

Foreword

Social protection lies at the heart of inclusive development and holds the key to unlocking a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1: The end of poverty in all its forms, everywhere. It is also increasingly recognised as an essential human right and a prerequisite for sustainable societies. The importance of social protection is reflected in the large number of countries at all income levels that are establishing social protection programmes, often with the support of the international development community.

Abundant evidence of social protection's positive impact exists, not only through a reduction in poverty and inequality but also through improved access to basic services, particularly health and education, that make such a difference to a country's long-term development. However, these benefits do not materialise automatically. To harness their full potential, social protection programmes need to reflect a country's needs and risks, both today and in the future. Individuals at every stage of their lives should be covered by a form of social protection appropriate to their situation, be it tax-financed transfers and social welfare, contributory social insurance schemes, or labour market programmes. These programmes need to provide adequate benefits as well as achieve broad and equitable coverage, and they need to be sustainable over the long term.

Moreover, social protection programmes need to work together, both with each other and with other public policies, to extend coverage, generate synergies and enhance value for money. Recognition is increasing on the importance of a systems approach to social protection, predicated upon coherence between programmes, co-ordination between institutions, shared administrative systems, and efficient allocation of financial resources based on robust monitoring and evaluation processes as well as long-term planning.

The Social Protection System Review is amongst a small number of tools for analysing how effective countries are in establishing a social protection system that responds to the needs of their people today and into the future. The toolkit presented here can be implemented in any country, at any income level, by any institution and is intended to generate policy recommendations actionable through national systems. Our experience in countries where this tool has been implemented thus far has been extremely positive, and we hope that this toolkit will prove instrumental in further promoting the critical impact of social protection.

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Acknowledgements

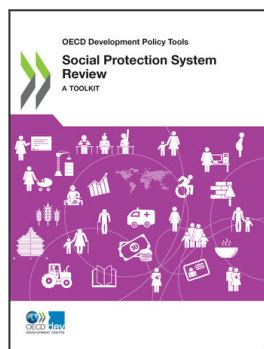
The Social Protection System Review: A Toolkit was prepared by the Social Cohesion Unit of the OECD Development Centre as part of the European Union Social Protection Systems (EU-SPS) Programme. The team was led by Alexandre Kolev, Head of the Social Cohesion Unit, and Ji-Yeun Rim, Co-ordinator of the EU-SPS Programme, under the guidance of Mario Pezzini, Director of the OECD Development Centre and Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary-General on Development and Naoko Ueda, Deputy Director of the OECD Development Centre. The report was drafted by Alexander Pick and Caroline Tassot. Justina La provided assistance at every stage.

The report benefited from valuable inputs and comments by Jüergen Hohmann from the European Commission, Alicia Spengler from GIZ, Juan de Laiglesia from the OECD Development Centre, as well as Monika Queisser and Willem Adema from the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate. The methodology was also presented at the Southern African Social Protection Experts Network International Conference in October 2016.

The methodology in the toolkit was refined through its implementation in Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia. The EU-SPS team would especially like to thank the focal points in each country for their support in this process: Dr Vathana Sann (Council for Agricultural and Rural Development in Cambodia); Zhypara Rysbekova (Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Labour and Social Development) and Pak Maliki (BAPPENAS in Indonesia). The toolkit benefits from concrete examples from these reviews.

The OECD Development Centre's publication team, led by Delphine Grandrieux and Elizabeth Nash, published the report. The cover was designed by Aida Buendía. The European Union Social Protection Systems Programme is co-financed by the European Union, the OECD and the Government of Finland.

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From:

Social Protection System Review

A Toolkit

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264310070-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2018), “Foreword”, in *Social Protection System Review: A Toolkit*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264310070-1-en>

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