in-depth understanding of the conceptual and practical issues involved in the development of social transfer programmes. The Ageing and Social Pensions module, offered by HelpAge International will focus on how social protection systems will adapt to an ageing population in the world. The module equips participants with knowledge on the design, implementation and financial costs of both social (non-contributory) and contributory pensions.

### *Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences*

In 2014 this German university introduced a new MA called ‘Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems’, a unique three-semester study programme that aims to enable international students from various countries to analyse social protection systems and design them in light of national needs and capacities. The course offers a tertiary-level qualification to employees of government ministries, social insurance providers, NGOs and international organisations who are working in the area of social protection or social security. This MA combines face-to-face teaching and distance-learning phases, with inputs by experts from the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, the Institute of Development Studies, HelpAge and others.

Website: <https://www.h-brs.de/en/analysis-and-design-social-protection-systems-ma>

### *University of Mauritius*

The University of Mauritius offers a one-year MSc in Social Protection Financing, in a partnership with the ILO. (The ILO has a similar partnership with the University of Maastricht's Graduate School of Governance.) The objective is to improve the capacities of national policymakers, administrators, and financial specialists responsible for financial planning and management of social protection schemes. The expected outcomes are the strengthening of the sustainability of the social protection schemes already in place, their improvement in the future, the development of financially sustainable and well-managed new schemes where gaps exist, and, as a consequence, the long-term reduction of poverty and the enhancement of welfare in African countries.

Website: <http://www.uomtrust.ac.mu/index.php/programmes/23-uom-trust/trust-programmes/uom-trust-postgraduate/85-msc-in-social-protection-financing-ft>

### *World Bank*

For several years the World Bank has run a two-week training course called 'Social Safety Nets Core Course' at its headquarters in Washington DC. The course focuses on safety nets as an integral part of social protection systems, to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the conceptual and practical issues involved in the development of social assistance programmes, or social safety nets. Learning methods include presentations, round table discussions, simulation games, computer-based exercises and group work. The target audience includes policymakers and policy analysts from government agencies, NGOs involved in the implementation of social safety nets, and operational staff from bilateral and multilateral donor agencies who are engaged in the design, implementation or evaluation of social safety nets programs.

Website: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2016/04/25/safety-nets-core-course-2016>



**José Supinho, Maputo Mozambique** A participant in the Government's Basic Social Protection programme. (Image courtesy of the Mozambican Civil Society Platform for Social Protection during a home visit linked to writing of success stories activity)

## Annex 4 | WHS Commitments

Commitment 1: Commit to a new way of working that meets people's immediate humanitarian needs, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years through the achievement of collective outcomes.

\* Anticipate, Do Not Wait: to invest in risk analysis and to incentivize early action in order to minimize the impact and frequency of known risks and hazards on people.

\* Reinforce, Do Not Replace: to support and invest in local, national and regional leadership, capacity strengthening and response systems, avoiding duplicative international mechanisms wherever possible.

\* Preserve and retain emergency capacity: to deliver predictable and flexible urgent and life-saving assistance and protection in accordance with humanitarian principles.

\* Transcend Humanitarian-Development Divides: work together, toward collective outcomes that ensure humanitarian needs are met, while at the same time reducing risk and vulnerability over multiple years and based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors. The primacy of humanitarian principles will continue to underpin humanitarian action.

Commitment 2: Commit to enable coherent financing that avoids fragmentation by supporting collective outcomes over multiple years, supporting those with demonstrated comparative advantage to deliver in context. (Linked to Financing Core Commitments)

### Ireland's Additional Specific Commitments

6.1 Ireland commits to deepening our focus on forgotten crises, fragile states and targeting investment in state-building and peacebuilding priorities. Applying the New Deal principles for engaging at national level, we will work towards strengthening and using national systems and local institutions for conflict prevention, state-building and economic empowerment.

6.2 Ireland will strengthen coherence and coordination across our development and humanitarian funding, working towards joint analysis and collective outcomes in our support to NGOs, the multilateral system and in our bilateral programmes.

6.3 Ireland will seek to identify multi-annual country level outcomes to guide our engagement in protracted crises. These outcomes, dictated by need, context and gender sensitivity, will allow for longer term planning and maximise the impact of the financial, human and political resources at our disposal. One example of a longer term outcome for collective action that we will promote is improved nutrition in all contexts.

6.4 Ireland will integrate natural disaster and climate change risk management and vulnerability assessments when planning and implementing all our bilateral country programmes. This will include increasing investment in multi-hazard risk analyses, early warning systems, preparedness and disaster risk reduction across our portfolio, with measures to ensure that the specific needs and capacities of women and children are considered.

6.5 Ireland will seek to support and build flexible and responsive national systems, such as health systems and social protection systems, that can strengthen targeting and entitlement for citizens based on need and can be scaled up or adjusted in times of greater need. We will continue to advocate with our partners for the increased use of cash programming in humanitarian crises where it is appropriate, and to invest in national registration systems.



