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# Operational

## Note No 4

### *Operations*

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**SPaN**  
Supporting people through crisis



*Guidance Package on Social Protection across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*

DEVCO  
ECHO  
NEAR



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This operational note has been written by Gabrielle Smith.

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# Introduction

**The world is seeing some of the worst levels of violence and displacement, driven by political instability, conflict, complex emergencies, failed peace agreements and disasters.** The international humanitarian system delivers assistance and protection to more people than ever. Many countries requiring assistance are affected by multiple and compounding crises, such as conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement, while crises are lasting longer: some 80 per cent of the humanitarian crises where DG ECHO works are lasting for five years or more. There is also increasing recognition of the need to protect development gains achieved during regular times from erosion by recurrent and predictable shocks and stresses.

**Traditional models of humanitarian and development assistance are challenged by such trends. Frequent, complex and protracted crises are placing extreme demands on the humanitarian system.** Providing short-term humanitarian support to complex, long-term challenges compromises the impact of assistance. Meanwhile, traditional development-oriented social protection approaches face challenges in scaling up, operating effectively, and adapting to or addressing the shocks and vulnerabilities found in fragile, conflict-affected and displacement contexts to better complement emergency assistance. New approaches are needed to better address the needs of vulnerable populations living in such contexts and help ensure they are not left behind.

**Against this background, international commitments to foster greater collaboration and coherence across the humanitarian-development nexus have strengthened.** Social protection and humanitarian assistance, particularly cash-based modalities, offer opportunities for common programming due to their prevalence, coverage and well-established impacts, including in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement situations and the similarities in design and operations between some humanitarian and social protection approaches.

**This operational note provides an overview of what fostering greater links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement contexts means in practice.** It explains why it is important to consider operations when fostering these linkages; key factors and considerations that guide operational decisions; underlying principles for success; key considerations, hints and tips at each stage of the delivery chain; requirements for coordination; and a checklist for mainstreaming operations considerations in the programme cycle. Case studies highlight operational challenges and promising practices. While the note is primarily based on experience and lessons from social transfers, the guidance is presented more generally and can be considered a sound basis for engaging with operational systems associated with other social protection instruments.

The note builds on the EU Reference Document '[Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus: a game changer in supporting people through crises](#)' and is intended as a gateway to further resources. It is complemented by notes on social protection in contexts of fragility and conflict, and contexts of forced displacement. The target audience is European Commission practitioners in EU delegations and ECHO field offices as well as ECHO, DEVCO and NEAR operational desks and the note's purpose is to better equip them to address specific operational challenges. It also aims to be useful to practitioners from EU Member States, international and national agencies and national governments.

# Defining social protection, humanitarian assistance and operations

Social protection can be defined as a broad range of public, and sometimes private, instruments to tackle the challenges of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion (European Commission 2015). Social protection programmes and systems exhibit a wide range of objectives from directly reducing income poverty and other deprivations (e.g. nutrition, protection or shelter, etc.) to promoting human development, access to jobs and basic social services, addressing economic and social vulnerabilities and contributing to pro-poor economic growth. Formal social protection instruments include: social assistance, social insurance, social care services and labour market policies.

The Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship refer to assistance that is provided to, ‘...*save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.*’<sup>1</sup> Whilst various types of humanitarian assistance exist, the modality with the most similarities to social protection, and particularly social assistance, in terms of design, delivery features and common target group is humanitarian cash and voucher assistance, and, to a lesser degree, food transfers. Cash and vouchers in particular are increasingly being used as a humanitarian response modality, with global calls to increase their use.<sup>2</sup>

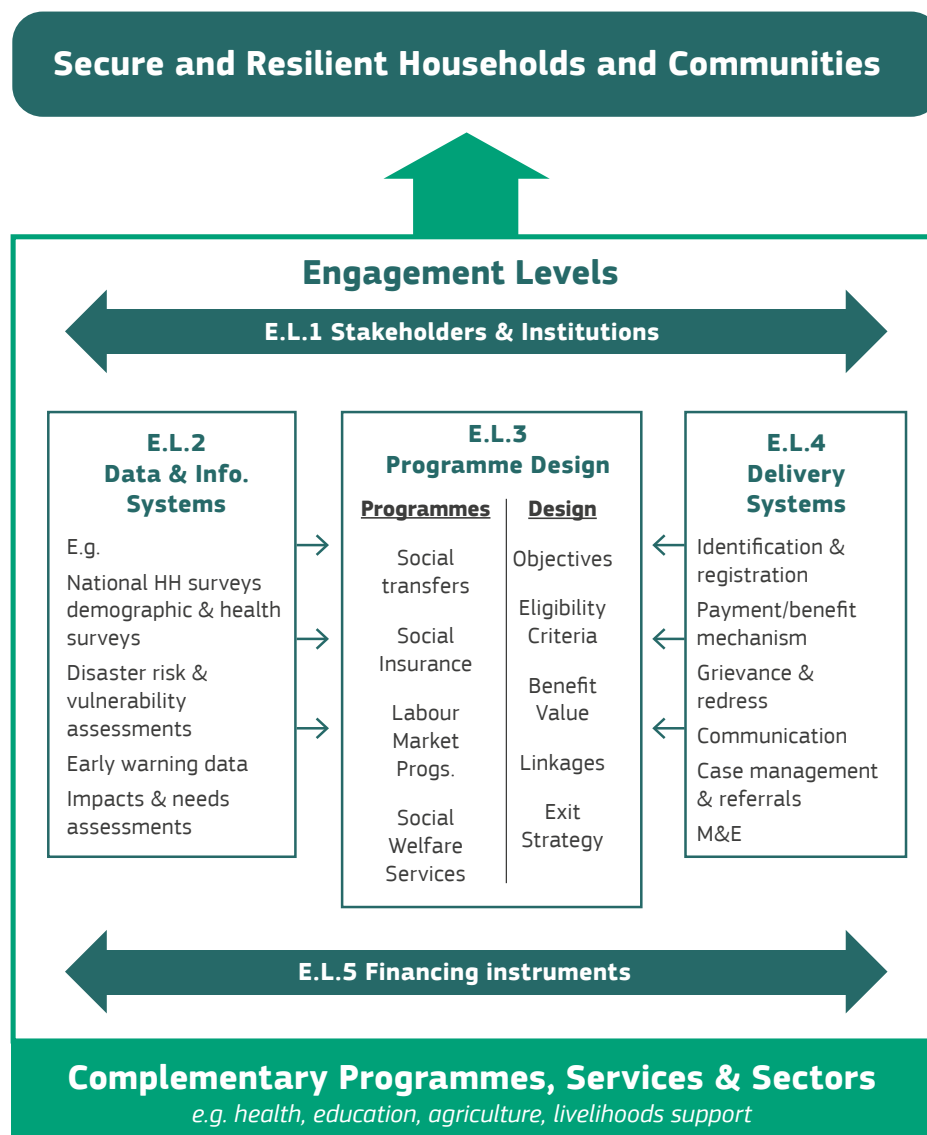
The note on *Social Protection in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts* highlights that optimising interactions between humanitarian and social protection interventions requires practitioners to assess and engage with one or more of these five building blocks, outlined in Figure 1. Programme operations, and the focus of this note, are concerned with engagements relating to delivery systems.

2 See for example the World Humanitarian Grand Bargain which commits to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming, and the December 2018 statement by the Principals of UNOCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP to increase the use of cash.

Social protection operations, or 'delivery systems', comprise the key business processes that enable the efficient and effective implementation of social protection policies and approaches. The implementation of social protection programmes (and especially social transfers) typically involves several administrative stages:

- communication,
- identification and registration,
- payment or benefit delivery,
- grievance and redress,
- case management,
- M&E

Figure 1: Levels of engagement with social protection in fragile and conflict-affected contexts



### Further resources

- **Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus: a game changer in supporting people through crises**

European Commission, provides information on different social protection instruments, and operational experiences of working with each. Annex 6 of the Reference Document lists additional online resources.

- **The Design and Management of Cash Transfer Programmes: An Overview**, Stephen Barrett and Stephen Kidd, KfW Development Bank Materials on Development Financing No. 3, 2015 [https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/Materialien/Nr.-3\\_Cash-transfer-programmes\\_EN.pdf](https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/PDF/Download-Center/Materialien/Nr.-3_Cash-transfer-programmes_EN.pdf)
- **Responding to shocks: considerations along the delivery chain**, Gabrielle Smith, Oxford Policy Management background paper for the World Bank (forthcoming).

## —2—

# Why is it important to engage with delivery systems?

**The EU Reference Document highlights that ‘the last decade has seen, on one hand, a considerable increase in the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian assistance, and on the other hand, an expansion of social cash transfer schemes in developing countries as part of efforts towards integrated social protection systems’ and that ‘as a result, humanitarian and social protection actors have to deal with a set of common operational issues around cash transfer design and implementation, and links with other sectors and interventions’.**

These overlaps in delivery systems have been a major factor galvanising the interest of both communities to take forward this approach. Commonalities in operational processes provide concrete entry points for the two sectors to work together – they solidify how linkages between humanitarian approaches and social protection can be made in practice<sup>3</sup>. It is through sharing, developing and strengthening these common systems that several of the anticipated benefits from working with social protection in crisis contexts – such as reducing response times, avoiding duplications, strengthening national systems, and supporting sustainability and exit<sup>4</sup> – are expected to be leveraged. Humanitarian agencies set up temporary operational systems and processes, resulting in numerous parallel systems. These are time-consuming and costly to set up, lead to significant duplication of effort, have no added value beyond the period of the response and do not contribute to building national capacities. Where governments and/or their partners are seeking to strengthen social protection in humanitarian settings, this interest is being driven by expectations that doing so will reduce system fragmentation, improve the timeliness, predictability and efficiency of humanitarian response in the short term, and improve national capacities for addressing humanitarian and social protection needs in the longer term<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, emerging evidence indicates that beyond the intrinsic importance of such systems, this practical collaboration between stakeholders can be an important entry point for building relationships and confidence and ultimately catalysing broader collaboration across the nexus<sup>6</sup>.

At the same time, evidence shows that weak, or overstretched, delivery systems can undermine the achievement of programme objectives and increase exposure to protection risks<sup>7</sup>. Outcomes for crisis-affected populations will depend on the sound design and robust execution of these administrative processes and systems. This issue can be critical when providing social protection in humanitarian settings, where i) shocks can impact on the functioning of delivery systems; ii) existing operational processes are being used/adapted to meet additional needs; or iii) new systems and programmes are being designed and implemented in contexts of fragility.

## Further resources

- **Social protection and humanitarian actors**, Monique Pariat, Director-General, DG ECHO. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/articles/social-protection-and-humanitarian-actors-qa-monique-pariat-director-general-echo>
- **Social protection as an instrument for emergency contexts**, Jean-Louis Ville, former acting Director of People and Peace Directorate, DG DEVCO. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144\\_fi](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/119144_fi)
- **What role can social protection systems play in responding to humanitarian emergencies?** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=dHl38bb\\_cjs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=dHl38bb_cjs)

3 OPM (2018) Shock Responsive Social Protection Literature Review

4 See note on SP in FCA contexts for further details of the expected benefits from linking.

5 OPM (2018) Shock Responsive Social Protection: Synthesis Report; EU Concept Document

6 UNICEF (2017) Outcome Document from International Conference on Assistance in Fragile and Conflict-Affected and Forced Displacement Contexts

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# Engaging with delivery systems: Guidance for practitioners

## Factors and considerations that guide operational decisions

The **EU Reference Document** identifies several ways in which social protection can help bridge the humanitarian-development divide. These are not mutually exclusive and can be combined. Different approaches will be appropriate depending on the level of maturity of the social protection system, as well as the nature of the crisis and the fragility context. The approach, or approaches, selected and these contextual factors will all have a bearing on the extent and nature of the engagement with social protection delivery systems – how these will be used, adapted, built or strengthened. Key considerations when working with these approaches, and in these contexts, are summarised in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2: Approaches to linking social protection and humanitarian action and the key considerations for engaging with delivery systems

APPROACH	OPTIONS <sup>8</sup>	USEFUL IN CONTEXTS OF...	ENGAGEMENT WITH DELIVERY SYSTEMS
Adapting existing social protection programmes and systems during periods of fragility, conflict or forced displacement to better address, and respond to, the needs of crisis-affected populations.	<p><b>Design tweaks:</b> adjustments to an existing, routine social protection programme to maintain the regular service in a crisis.</p> <p><b>Horizontal expansion:</b> temporarily include new, crisis-affected beneficiaries in an existing social protection programme.</p> <p><b>Vertical expansion:</b> temporarily increase the benefit value or duration of a benefit provided through an existing programme, for existing beneficiaries.</p> <p><b>Piggybacking:</b> elements of a programme's delivery system (e.g. beneficiary list, payment mechanism, communication system) are used to respond to a crisis, in a separately administered programme.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate/advanced maturity:</b> Government social protection has reasonable coverage and coherence, strong existing delivery systems and relatively clear institutional structures and mandates.</p>	<p><b>Guiding questions for decision makers:</b></p> <p>What is the operational performance of the day-to-day social protection programme(s) and its underlying processes?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are its processes enabling social protection to be effectively provided to people affected by crises?</li> <li>2. To what extent can these processes enable an effective response to needs caused by these crises?</li> <li>3. To what extent can they be amended, simplified, or otherwise supported, to enable them to be effectively used, and without undermining the operation of existing social protection schemes?</li> <li>4. Are there any alternative ways to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations and have these been compared?</li> </ol> <p><b>Considerations for success</b></p> <p>Success requires that existing processes and systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are sufficiently accurate, reliable and robust in normal times.</li> <li>• can continue to function, during or post disaster.</li> <li>• are suited to the realities and constraints of administering assistance in humanitarian settings or can be adapted to take these into account.</li> <li>• are accessible to humanitarian actors as well as national social protection actors.</li> <li>• (for shock response) have capacity to take on any additional tasks to administer humanitarian assistance.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Building new programmes during crises that include design and operational features to facilitate the transition of the programme or the caseload into a social protection system.</b></p>	<p>Alignment: humanitarian assistance is designed and delivered in a manner that can better meet the social protection needs of crisis-affected populations and potentially contribute to building future social protection systems. The ultimate aim is to transition eligible chronically poor and vulnerable households over to long-term government led systems. The approach may also be applicable as an interim measure for non-nationals prior to integration into national systems.</p>	<p><b>BASIC maturity:</b> social protection does not exist, is suspended, or is small-scale and fragmented, has limited coverage, unclear institutional structures, weak delivery systems.</p> <p><b>AND</b> refugee contexts where the aim is to eventually include the caseload within state services.</p>	<p><b>Guiding questions for decision makers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the design of any social protection processes that are emerging or planned?</li> <li>2. Where are the main capacity gaps in relation to delivery systems?</li> <li>3. Is there potential to develop processes, and underlying systems and capacities, that can be taken on by government or contribute to building social protection in the longer term?</li> </ol> <p><b>Considerations for success:</b></p> <p>Success requires that any operational processes developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are informed by discussions with government and development partners.</li> <li>• are appropriate for the local context, including technological levels.</li> <li>• align with existing or emerging processes, where these are judged to be robust and appropriate to the context.</li> <li>• use, or collect, data that could inform subsequent national social protection systems.</li> <li>• may be suitable for sequencing with complementary interventions.</li> <li>• are transferrable to a government agency (with appropriate capacity support).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Building social protection programmes and systems during periods of stability, that are resilient to fragility, conflict and displacement.</b></p>	<p>Brings together humanitarian and development actors on long-term programmes to build the capacity of government staff and systems and extend, strengthen or maintain social protection, to enable its continued provision (and potentially also shock-responsiveness) for vulnerable populations during times of crisis.</p>	<p>ALL contexts – this forms the foundation for all the above.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>This underpins the above approaches.</p> <p>Investing in social protection systems in normal times, but with a humanitarian lens, can establish a system that is more suited to operating in and capable of meeting needs of those affected by crises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in social protection coverage in crisis-affected areas.</li> <li>• Building systems and processes that are designed with disasters in mind, and are resilient to impacts of disasters and continue to operate during crises.</li> <li>• Have flexibility in processes to enable continued access for affected populations during crises.</li> <li>• Incorporate processes that enable scaling up to meet new acute needs caused by crisis.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES:**

- ➔ In **Turkey**, the condition for receipt of payments under the national conditional cash transfer for education is school attendance, verified through the integrated social assistance information system (ISAIS) which accesses data from the management information system of the national education ministry. When the EU adapted this programme for Syrian refugees, an interface between ISAIS and the management information system of the temporary education centres had to be built. This has improved linkages between, and management of, government services supporting refugees<sup>9</sup>.
- ➔ In **Palestine**, the EU and the World Bank supported capacity building of the national Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) including efforts to increase coverage, improve targeting and establish a management information system. Such measures have improved the ability of the emerging social protection system to provide support to households facing humanitarian emergency on account of the blockade. At the same time, WFP introduced a voucher programme for food assistance as a humanitarian response to high food prices. WFP aligned this voucher with the existing social protection processes used on the CTP and built the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development to implement the new electronic delivery processes associated with the voucher scheme. This programme is now partially managed by the ministry with technical support from WFP, enhancing the effectiveness of the CTP<sup>10</sup>.

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9 Maunder et al. (2018) 'Evaluation of the ECHO funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in Turkey, November 2016–February 2018'.  
 10 Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien (2018). Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection.

Figure 3: Linking social protection and humanitarian action in different emergency contexts – considerations for engagement with delivery systems

CONTEXT	POSSIBLE CHALLENGES IN ENGAGEMENT WITH DELIVERY SYSTEMS	PRACTICAL TIPS
<b>Fragility – insecurity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restricted population movement due to conflict or government-imposed restrictions creates challenges for affected populations to access front-line offices and distribution points.</li> <li>Restrictions for non-state actors and possibly government on accessing affected populations.</li> <li>Conflict and insecurity create protection risks for those implementing and accessing administrative processes.</li> <li>Government is implicated in the conflict, undermining humanitarian principles and meaning that donor funds cannot be transferred to government and/or government-owned and managed public services.</li> </ul>	<p>Assess the feasibility of and where appropriate promote the use of electronic transfers to distribute cash benefits, which can reduce protection risks for beneficiaries.</p> <p>Engage implementing partners (whether private sector or NGO/CBO) who are capable of operating and managing programme administration within the affected area (including good relationships with communities and strong mediation skills, and innovative approaches to working in these areas).</p> <p>Introduce additional monitoring-system checks and balances, according to best practices for remotely managed programmes (including employing third and fourth party monitors; leveraging digital technology; grievance and feedback mechanisms with hotline and social media channels).</p> <p>Engage with state bodies and their existing processes to the extent possible, to build capacities, involve them in programme decisions and continue or give active roles in implementation.</p> <p>Minimise its engagement in locations where this could risk escalating conflict, or in specific business processes in accordance with EU regulations. E.g. establish direct relationships with any private sector service providers involved in benefit distribution, for transfer of funds. Where these are not in place, map and identify such service providers.</p>
<b>Fragility – capacity</b>	<p>As social protection in many fragile and conflict-affected contexts is still at a nascent stage, capacity gaps in delivery systems will be more pronounced. This can contribute to fiduciary risk, bottlenecks in implementation and lack of accountability to affected populations.</p>	<p>Capacity assessment of relevant institutions (state as well as non-state actors) and any existing processes and systems to determine which can be effectively engaged with and where additional support is needed.</p> <p>Tailor the engagement with national delivery systems accordingly – it could be that government lead all processes; that some parallel processes are introduced; that funds or training are provided to augment capacity of systems to enable them to be used; or that parallel delivery systems are managed by implementing partners but designed with government and aligned with its needs, to build social protection systems.</p> <p>Ensure as much as possible that funding strategies include relevant technical assistance and finances to build capacity of staff and systems.</p>

<p><b>Fragility – legitimacy</b></p>	<p>While social protection may help build state legitimacy and contribute to peace and stability, where poorly designed or delivered it has the potential to exacerbate social tensions or undermine trust in the state. Every part of a social protection delivery system that people engage with will affect their experience of the programme and (by extension) their trust in the state, with potential to build or undermine legitimacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where limited state capacities risk undermining the quality with which processes are implemented, engage relevant, trusted and capable third parties to support this delivery.</li> <li>• Ensure that all administrative processes are designed to be simple, transparent and easy to access, with clear procedures for their use.</li> <li>• Regularly seek experiences, suggestions and feedback from the affected population to inform the design and implementation of communication mechanisms and delivery systems.</li> <li>• Invest in appropriate communication mechanisms comprising a range of culturally appropriate and accessible channels</li> <li>• Build capacities of relevant actors (state and non-state) for front-line delivery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural disaster</b></p>	<p>Natural disasters risk disrupting delivery processes, impacting on the infrastructure and staff of institutions involved in implementing these processes, and decreasing the capacity of delivery systems to continue 'business as usual' or expand operations to meet new needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider necessary adaptations to existing or nascent social protection delivery systems to better enable them to function following a shock.</li> <li>• Technical assistance and other relevant support for government bodies and others engaged in social protection provision to integrate DRR into SP operations and devise and implement strategies to ensure business continuity.</li> <li>• Work with implementing partners and service providers that have demonstrated ability to effectively mitigate this risk.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Displacement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Populations displaced across borders face challenges in engaging with service providers due to language barriers and difficulty accessing legal documentation on refugee or residency status.</li> <li>• Frequent movements of displaced populations, and government-enforced restrictions on refugee movement, or checkpoints, create similar access issues to conflict contexts above.</li> <li>• Risk that the inclusion of populations displaced across borders impacts on the quality of social protection delivery for citizens (e.g. queues at distribution points), creating tensions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy to bodies providing registration services to refugees, and technical assistance to streamline processes.</li> <li>• Where appropriate promote the use of new technology within core business processes (for communication, benefit delivery, grievance redress and monitoring), to reach mobile and dispersed populations.</li> <li>• In risk analysis of approaches and strategies, assess the potential for any escalation in social tensions between displaced and host communities at all stages of the delivery system.</li> </ul>

## EXAMPLES

- ➔ *In Yemen, since 2016 donors and humanitarian actors have been working with the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) to provide emergency cash assistance to food-insecure households affected by the conflict. The nature of the conflict restricted transfer of humanitarian funds to government as well as the use of the programme's main payment service provider, the national post office, to manage distribution. Instead, funds were transferred directly to the programme's private sector payment service provider, which disbursed transfers to beneficiaries. SWF front-line staff have still been involved in other aspects such as registration and grievance redress<sup>11</sup>.*
- ➔ *In Iraq, the insecurity caused by the ISIS insurgency and limited resources and capacities has curtailed development of the emerging social protection system. Some of these needs have been covered in the interim through humanitarian partners. As the security situation steadily improves, the EU and humanitarian partners recognise that delivery of assistance should transition from humanitarian actors to government. An ECHO feasibility study provides an action plan for all actors.*

11 Smith (2017) 'Linking Humanitarian Cash Transfers with National Social Protection Systems in the MENA Region', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF; Smith (2017) 'Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF.

*Capacity building for government includes reform of the core national social protection delivery systems and technical assistance. Meanwhile strategic alignment of the delivery systems used by implementing partners in the interim (harmonisation of registration and distribution processes) is expected to facilitate the transfer of vulnerable households over to government management as capacity builds<sup>12</sup>.*

- ➔ *In Turkey, the EU's Emergency Social Safety Net for Syrian refugees is making use of several of the delivery systems of the Turkish social protection systems to administer the programme, but for payment delivery a parallel system was set up with a different financial service provider. This built on the existing partnerships and systems of cash delivery used by humanitarian actors and minimised the risk that the national payment delivery systems would become overburdened, which could have impacted on delivery of assistance to Turkish citizens and escalated tensions. When programme monitoring found that the varied living arrangements of refugee families were creating barriers that prevented them formally registering with the Turkish government (a qualifying criterion for ESSN registration), advocacy with the government departments responsible for refugee registration led to relaxation of these procedures<sup>13</sup>.*

## ALWAYS BEAR IN MIND

1. Social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes are designed to achieve broadly similar functions but over different timelines and with broadly different outcomes in mind. Whilst operational processes on social transfer and humanitarian cash assistance programmes may therefore share many similar characteristics, these differences can mean that the optimum design of processes to achieve these objectives will differ.
  - *When using the systems of an existing programme, attention must be given to whether the current processes will allow for delivery of assistance that effectively meets the needs of populations affected by crises, or whether these need to be adapted.*
  - *When influencing the building or strengthening of social protection, the design of the operational systems need to take into account these dual objectives.*
  - *Compromises will need to be made. On the one hand, achieving humanitarian outcomes and conforming to humanitarian principles is important; on the other hand, implementation of social protection approaches in humanitarian settings should not impact negatively on the implementation or growth of the long-term social protection system.*
2. It will not be possible to work with all underlying processes and systems in all contexts, and some parallel processes may still be needed, for example:
  - *Where government cannot authorise access to or use of systems,*
  - *Where donors restrict flow of funds to government,*
  - *Where administrative procedures or capacity gaps are not conducive to effective response and cannot be amended, nor capacities quickly built.*
3. Other service providers and implementing partners can be engaged to implement parallel processes or to bolster capacity of social protection actors to implement existing processes.

## Further resources

- **Iraq: identifying opportunities to transition the chronically poor and vulnerable from humanitarian assistance to national schemes**, WFP lessons learned case study (forthcoming).
- **Quick Guidance for Planning an Intervention through Government Systems during an Emergency**, WFP, 2018
- **Cash Transfers in Remote Emergency Programming**, NRC, 2016.  
<http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/remotecashprojectguidancefinal.pdf>
- **Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection**, Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien, 2018.  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication>
- **Designing effective safety net programs**, Brian Culhane, World Bank, 1997.  
<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/532131468739326399/Designing-effective-safety-net-programs>

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12 WFP (forthcoming) *Iraq: identifying opportunities to transition the chronically poor and vulnerable from humanitarian assistance to national schemes*, WFP lessons learned case study.

13 Maunder et al. (2018), CaLP (2018) *State of the World's Cash Report*

## Principles for success

Lessons learned suggest that the following principles should inform and underpin approaches and actions when using, adapting or building delivery systems to link social protection and humanitarian action.

**Connectedness and interdisciplinary cooperation:** When engaging in these approaches in humanitarian contexts, they should be conceived through a broader analysis of the longer-term development context and apply development principles to address these problems. Social protection delivery systems provide a way to embed humanitarian action within longer-term systems and services. Longer-term investments to build, strengthen and adapt social protection delivery systems and extend coverage in stable times will improve the effectiveness of these systems to meet needs during crises.

**System resilience:** Providing social protection across the nexus should aim to enable households and communities to better absorb and recover from shocks of all kinds. Building this resilience depends on the resilience of operational systems. Continuing to provide or building social protection systems in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters, or using these systems to respond to such disasters, rely on the capability of these delivery systems to continue to operate during or after the shock. The more disruptive the shock, the more critical this becomes. It is important to have processes and implementers suited to operating in these contexts and clear procedures for timely restoration of systems, or for their modification in a post-shock environment.

**Do no harm:** Responding to shocks through social protection systems or activities aiming to build or strengthen social protection systems in fragile and conflicted-affected and forced-displacement contexts should not impact negatively on communities, or on the state's ability to deliver regular social protection. Context, risk and protection analyses should be jointly conducted to identify possible unintended negative impacts, and mitigation measures put in place. From a delivery system perspective this includes risks that activities will overburden staff, contribute to bottlenecks in process or otherwise undermine delivery of benefits packages. Social protection will not always be the most appropriate mechanism for achieving the desired outcomes for vulnerable populations in humanitarian contexts.

**National ownership:** The state is the primary duty bearer supporting vulnerable populations, and it is well recognised in EU and broader policy that social protection is a state-led service. The EU is committed to work with and through government to the greatest extent possible and working across the nexus is no exception. Depending on the nature of the crisis and the political context, this should be the aim. There are several benefits to doing so – from an operations perspective, it can build relationships between governments and donors and improve policy dialogue and influence on matters pertaining to adapting processes, strengthening delivery systems or amending laws and regulations to achieve this. A government-led approach still offers flexibility for the establishment of certain parallel processes, or for additional partnerships through which implementation of interventions can be realised, where government systems are still developing.

**Keep it simple:** Humanitarian contexts, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected environments, can be challenging to operate and deliver assistance in. Keeping operational processes as simple and straightforward as possible and clearly outlining process flows and roles and responsibilities will maximise effective implementation while minimising the likelihood of miscommunication, errors and bottlenecks, and will reduce protection-related and fiduciary risks.

**Flexibility:** The context on the ground can be complex and vulnerabilities, risks and other critical contextual factors can quickly change. Flexible approaches to programming are a key enabling factor, particularly the ability to modify and adapt business processes and systems and to have the capacity to implement such changes, based on the shock context and as new information becomes available.

**Accountability and accessibility:** Humanitarian programming is committed to achieving accountability for affected populations. Affected populations should be well informed about interventions, have meaningful participation in their design and implementation, and be able to feedback queries and complaints. Seeking the opinions, experiences and preferences of affected populations can help to adapt, build and strengthen social protection delivery systems in ways that improve their relevance and accessibility, enabling more effective assistance. At the same time these delivery systems provide the operational mechanism through which messages can be relayed and feedback shared.

## IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

*When using and adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
What data is already available on poor and vulnerable households, can this be shared and is this accurate/up to date?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will recent internal population displacement mean the data is inaccurate?</li> <li>• In the case of cross-border displacement, how well represented are non-citizens?</li> <li>• Are host communities (who are poor and affected by the displacement crisis) represented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a campaign to update household data – this could require a targeted communication campaign and additional support from implementing partners.</li> <li>• Run a new registration exercise in the affected locations to include additional vulnerable households. Data could feed into and update the registry.</li> </ul>
Are registration points accessible for vulnerable groups affected by crises, and do they have capacity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will non-citizens / displaced populations be informed?</li> <li>• What is the distance to registration points?</li> <li>• Are registration points inaccessible due to disaster, conflict, language barriers, and discrimination by service providers, lack of staff or office space?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a targeted communication campaign for affected populations through appropriate channels and languages.</li> <li>• Increase capacity of government registration points.</li> <li>• Establish and staff new registration points in accessible and highly populated areas.</li> <li>• Implementing partners can provide special assistance for vulnerable groups (taking registration into communities, staff that speak languages of non-citizens, translation services, covering costs of transportation).</li> </ul>



Are registration processes complex / time-consuming or presenting barriers to groups affected by crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are documents difficult, time-consuming and costly to access?</li> <li>• Do vulnerable groups have access to the recognised forms of ID?</li> <li>• Have civil documents, programme IDs or bank cards been lost due to a crisis?</li> <li>• Are there barriers to refugees obtaining certification of refugee status (e.g. are services bureaucratic or overstretched)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relax or simplify processes and develop related standard operating procedures (SOPs) to speed up registration in times of emergency, or to improve inclusion of groups affected by crises in long-term programmes.</li> <li>• Advocacy to relevant government counterparts to relax regulations.</li> <li>• Support to services providing or replacing civil/refugee documentation.</li> <li>• Implementing partners can provide special assistance for vulnerable groups to access / replace documents.</li> </ul>
Can a caseload of households that are vulnerable to crises be pre-identified <i>ex ante</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be valid approach in FCAS but less applicable to forced displacement which is dynamic and unpredictable in nature and may include non-citizens.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider such a 'no regrets' policy to speed up new registration post-crisis.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES:**

- *In Turkey, eligibility for social protection is based on a range of socioeconomic criteria. Applicants register at local Foundation offices and data is verified through home visits. When the EU began providing assistance to refugees through this system (the Emergency Social Safety Net), processes were adapted to make them relevant to the refugee's situation and allow rapid scale-up. Working with the Turkish Government, the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) were limited to six demographic indicators and the home visit requirement was postponed to within one year of enrolment onto the programme. The programme recruited Arabic-speaking translators to assist staff at the Foundations. In areas of the country with large numbers of refugees, the programme also funded the Turkish Red Crescent to set up service centres, to assist with registration and reduce the burden on Foundation staff. After programme monitoring showed that some vulnerable families were struggling with the application process, ECHO and other donors funded complementary activities through implementing partners, such as providing transport to the Foundation offices and covering the cost of notaries and translators<sup>15</sup>.*
- *In Kyrgyzstan following the conflict, the government signed a Temporary Regulation which relaxed the registration requirements on two social transfer programmes for six months in the affected provinces. Under this regulation, ad hoc local social commissions were established, to rapidly assess social protection applications without needing a household visit. The government set up mobile outreach services to take registration to communities. Humanitarian partners supported this capacity by recruiting and covering salaries of additional social workers. Meanwhile verification documentation did not need to be submitted for six-months and a government taskforce fast-tracked claims for replacement of lost ID cards<sup>16</sup>.*
- *In Yemen, many poor and vulnerable women do not have a national ID, which is a requirement for registration in the Social Welfare Fund (SWF). When this programme was adapted to provide emergency cash assistance, it was agreed that beneficiary identity would therefore be verified from a range of IDs including national ID card, passport, family card, voter card, SWF ID or traditional leader/Aqel's attestation. SWF staff were also supported during registration by a local implementing partner contracted by UNICEF<sup>17</sup>.*
- *Following the earthquake in Nepal, the expansion of the child grant to affected families did not have the benefit of an existing database of the population, and UNICEF had to launch a new census in the affected districts to identify new cases. This was time-consuming and labour-intensive to implement post-disaster, although the end product has strengthened the social protection system in the country. Children without birth certificates were not excluded from the programme – rather, caregivers were encouraged to go and get the children registered<sup>18</sup>.*
- *In Kenya, prior to the roll-out of phase 2 of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP2), a census was taken of all households in the drought-affected counties where the HSNP is implemented and participating households were registered into the programme's MIS. This created a database of most households in northern Kenya that can be wealth ranked. It 'pre-identifies' 180,000 additional households that are vulnerable to crises (in this case, natural disaster), for the provision of periodic emergency payments<sup>19</sup>.*

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15 Maunder et al. (2018)

16 Smith (2017) 'Supporting national social protection systems to respond to needs at times of crisis: lessons from Kyrgyzstan', a case study for UNICEF.

17 Smith (2017) 'Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF

18 Merttens et al. (2017) 'Evaluation of the Nepal Emergency Cash Transfer Programme through Social Assistance: Final Report', OPM

19 Farhat et al. (2017) 'Evaluation of the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme Phase 2: Emergency Payments Deep Dive Study', Oxford Policy Management



**EXAMPLE:**

20 O'Brien et al. (2017) 'Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Case study — Social Protection and Humanitarian Responses to Food Insecurity and Poverty in Mali'; Kukrety (2016) 'Working with Cash Based Safety Nets in Humanitarian Contexts: Guidance Note for Practitioners'. CaLP.

## PAYMENT/BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION

Ensuring that beneficiaries can access their social protection entitlements regularly, reliably and safely is fundamental to the success of social protection schemes. The delivery system for those social protection schemes that provide benefits in the form of resource transfers involves preparing lists of eligible beneficiaries according to the distribution schedule on the programme, informing beneficiaries of the distribution schedule, transferring lists and resources (cash/other) to service providers or front-line offices, disbursement of these directly to beneficiaries or into their accounts, and reconciliation of all benefits distributed. Most large-scale social transfer programmes will contract a financial service provider to lead this administrative process, in order to manage financial transactions quickly and safely while minimising risks.

### *When using or adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
Is the existing delivery system reliable, convenient and safe for people affected by crisis to access?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does conflict and insecurity mean distribution points are inaccessible?</li> <li>• Does conflict and insecurity present protection concerns for beneficiaries and staff at distribution?</li> <li>• Will overcrowding at distribution points cause tensions between beneficiaries/ between them and the wider community?</li> <li>• Can households moving from location to location still access their benefits?</li> <li>• Are affected populations (including refugees) familiar with digital payment systems?</li> <li>• Is the delivery channel trusted by the affected population?</li> <li>• Does language present a barrier for refugees?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set-up distribution points in other, accessible and secure areas.</li> <li>• Introduce measures to ensure security or ease congestion at distribution points.</li> <li>• Implement a parallel delivery system more suited to the requirements of the crisis and the needs and preferences of affected populations.</li> <li>• Assess feasibility of introducing electronic payment systems which could allow beneficiaries to withdraw funds in different or safer locations, at their convenience, and to store funds.</li> <li>• Service providers and implementing partners can reduce the barriers facing vulnerable groups (e.g. services in new language; 'doorstep' pay-out points; help to complete transactions...)</li> </ul>
Are delivery systems resilient to the impacts of crises that occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the frequency and severity of disruptive natural disasters in the areas concerned?</li> <li>• How have these affected delivery systems (now or in the past)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support actions to restore services post-disaster.</li> <li>• Put in place plans and measures for disaster recovery within relevant services, to ensure business continuity.</li> <li>• Put in place contingency plans for implementing distributions through alternative channels when business continuity fails.</li> </ul>
Is the distribution schedule the best fit for the objectives of a humanitarian response?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will modifying it increase the burden of work for those distributing the benefits? How will affected beneficiaries be made aware of any changes, especially those who are displaced?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications campaign.</li> <li>• Build capacity of services to manage any additional payments (e.g. additional staff; bring in international partners; additional administrative budget....)</li> </ul>
Do service providers and their agents, or front-line staff, have capacity to distribute benefits to an increased caseload?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there specific issues affecting their ability to distribute benefits to non-citizens / refugees (e.g. language barriers)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity of service providers, e.g. translation services for non-citizens; administrative budget to cover additional staffing requirements...)</li> <li>• Advocate for introduction of third party service provider to manage distribution process and ease administrative burden on front-line staff.</li> </ul>

## EXAMPLES

- In the **Philippines**, social protection beneficiaries can receive their payments either via an ATM card or as cash over the counter. After Typhoon Haiyan, power outages prevented the use of e-payment channels for several weeks. The payment service provider provided three mobile ATMs to help disburse card payments to beneficiaries and modified their service to provide payments over the counter while ATM services were reduced. This ensured that regular and additional emergency top-up payments to households affected by the typhoon were received in a timely fashion. However, these were not defined procedures in the programme and took time to put in place, meaning that payments were delivered later than originally planned. The financial service providers managing the 'over the counter' cash payments also faced challenges in making these payments as personnel and infrastructure had been affected by the typhoon. This was further compounded by the fact that humanitarian actors requested that the emergency top-up payments be provided monthly rather than bi-monthly. This was done in order to align this emergency assistance with that being provided to other households in the community through the parallel humanitarian system, but it created additional work to prepare, deliver and reconcile additional distributions at a time when capacity was stretched<sup>21</sup>.
- On the EU's ESSN in **Turkey**, bank staff faced difficulties in communicating with Syrian refugees. Since then, the Turkish Red Crescent has provided focal points in bank branches to assist in making payments to refugees. The bank also updated ATMs to include an Arabic language function, which has improved accessibility for Syrian refugees<sup>22</sup>.
- In **Yemen**, humanitarian actors using the national social protection system to deliver humanitarian assistance were unable to transfer funds to the government due to the nature of the conflict, and could not use the SWF's main payment service provider, which was the national post office. These actors still made use of one of the private sector payment service providers for the SWF and established a direct agreement with this bank for disbursing transfers to beneficiaries. When transfers were made to households in enclaved areas affected by the civil war, the payment service provider for the Social Welfare Fund selected pay-out points that were accessible to the affected communities (especially women) and set up temporary pay-out points in community spaces that were more secure. They also conducted home visits for those unable to attend the pay-out points<sup>23</sup>.
- In **Nepal**, social protection payments are made by local government staff, who also lead on the coordination of humanitarian activities in their communities during emergency response and recovery. These institutions also suffer from a shortage of staff in general. The scaling up of the social protection programmes following the earthquake placed additional responsibilities on already overworked government staff, who were frustrated that national government and humanitarian actors had not adequately considered their capacity to deliver the additional funds. An evaluation concluded that the capacity of delivery systems should have been assessed and necessary support provided<sup>24</sup>.

## When building new systems:

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
What distribution systems are used already by government and humanitarian actors and how reliable, accessible and convenient will these be for those affected by crises?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will pay-out points become inaccessible due to conflict?</li> <li>• Are there barriers to refugees or displaced populations accessing these services?</li> <li>• Is coverage or capacity of service providers in the affected areas limited due to conflict or fragility?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map available service providers in the affected area and assess respective benefits and constraints for the task in hand – accessibility, efficiency, coverage, and reliability – as well as alignment with government financial regulations and plans for 'government to person' payments.</li> <li>• Pilot the option(s) that is familiar and accessible for beneficiaries, well adapted to the operating context and able to take advantage of economies of scale, and generate evidence on the efficacy of these systems to influence the design of future social protection.</li> <li>• Where possible, encourage all IPs to use the same service provider; however, it may be necessary to work with more than one, given coverage and capacity gaps.</li> <li>• Harmonise selection, negotiations and the cost per transfer across all operational actors within the locale.</li> <li>• Keep payment schedules simple, to a regular date.</li> </ul>

21 Smith et al. (2017) *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research Case study—Post-Haiyan Cash Transfers in the Philippines*, OPM

22 Maunder et al. (2018)

23 Smith (2017) 'Linking Humanitarian Cash Transfers with National Social Protection Systems in the MENA Region', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF; Smith (2017) 'Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF;

24 Merttens et al. (2017)

**EXAMPLES:**

- *In Mali, given the low capacity and coverage of financial service providers in the north, rather than use the service providers of the pilot social protection programme or set up a single payment channel, ECHO opted to work with the most appropriate service provider for the context in each of the affected communes. This involved innovative approaches including contracting traders to deliver cash in some remote and insecure areas that financial service providers could not reach. Implementing partners jointly negotiated the service fee with service providers, which reduced transaction costs. Payments on the pilot social transfer programme and the INGO humanitarian CTP were delivered once every four months to take into account the remote locations and challenging context<sup>25</sup>.*
- *In Kenya, Concern and Oxfam piloted the use of e-payment systems on the urban food subsidy programme, to influence the (mainly manual) payment mechanisms used by the government to deliver social protection in urban areas<sup>26</sup>.*

**COMMUNICATION AND GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS**

Communications are required to inform communities and potential beneficiaries about who is providing the programme; its objectives; who is eligible; how to apply; the value, frequency and duration of the assistance and any associated conditions; what to do to receive the transfer; and how to raise problems, queries, appeals or complaints. Effective communication systems can reduce the risk that beneficiaries will be exploited, and can increase accountability and reduce any misunderstandings of the programme among the population.

Grievance mechanisms are two-way communication channels that provide an opportunity for beneficiaries and others in the community to provide feedback on the programme and raise issues and concerns. This involves:

1. Informing beneficiaries (and non-beneficiaries) of how to raise grievances.
2. Receiving and logging feedback and grievances through various channels.
3. Responding to the complainant and acting to address grievances where appropriate.

There are broadly two types of common grievance in social transfer programmes: i) appeals against exclusion during registration/targeting, and ii) complaints about implementation, such as delays to enrolment or payments, loss of programme documents/instruments, challenges with accessing pay points, or fraud and coercion during registration and payment. These mechanisms are therefore important, to ensure that the right people receive assistance and to identify and address weaknesses or bottlenecks in programme operations.

To be effective, the channels used for communication and grievance mechanisms must be accessible and trusted by beneficiaries and the wider population. Choice of channels should reflect the language, level of education, literacy, social marginalisation, gender and age of the beneficiary group. Communication channels include printed media, word of mouth, local information sessions, SMS and social media. Grievance mechanisms should ideally include a number of communication channels so as to be accessible to beneficiaries.

*When using and adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
What is the capacity and reach of the programme's communications system, and does this need adapting to ensure messages reach those to be targeted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will non-citizens/refugees be reached by the existing communication channels?</li> <li>• Are existing communication channels accessible during conflict?</li> <li>• Do word-of-mouth channels have capacity to 'scale up'?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add in or adapt specific communication channels that are accessible to those affected by the crisis.</li> <li>• Consider adding digital communication channels which are more easily scaled up than face-to-face communication, where appropriate.</li> </ul>

25 O'Brien et al. (2017)

26 Kukrety (2016)

Has the infrastructure underpinning communication (digital platforms, administrative staff) been affected by the shock?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can digital platforms be easily restored?</li> <li>• Can staff capacities be increased?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a shock has disrupted digital communication channels, reach people through other channels such as word of mouth.</li> <li>• Surge in administrative support from non-affected areas, or use trusted local actors.</li> <li>• Where beneficiaries are displaced, try messages through SMS and 'active outreach' through trusted social networks.</li> </ul>
How do communication messages need to be adapted to meet the communication needs of those being targeted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do new messages need communicating to existing beneficiaries to ensure continuity of regular programmes?</li> <li>• How can risks of creating confusion or tensions be minimised?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of beneficiaries about any temporary changes to the programme's usual processes.</li> <li>• Develop a new communication strategy for all responses implemented through national systems.</li> </ul>
Is the grievance mechanism accessible for those being targeted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will displaced households or non-citizens face any barriers in raising appeals or complaints, including due to conflict?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add in new channels to the grievance mechanism that are accessible to the target groups.</li> </ul>
Is the grievance mechanism functioning well? Do administrative teams have capacity to log and respond to any additional grievances raised?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will administrative teams be able to communicate adequately with non-citizens/refugees?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement the capacity of the existing grievance mechanism with additional staff, and improved processes and channels.</li> <li>• Where there is no existing grievance mechanism or this is poorly functioning, introduce systems to strengthen this administrative process on the long-term programme.</li> </ul>

**EXAMPLES:**

- *In Yemen, communicating messages through the trusted social welfare fund staff and a local community-based organisation ensured that marginalised groups trusted the programme and that social tensions and conflict were avoided. The social welfare fund's existing grievance mechanism was poorly designed and implemented. UNICEF therefore supported the establishment of a new mechanism and trained social welfare fund staff in how to use and manage this. Additional phone hotline channels were added to this grievance mechanism, in addition to the traditional channel of the social welfare officers. These were more accessible for those beneficiaries living in insecure areas, where access to social welfare offices was restricted<sup>27</sup>.*
- *In Turkey, communication materials and channels used in the Turkish social assistance system are not as accessible to the Syrian refugees, due mainly to language barriers and the widely dispersed population. New communication channels were used to expand outreach, including printed materials in Arabic, SMS, and social media channels that were familiar and well used by refugees. Staff of the foundations managing applications were also supported by translators. Refugees make use of a dedicated hotline, staffed by the Turkish Red Crescent, to access information and manage grievances relating to the programmes, which is outside of the national social protection system. Whereas ESSN transfers are made monthly, the payment schedule for the CCTE for refugees mirrors the payment schedule on the CCTE for Turkish citizens. Transfers are delivered every two months, and only for the corresponding 10 months of a school year. Communicating these different payment schedules to households who are benefiting from both programmes required careful coordination of communication strategies (channel, phrasing and timing of messages) between the implementing agencies<sup>28</sup>.*
- *In Nepal, UNICEF piloted the use of SMS messaging alongside the traditional face-to-face communication channels of the social assistance system. However, the SMS campaign was not very successful as few respondents reported receiving the messages<sup>29</sup>.*

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27 Smith (2017) 'Use of Cash in Conflict-Affected Areas in the MENA Region – Example of Yemen', a lessons learned case study for UNICEF  
 28 CaLP (2018)  
 29 Merttens et al. (2017)

## MONITORING, CASE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed on social transfer programmes to ensure that programmes can provide key performance data and information to enable ongoing improvement of key business processes. Monitoring encompasses a range of activities and is important for ensuring oversight and reporting, effective management, and troubleshooting when problems and bottlenecks are identified. These include monitoring payment receipt; compliance with programme conditions; and administrative issues in the programme cycle. They require defined human resources and effective information systems for recording and managing data. Data should be analysed and used to inform changes to the programme cycle. Impact evaluations are commissioned intermittently to generate data on programme outcomes and impacts. Collection of 'outcome' data is not a common activity in day-to-day monitoring of social transfers.

Some social transfer programmes are complemented by active case management systems whereby social workers undertake outreach to or follow-up with vulnerable beneficiaries to ensure that their situation is assessed on a continuous basis and needs addressed. This might involve providing information or support to address specific issues facing certain households, such as non-compliance with conditionalities, or sensitisation to reinforce particular behaviours. It can also include referrals to other assistance and services. This so-called 'cash plus' approach is also increasingly being promoted in humanitarian contexts as a way to support greater outcomes from cash assistance in crisis contexts. Such systems, however, often have developmental shortcomings in low- and middle-income countries due to limited investment in trained social workers.

### *When using and adapting existing systems:*

CONSIDERATIONS		POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS/ACTIONS
Is the current monitoring system sufficient for the monitoring requirements of the planned programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is household-level data on expenditure/outcomes captured regularly?</li> <li>Are financial monitoring processes adequate for donor reporting purposes?</li> <li>Can monitoring activities be scaled up effectively to include new caseloads?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implement additional separate monitoring activities to fill gaps in data without overburdening the existing system.</li> <li>Surge in staff from other non-affected areas or include an independent service provider to support monitoring.</li> <li>Modify existing monitoring procedures and activities to incorporate what is needed.</li> </ul>
Do existing case management processes, and programme conditionalities, need to be reduced to suit the emergency context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the shock, especially conflict, affected the accessibility of basic services?</li> <li>Can social welfare officers or other services cope with case management tasks alongside managing any expansion of social transfers for shock response?</li> <li>Do targeted populations need time to deal with the effects of the shock?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporarily reduce existing case management activities or enforcement of conditions, where this is needed to reduce burden on staff and systems or avoid putting beneficiaries at risk.</li> </ul>
How can existing case management processes be adapted to meet needs of the targeted population?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will non-citizens / displaced populations be included?</li> <li>Do social welfare teams have the capacity to expand services?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move such activities to more accessible locations.</li> <li>Modify case management data systems to effectively monitor and capture data on new beneficiaries.</li> <li>Invest in recruitment and training additional social welfare teams, which can also strengthen the long term social protection system.</li> </ul>



## EXAMPLES

- The Pantawid programme in the **Philippines** has strong monitoring and reporting systems in place. However, as a long-term development programme, there is less emphasis on monitoring the day-to-day uses of the transfers received by Pantawid beneficiaries; rather, this is something analysed during periodic evaluations. In contrast, WFP, which partnered with the Pantawid programme to top up cash assistance to beneficiaries affected by Typhoon Haiyan, had a responsibility to its humanitarian donors to demonstrate that the objective of meeting humanitarian food needs had been met. With the government's agreement, WFP implemented their own post-distribution monitoring activities and indicators in order to understand household expenditures and outcomes, as well as market monitoring. WFP's financial procedures also required specific evidence to demonstrate 'proof of delivery' of cash disbursements to beneficiaries (photocopies of the beneficiary receipts). This was not part of the Pantawid's usual financial monitoring processes. The government was able to adapt its systems to provide this proof, but it took several months and considerable resources. It was recommended that in future partnerships, these reporting requirements should be set out from the beginning<sup>30</sup>.
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, social welfare officers did not practise a 'case management' approach prior to the conflict. UNICEF provided training for social workers on outreach measures for family welfare and care and support plans to monitor needs and referrals for families. This approach was subsequently adopted by the government. UNICEF also recruited and covered salaries of additional social workers to support outreach activities during the response<sup>31</sup>.
- In **Nepal**, the expansion of social assistance after the earthquake was accompanied with comprehensive monitoring, including real-time process monitoring and monitoring of outcomes. Overall management was undertaken by the government's humanitarian partner on the programme, UNICEF, but involved government social protection staff in implementation. UNICEF collated field-monitoring data from government staff and maintained a centralised management information system (MIS) to track district-wise progress in implementation. The data informed conversations with implementing staff on solutions to challenges, such as delays in distribution<sup>32</sup>.
- On the CCTE in **Turkey**, verifying school attendance is through inter-governmental data management systems. Attendance data inputted into the ministry of education's management information system is accessed and verified through the Integrated Social Assistance Information System (ISAIS) before each payroll. On the CCTE for Refugees, some children were enrolled in temporary education centres, which were not connected to the Ministry of Education's management information system. The data management system used by the temporary education centres had to be integrated with ISAIS before the programme could begin<sup>33</sup>.
- In **Lebanon**, people in need across the country receive relief and support from the government through the national network of Social Development Centres (SDCs). These are staffed by social workers, health and administrative professionals and provide a range of social welfare services to poor citizens alongside the administration of certain processes concerning food vouchers for the extreme poor (under the NPT). Many SDCs are also the primary social and healthcare services outlet for Syrian refugees. A DEVCO-ECHO scoping study identifies these as the natural locus for supporting access to social services and referrals for both populations, complementing cash and voucher assistance. However, these centres have a 75 per cent shortfall in their staffing budget and a range of capacities must be built<sup>34</sup>.

## Further resources

- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report**, O'Brien et. al., 2018.  
<https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-synthesis-report.pdf?noredirect=1>
- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Toolkit: Appraising the use of social protection in addressing large-scale shocks**, O'Brien et al (2018).  
<https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-toolkit.pdf>
- **Human(itarian) Capital? Lessons on Better Connecting Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection**, Gentilini, Laughton & O'Brien (2018).  
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication/humanitarian-capital-lessons-on-better-connecting-humanitarian-assistance-and-social-protection>
- **Use of Country Systems in Fragile States**, Hart, et. Al, ODI (2015) .  
<https://www.odi.org/publications/10208-using-country-systems-fragile-states>

30 Smith et al. (2017)

31 Smith (2017) 'Supporting national social protection systems to respond to needs at times of crisis: lessons from Kyrgyzstan', a case study for UNICEF.

32 Merttens et al. (2017)

33 CaLP (2018)

34 EU (2018) A roadmap towards the development of a more systemic and longer-term social assistance mechanism for the most vulnerable refugees and Lebanese – case study for the Guidance package on Social protection across the humanitarian-development nexus (SPaN)

## Coordination Requirements

Forging links between social protection and humanitarian assistance in practice requires operational and strategic coordination, at national and sub-national levels, and with multiple stakeholders. Figure 4 outlines the types of entity that need to be engaged and their relevance.

Figure 4: Key considerations for multi-stakeholder engagement

STAKEHOLDER	KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THEIR ENGAGEMENT
National government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National governments are duty bearers for providing social protection, often manage existing processes, and are custodians of operating systems.</li> <li>National DRM structures are responsible for leading or coordinating humanitarian response and recovery.</li> <li>These mandates can be split across several ministries, requiring coordination across multiple departments.</li> <li>Government entities responsible for management of household registries, changing regulations etc. must be engaged where needed, to develop a supportive legal and regulatory framework and ensure access to data.</li> </ul>
International development and humanitarian actors (donors, operational agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including a humanitarian lens in the long-term social protection programme and system requires partnerships between humanitarian and development policy makers and practitioners.</li> <li>Operational agencies add considerable value to implementation of approaches, especially where national capacities are limited.</li> <li>Lessons and experiences of delivery processes from humanitarian programmes should influence design.</li> <li>The primary instrument of cash transfers is a tool that is highly relevant to the work of all sectors.</li> <li>Social protection approaches in humanitarian contexts will never meet all the chronic and transitory sectoral needs of all households who need assistance, so coordination is essential with other assistance interventions across sectors (not only other resource transfers but also protection concerns, psychosocial and counselling, labour market and livelihood needs).</li> </ul>
Private sector capacity building, technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical roles to play in social protection service provision through management of core delivery processes.</li> </ul>

### EXPERIENCES TO DATE SHOW THAT:

- Cash transfers continue to lack a dedicated 'place' in humanitarian coordination structures.**
- There is no 'one size fits all' – coordination approaches, structures and mechanisms vary hugely due to contextual factors, differing levels of national involvement, the structure of governance in a country, and decentralised aspects of humanitarian coordination.**
- There is a need for coordination at various levels – both bilaterally between the actors implementing relevant interventions and their collaborators, and more broadly and strategically, at the level of the response and developmental strategy.**



Figure 5 summarises some of the strengths and limitations of typical coordination groups.

Figure 5: Considerations for establishing coordination mechanisms

STRUCTURE	CONSIDERATIONS
Clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where governments have established similar sectoral coordination structures for coordination of humanitarian action, or where they have a co-leadership role, this can ensure government involvement.</li> <li>Useful for operationalising social protection approaches for specific sector-oriented instruments, for example school feeding, or public works.</li> <li>If cluster system is not permanently active in the country, less useful for approaches that are undertaking activities during normal times/preparedness, or for smaller responses where governments have capacity to manage.</li> </ul>
Inter-cluster coordination or HCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donors can be engaged (HCT).</li> <li>Useful in cases where social protection provision aims to meet multiple needs across sectors (intrinsic to cash transfers).</li> <li>Can ensure strategic coordination of social protection approaches with the wider response.</li> <li>Can support harmonised ways of working across clusters and sector actors.</li> </ul>
Inter-governmental bodies for disaster management, and/or social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on existing structures increases buy-in and integration with national development strategies and systems.</li> <li>Such bodies are already multi-disciplinary and, as such, social protection departments will often have a seat at the table for DRM coordination and vice versa.</li> </ul>
Cash working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becoming established in some form in almost all responses – though their structure, management and capacities vary and these remain ad hoc not formalised structures.</li> <li>Increasingly cut across sectors (since cash is a multi-sectoral tool and is increasingly being provided with multi-sectoral objectives in mind).</li> <li>Can engage stakeholders across government, international actors and private sector.</li> <li>Useful for coordination of operational aspects such as harmonising processes between actors.</li> </ul>
Other sectoral working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above, useful for operational coordination relating to other instruments.</li> <li>Can provide linkages to other relevant service provision (health, education).</li> </ul>
Programme taskforces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can include every actor with a direct role to play in implementing an approach, as well as extending membership to others with valid expertise to aid effective management.</li> <li>Depending on the level of engagement, can be limited to coordination of a specific intervention or can support coordination of social protection approaches with the wider response.</li> </ul>

#### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- **Map the actors engaging in social protection and humanitarian action and existing national and humanitarian coordination structures and build relationships ahead of the crisis.**
- **Strengthen collaboration between social protection, DRM and humanitarian actors by promoting common understanding of the different fields and the synergies between them.**
- **Improve policy coherence within the sectors of relevance (developing sector-wide strategies, policies or budgets) as a starting point for facilitating more cross-sectoral collaboration, and support weak departments to develop stronger and clearer institutional frameworks (e.g. clearer governance arrangements, legislation or policies).**
- **Strengthen or develop coordination structures that span sectors and disciplines (inter-governmental steering committees/taskforces; structures bringing together governmental and non-governmental stakeholders), including those for strategic oversight and information exchange, and others focusing on implementation aspects such as elaboration and harmonisation of technical processes, data analysis, and monitoring of programme implementation.**

- **Promote coordination between social protection interventions and the wider emergency response (i.e. with other programmes), including collaborating on practical issues such as sharing data, setting transfer values, minimising gaps and managing potential duplication in support to beneficiaries.**

#### EXAMPLES:

- *In Pakistan, to piggyback on the national social and economic register (NSER) for future disaster response would require clarification of roles and responsibilities between the Benazir Income Support Programme, the National Database and Registration Authority, national and provincial disaster management authorities and non-governmental actors<sup>35</sup>.*
- *In the Philippines, the Department for Social Welfare and Development co-led three clusters during the typhoon Haiyan response and, with the cluster members, they set up a system for coordinating data on typhoon-affected households assisted by aid agencies with its own database. This coordination led to the enrolment of an additional 20,000 households into a government cash transfer programme<sup>36</sup>.*
- *In Turkey an ESSN Taskforce (ECHO, INGOs, government and academic institutions) was set up to improve links to and complement the wider response. The Taskforce holds monthly meetings in four project locations. It has been effective in influencing changes to the ESSN transfer value and targeting criteria, and in aligning INGO protection activities to improve access to the ESSN<sup>37</sup>.*
- *In Nepal, UNICEF assumed that other humanitarian actors would support those households who were not existing beneficiaries of the social transfer programmes and in need of humanitarian assistance – but did not establish coordination mechanisms to ensure that this happened in practice<sup>38</sup>.*

#### Further resources

- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report**, O'Brien et. al., (2018). <https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/srsp-synthesis-report.pdf>
- **The State of the World's Cash Report: Cash Transfer Programming in Humanitarian Aid**, CaLP (2018). <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-sowc-report-web.pdf>
- **Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research Case study—Post-Haiyan Cash Transfers in the Philippines**, Smith et al., OPM (2017) <https://www.opml.co.uk/files/Publications/a0408-shock-responsive-social-protection-systems/opm-case-study-2017-srsp-philippines.pdf?noredirect=1>
- **White Paper on Cash Coordination**, CaLP and GPPI (2017). [https://www.gppi.net/media/Steets\\_\\_Ruppert\\_\\_2017\\_\\_Cash\\_Coordination\\_in\\_Humanitarian\\_Contexts.pdf](https://www.gppi.net/media/Steets__Ruppert__2017__Cash_Coordination_in_Humanitarian_Contexts.pdf)

## Checklist for Mainstreaming Operational Considerations

Figure 6 outlines the steps in the process for working with social protection programmes and approaches in fragile and conflict-affected and displacement contexts<sup>39</sup>. Actions and decisions taken at each of these stages will impact on the nature of your delivery systems.

This process is applicable to and can be adapted for all stages of an emergency – preparedness, during an acute crisis, in protracted crises or as part of post crisis and long-term recovery efforts. That said, it must be noted that to undertake all steps and recommended actions effectively requires time. In the interests of effective and timely response, it is therefore recommended that wherever appropriate these actions should be considered as part of preparedness planning.

35 Watson et al. (2017) *Shock Responsive Social Protection Research: Pakistan Case Study*, OPM  
 36 Smith et al. (2017)  
 37 Maunder et al. (2018)  
 38 Merttens et al. (2017)  
 39 See Note on social protection in FCAS for further detail on these stages

Figure 6: Process for optimising operations in social protection and humanitarian assistance interactions



### Further resources

- Cash Preparedness Assessment Tool, Guidance Document, UNICEF (forthcoming).
- Adaptive: Social Protection and Shocks, World Bank (forthcoming)
- The Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Tools (ISPA)

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