

## HOW TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED INFORMATION SYSTEM\* FOR THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SECTOR? WHY WE NEED TO FOCUS ON POLICY AND NOT TECHNOLOGY

If you wish your social protection sector to have these ...your information system will need these features in order to contribute effectively characteristics... Inclusive data collection and updating Equity Support distribution of resources based on objective and comparable information, addressing the uneven and unequal provision of social protection across social groups and administrative jurisdictions Inclusive process for data collection and updating that addresses risk of multiple exclusion. Ideally on-demand systems that enable anyone in need to apply at any time, while explicitly addressing barriers to access Responsiveness and inclusiveness Increase responsiveness and inclusiveness of interventions to serve the chronically poor, serve those who are structurally vulnerable to poverty, and respond to individual shocks/stressors (e.g. job loss, disability, childbearing or old age) or large crises (e.g. natural disaster or conflict) Sufficient coverage Broad coverage across social groups and jurisdictions Coordination and universal coverage Support implementation of comprehensive social protection systems and coordination across social assistance programs, and between social assistance and social insurance programs Policy objectives **Policy vision** Support complementary programming and links to wider social and economic policies when designing the system (and underlying registries). Many of these policy objectives are not achievable unless explicitly pursued! Transparency and accountability Ensure that the rationale for policy decisions is clearly understood and that all programs demonstrate accountability to their beneficiaries, the government and funders (e.g. info shared and compared) Data exchange and privacy Processes for data exchange across the sector and beyond, underpinned by a 'unique identifier' (not necessarily a national ID number, though countries that have a strong Civil Registration and/or ID system have an advantage). Ensuring data is easily accessible and usable by all relevant stakeholders, while safeguarding privacy T Improve understanding of poverty and vulnerability Oversight, reporting and planning Storing and management of data that enables the assessment of individuals/households' Facilitate oversight of multiple schemes and reporting, including monitoring of multiple payments. This can also improve budget planning and the ability to model and test policy changes vulnerabilities across the lifecycle, including potential exposure to risks and shocks Transition between schemes Enable beneficiaries to transition between schemes as their circumstances change M&E and planning Explicit focus on M&E and planning, for example through an 'integrated beneficiary registry' – consolidating data across existing programs – to establish who is receiving what (ideally both 0.0 Operational objectives Support improved processes for identification, verification, validation, processing and analysis to better manage error and fraud social assistance and social insurance) Lower burden on staff and applicants Reduce paperwork and manual reporting for staff and improve user experience for applicant (e.g. apply for several programs at once, fewer documents, better/more coordinated information on entitlements) Focus on needs if it is explicitly pursued when designing and implementing the information system, avoiding risks of increased burden (e.g. if staff not trained idequately or staff with right capacity not in-house) Lower gaps and duplication in service delivery Reduce gaps and/or duplications across programs for registration and other delivery functions, establishing common systems across schemes (e.g. payments, grievances), increasing efficiency and saving money Back and front office integration Deliver interventions that better support households in times of emergency or crisis (e.g. by building on existing data and systems)



\*By 'integrated information system' we refer to the broad system that enables the flow and management of information within the social protection sector (e.g. across programs), and sometimes beyond to other sectors. For further information: Barca V. (2017). Integrating data and information management for social protection: social registries and integrated beneficiary registries. Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

 $Read our full report and policy brief, at {\it http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/integrating-data-information-management-social-protection.aspx} \\$