

# Building the Case for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions

**Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator**

January 2026







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**Editors:**  
Anna Brachtendorf  
Valérie Schmitt

January 2026

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# Foreword



For over a century, the ILO has championed social justice. This mandate remains as relevant as ever in today's rapidly changing world. As countries confront mounting interlinked social, economic and environmental challenges, our commitment to supporting governments, workers and employers' organizations design and implement coherent, forward-looking employment and social protection policies that can stand up to these challenges has only grown stronger.

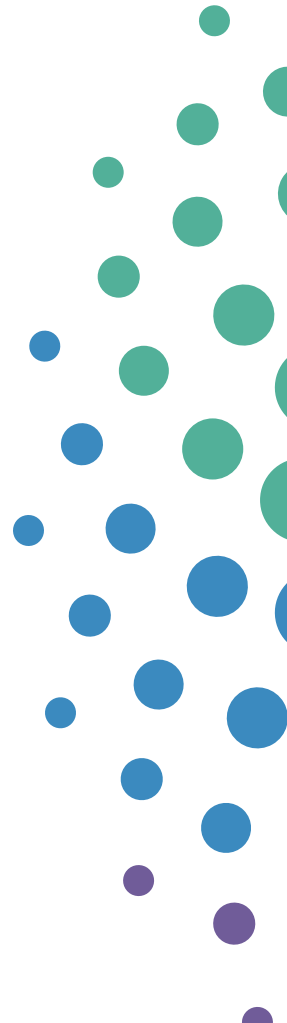
In this context, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions has become an important initiative to achieve the SDGs. Launched by the UN Secretary General in 2021, coordinated by the ILO, and championed by 19 pathfinder countries, it promotes policy coherence to avoid duplication, harness synergies and ultimately deliver better results for people. Initial results and knowledge gained from its implementation, compiled for the first time in this publication, illustrate what can become possible when various ministries and institutions—finance, economy, labour, social affairs, planning, and sectoral line ministries— together with social partners and civil society, collaborate towards the achievement of social justice.

A central lesson emerging from country experiences is the importance of linking policies, financing, and implementation. Ambitious social protection, employment and skills reforms require adequate fiscal space, appropriate macroeconomic policies, and investments that explicitly prioritize decent work and inclusion. By working closely with ministries of economy and finance and making the economic case for investing in universal social protection and decent jobs, the Global Accelerator is helping countries integrate the social agenda into their strategies for economic development.

At a time when multilateral cooperation is being questioned and undermined, this publication shows in concrete terms why it matters, how it works in practice, and enables more sustainable results to be achieved more quickly. Collaboration between Member States, donors and partners, UN agencies and increasingly International Financial Institutions, in designing, implementing and financing Global Accelerator national roadmaps, has created momentum and support for decent jobs and universal social protection. This support was reflected in recent outcome documents of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development 2025.

This publication gives us a better understanding of how an idea and an ambition that was born on the heels of the socioeconomic devastation unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic, gained traction and was implemented in practice in a wide range of pathfinder countries, helping to support economic and social transformations by ensuring that they are fair and sustainable, contributing to social justice. As the United Nations system reinvents itself to better respond to new and emerging challenges, the experience of the Global Accelerator certainly demonstrates the value of working in a more coherent manner.

Gilbert F. HOUNGBO  
ILO Director-General





# The Deputy Secretary- General's Foreword



## Building the Case for the Global Accelerator

At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals is a simple promise: that every person deserves access to decent work and the protection and dignity that comes with it. Where we have invested in that promise, we have seen the difference it can make — in stronger livelihoods, greater resilience, and more secure pathways for people to build better futures.

For too many people, however, that promise remains out of reach. Across the world, millions of workers are caught in employment that offers no security, no protection and no pathway forward. Around 60 per cent of the global workforce — and more than 80 per cent of workers in developing countries — are in informal employment, where labour protections are limited or absent and poverty is a constant risk.

They are navigating transitions driven by climate change, digitalisation and shifting demographics that are reshaping the world of work faster than the systems designed to support people can keep pace. The scale of that exposure is sobering: 3.8 billion people have no social protection, more than 240 million workers live in extreme poverty, and nearly half a billion are shut out of the labour market entirely. Progress on SDG 8 is lagging in most regions, precisely because the indicators related to employment and decent work remain unmet.

The stakes are highest for young people, especially young women, who face these barriers despite higher levels of educational achievement than previous generations. Those entering the labour market today face transitions that will define their entire working lives, and they are doing so in economies where youth unemployment remains persistently high and social protection systems were largely built for a different era. If those transitions are managed well, with decent work as the goal and social protection as the floor, this generation stands to benefit enormously.

Underpinning all of this is a compliance gap that is too rarely named. Where labour rights are poorly enforced, where workers cannot organise, where minimum wage protections go unmet, or where occupational safety standards exist on paper but

not in practice, progress towards decent-work objectives is consistently undermined. Closing that gap is a precondition for any of the other targets to be met.

The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions was built to close these gaps. Launched by the Secretary-General as part of the Common Agenda, its purpose is to create 400 million new decent jobs, with a focus on the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection to those currently without it. It invests in skills training and supports the creation of sustainable livelihoods, including in the fast-growing clean energy sector. In doing so, it advances some of the most off-track Goals directly, on decent work, on reducing inequality, on climate action, and demonstrates that integrated investment in people is the fastest route back to the 2030 targets.

This knowledge product builds the case for that approach. Drawing on the experience of pathfinder countries, it presents evidence of what integrated policy and financing approaches deliver in practice, and what others can learn from them. It is an invitation to governments, donors, development banks and civil society to engage with what works and to contribute to what comes next.

The case is there to be made: decent work and universal social protection are the foundation of any transition that can credibly call itself just, and the investment this generation owes to the next.

Amina J. Mohammed  
Deputy Secretary-General  
United Nations

# Secretary- General's remarks at the High-Level Event on the Implementation of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions



Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you today to focus on concrete solutions to implement the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. This initiative was launched exactly one year ago in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic to build on our ongoing efforts to support countries through the crisis.

Today, the need for the Accelerator is – if anything – accelerating. Economies that have been battered by the pandemic are now confronting a cascade of other crises – from the fallout of the war in Ukraine and soaring food and energy prices, to spiralling inflation, crushing debt burdens, and shrinking fiscal space.

These crises are also compounding challenges for countries pursuing the path towards a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, countries like Togo deployed innovative digital solutions to expand social protection to hard-to-reach populations, protecting thousands of people in the process. South Africa launched a Just Energy Transition partnership, signalling an important step in the fight against climate change. It is imperative that we provide the support needed – at speed and at scale – to keep the momentum and ambition of these and similar initiatives alive.

Excellencies,

Let's be clear: The present economic system is unfair, boosting inequalities, and now pushing more people into poverty. The morally bankrupt global financial system requires deep structural reform.

We are working hard to achieve that – but change won't happen overnight.

In the interim, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection is a critical tool to help provide immediate support to people in need and advance action towards transformative change for all. It brings together governments, international financial institutions, civil society, the United Nations, and the private sector with a clear focus:

To create 400 million new decent jobs – especially in the green, care and digital economies – and extend social protection to the over 4 billion people currently without coverage.

To help us manage the massive transformations that will fundamentally change our societies in the coming decades – from digital, to climate, to demographic revolutions – and pave the way for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To put people first by making massive investments in their future wellbeing.

From health and education... to food systems and green infrastructure... to social safety nets that level the playing field... to increased support for women... to preparing young people for the rapidly evolving world of work. One year on, I commend our UN partners – including the ILO – for developing a robust implementation strategy to deploy the Global Accelerator at the country level.

I call on each of you to commit to supporting the Global Accelerator and its objectives.

By developing national policies and integrated strategies for just transitions.

By launching tripartite social dialogues on employment and social protection.

By advocating for stronger multilateral and South–South cooperation.

And by providing the necessary funding and financing strategies – because the reality is that without it, the Accelerator will not succeed. Domestic public resources will provide the bulk of financing, but Official Development Assistance will be required as well. I ask that you give generously – through the Joint SDG Fund or other mechanisms – to help transform the Accelerator from promise to reality.

Excellencies,

We have two paths before us.

One path – the path of inaction – leads to economic collapse and climate catastrophe, widening inequalities and escalating social unrest, and billions trapped in vicious circles of poverty and destitution.

The other path – the path defined by the Accelerator – aims to rebalance societies by putting decent jobs and social protection at the centre of sustainable development.

Let us accelerate our pace down that path in partnership and solidarity so that all people everywhere can live lives of dignity and opportunity in societies that are just, peaceful, and prosperous.

Thank you.

António Guterres  
(UN 2022)

23 September 2022



# Table of contents



<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Deputy Secretary-General's Foreword</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Secretary-General's remarks at the High-Level Event on the Implementation of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>About the authors</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Closing social protection and jobs gaps</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>The Global Accelerator's ambition</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>High-level recognition for the Global Accelerator</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Structure</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Part I. From commitment to action</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>1. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions: Concept and approach</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>1.1 Integrating policies for decent jobs and social protection</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>1.2 Financing decent jobs and social protection</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>1.3 Fostering enhanced multilateral cooperation</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>2. Status of implementation of the Global Accelerator in pathfinder countries</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.1 Vision, ambition and political will</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.2 Collaboration, cooperation and social dialogue</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>2.3 Design and development of integrated policy approaches</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>2.4 Financing</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>2.5 Building an evidence base</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>3. Conclusion</b>	<b>101</b>

<b>Appendices</b>	103
<b>Appendix I: Interview questions</b>	103
<b>Appendix II: Overview of references to the Global Accelerator in high-level documents</b>	105
<b>References</b>	111
<b>Part II. Case Studies</b>	116
<b>Introduction</b>	118
<b>4. Extending social protection and decent jobs to informal economy workers and refugees in Jordan: The <i>Estidama++</i> programme</b>	123
<b>5. Simplified tax and contribution schemes supporting the transition to formality in Argentina</b>	131
<b>6. Social protection and employment in Algeria: Towards sustainable formalization?</b>	141
<b>7. Fostering economic and environmental goals through social protection: The PROEZA project in Paraguay</b>	155
<b>8. Collective insurance agreements for rural workers in Costa Rica's agricultural sector</b>	169
<b>9. Rural benefits and support for smallholder farmers in Brazil: Addressing rural poverty and climate vulnerability</b>	179
<b>10. Integrated programming to strengthen social protection and jobs in Burundi</b>	195
<b>11. Good practices in using social protection to promote a just transition in China: The case of former Yangtze River fishers</b>	213
<b>12. The National Integrated Care System in Uruguay</b>	231
<b>13. Advancing social health protection coverage in Zambia through integration and coordination</b>	249
<b>14. Creating fiscal space for social protection in Senegal through the reallocation of fuel subsidies</b>	261

## List of boxes

Box 1. The Global Accelerator's role in realizing the ambitions of high-level events on financing inclusive and sustainable development	32
Box 2. The National Steering Committee for the Global Accelerator in the Philippines	56
Box 3. Sectoral round tables in Namibia	60
Box 4. Trade union involvement in the Global Accelerator in Rwanda	62
Box 5. Trade union involvement in the Global Accelerator in Paraguay and Uzbekistan	64
Box 6. Integrated policy approaches in the care system in Albania	84
Box 7. Integrated financing in Cambodia: Catalytic support for unlocking social protection	91
Box 8. Application of the Structural Model for Sustainable Development in Senegal	93
Box 9. How the <i>monotributo</i> is promoting social security extension and formalization in Argentina	133
Box 10. Key lessons learned from Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements for rural workers in the agricultural sector	170
Box 11. Key lessons learned from Brazil's rural benefits and policies to support smallholder farmers	180
Box 12. Key lessons learned from the school meals programme in Burundi	197
Box 13. What is an area-based approach?	199
Box 14. What is the commodity voucher model in social assistance?	204
Box 15. Main guiding policy documents for the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, China	217
Box 16. Main responsibilities of the various government bodies working on the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River, China	218
Box 17. Process for former fishers to receive old-age benefits in the Yangtze region, China	222
Box 18. Key lessons learned from Uruguay's National Integrated Care System	233
Box 19. Social security for care workers	239
Box 20. Key lessons learned from the NHIMA–Global Fund pilot programme in Zambia	250

## List of figures

Figure 1. The three-pillar approach of the Global Accelerator	38
Figure 2. Expected results of the Global Accelerator	97
Figure 3. Number of workers in Argentina enrolled in the <i>monotributo</i> scheme and the general scheme for the self-employed, 1997–2023 (millions)	136
Figure 4. Operational mechanism of collective insurance agreements in Costa Rica	173
Figure 5. Share of beneficiaries covered by collective insurance agreements in total number of non-salaried workers affiliated to pension and health insurance in Costa Rica, 2011–24 (percentage)	175
Figure 6. Number of benefits paid out by Brazil's National Social Security Institute, total and by urban versus rural status, 2006–22	183
Figure 7. Number of retirement pension benefits paid out under Brazil's General Social Security Scheme, total and by urban versus rural status, 2021–23	183
Figure 8. Programmes and policies to support smallholder farming in Brazil	185
Figure 9. The World Food Programme's area-based approach to integrated food systems in Burundi	200
Figure 10. Core components and reinforcing pathways of the integrated social protection model in Burundi	209
Figure 11. Map showing the ten provinces along the Yangtze River in China covered by the ten-year fishing ban imposed in 2021	216
Figure 12. Division of responsibilities among the government bodies working on the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, China	219
Figure 13. Step-by-step process for former fishers to receive old-age benefits in the Yangtze region, China	223
Figure 14. Share of subsidies received by households in Senegal, by decile of household income distribution and by type of subsidy, 2019 (percentage)	266
Figure 15. Level of regressivity of fuel subsidies in Senegal, 2019 (percentage)	267

## List of tables

Table 1. Overview of draft and finalized Global Accelerator national road maps	52
Table 2. National governance of the Global Accelerator in pathfinder countries	67
Table 3. Requests for technical assistance submitted to the Global Accelerator Hub of Expertise – ongoing and planned	80
Table 4. Main highlights of the country case studies	119
Table 5. Evolution of selected labour market indicators in Algeria, 2019–24	143
Table 6. China's basic old-age insurance system	220
Table 7. Major social assistance programmes available to former fishers in the Yangtze region, China	225

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### **The National Integrated Care System in Uruguay**

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### **Advancing social health protection coverage in Zambia through integration and coordination**

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### **Creating fiscal space for social protection in Senegal through the reallocation of fuel subsidies**

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# Abbreviations



<b>5R</b>	Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care, reward of paid care work and representation of care workers
<b>ACTRAV</b>	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AFD</b>	French Development Agency
<b>ANAE</b>	National Agency for the Self-Employed (Algeria)
<b>ANEM</b>	National Employment Agency (Algeria)
<b>CACOBATPH</b>	National Fund for Paid Leave and Weather-Related Layoffs in the Construction, Public Works and Hydraulics Sectors (Algeria)
<b>CAIF</b>	Family and Child Support Centre (Uruguay)
<b>CASNOS</b>	National Social Security Fund for the Self-Employed (Algeria)
<b>CCSS</b>	Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund
<b>CEB</b>	Council of Europe Development Bank
<b>CEI</b>	Special Indigenous Commission (Paraguay)
<b>CESE</b>	Economic, Social and Environmental Council (Senegal)
<b>CFA franc</b>	West African CFA franc [CFA = Communauté financière d'Afrique]
<b>CNAC</b>	National Unemployment Insurance Fund (Algeria)
<b>CNAS</b>	National Social Insurance Fund for Employees (Algeria)
<b>CNR</b>	National Pension Fund (Algeria)
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>DGPPE</b>	General Directorate for Planning and Economic Policy (Senegal)
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EFPP</b>	Employers' Federation of Pakistan
<b>ESPER</b>	Employment and Social Protection Expenditure Review
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FfD4</b>	Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
<b>FiCS</b>	Finance in Common Summit
<b>FPIC</b>	free, prior and informed consent

<b>G7</b>	Group of Seven (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States)
<b>G20</b>	Group of 20 (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States; African Union, European Union)
<b>GA</b>	Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>Global Fund</b>	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
<b>HCDS</b>	High Council for Social Dialogue (Senegal)
<b>HGSM</b>	Home-Grown School Meals (Burundi)
<b>HLPF</b>	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFI</b>	international financial institution
<b>INSP!R</b>	International Network for Social Protection Rights
<b>INSS</b>	National Social Security Institute (Brazil)
<b>ITUC</b>	International Trade Union Confederation
<b>LDC</b>	least developed country
<b>M-GA</b>	Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Implement the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Compass
<b>MOHRSS</b>	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (China)
<b>MSEs</b>	micro and small enterprises
<b>MSMEs</b>	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>NEET</b>	not in employment, education or training
<b>NHIMA</b>	National Health Insurance Management Authority (Zambia)
<b>NHIS</b>	National Health Insurance Scheme (Zambia)
<b>NSC</b>	national steering committee
<b>ODA</b>	official development assistance
<b>PDB</b>	public development bank
<b>PNBSF</b>	National Programme of Family Security Grants (Senegal)
<b>PROEZA</b>	Poverty, Reforestation, Energy, and Climate Change Project (Paraguay)
<b>PRONAF</b>	National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming (Brazil)
<b>RGPS</b>	General Social Security Scheme (Brazil)
<b>RNU</b>	Single National Registry (Senegal)
<b>SCT</b>	Social Cash Transfer [programme] (Zambia)

<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SMEs</b>	small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>SMSD</b>	Structural Model for Sustainable Development
<b>SNIC</b>	National Integrated Care System (Uruguay)
<b>SOCIEUX+</b>	EU Expertise on Social Protection, Labour and Employment
<b>TPB</b>	Trabaho Para sa Bayan (Work for the People) (Philippines)
<b>TSF</b>	Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions
<b>TVET</b>	technical and vocational education and training
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations Refugee High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNRC</b>	United Nations Resident Coordinator
<b>UNU-MERIT</b>	United Nations University–Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology
<b>UN-Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WSM</b>	We Social Movements
<b>WSSD2</b>	Second World Summit for Social Development



# Introduction



The purpose of this book is to present how the United Nations (UN) Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is being implemented in and by pathfinder countries and contributing to significant policy changes and increases in financing to advance decent jobs and universal social protection. It also describes how each country is using the Global Accelerator model to drive economic reforms and strengthen social development while putting people at the centre.

The volume contributes to wider efforts to progressively build a case for “what works” in the creation of decent jobs and the extension of social protection for just transitions, and to show why such investments are critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and beyond and how UN system agencies and other partners can join forces in providing coherent policy and financial support.

Supporting South–South cooperation, the book provides Global Accelerator pathfinder countries – and those interested in joining the initiative – with evidence of concrete experiences of countries that are currently implementing the Global Accelerator, along with examples of countries that have succeeded in achieving just transitions for their populations through better coordination and financing of social protection, employment and macroeconomic policies.

This document is also intended for the entire community of experts, donors, development banks, researchers, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and civil society, offering an overview of where the initiative currently stands, drawing on lessons learned and highlighting the path that remains to be travelled. It illustrates how a global initiative can be translated into various implementation pathways that are fully aligned with each country’s development priorities.

## Closing social protection and jobs gaps

For the first time in history, over half the global population is covered by at least one form of social protection. However, this milestone masks major disparities: 3.8 billion people still have no coverage at all, and 2 billion are inadequately protected, these often being the most vulnerable and the hardest to reach. Closing this gap requires an additional investment of 3.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) annually in low- and middle-income countries (ILO 2024a; ILO 2025a). In the 50 most climate-vulnerable countries, mainly in Africa and in

Asia and the Pacific, 2.1 billion people are currently facing the ravages of climate breakdown with no protection (ILO 2024a). Moreover, many developing countries have to contend with debt repayments and financing constraints that block vital investment in the SDGs.

Globally, the jobs gap remains vast. The global jobs gap – the estimated number of people who want to work but do not have a job – reached 402 million in 2024. This includes 186 million unemployed people, 137 million who are temporarily unavailable to work, and 79 million discouraged workers who have stopped looking for a job. Around 60 per cent of workers (2 billion people) work informally, while up to 80 per cent of enterprises operate in the informal economy. Women bear the brunt of informality, holding fewer decent jobs and performing much more unpaid care work (3.2 times more on average) than men. One in five young people are not in employment, education or training (NEET), and young women are twice as likely than young men to be in a NEET situation, reflecting deep gender inequalities (ILO 2025b, ILO n.d.).

The lack of decent work and exclusion from social protection feed into a vicious cycle of informality, poverty, inequality, skills gaps and low productivity that undermines opportunities for the full development of human potential, including creativity, productive capacity and entrepreneurial spirit. Such lack of opportunities threatens livelihoods and is often entrenched, passing from one generation to the next and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality that precludes economic growth.

In addition, there is a risk of new challenges exacerbating this vicious cycle. Digital transformation, demographic change and other ongoing economic and societal transformations may widen structural gaps in the creation of decent employment and intensify decent work deficits, leading to further poverty, social exclusion, increasing inequality and risks of social instability and unrest. However, if the associated transitions were to be managed in a just and equitable manner, there could be unparalleled opportunities for creating decent jobs and expanding social protection, poverty eradication and social integration.

Addressing these decent work deficits, removing barriers to decent and productive employment, and closing social protection coverage and financing gaps are the tasks that the Global Accelerator is designed to achieve through integrated policies and financing and enhanced multilateral cooperation. In that regard, the Global Accelerator is making a significant contribution to achieving the SDGs and associated targets, in particular SDG target 1.3 (social protection systems for all, including floors) and Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), but also Goals 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health and well-being), 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 10 (Reduced inequalities) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Beyond the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is essential that everyone is able to participate in and benefit from economic development, and that

inequalities both within and between countries, which continue to rise under the onslaught of climate change, demographic change and armed conflict, are reduced. Only inclusion, participation and social justice lead to lasting peace and prosperity.

## The Global Accelerator's ambition

**The Global Accelerator helps to ensure that economic and social development go hand in hand.** The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is a UN initiative launched in 2021 that seeks to make economic development more equitable by overcoming persistent decent work and social protection deficits. It aims to ensure that economic transformations, whether related to climate change, digitalization, demographic change or structural transformations, leave no one behind but, rather, become opportunities for decent employment, expanded social protection and just transitions for everyone (UNSDG 2021; Global Accelerator 2022). Championing a human-centred approach, the Global Accelerator supports countries in the development of concrete and tailor-made integrated policy solutions and financing options for their implementation, supported by enhanced multilateral cooperation.

**The Global Accelerator promotes social investments as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth.** There is ample evidence that spending on social protection systems and employment policies and programmes is a crucial investment, with significant economic and fiscal returns. One US dollar invested in social protection leads to an increase in GDP of between US\$2 and US\$5 in two and a half years (Cardoso et al. 2025). Combined investments in social protection and employment policies feed into a virtuous cycle of development, enhancing aggregate demand and productivity, which in turn spur inclusive growth and expand fiscal space for further investments. The Global Accelerator offers compelling evidence of the importance of social investments for sustained economic growth and helps countries in bringing together policymakers and financiers to contribute to national road maps aimed at accelerating the creation of decent jobs, universal social protection and just transitions.

**The Global Accelerator brings stakeholders together.** In an increasingly polarized world, the initiative provides a convincing narrative linking social investments and economic growth that does not divide but instead fosters cooperation. Founded on a rights-based approach, it presents compelling reasons for collaboration among ministries of the economy, finance and labour, the United Nations under the leadership of the UNRCs, public development banks (PDBs), the private sector, the social partners, civil society, and donors. This collaboration is formalized in national- and global-level governance structures.

**The Global Accelerator is developed and implemented locally.** Each pathfinder country has its own Global Accelerator approach, based on the very strong, high-level political commitment and the national road map developed through

a participatory approach by the government, the social partners and civil society. Under government leadership, the road map defines the direction that each pathfinder country commits itself to take and facilitates collaborative support for the implementation of relevant policies and measures. Complementing national leadership, the initiative amplifies its impact through South-South cooperation, multi-stakeholder engagement at the national and global levels and evidence-based advocacy.

“What we hope to achieve is that all of the government ministries, but also the other sectors of our society, come together and commit to taking joint responsibility for building our country,” explained Ms Vicki Erenstein ya Toivo, former Special Adviser to the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation of Namibia.

### **High-level recognition for the Global Accelerator**

In view of its immense potential, the Global Accelerator has attracted recognition and support from governments, international financial institutions (IFIs) and the social partners. It has been endorsed in high-level declarations and other documents, including communiqués issued by the G7 and the G20, and acknowledged at major global forums such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the Finance in Common Summit (FiCS), the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the UN General Assembly (see Appendix II).

The Global Accelerator directly supports the “jobs and social protection” transition, one of the six transitions identified by the UN as key investment pathways for delivering the SDGs and coordinated at country level by the UN Resident Coordinators. It contributes to the implementation of other investment pathways, such as food systems, energy, digital transformation, education, and the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, and was identified as one of the 12 high-impact initiatives at the SDG Summit in 2023 (UNSDG 2023; UNDESA 2023).

The Global Accelerator offers a concrete action platform for the realization of the Sevilla Commitment (the FfD4 outcome document) and the ambition expressed by UN member states in the Doha Political Declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2).

### Box 1. The Global Accelerator's role in realizing the ambitions of high-level events on financing inclusive and sustainable development

The United Nations (UN) Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is part of the Sevilla Platform for Action, launched on 30 June 2025 at the start of the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)**, and contributes to the implementation of several paragraphs of the FfD4 outcome document, known as the Sevilla Commitment:

- The Global Accelerator fosters **collaboration between the UN and international financial institutions (IFIs)** through its Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Implement the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Compass (M-GA) partnership with the World Bank and collaboration with development banks (para. 7 of the Sevilla Commitment).
- Through **country-led national coordination platforms** (para. 40) and national road maps, it helps to align international support with national financing and policy priorities related to decent jobs and universal social protection (para. 8).
- The Global Accelerator supports integrated/coordinated policymaking and financing to create **decent jobs**, expand **social protection** and facilitate the **transition to the formal economy** (paras 21, 27 and 54).
- It promotes **democratic and participatory governance** (para. 13) through its global-level Steering Group and tripartite national steering committees that bring together the national governments of pathfinder countries, the social partners, donors, the UN, IFIs and civil society (para. 24).
- The Global Accelerator supports increased **domestic resource mobilization** (para. 26), backed by international cooperation and innovative financing instruments such as social bonds (para. 32). It mobilizes funding for technical assistance and channels resources through the Joint SDG Fund (para. 39), which actively leads resource mobilization efforts as the global financing mechanism of the UN Resident Coordinator system.

It supports all three core themes of social development simultaneously and thereby the ambition of the **Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2)**, at which Member States committed themselves, in the Doha Political Declaration of 6 November 2025, to “considering to support the implementation of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions ...” (para. 30 (h)).

- The Global Accelerator contributes to **poverty eradication** through the strengthening of national social protection systems and the extension of social protection coverage to the 3.8 billion people still excluded; and by promoting integrated policy packages covering the areas of skills development, job placement, social services and social protection that can help lift people out of poverty, including persons with disabilities, individuals working in informal economy and members of other vulnerable groups.
- It contributes to the achievement of **full and productive employment and decent work** by supporting the transition from informal to formal employment and enterprises, and by ensuring that structural economic transformations – notably in sectors with high levels of informality, such as agriculture, care work, the digital economy, transport, construction and tourism – are just, people-centred and productivity-enhancing.
- The Global Accelerator fosters **social integration** through its systematic participatory approach grounded in social dialogue and tripartite representation. It also does so by focusing on specific groups to ensure that no one is left behind, and by promoting integrated decent work and social protection approaches to help countries navigate demographic challenges, such as ageing populations or youth bulges.
- It helps to create an enabling environment that recognizes the inter-related and mutually reinforcing nature of the three core themes, and thus contributes to progress on all three fronts simultaneously.

Source: UNDESA (2025a); ILO (2025c); UNDESA (2025b).

## Structure

After recalling the concept of the Global Accelerator and its three interlinked and mutually supportive pillars, Part I takes stock of its implementation in 18 pathfinder countries. It provides qualitative evidence of how the Global Accelerator works in pathfinder countries, thereby contributing to the development and sharing of knowledge for current and future pathfinder countries and the wider development community in the spirit of South–South collaboration. Part II includes 11 case studies of countries that have made significant progress in promoting just transitions through better coordination of their employment, social protection, macroeconomic and fiscal policies.



# Part I.

# FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION





1



# The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions: Concept and approach



Launched in September 2021 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions embodies the UN system's collective response to addressing the multiple challenges that threaten to erase social and economic development progress. It aims to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated targets, in particular SDG targets 1.3 and 8.5, but also SDG targets 1.a, 2.1, 3.8, 4.4, 5.4, 5.c, 8.3, 8.6, 10.4, 17.1, 17.3, 17.16 and 17.19 (UNSTAT, n.d.).

As at January 2026, **19 countries**<sup>1</sup> had joined the Global Accelerator, and all of them are committed to stepping up their efforts to achieve progress on decent jobs, social protection and just transitions by **integrating policy efforts** with increased **financing** through **enhanced collaboration** between ministries, with workers' and

employers' organizations, civil society and the private sector, and with the UN, development partners and international financial institutions (IFIs). In each country, this process is guided by a government-led and jointly developed Global Accelerator road map to prioritize and consolidate national efforts.<sup>2</sup>

The Global Accelerator is implemented through three complementary and mutually supportive areas of work (see figure 1):

1. the in-country development of integrated and coordinated employment and social protection policies and strategies that facilitate just transitions;
2. the establishment of national financing frameworks and the mobilization of public and private domestic and international resources to invest

<sup>1</sup> The pathfinder countries as at January 2026 are Albania, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Indonesia, Malawi, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

<sup>2</sup> See the Global Accelerator website, <https://www.unglobalaccelerator.org>.

in universal social protection and inclusive, environment- and gender-responsive employment interventions with a view to creating quality jobs;

3. the improvement of multilateral cooperation on jobs and social protection for just transitions, including cooperation with IFIs (Global Accelerator 2022).

**Figure 1. The three-pillar approach of the Global Accelerator**



Source: Adapted from UNSDG (2021)

### 1.1 Integrating policies for decent jobs and social protection

Despite ongoing efforts, challenges such as informality, gender-based barriers to decent work and structural weaknesses in social protection systems persist. To overcome these challenges, many of them must be addressed simultaneously through the creation of decent and productive jobs and the strengthening of social protection systems. Decent work includes access to social protection. Social protection coverage increases access to healthcare, income security and opportunities to upgrade skills or reskill (ILO 2023a), all of which help to enhance productivity; it also improves business continuity and helps in attracting and retaining talented workers, who in turn contribute to enterprise competitiveness, leading to business and economic growth and further job creation.

To stop the vicious cycle of poverty, inequality and informality, and to facilitate just transitions, a “basket” of integrated employment and social protection policy measures is required.

The type of integration depends on the vision, ambition and capacity of the State to break down the silos within which policies and institutional arrangements are most often defined and implemented. When combined, it is expected that employment and social protection policies can support economic growth by fostering decent jobs, social protection, inclusion, sustainability and formalization, thereby leading to the increased fiscal revenue

that is key to unlocking the Global Accelerator’s potential.

### 1.2 Financing decent jobs and social protection

An additional annual investment of US\$1.4 trillion, or 3.3 per cent of the aggregate GDP of low- and middle-income countries, is the bare minimum necessary to ensure a social protection floor and cover the 47.6 per cent of the global population (3.8 billion people) who remain without any social protection (ILO 2024a; ILO 2025a). Fiscal stimulus gaps reduce the ability of governments to stimulate the creation of the 400 million jobs that are currently needed worldwide. This leaves millions unemployed or in precarious, informal employment without adequate protections, with women facing far greater obstacles in accessing decent work. Governments’ responses to these challenges, and their willingness to invest in gender-responsive social protection and employment policies and sectoral transformation, are hamstrung by rising levels of debt and limited fiscal space.

Financing employment and social protection can be considered both a means and an end. A self-reinforcing dynamic of higher GDP per capita, full and productive employment and universal social protection should be promoted, while taking account of the constraints and opportunities associated with a just transition.

Formal, productive jobs are critical to financing in the long run, driving higher consumption and increased do-

mestic budget revenue through taxation and social security contributions. Social protection plays a critical role as an automatic stabilizer of aggregate demand by (a) reducing poverty and the likelihood of households having to adopt negative coping strategies (such as removing children from school or delaying access to healthcare); and (b) supporting productivity growth and broader development outcomes (nutrition, education, health, care and support). Higher net wages and other earnings from work translate into higher social security contributions, while greater income security – provided by social protection and more stable and decent jobs – is conducive to a more productive workforce and sustainable enterprises. Through their redistributive effect, social protection and investments in public services further reduce vulnerabilities, horizontal and vertical inequalities, social exclusion and poverty. A government’s ability to generate sufficient revenue and create the necessary fiscal space for redistributive policies is closely linked to its capacity to foster an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises that create decent and productive employment (INFF, n.d.).

It is thus essential that integrated policies be adequately financed, as this will spur further public, private, domestic and international investments in productive employment and social protection that will ultimately deliver a positive economic and fiscal return on investment. **Four financing dimensions** are relevant when it comes to financing the accelerated creation of jobs and extension of social protection coverage (Global Accelerator 2026a):

- **Enhance public spending on social protection and jobs:** A review of social protection and employment expenditures is necessary to be able to track these expenditures and benchmark them against international practices and standards. Budget-neutral reallocations towards social protection and jobs can be considered, as can improving the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the measures that are already being funded.
- **Mobilize public revenue to support social protection and jobs:** To be able to spend more, countries need to be able to mobilize revenue for social protection and employment. Tax reforms – such as promoting more efficient tax collection, harnessing official development assistance in the areas of social protection and employment, and extending contributory social security schemes – expand the tax base and contribute to government revenues that can be used to create stronger social protection and employment systems.
- **Promote investments with a social impact:** Credit and investment – public, private, domestic and international – can contribute to employment and social protection. Assessing the social impact of investments (using the Structural Model for Sustainable Development; see box 8) and increasing this impact through the systematic implementation of existing provisions and additional social protection and employment policies and measures can increase the impact that public and private



investments in other areas have on implementing the SDGs.

- **Develop favourable macroeconomic policies:** Fiscal space and broader financing are a product of macroeconomic policy choices and their impact on the economic and social trajectory of a country. Evidence-based policy dialogue is required so that macroeconomic policy (spearheaded by ministries of finance and central banks) and socio-economic policies (led by ministries of labour, other ministries and the social partners) **converge** towards inclusive, job-rich growth accompanied by social protection.

Macroeconomic models allow a focus on potential public investment projects or fiscal measures and estimate their **economic and social returns** (Global Accelerator 2026a).

### 1.3 Fostering enhanced multilateral cooperation

Enhanced multilateral cooperation is the mechanism through which integrated policies and financing work together. The policy and financing reforms undertaken in connection with the Global Accelerator are designed at the country level through the co-creation of a road map, ensuring synergies among participating ministries, donors, development banks, UN agencies, the private sector, the social partners and civil society. **Enhanced collaboration between ministries of finance and ministries of labour** and other relevant line ministries as part of the Global Accelerator national steering committees facilitates ownership through agreement on policy priorities and their financing. **Social dialogue** with workers' and employers' representatives and collaboration with civil society ensure that policy reforms are relevant and financially sustainable and leave no one behind. The **involvement of donors, implementing agencies and public development banks** (PDBs) allows these stakeholders to identify opportunities for investments in decent jobs, social protection and just transitions. Being part of the process streamlines their engagement with the government, and the road maps can facilitate the alignment of donor support and PDB investments with national priorities.

Following the UN's "Delivering as One" approach, the Global Accelerator **pulls together relevant UN expertise** from within the country and beyond. Led by Resident Coordinators, UN country teams provide technical assistance on

policy areas, financing solutions and the engagement of key stakeholders in accordance with the mandates of the specialized UN agencies represented in the team. The Joint SDG Fund provides catalytic funding for technical assistance to support the development of social protection, employment and skills policies and the mobilisation of domestic resources to finance their implementation.

To support **strategic collaboration between the UN and the World Bank**, the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Implement the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Compass (M-GA) was initiated in 2023 with the support of Germany and Ireland. This joint initiative aims to support countries in developing integrated and well-coordinated national employment and social protection programmes and policies through UN–World Bank concerted action, joint programming and knowledge products.

To **encourage further collaboration with development banks**, the Coalition for Social Investment, one of the thematic coalitions of the Finance in Common Summit (FICS), established in 2024 with the Global Accelerator's support a working group on harnessing the social impact of PDB financing for just transitions.

More information on enhanced multilateral cooperation can be found in section 2.2.



# 2



# Status of implementation of the Global Accelerator in pathfinder countries



This chapter presents preliminary qualitative evidence of how the Global Accelerator has been working in pathfinder countries, thereby contributing to the development and sharing of knowledge for future pathfinder countries and the wider development community.

To identify the changes and progress made in pathfinder countries in the short run, interviews were conducted with key members of the national steering committees (NSCs) in pathfinder countries between November 2024 and April 2025. This qualitative information has been supplemented by the analysis of road maps, UN joint programmes funded through the Joint SDG Fund, progress reports and other resources (Global Accelerator, forthcoming(b); Global Accelerator 2024a).

The Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator aims to conduct these interviews every 12 to 18 months in order to track progress in pathfinder countries. The interview questions can be found in Appendix I.

## 2.1 Vision, ambition and political will

### 2.1.1 Overcoming challenges and making transitions just

The political commitment to prioritize and promote decent jobs, skills development and access to social protection underpins pathfinder countries' engagement with the Global Accelerator. While each country is affected differently by current global challenges and megatrends, they have all identified some transitions that affect their labour markets, along with life-cycle risks covered by social protection. How countries respond to the climate crisis, digital transformation, demographic change and other ongoing economic and societal transformations will be decisive for the achievement of the SDGs. These processes may increase poverty, informal employment and barriers to decent work, and lead to social exclusion, greater inequality and risks of social instability and unrest. However, if these transitions were to be managed in a just and equitable manner, there could be unparalleled opportunities for creating decent jobs and expanding

social protection, poverty eradication and social integration. “The GA helps to put people at the centre of economic transformations,” says Mr Maliki, Deputy Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia.

The implementation of the Global Accelerator is closely linked to each country’s current economic and social situation, national development plans and specific plans for achieving the SDGs. There is considerable diversity among pathfinder countries in terms of income per capita, social protection coverage and the prevalence of decent jobs. However, across all these countries there are persistent problems regarding within-country inequality and informality of jobs and enterprises that inhibit access to social protection, the improvement of productivity and the creation of decent jobs.

### Graduation from least developed country status and to Middle Income Country Status

Several pathfinder countries expect to graduate from least developed country (LDC) status in the near future: **Cambodia** in 2029, **Nepal** in 2026, **Senegal** in 2029 and **Rwanda** potentially being recommended for graduation in the coming years if it meets the criteria again in 2027 (UNDESA, n.d.). Least developed countries have access to specific international support measures in the areas of trade and financial and technical co-operation, and for their participation in international forums. To graduate from LDC status, countries need to meet gross national income, economic and environmental vulnerability thresholds, in addition to basic indicators for hu-

man development related to education, health and nutrition. Once they have graduated, social development needs to be expanded to go hand in hand with economic growth. This includes the extension of social protection and the creation of decent jobs, which are key to the reduction of inequalities and further development towards the status of a middle-income country. Graduation from LDC status also has implications for countries’ access to external support for their economic and social development, as they are expected to rely increasingly on domestic resources to achieve further progress.

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** highlighted the link between the Global Accelerator road map and his country’s projected graduation from LDC status in 2029. He noted the importance of ensuring that nobody was left behind in the process. He also emphasized the important role of strong political will for working together with other line ministries and reaching compromises. This was also highlighted by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia. In Cambodia, the Global Accelerator road map is fully aligned with the government’s Pentagonal Strategy – Phase I of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035, and the National Strategy for Informal Economy Development, 2023-2028.

**Bhutan** already graduated from LDC status in December 2023. The Global Accelerator contributes to the implementation of the 13th Five-Year Plan, which sets out a smooth transition strategy for sustainable development

and envisages access to social protection for all Bhutanese people and the development of “twenty-first century skills” through technical and vocational education and training.

In **Uzbekistan**, the Global Accelerator contributes to the implementation of the Government’s “Uzbekistan 2030” strategy, which encapsulates the aspiration to become a middle-income country by 2030. The Government has set out the details for implementing this strategy in several development programmes and legislative acts. Social protection and employment measures are among the key elements of this strategy.

In **Albania**, the Global Accelerator is aligned with the goal of preserving and advancing development progress towards European Union (EU) membership. To that end, the country’s road map focuses on the creation of green and digital jobs, involvement of the private sector in digital skills development programmes for young people and women, and the strengthening of an inclusive social protection system, with a particular emphasis on persons with disabilities.

### Poverty eradication and social inclusion

The Global Accelerator contributes directly to the goal of eradicating poverty in many pathfinder countries. Two pathfinder countries have linked the Global Accelerator to their national strategies on poverty eradication.

In **Indonesia** and **Cabo Verde**, in particular, the Global Accelerator is

strongly linked to government efforts on poverty eradication. Indonesia aims to achieve a poverty rate below 5 per cent by 2029 and zero poverty by 2045, while Cabo Verde has set its sights on eradicating extreme poverty by the end of 2026 (from 2.5 per cent in 2024).

### Achieving universal social protection and the “2 percentage point” goal

The Global Accelerator contributes directly to the aim of achieving universal social protection, in particular by supporting the annual increase of at least 2 percentage points in the share of a country’s population covered for at least one life-cycle risk (USP2030 Partnership 2025). Social protection extension is one of the objectives in most pathfinder countries. However, some of them have specifically quantified their extension targets. In **Nepal**, the Government seeks, with the Global Accelerator’s support, to reach its target of extending social protection coverage to 60 per cent of the population by 2030, doubling the current rate of 30 per cent. In **Cambodia**, the Global Accelerator is supporting the Government in achieving its target of extending universal health coverage to 70 per cent of the population by 2028, up from 58 per cent in 2023, and social protection coverage to 50 per cent, up from 42 per cent in 2023.

### Demographic shifts: Youth employment

The Global Accelerator facilitates just demographic transitions for young people by supporting the creation of decent jobs, skills development opportunities

and access to social protection, allowing the younger generation to fully participate in their country's economic and social development.

In **Malawi**, the Global Accelerator aims to ensure that society can fully benefit from the country's youth bulge. The national road map there focuses on the extension of social protection and the creation of decent jobs in the agricultural, mining and tourism sectors, which is expected to have a high impact on youth employment. These are government priorities in the "Malawi 2063 Vision" and its associated first ten-year implementation plan.

In **Nepal**, the Global Accelerator likewise focuses on providing employment opportunities for young people, many of whom have been leaving the country in search of employment elsewhere, and it will support the finalization and implementation of a national care work policy. This is relevant for **Bhutan** as well.

In his commitment letter, the President of **Namibia** noted the high rate of youth unemployment, which is related to the youth bulge that the country is experiencing. He also referred to the high levels of informality. These issues are exacerbated by droughts linked to climate change.

The commitment letter from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of **Cabo Verde** highlights the importance of skills development for young people to be able to benefit from digitalization and the energy transition.

**Senegal** has a considerable young population and youth employment has been a policy priority there since 2004 (ILO 2023b). The country's road map will also prioritize vocational and technical training for those currently outside the education system and unable to find stable employment.

### Demographic shifts: Care and support systems

The Global Accelerator also facilitates just demographic transitions through its contribution to the development of the care economy. It is essential to invest in care and support services and systems for young people, persons with disabilities and the elderly as beneficiaries and, in the case of young people, as care workers as well. Investment in the care economy leading to the expansion of care and support services redistributes and reduces unpaid care work, easing some of the constraints on women's labour force participation. Such investment creates decent work for care workers along with new indirect employment, supports the development of people's capabilities, and has the potential to increase personal autonomy and choice and improve the quality of professional care in line with needs.

**Albania** has identified care for persons with disabilities, including children, as a priority policy area. Another such priority in Albania's road map is strengthening the social protection system, in particular with regard to childcare and elderly care services. This also includes extending social protection to care workers.



**Indonesia** has identified the integration of social services to cover older people, children and persons with disabilities as a priority action area. One of the aims identified in the country's road map is the establishment of a long-term care benefit scheme, which will improve access to care services for the elderly.

With a view to increasing societal and economic inclusion, **Uzbekistan** has identified two priority actions related to health and care. First, it seeks to enhance the quality and accessibility of integrated social protection and social care and support services for vulnerable groups, including women, young people, returning migrants and persons with disabilities, together with their families. This includes ensuring the high-quality delivery of comprehensive social care and support services, and an effective combination of home and community-based care. Secondly, Uzbekistan aims to enhance childcare services through regulatory reform, the design and implementation of commu-

nity-driven childcare programmes, and awareness and advocacy campaigns. This will be complemented by new policies promoting the transition of care workers to the formal economy.

**Paraguay** has identified in its road map the intention to develop and implement pilot strategies for the National Care Policy.

### **Environmental sustainability**

Pathfinder countries such as Indonesia, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Senegal, and Uzbekistan are highly exposed to climate shocks. For instance, Typhoon Rai in the Philippines affected over 4.4 million workers in 2021 (ILO 2022a), and the 2022 floods in Pakistan disrupted or caused job loss for over 4.3 million workers (ILO 2022b). In view of the impact of extreme heat on workers and businesses, Paraguay is prioritizing the protection of workers in the construction sector. Cambodia, the Democratic Republic

of the Congo, Malawi and Rwanda, which rely heavily on agriculture, face threats to productivity, incomes and food security due to climate change. Environmental degradation necessitates a shift to sustainable practices and agricultural transformation, which are key “acceleration points” for Malawi and Rwanda. Policies to mitigate climate change can have serious adverse effects, particularly on the most vulnerable (ILO 2024b).

In the **Philippines**, the Global Accelerator is enabling the Government to operationalize and implement national policies in two priority sectors, construction and transport, which had been identified early on through consultations with various agencies and ministries. Informality rates in the two sectors are very high and, at the same time, both sectors are undergoing transformations in response to emission reduction targets.

The commitment letter from the Minister of State and Minister of Planning of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** refers to the ecological transition and youth employment.

In their joint commitment letter, the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and the Minister of Labour and Civil Service of **Guinea** also refer to the need to support the ecological transition.

### Transition from informality to formal employment and enterprises

The need to support the transition from informality to formal employment and

enterprises is identified in all Global Accelerator road maps.

At the opening of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in Seville, Spain, on 30 June 2025, Mr Ilkhom Norkulov, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance of **Uzbekistan**, singled out the Global Accelerator when discussing how countries were making progress on the SDGs: “Uzbekistan has been a Global Accelerator pathfinder country since 2023 and has developed a road map with four pillars. Reducing informality is a key pillar that is helping identify vulnerable populations, enabling targeted policies, promoting financial inclusion and increasing the tax base.”

In **Paraguay**, Mr Joryan Joryan Rosati, General Director of Planning at the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, sees the Global Accelerator as “a global alliance that helps drive systemic change”. It supports the Government’s commitment to creating 500,000 jobs in five years, in particular through formalization of the economy, a just transition and the extension of social protection in order to protect workers and communities from economic, climate and environmental risks.

## 2.1.2 National road maps

As at April 2026, 14 countries had endorsed their national Global Accelerator road maps (Albania, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Colombia, Indonesia, Malawi, Nepal, Paraguay, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam), while Namibia was in

the process of validating its road map. The development of road maps has been initiated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Pakistan and Tunisia.

To draw up a Global Accelerator road map, the lead or co-lead government institutions nominated in the high-level commitment letter establish a multi-stakeholder steering committee tasked with leading the implementation of the Global Accelerator initiative in the country, and in particular with coordinating the development of a coherent and prioritized policy agenda ("road map"). This process should be transparent and participatory, involving all relevant line ministries, the social partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, development banks and development partners. Once finalized, the road map is endorsed by the Government and is used to galvanize public institutions, the private sector, development partners and development banks to support the reform needs identified.

The development of a road map starts with a summary of advances made by the country and the pace of progress towards the SDGs, focusing on decent jobs and social protection. This includes the identification of gaps and barriers. The agenda for acceleration is then proposed, comprising priority policy changes and interventions that have been agreed on in order to tackle prominent socio-economic challenges. "Policy changes" may refer both to policies that have already been agreed on and that can be accelerated, or to new policies that will be pursued after further analysis. The prioritized policy

changes should lead to the achievement of a desired impact on jobs, social protection and just transitions. As part of a coherent, prioritized agenda for change, the creation of decent jobs, the expansion of social protection and the advancement of just transitions amount to more than the sum of each individual measure. A key added value of the Global Accelerator lies in its potential to generate positive synergies and feedback loops between social, economic and environmental investments, thereby supporting sustained, broad-based change (Global Accelerator 2023).

The table below shows the main focus areas of the road maps in the pathfinder countries. All road maps seek to promote universal social protection, decent and productive employment, skills development and sustainable enterprises. Some of them focus primarily on the relevant policies, their implementation, improved coordination and the creation of integrated policy packages. Others focus on the implementation of these policies in specific sectors of the economy or throughout specific transitions, so as to ensure that investments in the economy generate social progress.

**Table 1. Overview of draft and finalized Global Accelerator national road maps**

Country	Status of road map	Transitions	Sectors	Target groups
<b>Albania (Global Accelerator 2024b)</b>	Endorsed	Digitalization Demographic change	Healthcare Childcare and support Long-term care	Persons with disabilities Rural youth and women Informal economy workers
<b>Bhutan (Global Accelerator 2025a)</b>	Endorsed	Formalisation Digitalization	Agriculture	Persons with disabilities
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	Endorsed	Formalization		Households in extreme poverty Informal economy workers
<b>Cambodia</b>	Endorsed	Formalization	Healthcare Manufacturing Energy Agriculture Tourism Construction Information technology	Women entrepreneurs Poor and vulnerable households Young people Informal economy workers
<b>Colombia</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Digitalization Low-carbon economy	Agro-industry Tourism Manufacturing Garment industry Energy	Young people Persons with disabilities Care workers Women at the head of households Informal economy workers
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Early stage			
<b>Guinea</b>	Early stage			
<b>Indonesia (Global Accelerator 2025b)</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Energy transition Low-carbon economy Digitalization	Childcare and support Tourism Agriculture	Pregnant mothers Workers with young children Older people Persons with disabilities Informal economy workers
<b>Malawi (Global Accelerator 2024c)</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Energy transition	Mining Agriculture Tourism Energy	Young people Persons with disabilities Informal economy workers

## Status of implementation of the Global Accelerator in pathfinder countries

Country	Status of road map	Transitions	Sectors	Target groups
<b>Namibia</b>	Finalization	Formalization Energy transition Digitalization	Biomass Agriculture Energy Mining Tourism	Young people Mothers Children Older people Informal economy workers
<b>Nepal (Global Accelerator 2025c)</b>	Endorsed	Low-carbon economy Demographic change Formalization		Young people
<b>Pakistan</b>	Early stage	Formalization	Healthcare Textiles Agriculture Energy	Health workers Informal economy workers Women entrepreneurs
<b>Paraguay (Global Accelerator 2024d)</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Low-carbon economy	Care economy Agriculture and livestock	
<b>Philippines (Global Accelerator 2024e)</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Low-carbon economy Digitalization	Construction Transport	Young people Persons with disabilities Women Rural poor households Indigenous peoples Informal economy workers
<b>Rwanda (Global Accelerator 2025d)</b>	Endorsed	Formalization	Agriculture Manufacturing Creative industries Digital economy	Young people Women Persons with disabilities
<b>Senegal (Global Accelerator 2025e)</b>	Finalization	Formalization	Agriculture Industry Construction	Poorest households Informal economy workers Women, young people and persons with disabilities
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Endorsed	Formalization Low-carbon economy Digitalization Energy transition	Construction Agriculture	Migrant workers Young people Women Vulnerable households Informal economy workers
<b>Viet Nam</b>	Endorsed			

The Global Accelerator national road maps are implemented through national policies and programmes and funded by both public and private investments. The UN provides technical support, and it is important to advocate for financial support from IFIs, development partners, the private sector and other partners. Currently, 47 UN and joint UN–World Bank programmes are under way in 30 countries in support of the development and implementation of Global Accelerator road maps or specific transitions. On the UN side, the Joint SDG Fund serves as the financing vehicle to channel this funding to UN agencies at the country level that support the policy reforms identified by governments.

For example, the national road map of **Uzbekistan** identifies four strategic “acceleration points” that will help the Government to achieve its development goals: formalization, green transition, digital transition and social inclusion. How the integration will work in practice is demonstrated citing the construction, transport, agricultural and energy sectors as examples. All sectors are affected by the shift towards a low-carbon economy and by high levels of informality. Digitalization is an enabler of efficiency gains in the delivery of services to beneficiaries and in the management of data by the Government. Both a UN joint programme and a UN–World Bank programme currently being implemented in Uzbekistan focus on formalization. The World Bank, the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (a German PDB) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency have signed loan agreements with Uzbekistan, the borrowing con-

ditions being tied to the development and implementation of social insurance legislation in the country.

Alignment of activities by various actors at the country level is crucial in working towards the implementation of the Global Accelerator national road maps. Their scope is too large for any one actor to be able to provide sufficient financial support or technical assistance on its own for their full implementation.

## 2.2 Collaboration, cooperation and social dialogue

“The Global Accelerator serves as a valuable model, demonstrating how coordinated efforts can lead to more impactful and efficient use of resources,” as noted by Mr Álvaro Díaz, Deputy Director General for Multilateral and European Development Policies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain.

### 2.2.1 Interministerial collaboration

The Global Accelerator requires close collaboration between several ministries. That is why the initiative must be supported at the highest political levels. For example, Malawi joined the initiative through a commitment by the Head of State, as did Namibia. In some countries, this commitment was made jointly by several ministries, as in the case of Guinea (Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Minister of Labour and Civil Service)

and Cabo Verde (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Cabo Verde, and Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal).

Many high-level commitment letters also indicate explicitly which ministry or agency will take the lead role in coordinating the implementation of the Global Accelerator. For example, in **Senegal**, this is the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation, while in Indonesia it is the Ministry of National Development Planning.

In other countries, the responsibility has been shared among several ministries and agencies. In **Namibia**, coordination of the initiative is provided by a “troika” comprising the Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations, the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission. In **Cambodia**, the Prime Minister has endorsed the Global Accelerator national road map and placed its implementation under the leadership of the Minister of Economy and Finance and Deputy Prime Minister. Moreover, and following the government decision No. 57 SSR, the Minister of Labour and Vocational Training chairs the interministerial working group that has been tasked with promoting the road map’s implementation.

These ministries and agencies have been given a clear mandate to bring around the table all other government bodies whose collaboration is necessary for the success of the Global Accelerator initiative. In **Cambodia** this includes the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; the Office

of the Council of Ministers; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; the Ministry of Women’s Affairs; the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation; the Ministry of Planning; the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Commerce; and the Council for the Development of Cambodia. A dedicated joint technical working group also includes the social partners and CSOs.

In **Malawi**, the stakeholders involved include the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs as co-leads; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Mining; the Department of Tourism; the Ministry of Trade and Industry; the Ministry of Gender, the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Natural Resources and Climate Change; representatives of the private sector; representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations; and youth representatives.

Being constituent partners in the development and implementation of the Global Accelerator national road map allows ministries of labour and social affairs to be more closely involved in the preparation and negotiation of national budgets. At the same time, it helps ministries of finance and the economy to ensure that investments in jobs and social protection have an economic and fiscal return. For example, the Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator is providing support to the Department of Labor and Employment in the Philippines through a modelling exercise so that

## Box 2. The National Steering Committee for the Global Accelerator in the Philippines

On 23 September 2023, the Philippines enacted the Trabaho Para sa Bayan (TPB; Work for the People) Act, advancing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach for improving the employability and competitiveness of the country's workers through upskilling and reskilling initiatives and by providing the necessary support to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and industry stakeholders. The TPB Inter-Agency Council includes the following members:

- Department of Economy, Planning and Development (formerly National Economic and Development Authority)
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Labor and Employment
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
- Department of Budget and Management
- Department of Finance
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- A representative of employers' organizations
- A representative of workers' organizations
- A representative from a marginalized or vulnerable sector
- A representative from the informal sector.

The TPB Inter-Agency Council serves as the National Steering Committee for the implementation of the Global Accelerator national road map, allowing for enhanced coordination through an already existing inter-agency body. It aligns the national plans and programmes of the Philippines with the Global Accelerator national road map to ensure an integrated approach to job creation and social protection. Representatives of other stakeholders (i.e. civil society, development partners, the United Nations and international financial institutions) contribute their expertise and perspectives, thereby making the road map's implementation more effective and efficient. The TPB Inter-Agency Council approved the creation of the Global Accelerator Technical Working Group, which is tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of the road map.

A senior official from the Department of Labor and Employment emphasized the importance of having these established structures in place for efficient and smooth cooperation.

Source: Philippines, Department of Economy, Planning and Development (2025).

the Department is able to make the case for investments in social protection and decent work to other relevant institutions, particularly the members of the Trabaho Para sa Bayan (TPB) Inter-Agency Council (see box 2). A similar modelling exercise was undertaken in Senegal, which helped convince the Planning Department of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation to systematically assess the social returns of economic investments.

In **Indonesia**, the National Steering Committee will be supported by four working groups dealing with (a) social protection and data integration; (b) social, care and labour services for the most vulnerable; (c) programme adaptability for a just transition; and (d) equal and extensive skills development for everyone. The Ministry of National Development Planning worked together with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop the Global Accelerator road map.

In **Uzbekistan**, a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and a representative of the National Agency for Social Protection both confirmed that although ministries were already working together closely, the National Steering Committee for the Global Accelerator was useful as a lever to initiate projects and to synergize priorities.

“I encourage Member States to see the Global Accelerator as an opportunity to think out of the box, an opportunity to declare war on silos,” said Ms Vicki Erenstein ya Toivo, former Special Adviser to the Minister of Labour, Industrial

Relations and Employment Creation of Namibia.

The result of this close collaboration between ministries and agencies is that public social protection and employment policies are prioritized through a whole-of-government approach, which is decisive for the adequate financing and successful implementation of these policies. At the same time, ministries of economy and finance that make decisions on public investments in specific sectors (such as agriculture or transport infrastructure in Senegal) or on transformations of the economy start assessing these investments on the basis of their social as well as economic returns. Tools such as the Structural Model for Sustainable Development (SMSD) can help to facilitate this dialogue. By combining structural economic modelling with advanced microsimulation techniques, the SMSD provides policymakers and development partners with detailed insights into how interventions affect different economic sectors, employment categories and household types. This comprehensive approach is essential for the design of policies and investments that promote both economic growth and social inclusion, making the SMSD a valuable tool for pathfinder countries that are pursuing transformative development agendas within the Global Accelerator framework (see box 8 on the SMSD; Global Accelerator 2025f).

## 2.2.2 Social dialogue and cooperation with civil society organizations

### Social dialogue between governments and employers' and workers' organizations

The Global Accelerator is rooted in social dialogue, which includes all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between or among representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. Social dialogue is both a means to achieve social and economic progress and an end in itself, as it gives people a voice and a stake in their workplaces and societies.

Effective social dialogue between governments and employers' and workers' organizations is essential for advancing social justice, fostering inclusive economic growth, improving wages and working conditions, extending social protection and supporting sustainable enterprises. As a cornerstone of good governance, social dialogue creates the conditions required to achieve decent work for everyone while promoting social peace, stability and effective labour market governance. Social dialogue is instrumental in achieving several SDGs, including Goals 1 (No poverty), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 10 (Reduced inequalities) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

Employers create jobs; they know which skills are needed for growth, and they make crucial contributions to social protection systems. Employers and enterprises have a clear role in

promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development, in skills development, in enabling enterprises to thrive and expand across borders and in creating decent jobs on a large scale.

Workers are equally important as stakeholders and must be included in reform processes. For example, the transition away from fossil fuels may cause unemployment in specific sectors or geographical areas. Involving workers' representatives in the associated reform process and ensuring that they have access to support while they reskill to move into another industry or retire, is essential to reduce inequality, prevent poverty and maintain social stability.

As Mr Gilson Pina, National Director for Planning at the Ministry of Finance of **Cabo Verde**, explained during the FfD4 conference in Seville in June–July 2025:

“In Cabo Verde we created a national team with all stakeholders from the government side with the Ministry of Family and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Employment and Business Development and the Ministry of Finance. And of course, civil society, trade unions, the private sector, the UN system, the World Bank and the Government of Portugal. All these stakeholders sit with different perspectives, but with the same objective; they can discuss implementation and achieve better results for the national population; civil society and trade unions can provide guidance to the Government. The road map helps to create such coordination and prioritize what needs to be done in terms of social protection and decent job creation. In the end it is not a road



map of the Government, it's not a road map of the UN or partners, but it is a road map for all Cabo Verde's stakeholders."

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** likewise emphasized the value of social dialogue and the country's positive experiences in that regard. He noted the importance of capacity-building for all stakeholders and thanked Cambodia's partners for supporting these efforts. This fostering of tripartism extended beyond his Ministry and was also to be observed in the Ministry of Economy and Finance and other ministries involved in the design and implementation of the Global Accelerator road map.

Similarly, in **Malawi** the social partners and civil society have been involved in

consultations leading to the national launch of the Global Accelerator initiative and have contributed to the development of the country's Global Accelerator road map. Specific orientation meetings were organized by employers' and workers' organizations to raise awareness among their members and strengthen their involvement in the design and implementation of the Global Accelerator initiative.

"What is unique about the Global Accelerator is that it's not a top-down policy; it's bottom-up. That's why trade unions and workers' associations should actively be engaged and not just recipients of these policies," said Ms Anne Colina from the Federation of Free Workers in the **Philippines**.

### Box 3. Sectoral round tables in Namibia

In order to develop the Global Accelerator national road map, the Namibian Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation<sup>1</sup> organized two sectoral round tables in April and May 2024 on (a) agricultural production, value chains and employment creation; and (b) biomass value chains and employment creation. The round tables were designed to provide a platform for the sharing of a wide range of views from experts working in these sectors, based on analyses, experiences and the programmes and plans of various institutions.

**Agriculture:** The round table began with a presentation by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform providing an overview of the agricultural sector and employment creation, which was followed by two panel discussions, a breakaway session and plenary sessions. The outcome of the round table was consensus on at least the first concrete programmes that the Global Accelerator should support, and on the projected budget, possible financing sources and measurable results. Three programmatic areas with high potential for growth and impact were identified: (a) the development of irrigation infrastructure; (b) the conversion of brownfield areas into green spaces; and (c) horticulture support.

**Biomass:** The objectives of the round table were twofold: firstly, to identify potential programmes and projects within the biomass value chain that can generate employment opportunities. Secondly, to assess possible risks associated with these programmes and devise mitigation strategies while also exploring financing models, infrastructure development and the integration of social protection programmes. The event helped to align the biomass value chain with national public policies, strategies and partnerships, the focus being on maximizing employment and enterprise creation. Through open and inclusive discussions, diverse perspectives and expertise were gathered to inform interventions aimed at tackling unemployment in Namibia.

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry was dissolved in 2025 and its functions taken over by the Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations.

Source: ILO Country Office Harare; Global Accelerator (2024f).

### Capacity-building for workers' and employers' organizations

In order to ensure that social dialogue can succeed, it is crucial for workers' and employers' representatives to have

the capacity required to meaningfully engage in discussions with technical staff from ministries on matters such as designing and financing social protection and skills development, developing single-window services, active labour



market policies and various sectoral approaches. Social dialogue relies on a smooth transfer of information from the government to the social partners and vice versa, and it may also require dedicated capacity-building opportunities for the social partners. This is particularly so in the case of a new initiative like the Global Accelerator.

To that end, **Rwanda** organized a series of workshops for the social partners, especially workers' organizations, in order to strengthen their understanding of the rights of workers in the gig economy and to define concrete steps related to the engagement and role of

trade unions in promoting universal social protection and digital employment opportunities. The workshops were organized in early 2024 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg. Rwanda joined the Global Accelerator with the aim of catalysing progress in various priority areas, including the formalization and digitalization of the urban economy. Accordingly, the workshops also enabled workers' organizations to actively contribute to the development of the road map for the implementation of the Global Accelerator in the country (Global Accelerator 2024g; see also box 4).

#### Box 4. Trade union involvement in the Global Accelerator in Rwanda

As soon as Rwanda became a Global Accelerator pathfinder country, the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) organized several capacity-building events for Rwandan trade unions. Subsequently, the Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda (CESTRAR) – in collaboration with two other national trade union centres (Congrès du Travail et de la Fraternité des Travailleurs (COTRAF) and Conseil National des Organisations Syndicales Libres du Rwanda (COSYLI)) and with the support of ACTRAV – developed and adopted a policy paper to inform their position when co-designing, with other stakeholders, the road map for implementing the Global Accelerator initiative in Rwanda. Trade unions had the opportunity to make their voice heard during a tripartite technical workshop which covered the design and drafting of the national road map.

This policy paper will help trade unions to defend their rights and speak with one voice. It defines three priority areas: (a) formalizing and digitalizing the urban economy; (b) modernizing and greening the agricultural sector; and (c) achieving gender equality through sustained investments in the care economy. The efforts undertaken to achieve these priorities should be based on a universal and rights-based approach, taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities and forcibly displaced persons. The policy paper emphasizes the importance of trade union strategies to support the creation of decent jobs in the digital economy, the extension of social protection to excluded categories of workers, increased investment in training and retraining to close digital skills gaps, and addressing the concerns of workers affected by job losses due to the transition to digital and green economies.

Source: ILO/ACTRAV; Global Accelerator (2024f).

At the global level, various information-sharing sessions have been organized by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to make workers' representatives better aware of the Global Accelerator and to help them to understand how and when to engage with the government on the development and implementation of the national road map.

Employers' organizations representing the private sector are also important partners in the implementation of the Global Accelerator. They are systematically involved in the development and implementation of Global Accelerator road maps through national consultations and participatory social dialogue. In addition, some countries have reported specific activities to build the capacity of employers' organizations



and increase their involvement in the Global Accelerator.

In **Pakistan**, a project to support the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) is being implemented with the support of SOCIEUX+ (EU Expertise on Social Protection, Labour and Employment), a facility for technical cooperation between public and social partner peers established and co-funded by the EU that seeks to expand access to better employment opportunities and inclusive social protection systems. As part of that project in Pakistan, the EFP aims to raise awareness among its members regarding sustainability commitments, decent work and inclusivity. This initiative will integrate "corporate sustainability due diligence" and "just transition" principles into tripartite social dialogue, aligning the EFP's strategies with climate goals and with a gender perspective. The project will produce a comprehensive assessment of sectoral readiness among the EFP's constituency, identify industry-specific challenges and green skills gaps, and

develop policy recommendations grounded in environmental, social and governance (ESG) and due diligence frameworks. It will also enhance cooperation between employers, the Government and international partners to foster climate action, the development of green enterprises and inclusive job creation, ensuring that Pakistan's transition to a green economy is fair, strategic and sustainable.

In **Malawi**, private sector enterprise representatives were interested in contributing to the extension of social protection at the enterprise level, but they needed support through capacity-building, which was duly included as an activity in a UN joint programme supporting the implementation of the Global Accelerator in the country. This decision was the result of a specific private sector consultation meeting organized with the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi, which is part of the National Steering Committee, including at technical level.

## Box 5. Trade union involvement in the Global Accelerator in Paraguay and Uzbekistan

### 1. Paraguay

Workers' organizations were initially not involved in the Global Accelerator when Paraguay became a pathfinder country. The social partners started to engage with the initiative when they were asked to provide comments on the draft Global Accelerator road map, which was developed with technical support from the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and endorsed by the Government in July 2024. Since then, workers' organizations have played a prominent role in the various Global Accelerator processes and have been able to make their voice heard.

In particular, Paraguayan workers' organizations are participating in the Tripartite Commission on Equal Opportunities (CTIO), which is responsible for developing a strategic plan for the implementation of the road map, including milestones and timelines. In addition to their participation in the CTIO, workers' organizations contribute actively to multisectoral round tables, linked to the Global Accelerator, that are organized to promote social protection and decent employment.

The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has provided comprehensive support to the Mesa Sindical, as Paraguay's trade union coordination council is known,<sup>1</sup> through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities highlighting the scope of the Global Accelerator and how decent work, international labour standards and gender equality underlie the implementation of the Global Accelerator road map. Regular ILO presentations to the Mesa Sindical have strengthened the commitment of workers' organizations' and enabled progress towards a system of social and technical accountability.

However, to ensure the social partners' continued participation and commitment in all Global Accelerator processes, it is necessary to institutionalize spaces for tripartite social dialogue and establish stable mechanisms for representation and sustained social dialogue.

<sup>1</sup> The Mesa Sindical brings together the Central Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT; National Central Workers' Organization), the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT; Unitary Central Organization of Workers), the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores Auténtica (CUT-A; Authentic Unitary Central Organization of Workers), the Central General de Trabajadores (CGT; General Central Organization of Workers) and the Confederación Paraguaya de Trabajadores (CPT; Paraguayan Confederation of Workers).

## 2. Uzbekistan

In early 2024, the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan (FTUU) joined the National Steering Committee (NSC) and its technical working groups on the Global Accelerator, supported by continuous policy advice and technical assistance from ACTRAV. The FTUU participated in national consultations on the Global Accelerator road map, contributing to its design and ensuring that workers' rights and decent work priorities were taken into account. Its proposals on occupational safety, social protection and formalization were incorporated into the road map, which was officially endorsed by the Government in May 2024.

Thanks to the FTUU's advocacy, the Uzbek Parliament ratified, in October 2024, the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), a milestone in the alignment of national legislation with the Global Accelerator's goals.

With ACTRAV support, a series of technical workshops and bilateral meetings were organized throughout 2024 to strengthen the FTUU's role in the Global Accelerator initiative. FTUU representatives actively engaged in global forums, including the high-level Steering Group of the Global Accelerator and the sixth meeting of the Social Protection, Freedom and Justice for Workers Network in mid-2024, showcasing the Federation's successful involvement in the Global Accelerator process.

The FTUU continues to actively take part in the implementation of the Global Accelerator road map as a member of the NSC. Furthermore, in May 2025, ACTRAV secured funding to support the FTUU in producing advocacy and information materials and organizing campaigns for the formalization of the construction sector, which is a priority in Uzbekistan's Global Accelerator road map.

Source: ILO/ACTRAV

### Participation of civil society organizations

In addition to the social partners, CSOs are important players in the development and implementation of decent jobs and social protection measures. Especially in countries where the majority of workers and employers are not in formal employment, and hence often not formal members of

trade unions, the input and support of CSOs are key to ensuring the success of such policies. However, CSOs too need to be able to access relevant information in a timely manner so that they can engage in evidence-based advocacy for policies and necessary investments in social protection and decent jobs. They may also require training on certain aspects.

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** highlighted that his Ministry was working with CSOs on the issue of formalization in particular. The Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Labour of **Malawi** explained that the Government had organized special consultations with youth organizations.

At the global level, several discussions and information-sharing sessions have been organized by the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, which consists of more than 100 non-governmental organizations and trade unions from all parts of the world, and by We Social Movements (WSM). These include region-specific discussions on the Global Accelerator. For example, WSM and the International Network for Social Protection Rights (INSP!R)<sup>3</sup> organized a one-day hybrid meeting of Asian Global Accelerator pathfinder countries in April 2024 for their CSO members in Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines. At the celebration of the 50th anniversary of WSM in Brussels in November 2024, the ILO delivered a presentation on the Global Accelerator. The ITUC and INSP!R organized a webinar for workers' organization and CSO representatives from African pathfinder countries in June 2025. The Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors has also prepared guidelines on CSO engagement with the Global Accelerator, which CSOs in all pathfinder countries can use. It is clear that social dialogue and cooperation with CSOs are key to the success

of the Global Accelerator initiative. This means that including these stakeholders in the national steering committees is imperative.

### 2.2.3 National coordination structures

Interministerial collaboration and the involvement of the social partners and civil society in the Global Accelerator are formalized through national coordination structures that are tailored to each country's specific circumstances. Some countries, such as Malawi and the Philippines, use pre-existing coordination bodies, while others have established a dedicated mechanism to coordinate implementation of the Global Accelerator road map. Workers' and employers' organizations and civil society are key stakeholders that should be included more systematically and meaningfully in the relevant decision-making and monitoring processes (see table 2).

<sup>3</sup> Launched by the Belgian CSO We Social Movements in 2022, the International Network for Social Protection Rights (INSP!R) connects 153 social movements across 19 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Europe.

**Table 2. National governance of the Global Accelerator in pathfinder countries**

	Is a national steering committee in place?	Is this a new or an existing structure?	Lead government institution(s)	Are workers' and employers' representatives part of the structure?	Are CSOs part of the structure?
<b>Albania</b>	Yes	Existing structure	Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Yes	Yes
<b>Bhutan</b>	Yes	Existing structure	Ministry of Finance	Not yet	Yes
<b>Cabo Verde</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Finance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cambodia</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training	Yes	Yes
<b>Colombia</b>	Yes	Existing structure	National Planning Department	Yes	Not yet
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Not yet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Guinea</b>	Not yet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Indonesia</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of National Development Planning	As part of the technical working groups	As part of the technical working groups
<b>Malawi</b>	Yes	Existing structure	Ministry of Labour Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	Yes – Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM) and Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) are part of both the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee	Yes – Civil Society Social Protection Network is part of the Technical and Steering Committees

	Is a national steering committee in place?	Is this a new or an existing structure?	Lead government institution(s)	Are workers' and employers' representatives part of the structure?	Are CSOs part of the structure?
<b>Namibia</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations Ministry of Finance National Planning Commission	Yes	Yes
<b>Nepal</b>	Yes	New structure	National Planning Commission	Yes	Not yet
<b>Pakistan</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (chair) Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Ministry of Finance, Economics Affairs Division Provincial departments of labour	Yes	Co-opted members
<b>Paraguay</b>	Not yet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Philippines</b>	Yes	Existing structure	Department of Economy, Planning and Development (formerly National Economic and Development Authority) Department of Labor and Employment Department of Trade and Industry	Yes	Yes
<b>Rwanda</b>	Not yet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

	Is a national steering committee in place?	Is this a new or an existing structure?	Lead government institution(s)	Are workers' and employers' representatives part of the structure?	Are CSOs part of the structure?
<b>Senegal</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation Ministry of Finance and Budget Ministry of Labour, Employment and Relations with Institutions Ministry of the Environment and Ecological Transition Ministry for the Family and Solidarity	Yes	Yes
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Yes	New structure	Ministry of Economy and Finance Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction National Agency for Social Protection	Yes	Not yet
<b>Viet Nam</b>	Not yet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

n.a. = not applicable, CSO = civil society organization

Source: Global Accelerator (forthcoming(c)).

### 2.2.4 Collaboration with the United Nations, international financial institutions and development partners

The Global Accelerator national road maps are country-owned unifying frameworks that enable the UN, donors and development banks to provide precisely the technical and financial support that is needed to implement government priorities.

### The Global Accelerator strengthens the role of the UN Resident Coordinators

The Global Accelerator is conceptualized as an initiative that fosters collaboration among UN agencies at the global and national levels. It enables coordinated UN support on social protection and jobs under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators and, as such, serves as a tool for further

implementation of UN reform. Mr Joseph Scheuer, UN Resident Coordinator in **Cambodia**, emphasized: “As UNRCs we have access to the Government at the highest level. Having the strength of the UN country team behind us, it is easier, it is more credible, and it is more effective than if individual agencies engage by themselves.”

Similarly, Ms Hanaa Singer-Hamdy, the Resident Coordinator in **Nepal**, explained that “the Global Accelerator reinforces UNRC ability to foster coordination and create coherence across government and UN agencies”. In Nepal, the Global Accelerator is helping to create coherence across planning and line ministries within the Government. Among the various UN agencies operating in a country, the Global Accelerator also provides a platform to get the best out of each one and leverage their comparative advantages: (a) the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promotes private sector development; (b) the ILO ensures that jobs are decent and formal and that social protection is extended; (c) the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) supports rights-based non-contributory protection for children; (d) the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the ILO have expertise in care policies and gender-responsive employment policies; and (e) the World Bank provides access to financial instruments and policy advice. “Together, these actors are a more unified ecosystem”, Ms Singer-Hamdy added.

While the added value brought by the Global Accelerator is widely acknowledged, it is important to raise

awareness among the country representatives of UN agencies regarding the initiative’s relevance to the country’s development plan and to the provision of coordinated UN support to national governments. This is something that Ms Aminata Maiga, UN Resident Coordinator in **Senegal**, has been doing:

“In Senegal I first raised awareness among the UN country team about the Global Accelerator approach, which was key to securing the commitment of heads of UN agencies. I then used the Global Accelerator to align the interventions of UN agencies in key sectors. The fact that the Global Accelerator contributes directly to one of the six pathways for accelerating the SDGs on decent work and universal social protection helped a lot. I also drew inspiration from the Global Accelerator Steering Group structure that existed at the global level by genuinely involving all relevant UN agencies.”

In many countries the UN Resident Coordinators have played a key role in securing high-level commitment from the government to officially become a pathfinder country. This was the case in Rwanda and Senegal, to name but a few.

The Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator secured catalytic resources from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Republic of Korea and Spain to support Global Accelerator implementation on the ground. Moreover, together with the Joint SDG Fund and the World Bank, the Technical Support Facility initiated several rounds of Global Accelerator and M-GA pro-



posals in 2024 and 2025, which helped UN Resident Coordinators and country teams to develop UN joint programmes aimed at providing coherent technical assistance to countries in the implementation of their national priorities for accelerating progress on decent jobs and universal social protection. By channelling resources to UN joint programmes, the Joint SDG Fund and the GA TSF reinforce the Resident Coordinator's convening power and coordination role across participating UN agencies. This financial support enhances the coherence and strategic impact of UN support for the Global Accelerator, which serves as a unified platform for delivering on the SDGs through decent jobs and universal social protection. The Joint SDG Fund and the GA TSF also help to mobilize additional resources and secure political commitment from governments and development partners.

Resident Coordinators are increasingly aware of the importance of mobilizing donors and partners locally to comple-

ment such catalytic funding and further support implementation of the Global Accelerator on the ground. In that regard, Mr Joseph Scheuer, the UN Resident Coordinator in **Cambodia**, convened a donor meeting in April 2025 on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Global Accelerator Policy Forum. The confirmation of unified UN support for the creation of decent jobs and social protection, and a joint narrative led by the Resident Coordinator, highlighted to donors the value of supporting the Global Accelerator and the meeting served as a starting point for further in-depth and complementary discussions and action. In **Malawi**, a similar round-table event brought together potential donors to promote decent jobs and universal social protection in the development of agricultural value chains.

A recent questionnaire sent by the UN Development Coordination Office to all the Resident Coordinators concerned has resulted in very positive feedback. All of them agreed that the Global Ac-

celerator had enabled coherent UN support on social protection and jobs and that the ILO had consistently provided substantive technical leadership. The Global Accelerator initiative had played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration among UN agencies and national stakeholders, ensuring coherence and complementarity in joint programmes. Overall, the Resident Coordinators viewed the Global Accelerator approach as inclusive in that it actively involved a broad range of partners – including government ministries, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and other UN entities – to ensure that diverse perspectives were integrated into the design and implementation of national road maps. In addition, it was underscored that the strategic partnership and joint funding mechanism with the World Bank (M-GA) had enabled the Resident Coordinators to engage in concrete collaborative work with the World Bank and other IFIs.

### **The Global Accelerator strengthens collaboration with public development banks**

Among PDBs, the World Bank<sup>4</sup> is by far the biggest investor in social protection. The World Bank was responsible for 67 per cent of social protection financing in 2023. Its investment is even more concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected States and most climate-vulnerable countries, where the World Bank accounted for, respectively, 89 per cent and 77 per cent of the total in 2023 (Watkins et al. 2025). Developing a partnership between

the Global Accelerator and the World Bank was accordingly a strategic objective supported by Germany and Ireland. This resulted in the creation of the Multi-Stakeholder Engagement to Implement the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Compass (M-GA), which fosters systematic joint provision of technical support by the UN and the World Bank in relation to decent jobs and universal social protection. The M-GA does so through calls for proposals launched by the Joint SDG Fund on the UN side and by the Social Protection Response Umbrella Trust Fund on the World Bank side. M-GA projects can also help to lay the groundwork for World Bank lending operations. Two calls for proposals have been launched in 2024 and 2025, leading to a total of 32 UN–World Bank joint programmes being implemented.

Collaboration with development banks was also extended to other PDBs that recognize the importance of social investments and just transitions. “For development banks, the Global Accelerator national road maps present a structured demand of government priorities,” said Ms Virgine Leroy, former Deputy Executive Director for Human Development and Social Progress at the French Development Agency (AFD). The role of PDBs in supporting social development and achieving just transitions is twofold. First, they need to ensure that their investments contribute to social as well as economic development. This can be done, for example, by ensuring

4 The World Bank comprises two institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA).

that the projects they invest in create jobs that feature social protection. This is the case with the AFD's investments in **South Africa**. The Agency's public policy loan of €400 million to support the implementation of that country's Just Energy Transition Plan focuses on social equity and specifically directs support towards the social dimensions of the transition, which include job creation, poverty reduction, social justice and equitable access to electricity supply.

Secondly, development banks also need to support the development of social policies and schemes, which helps to strengthen the social fabric of countries. By providing the necessary financial resources, PDBs play a critical role in backing effective policies that attract further investments. This helps to ensure that social investments are sustainable and impactful. In the **Philippines**, the work planned under the Global Accelerator in the transport and construction sectors has been discussed between the government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In **Nepal**, various development partners and IFIs, notably the World Bank and the ADB, have expressed their interest in supporting the implementation of the country's Global Accelerator road map, in particular aspects that relate to job creation. The private sector is also keen to contribute to this, especially in the tourism sector. In **Malawi**, the ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are exploring possible collaboration on setting up integrated agribusiness hubs to promote the creation of decent jobs and social protection in the agricultural value chain.

To support such efforts, the Finance in Common Summit's Coalition for Social Investment, together with the ILO, has created a working group that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences among PDBs regarding their alignment with the Global Accelerator national road maps. Ms Audrey Rojkoff, AFD Regional Director for Southern Africa, explained the underlying rationale:

"We have set up this Coalition for Social Investment, and the idea was to build the resilience of our economies because equal access to basic services such as health, education and skills, along with a solid social protection system is a foundation for economic growth. Investing in human capital is certainly a prerequisite for just and sustainable growth, just like any infrastructure project. So, the role of PDBs in the broader financial system is to promote sustainability and inclusivity, and to bring together all the development financiers around the same objectives."

As Ms Isabelle Brun, Senior Adviser on Sector Policy and Partnerships at the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), emphasizes, "disseminating and using the Global Accelerator national road maps to all relevant IFIs to promote discussions at the country level is key. In addition, the Global Accelerator's contribution to measuring the social impact of IFI operations is important for most investors and can help channel increased funding towards social investments." In that regard, the ILO is promoting the Structural Model for Sustainable Development (SMSD), which can help Ministries of Economy and Finance and IFIs to maximize the social impact of their investments

through ex ante assessments and improvements to the design of the projects that they fund.

These initial efforts need to be built on in order to enhance the financial support provided by PDBs for the policy reforms and investments that are prioritized in Global Accelerator national road maps. Closer collaboration is required to leverage the comparative advantages of the UN and IFIs in supporting the Global Accelerator's implementation technically and financially. An EU project currently under development will help the ILO and the AFD to join forces in promoting decent jobs and universal social protection through investments under the EU's Global Gateway strategy.

### 2.2.5 Steering Group of the Global Accelerator

The Steering Group of the Global Accelerator brings together the stakeholders from all national steering committees. It provides strategic guidance for the initiative, monitors the progress made in countries and at the global level, supports the development and dissemination of knowledge, results and evidence, facilitates peer-to-peer learning and South-South and triangular cooperation, and engages in advocacy and resource mobilization for the Global Accelerator. It was created on 20 February 2024 and is composed of representatives of pathfinder countries, donor governments, UN agencies, the social partners, PDBs and civil society (Global Accelerator 2024h). The Steering Group convened four times in 2024 and twice in 2025 to monitor

progress, provide strategic guidance and advocate for the Global Accelerator's ambitions at global forums. On matters related to the M-GA, the Steering Group joins the World Bank as part of the M-GA Coordinating Council. Five meetings of the Coordinating Council took place in 2024 and 2025.

The Steering Group's mission has been described as follows by Ms Mia Seppo, former ILO Assistant Director-General for the Jobs and Social Protection Cluster:

"It's up to all of us members of the Steering Group to guide the Global Accelerator so that it can provide results, impact and evidence. We need concrete examples that can inspire others; we need evidence which we can communicate globally in high-level meetings and in a South-South context, and locally under the leadership of pathfinder country governments. Let us work together in this group to make the Global Accelerator a success in delivering at the country level and using the evidence to impact on global debates so as to accelerate progress towards social justice."

The Steering Group regularly organizes discussions on how to advocate more strongly for the Global Accelerator at international forums. After the FfD4 conference, the discussion centred around the forthcoming Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in Doha, in particular on including a reference to the Global Accelerator in the political declaration to be adopted there and organizing a side event to showcase the Global Accelerator's contribution to social de-

velopment. Thanks to these efforts, the Global Accelerator was mentioned in the Doha Political Declaration in para. 30(h) as a mechanism that could support the implementation of the commitments adopted at WSSD2.

South–South learning is another key aspect of the Steering Group’s work. A member of the National Planning Commission of **Nepal** noted the importance of learning from other countries. An in-depth exchange was conducted over two days in October 2024, and regular Steering Group meetings have been giving pathfinder country governments and other stakeholders the opportunity to share information on the progress they have made – for example, on the development of integrated policy approaches, the drawing up of strategies for financing and the mobilization of resources, the application of specific tools and methodologies, or the design of national road maps. At the Asia-Pacific Global Accelerator Policy Forum in April 2025, these exchanges took place in greater depth among pathfinder countries from the region (Global Accelerator 2025g).

In addition, pathfinder countries are starting to support each other bilaterally. The Department of Labor and Employment of the **Philippines** shared its experience during a technical meeting with **Viet Nam’s** national partners with regard to multi-stakeholder engagement for the Global Accelerator, the selection of priority sectors and how to proceed to the development of a national road map. With the UN Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam chairing the meeting, national partners discussed how they could learn from the experi-

ence gained by the Philippines. National partners in Viet Nam continue to request information on other pathfinder countries’ experiences with the design and implementation of Global Accelerator road maps and are using this to guide their own decision-making.

The Steering Group of the Global Accelerator and the M-GA Coordinating Council create a link between global policy discussions and country-level implementation. They ensure that lessons learned from individual countries’ implementation of the Global Accelerator can feed into global policy discussions and commitments – for instance, at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, at G20 meetings, the FiCS summit, the FfD4 conference and the WSSD2 summit. They also promote the Global Accelerator and the M-GA as useful mechanisms for supporting the implementation of global commitments at the national level.

### 2.2.6 Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator

The Technical Support Facility (TSF) of the Global Accelerator serves as the secretariat of the Steering Group. Coordinated by the ILO and composed of five other UN agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women and the World Food Programme (WFP)), the TSF brings together relevant expertise from across the UN development community. It mobilizes resources and supports Joint SDG Fund calls for proposals. Beyond

fundraising, the TSF: (a) develops partnerships with donor countries, IFIs, the private sector and technical experts; (b) communicates on the Global Accelerator initiative and assembles evidence of its results and impacts, which feeds into global policy discussions; (c) develops tools and methodologies that can be applied, on demand, to support the design and implementation of national road maps; (d) supports capacity-building activities for countries and UN staff; (e) manages the Global Accelerator Hub of Expertise; and (f) fosters a community of practice on integrated job creation and social protection policies and financing.

### Resource mobilization

The TSF mobilizes resources to support the provision of technical assistance to pathfinder countries and organizes calls for proposals in close coordination with the Joint SDG Fund, which manages a global “funding window” for decent jobs and universal social protection and has already channelled over US\$24 million to more than 20 countries. In the context of the M-GA the calls are co-organized with the Joint SDG Fund and the World Bank Social Protection Response Umbrella Trust Fund (SPR UTF)

Several funding rounds have been organized by the TSF. The first such round was initiated through the Joint SDG Fund in early 2024, resulting in the approval of a funding envelope of US\$17.8 million – financed by Belgium, Germany and Spain – to develop and implement the first set of Global Accelerator and M-GA joint programmes. A total of 23 joint programmes, dis-

tributed across three tracks, and one global project to support the TSF have been approved and fully launched:

- Joint programmes under the “high-impact track” are under way in six pathfinder countries where Global Accelerator road maps were ready. These programmes received approximately US\$1.8 million each through the first round of funding and their implementation is expected to deliver transformative results over a 24-month period.
- Eight countries have received US\$200,000 each under the “seed funding track” to support the inclusive design of their road maps, enabling broad stakeholder engagement in shaping strategic reforms for the creation of decent jobs and social protection.
- Nine countries are implementing joint UN–World Bank programmes under the “M-GA track”, each receiving US\$250,000 through the Joint SDG Fund and US\$250,000 through the World Bank side. These initiatives bring together UN expertise and World Bank financing to address shared priorities such as employment formalization, social insurance expansion and skills development.

A second M-GA funding round of the Joint SDG Fund was launched on 8 May 2025, with an envelope totalling US\$11.1 million. Conducted together with the World Bank, which received the same amount of US\$11.1 million, this round features a “pathfinder track” to support Global Accelerator implementation in pathfinder countries and



a “thematic track” open to additional countries. This second call for proposals attracted a high level of engagement, with 51 proposals submitted: 18 from pathfinder countries seeking funding to support the implementation of their road maps and 33 under the thematic track, primarily for activities to address climate change, informality and fragility. 23 joint UN-World Bank programs (and one UN joint program) as well as one global project to support the Technical Support Facility were approved.

The Global Accelerator and the M-GA are currently overseeing 47 joint programmes on decent jobs and universal social protection, of which 35 are benefiting pathfinder countries and 12 are in non-pathfinder countries. New funding rounds will be organized in 2026 to support Global Accelerator implementation.

### **Technical support and capacity development**

To bolster national capacities, the TSF has developed tools and guidelines such as a Global Accelerator road map template, Guidelines for the inception phase (Global Accelerator 2024i), the Informality Dashboard, the financing strategy, the SMSD and a practitioner’s guide entitled *Macroeconomic Diagnostics for Decent Jobs, Social Protection and Just Transitions* (Islam, Fedi and Verick 2024). In addition, the TSF is creating tools and methodologies, or refining and improving existing ones, that can be used to assess social protection- and employment-related spending in all pathfinder countries, to support the design and implementation of integrated policy approaches and to harness the knowledge and experience gained

by pathfinder countries so as to benefit more countries.<sup>5</sup>

The TSF has developed a results framework for the Global Accelerator, supporting national monitoring of road map implementation. It is working with the UN Development Coordination Office to embed Global Accelerator-related indicators into UN-wide monitoring systems (Global Accelerator 2024j). In that regard, the Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** highlighted the importance of having a robust common results framework for the Global Accelerator, which enabled the consolidation of results. However, countries may need the support of the TSF in collecting the relevant data.

In collaboration with the UNDP Sustainable Finance Hub, a TSF working group on financing is supporting countries with the development of financing strategies for their Global Accelerator road maps. This includes reviewing Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) and identifying options to mobilize domestic and international resources for priorities identified in the road maps (INFF, n.d.).

The TSF also facilitates real-time learning across countries and between agencies within countries. This is essential to maintain consistent quality standards, to ensure that the technical assistance provided is aligned with human rights and international labour standards, and to foster coherent approaches across UN country teams. This is achieved through regular com-

munication within the Steering Group of the Global Accelerator and by fostering direct South–South exchanges between countries. More of these exchanges will be organized in the future through a community of practice as countries start implementing their national Global Accelerator road maps, resulting in concrete policy changes and impacts on the ground.

The TSF is already providing technical support, on demand, to pathfinder countries on the development of their road maps, on results frameworks, policy development and integration, financing and multilateral cooperation. These services are delivered by a virtual Hub of Expertise composed of UN experts and external collaborators (see table 3). The list of services can be accessed [here](#).

Technical support with the design of integrated policy approaches and delivery mechanisms is currently being provided in **Cambodia** and **Paraguay**, with a specific focus on the integration of social protection programmes and active labour market policies. The TSF also provides ex ante impact assessments of policy packages and investments using the SMSD, as was already done in **Senegal**, with Cambodia, Malawi, Nepal and the Philippines all having expressed interest in conducting such analyses. The Department of Labor and Employment of the **Philippines** indicated interest in technical support on just transition and green jobs aspects relevant to both the construction and the transport sectors.

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<sup>5</sup> These resources are being published on the Global Accelerator website (<http://www.unglobalaccelerator.org>) as they become available.

With regard to financing, the TSF supports governments in conducting Employment and Social Protection Expenditure Reviews, which are under way in **Cambodia, Paraguay** and **Viet Nam**. The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia mentioned the possibility of setting a minimum threshold for how much domestic public financing and investments would be needed to ensure that policies developed with the Global Accelerator's support reach the most vulnerable. In addition to being crucial for stepping up investments in social protection and decent jobs, the aforementioned reviews contribute significantly to the development of data baselines that will help countries to report on their progress as measured by the indicators identified in the Global Accelerator results framework. The TSF can support governments in conducting a macroeconomic diagnostic study to support the development of a macroeconomic framework that is conducive to employment creation and the extension of social protection – such studies are ongoing in **Nepal** and **Senegal** and are planned in **Malawi**. The TSF also helps governments to develop financing strategies for their Global Accelerator national road maps. The Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Labour of **Malawi** expressed the need for further clarification on the Global Accelerator financing strategy and how to adapt it to the Malawian context. In that regard, the sharing of other countries' experiences would be useful.

In terms of multilateral cooperation, the TSF supports countries in ensuring that investments by national govern-

ments, development banks and the private sector have a social impact. In **Senegal**, the National Steering Committee reviews proposals for public investment projects in such areas as rural electrification, agricultural transformation and universal health coverage, and seeks to maximize their expected impact on social protection and decent jobs – in line with the priorities of the Global Accelerator national road map – before their final submission to the Ministry of Finance and Budget. This reflects the Senegalese authorities' ambition to embed decent employment and social protection as cross-cutting issues in strategic projects (Global Accelerator 2025h). Such coherence can be achieved by, for example, applying the SMSD methodology and reviewing investments at the design stage.

The technical and financial assistance provided through various UN joint programmes can only partially and temporarily support the implementation of the Global Accelerator in countries. The bulk of the investments needs to be made by national governments in close collaboration with the social partners, development partners, the private sector and public and private banks and investors. UN joint programmes should serve as catalytic investments to kick-start more sustainable, nationally financed government programmes and they thus need to have clear exit strategies, as pointed out by the Director of Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare at the Ministry of National Development Planning of **Indonesia**.

**Table 3. Requests for technical assistance submitted to the Global Accelerator Hub of Expertise – ongoing and planned**

Areas of technical assistance	Methodologies and tools used	Ongoing support provided to	New requests submitted by
<b>Policy integration</b>	Integrated policy approaches and delivery mechanisms	Cambodia Paraguay	Malawi
<b>Financing</b>	Ex ante impact assessments using the Structural Model for Sustainable Development	Senegal	Cambodia Malawi Philippines
	Employment and Social Protection Expenditure Reviews	Cambodia Paraguay Viet Nam	Malawi Philippines
	Management of public finances (budget preparation, approval, expenditures, audit, evaluation)	–	Malawi
	Macroeconomic diagnostic study to support decent jobs, social protection and just transitions	Nepal Senegal	Malawi
	Financing strategies for Global Accelerator road maps	Uzbekistan	Malawi Rwanda
<b>Multilateral cooperation</b>	Development of PDB projects	Albania (by CEB) Malawi (by IFAD)	Several countries in Southern Africa (AFD and EU)
	Capacity-building for the social partners	Pakistan (by SOCIEUX+) Rwanda	Malawi
<b>Overarching</b>	Support with the development of road maps	All pathfinder countries	–
	Results monitoring	Cambodia Senegal	All pathfinder countries

– = none.

AFD = French Development Agency; CEB = Council of Europe Development Bank; EU = European Union; IFAD = International Fund for Agricultural Development; PDB = public development bank; SOCIEUX+ = EU Expertise on Social Protection, Labour and Employment.

The list of available services is available on line: <https://www.unglobalaccelerator.org/sites/default/files/2026-03/Technical%20Support%20Facility%20-%20Hub%20of%20Expertise%20Service%20list%20-%20March%202026.pdf>

## 2.3 Design and development of integrated policy approaches

The Global Accelerator pathfinder countries are very diverse in their development pathways, institutional setup and national priorities. This is reflected in their approach to the design and development of integrated policy approaches. Some countries favour integration in specific sectors; others identify which measures and policies must be integrated to effectively deliver just transitions. In **Uzbekistan**, a representative of the National Agency for Social Protection highlighted the importance of integrated policy approaches in ensuring that transitions were just for the entire population. In order to devise such approaches, it was essential to first assess what already existed.

“The Global Accelerator/M-GA brings strategic benefits to **Indonesia’s** development agenda by supporting the Government’s efforts to build more inclusive, adaptive and integrated systems for social protection and employment,” noted Mr Maliki, Deputy Minister of National Development Planning of Indonesia.

The integration of policies or programmes at the policy or system level can exploit synergies and thus create efficiencies. This includes the institutional integration of jobs and social protection, adding elements of one or the other to existing programmes, such as cash-plus programmes, and ensuring that considerations related to jobs and social protection are incorporated into macroeconomic, sectoral

policies and other policy packages that support just transitions (digital, green, formalization).

From the perspective of beneficiaries, integration can also mean offering a comprehensive package of services that respond to existing needs. This can be achieved through, for example, the development of single-window services or digital management information systems integrated with public employment services. In these cases, digitalization can help to increase the accessibility of services for beneficiaries.

### 2.3.1 Jobs and social protection systems: Institutional integration and linkages

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** explained that some integrated policies were already being implemented, such as an integration of skills training and cash transfers for the poorest, with the transfers being conditional on taking part in the training offered. With the Global Accelerator’s support, Cambodia is strengthening its social assistance programme for vocational training directed at young people and poor households. Integration will be deepened further by building capacities at the district level related to public employment services, i.e. job matching and placement, counselling and guidance. The programme is being improved by ensuring that the vocational training provided is of high quality and relevant, and by exploring partnerships (including with the private sector) to secure additional funding.

The Government also intends to implement a “digital social registry”, enhancing the existing online registry for small businesses and enabling digital referrals of persons with disabilities to vocational training. This is being driven by improved interoperability among public agencies.

In **Albania**, policy integration is particularly prevalent in the provision of support for a specific group of beneficiaries, namely persons with disabilities. The Global Accelerator national road map envisages adjustments to, and strengthening of, the social protection system, employment policies, skills policies and education. It is noted in the road map that this will require increased collaboration among all the stakeholders.

In **Malawi**, discussions are under way to expand an existing programme that provides vocational skills training, entrepreneurship support and job placement services to young people in rural areas to help them establish themselves in decent self-employment or find decent wage jobs in the agribusiness supply chain. Specifically, it is planned to incorporate innovative approaches into that programme so that it promotes social protection coverage for these young people.

In **Viet Nam**, efforts to integrate job creation, the labour market information system, employment services, skills development and unemployment insurance continue to be pursued successfully. This is reflected in the Social Insurance Act, which came into effect on 1 July 2025, and the adoption of

the amended Employment Act by the National Assembly on 16 June 2025.

These are a few concrete examples of ways to link decent jobs and universal social protection at the policy and institutional levels. When it comes to policy implementation, the integration of delivery mechanisms can also contribute to a more comprehensive service offer, creating synergies between programmes while reducing administrative costs.

In **Namibia**, a digital integrated management information system is being developed to extend social protection to nomadic communities. This system will link to birth registers, tax records, the national pension fund and registries of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and jobseekers, thereby enhancing institutional capacity and streamlining access to services.

**Indonesia** is upgrading its socio-economic registry and management information system to make its services more inclusive, efficient and responsive. The planned improvements will support faster registration, better data integration across government programmes, increased cost efficiency, reduced exclusion errors and a stronger capacity to respond to emergencies.

Such integration can also happen at the delivery level. In **Uzbekistan**, as part of support for the formalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the road map envisages the introduction of a simplified social protection contribution mechanism and a social protection one-stop shop.

However, for institutional integration and linkages to be achieved, it is necessary to break down silos. The Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Labour of **Malawi** observed that one challenge in developing integrated policy approaches was changing the mindsets of people. Staff at institutions preferred to continue working as they had always done, and integrated approaches required innovation and capacity-building to break silos and overcome such attitudes. However, with time, and as the participatory development of the road map progressed, the necessary changes became clearer and were accepted. The Department of Labor and Employment of the **Philippines** explained that a process of breaking down silos in various ministries was already under way. Because of the ongoing close interministerial cooperation in the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Inter-Agency Council (see box 2 above), the Government found it easy to develop integrated approaches and was able to draw on various existing plans and frameworks for skills, social protection and employment.

### 2.3.2 Jobs and social protection in sectoral policies and specific value chains

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** agreed that, for the formalization of jobs and enterprises, it was useful to start with sectors with very high levels of informality. The Government would tackle informality in the platform (or “gig”) economy as a next step and was already engaging in discussions with platforms on

how they could contribute to the social protection of workers. Integrated skills, employment and social protection approaches are also crucial for specific value chains in Cambodia. For example, in the garment and footwear industries, where Cambodia is currently prominent mainly in upstream production processes, the Government was trying to support expansion into middle-stream and downstream processes, including the mill processing and colouring of fabrics. That, however, required automation and work with chemicals, for which workers needed to receive the relevant skills training and occupational safety and health measures had to be implemented, such as the provision of protective equipment. Similarly, in the agricultural sector, cashew farmers currently benefit only from selling the cashew nut. However, with the development of additional processing industries in Cambodia and the necessary skills training, farmers can extract value from the cashew fruit as well by turning it into oils or charcoal. This work is currently being supported by the World Bank, the ADB and the AFD. With additional and more stable income, the workers and micro and small enterprises (MSEs) concerned will be able to register with, and contribute to, the country’s social insurance scheme, which is in the process of being extended to workers and enterprises operating in the informal economy.

In **Indonesia**, the Government favours an approach that involves piloting integrated policies on a smaller scale and, if they prove to be effective in reducing poverty, subsequently upscaling them so that they become national

programmes. This approach is also preferred by the Government of the **Philippines**, where the Global Accelerator road map is initially focusing on the construction and transport sectors, the aim being to extrapolate successful measures to other priority sectors identified in the national employment master plan. Construction

and transport, both of which are pivotal to infrastructure development, climate adaptation and digital transformation (in view of the many gig workers in the transport sector), and both of which face high and persistent levels of informality, were identified as priority sectors through extensive stakeholder consultations.

### Box 6. Integrated policy approaches in the care system in Albania

In **Albania**, the Global Accelerator is supporting the piloting of long-term care (LTC) models in six municipalities and the development of a customized training curriculum for the LTC workforce, in line with the National Ageing Plan 2025–2030. The Global Accelerator road map promotes care employment outcomes, particularly for women, and calls for LTC policies to be integrated into Albania's social protection system. As at July 2025, over 200 women and young people had received professional certification and been placed with some 220 households, where they are providing integrated LTC services.

Using an integrated model of service delivery, municipal partnerships supported 112 families receiving economic assistance by providing additional services such as home visits, psychosocial counselling, parenting sessions, mentoring and employment referral pathways. As at July 2025, this outreach had extended to 332 marginalized households, increasing their access to essential services and fostering inclusion. Moreover, partnerships with local authorities and non-governmental organizations had expanded the provision of care to over 500 families in need.

### 2.3.3 Jobs and social protection as a means to advance other policy objectives and transitions

#### Formalization

The prevalence of workers and enterprises in the informal economy remains a significant obstacle to the achievement of decent work and universal

social protection in most pathfinder countries. The informal employment rate ranges from around 57 per cent in **Albania** (ILO 2024c) to 88.3 per cent in **Cambodia** (ILO 2024d). In **Paraguay**, the Global Accelerator road map has identified key policy areas that promote access to social protection for young people and women through the implementation of a comprehensive policy package designed to facilitate their

transition to the formal economy. Two recent policy decisions illustrate this integrated approach. The first is the launch of a new active labour market programme, “Emplea PY Joven”, to help young people to take up formal jobs in MSEs, including social protection and access to a vocational training course. Secondly, Paraguay has adopted a new version of the Integrated Strategy for the Formalization of Employment covering the period 2025–2028.

**Cambodia, Namibia, Nepal, Paraguay** and **Uzbekistan** plan to advance the implementation of their **comprehensive national strategies** for formalization through the Global Accelerator. Pathfinder countries chose various entry points to accelerate this transition.

Several pathfinder countries have chosen to focus on the formalization of jobs and enterprises in specific sectors: **Albania** (tourism), **Malawi** (agriculture), the **Philippines** (construction and transport), **Senegal** (agriculture and transport) and **Uzbekistan** (construction, transport, agriculture and energy). A better understanding of the role of diverse actors and their economic relations across a specific sector and value chain helps in identifying concrete formalization measures, and the lessons learned from that sector or value chain can be extrapolated to others. **Cabo Verde** and **Uzbekistan** are also promoting enterprise formalization in their Global Accelerator work.

### Transition to a low-carbon economy

Several pathfinder countries have identified the transition to a low-carbon

economy as a priority in their Global Accelerator national road maps. Thus, in the road map for **Uzbekistan**, the Government has identified the need to (a) establish skills development systems that respond to the demands of the green transition; (b) strengthen the country’s social protection system to cover the most vulnerable people in the regions affected the most by the green transition and those affected by climate shocks; and (c) support resilient SMEs and social enterprises that are able to benefit from and/or adapt to the opportunities and challenges of the green transition.

In the road map of **Indonesia**, climate change, natural disasters and the energy transition are identified as cross-cutting areas. The Government intends to further integrate existing social protection programmes and develop adaptive social protection programmes along with skills development schemes and active labour market policies in order to make it easier for workers to access new employment opportunities. This includes, for example, the expansion of unemployment protection during the accelerated development of renewable energies. The Government also plans to establish needs-based skills development programmes in regions impacted by climate change, the energy transition and natural disasters.

In the **Philippines**, the transport and construction sectors, which are the priority sectors in the Global Accelerator national road map, are both affected by climate change and the need to decarbonize the economy. Green investments have the potential to create de-

cent jobs. With that in mind, **Namibia** is focusing on renewable energy.

As in other countries, the labour market in **Paraguay** is being shaken up by **demographic, technological and environmental change**. The Global Accelerator is helping to anticipate the job losses and social protection needs that are likely to result from these transformations. Accordingly, the Government is overhauling an existing unemployment insurance scheme and updating active labour market policies and its broader employment and industrial policy. The Government also intends to strengthen the national social protection system so that it can respond better to climate-related shocks.

### Digitalization

For all pathfinder countries, the digital transition offers many opportunities for job creation and productivity enhancement, along with improvements in efficiency, accessibility and the inclusivity of social protection and skills development.<sup>6</sup> This presupposes the protection of the political, cultural and personal rights of individuals, including the confidentiality of private information. To be able to seize these opportunities, people need access to digital connectivity, which varies widely across pathfinder countries. Internet access ranges from 38 per cent of the population in Africa to 92 per cent in Europe, with Asia and the Pacific standing at 66 per cent and the Americas at 87 per cent (ITU 2024). In low- and

lower-middle-income countries, there are persistent gender inequalities in internet use.

Digital literacy and skills are key areas of the Global Accelerator's implementation in **Cabo Verde, Indonesia** and **Namibia**. In **Cambodia**, formal digital skills training as part of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is combined with a cash transfer programme to support vulnerable young people.

The road maps in **Cambodia** and **Uzbekistan** also prioritize the digitalization of SMEs with a view to increasing productivity and accelerating formalization. Relevant measures in **Uzbekistan** include campaigns to raise awareness of digital business practices among SMEs and the development of sample digital employment agreements for cleaners, home-care workers and nannies.

The development of the platform economy has created a range of new employment opportunities, as in **Cambodia, Rwanda** and the **Philippines**, yet workers often face challenging working conditions and many are not entitled to mandatory social insurance. Both countries will seek to enhance digital skills (so as to improve access to job opportunities) while extending social security to workers in all types of employment, including platform workers.

<sup>6</sup> For examples of how pathfinder countries are using digitalization as an enabler of policy integration, see section 2.3.1.

## Demographic change

Some pathfinder countries are experiencing a youth bulge, while others are contending with the effects of rapidly ageing populations. To turn the youth bulge into an economic dividend, young people must have access to skills development, decent jobs and social protection. The need for a more comprehensive care sector was identified as a priority in several pathfinder countries, specifically a mix of long-term care for persons with disabilities and older people on the one hand, and childcare services on the other. Access to decent jobs in care services can provide rewarding employment for women (and men), while access to childcare and long-term care for the elderly and persons with disabilities can increase women's labour force participation rates, thereby reducing the risk of old-age poverty among women.

In **Namibia**, where in 2018 the NEET (not in employment, education or training) rate stood at 29.4 per cent for men and at 34.3 per cent for women (ILO, n.d.), green energy, agriculture, mining and tourism have been identified as priority sectors in the Global Accelerator road map when it comes to increasing youth employment, including by improving access to skills development through TVET, active labour market policies, an integrated school-to-work strategy that provides financial support for first-time jobseekers, and the creation of decent jobs. This is to be complemented by the extension of social protection, in particular the strengthening of pensions. Formalization is also a key objective, given that young people are more likely to be in informal jobs.

In **Malawi**, where youth unemployment stands at around 23 per cent, youth empowerment and job creation and skills development for young people are cross-cutting priorities of the Global Accelerator road map. The Government aims to equip young people with knowledge of modern agricultural techniques and mining skills, but also with reskilling and upskilling opportunities for employment in the creative arts and sports, and with entrepreneurial capabilities in general. It intends to create employment opportunities with social protection in the energy and trade sectors, among others.

In its national road map, **Albania**, which faces an ageing population, has identified the strengthening of the care sector and care services, both for older people and for children, as a key priority. The planned investments in childcare services and enhanced services for the elderly include the extension of social protection to caregivers, including those working in informal arrangements, in order to help increase formal employment among women.

**Indonesia** intends to establish a long-term care benefit scheme, which will improve access to care services for older people.

**Uzbekistan** seeks to enhance childcare services through regulatory reform, the design and implementation of community-driven childcare programmes, and awareness and advocacy campaigns. This is to be complemented by policy measures promoting the transition of care workers into the formal economy. **Rwanda** prioritizes

the digital and creative economy that predominantly employ young people.

## 2.4 Financing

“The Global Accelerator’s fuel is financing. The country road maps are great unifying frameworks and a way to harmonize approaches for coherent interventions around jobs and social protection,” said Ms Karin Schelzig, Director of the Human and Social Development Sector Office for Southeast Asia at the ADB.

Four financing dimensions can be distinguished when it comes to financing the accelerated creation of decent jobs with social protection (Global Accelerator 2026a). These dimensions need to be considered by pathfinder countries during the initial design of their road maps and as the road maps are fleshed out and implemented. What to start with and how to select the right financing options in an informed manner will differ depending on the national context and a country’s previous work on financing (IATF 2024). The UN joint programmes and UN-World Bank joint programmes, which are funded on the UN side through the Joint SDG Fund, deliver catalytic investments designed to unlock domestic public resources and thus enhance the projects’ social and economic impact

### 2.4.1 Public spending on social protection and jobs

**Employment and Social Protection Expenditure Reviews:** A first consideration is how much and how effec-

tively a country directly spends on social protection and employment. A review of spending on social protection, employment and related services is useful in order to be able to track these expenditures and compare them against international benchmarks, including benchmarks that incorporate a gender-responsive and social inclusion lens.

**“ESPER”, a service offered by the Technical Support Facility:** The Technical Support Facility of the Global Accelerator conducts Employment and Social Protection Expenditure Reviews (“ESPER reviews”) in pathfinder countries that request such support, as is the case, for example, with **Cambodia, Paraguay and Viet Nam**. ESPER reviews examine the adequacy, alignment, and efficiency of spending related to employment and social protection systems and generate evidence-based policy recommendations that governments can use to increase coherence, improve socio-economic outcomes and ensure fiscal sustainability. The Department of Labor and Employment of the **Philippines** recognized the importance of the support provided through the Global Accelerator for reviewing spending on employment and social protection. The ESPER service was very well aligned with an ongoing government initiative on programme convergence budgeting.

Following a sound assessment of their social protection- and jobs-related spending, pathfinder countries can strengthen public expenditure processes to ensure that resources are used effectively to achieve their social protection and employment goals



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(Bierbaum, Schmitt 2022a). This includes improving budget execution by releasing funds on time, strengthening expenditure and commitment controls, and streamlining procurement and payment processes, including digital delivery mechanisms. Investing in financial management information systems can further improve transparency, accountability and efficiency. By taking these steps, countries can enhance the effectiveness of their spending related to social protection and employment.

### 2.4.2 Revenues for social protection and jobs

To increase spending capacity, countries need to be able to mobilize ad-

ditional revenue for social protection and employment. This can be achieved through a combination of tax reforms, improved tax collection capacity and effectiveness, government budget reallocations and the extension of contributory systems (in terms of both coverage and adequacy), with budget support through official development assistance (ODA) acting as a catalyst.

#### **Increasing government budgets:**

The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** highlighted the need to expand the fiscal space for social protection and decent work. His country's high-level political commitment to the Global Accelerator reflected a strong determination to invest further in those two areas. The shock

experienced during the COVID-19 crisis had accentuated the importance of such investment. He emphasized that expanding social protection and supporting the creation of decent jobs was an investment, not an expenditure, pointing to the economic and fiscal returns that could be achieved. The Government had committed itself to increasing the budget for social protection so that it would act as a buffer against crises such as natural disasters, financial downturns and trade wars.

**Digitalization** improves the ecosystem for enterprises, can increase productivity, and facilitates social security affiliation, the collection of social security contributions and formalization of the economy, leading to increased public revenues. It also reduces fraud and increases the efficiency of public programmes, thereby improving public finance management. To unlock the full potential of digitalization, investments are required in digital and energy infrastructure – for example, through projects under the EU’s Global Gateway strategy, which can contribute significantly to the extension of social protection and the creation of decent jobs if designed well.

**Reallocating national budgets:** As well as improving the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of existing spending, budget-neutral reallocations from less effective spending towards social protection and jobs can increase spending capacity. The Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Labour of **Malawi** highlighted the importance of the high-level political commitment, which in her country’s case had come from the President, in fostering close-

er collaboration between her Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and in mobilizing resources from the government budget. In addition, the focus of the Global Accelerator road map on young people had also helped to garner further support and resources from the Ministry of Finance, as the “Malawi 2063 Vision” emphasizes the crucial role of young people as a force for progress and development. The discussions were currently centred on job creation but would be expanded to cover social protection as well.

**Central/local matching of public budgets:** In **Indonesia**, as explained by the Director of Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare at the Ministry of National Development Planning, much of the financing was needed at the sub-national level. The central Government supported local governments through grant matching or performance-based grants, for example, but it was important that local governments also mobilized resources themselves. She expressed interest in adopting good practices from other countries to support that process.

**Increasing fiscal space through formalization:** Integrated approaches can be the pathway to increased formalization of jobs and enterprises. Formal businesses are more likely to comply with tax obligations and make it easier for the authorities to implement compliance measures, which means that the formalization of enterprises both supports and improves tax collection efforts. Similarly, the formalization of jobs creates closer links between employment, social protection and tax systems, and supports improved

coverage and revenues of contributory social security. Such measures lead to increased public revenue for social protection and jobs, and ultimately to greater fiscal space. This is what the programmes currently under way in **Uzbekistan** aim to achieve.

**Official development assistance:** Development cooperation resources channelled to UN country teams through the Joint SDG Fund provide catalytic funding to kick-start the design and

implementation of Global Accelerator national road maps. This, in turn, can prompt the mobilization of additional ODA resources – budget support and concessional financing in particular – to support national policy and public and private investments in infrastructure. The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** emphasized the importance of funding and promoting training and capacity-building activities for all stakeholders.

### Box 7. Integrated financing in Cambodia: Catalytic support for unlocking social protection

Cambodia piloted a cost efficiency review of public expenditure to identify fiscal space for social sectors. This includes the development and roll-out of a budget monitoring app that enhances local capacity to track social protection expenditures. The review was launched pursuant to an interministerial circular of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Interior that aims to unlock approximately US\$20 million in communal budgets to support social protection programmes, including programmes for disability identification and social assistance packages for families.

Ensuring that these additional revenues translate into tangible improvements in social protection and employment requires robust and well-structured budget preparation. Countries can strengthen this process by (a) adopting medium-term budget frameworks that link policy priorities to multi-year resource allocations; (b) anchoring social protection and employment commitments in legislation and national development plans to secure predictable funding; and (c) basing budget proposals on realistic

costing and evidence. Closer coordination between the ministries of finance, labour and social affairs, and with subnational governments, helps to consolidate fragmented schemes into a coherent “budget envelope”. The Director of Poverty Alleviation and Social Welfare at the Ministry of National Development Planning of **Indonesia** explained that closer collaboration between ministries through the National Steering Committee for the Global Accelerator could help to increase domestic resource mobili-

zation. Closer collaboration was also liable to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government spending, the aim being to use potentially freed-up resources for integrated poverty alleviation measures. Furthermore, inclusive budget preparation – for example, through engagement with the social partners and civil society – can increase transparency, strengthen political ownership and protect resource allocations for social protection and decent work-related activities.

### 2.4.3 Investments with a social impact

This financing dimension has to do with public and private, domestic and international credit and capital investments, and with how much the various actors involved can do to contribute to employment and social protection.

**Social security contributions and taxes:** Both employers and workers finance social protection through the payment of social security contributions and taxes. The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** emphasized that employers also actively participated in, and contributed, to the financing of social protection. Contributions by the private sector to the health insurance scheme were very important. This was confirmed by Mr Antoine Fontaine, Vice President of the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations, who noted:

“Cambodian employers strongly support the development of sustainable social protection. This is not only an

ethical imperative, but also a strategic choice. A protected workforce is more productive, less frequently absent and more stable. The workforce is also a driver of economic growth. It consumes, innovates and invests in the future of the country.”

**Involving the private sector and public development banks in financing technical and vocational education and training:** Innovative financing approaches for skills development are being explored by **Indonesia** in two priority sectors, tourism and agribusiness, where sectoral skills councils and the development of apprenticeship programmes provide specific entry points for private sector financing. In **Senegal**, the private sector is already contributing to the financing of TVET through regular contributions. The country’s Global Accelerator road map envisages a reform of the governance of TVET aimed at increasing the private sector’s role in identifying priority areas for training curricula so as to reduce skills mismatches.

**Promoting the use of climate funds:** Investments in social protection and decent jobs can also help to achieve other policy objectives, such as climate action, which means that climate funds can potentially be used to extend social protection and promote decent work. The resilience of individuals and societies that comes with universal social protection and access to decent jobs is essential for successful climate action. In that sense, the Global Accelerator’s work is closely linked to the aims of climate funds such as the Global Environment Facility or the Green Climate Fund (Task Force on Linking

Adaptive Social Protection and Climate Financing 2025). For example, the Government of **Senegal** reallocated fossil fuel subsidies to its family benefits programme in 2023, following an assessment of the fiscal space and various financing options. Other pathfinder countries have similarly identified the transition to a low-carbon economy as a priority in their Global Accelerator national road maps and could use climate funding to finance some of their work on policy design and implementation. This is the case for Indonesia, the Philippines and Uzbekistan.

The integration of climate, social protection and employment policies – including through nationally determined contributions – is essential for this financing to become a reality. Countries may also seize the opportunities provided by Just Energy Transition Partnerships (in Indonesia, Senegal and Viet Nam) and Global Gateway projects, involving governments, the EU, IFIs and the private sector, to promote increased investments in employment, skills and social protection policies in conjunction with investments in green energy.

### **Box 8. Application of the Structural Model for Sustainable Development in Senegal**

The SMSD application in Senegal provided the following policy and financing recommendations. Senegal should implement a multi-tiered social protection system that combines universal basic coverage with targeted interventions, including maintaining the existing cash transfer programme as a bedrock while adding specialized programmes such as healthcare subsidies for individuals with disabilities and vocational training components that the SMSD modelling showed to be associated with significant improvements in employability. This system should be supported by a balanced financing strategy that distributes the fiscal burden across multiple sources, combining moderate deficit financing within sustainable limits, progressive taxation with appropriate exemptions, and systematic enhancements of the efficiency of public spending. Reviews of the system should be conducted regularly in the light of evolving economic conditions.

Source: Adapted from Jiang and Xi (2026).

**Investments with social impact and social investments with economic returns:** A member of the National Planning Commission of **Nepal** emphasized that infrastructure projects should also generate decent jobs, which would help to make the construction sector more attractive to local workers. The Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of **Cambodia** highlighted the need for greater investment from the private sector, PDBs, donors and other actors in order to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, too, could benefit from the extension of social protection and the creation of decent jobs. In **Senegal**, application of the Structural Model for Sustainable Development (SMSD) is helping the Government to assess ex ante the impact of envisaged investments in agriculture and transport infrastructure on the creation of decent jobs and the reduction of inequality (see box 8). This enables policymakers to make informed decisions that are in keeping with the ambition to foster both economic and social development. Similarly, the SMSD could also be used to assess the social impact of PDB investments. In **Namibia**, the financing strategy includes maximizing the contribution of the **sovereign wealth fund** towards social protection and economic empowerment interventions for young people.

#### 2.4.4 Macroeconomic framework

Fiscal space and broader financing are a product of macroeconomic policy choices and their impact on the economic and social trajectory of a country. Evidence-based policy dialogue is

needed to ensure that macroeconomic policy (spearheaded by ministries of finance and central banks) and socio-economic policies (led by ministries of labour and social affairs, other ministries and the social partners) are aligned with each other to drive inclusive, job-rich growth. Macroeconomic models can help in assessing possible public investment projects or fiscal measures, estimating their overall economic and social returns. **Macroeconomic policy dialogue** is also key to harnessing the “demographic dividend”, which can boost growth and support the financing of social protection.

In **Malawi**, for example, implementation of the Global Accelerator will depend on an enabling macro-fiscal environment and supportive policy and regulatory frameworks. Malawi is facing an acute macro-fiscal crisis, which requires arduous decisions to be taken on fiscal revenue and spending. A social protection response will need to be mounted with international support and the reallocation of public spending towards social assistance. Going forward, the social insurance system also needs to be further developed, strengthened and extended to provide more adequate and sustainable protection to workers and their families, including those operating in the informal economy. A renewed role for development financing, involving public and private domestic and international actors, is essential in that regard, since commercial banks in Malawi are by and large shying away from the major, longer-term investments in agriculture, industry or mining that would be required to accelerate

growth and the creation of productive, decent jobs.

In **Nepal**, the Global Accelerator will analyse how macroeconomic policies can be leveraged to seize the opportunities that graduation from the status of a least developed country in 2026 will bring, while protecting jobs, workers and their families from any possible impacts of that process. This will complement sectoral investment plans and a financing framework for the extension of social protection in line with the country's 16th National Development Plan.

## 2.5 Building an evidence base

The Global Accelerator is an initiative that seeks to put social development at the heart of economic development so that transformations are fair for everyone and are accompanied by a reduction in poverty and inequality and by the formalization of employment and enterprises. To that end, it is essential to demonstrate that the approach promoted by the Global Accelerator — simultaneously creating decent jobs and extending social protection — is not only key to achieving the social SDGs, but also a prerequisite for economic success. The Global Accelerator model guarantees a return on investment in terms of increasing GDP, public revenues and fiscal space, creating a conducive business environment, improving the image of public and private investors, and enhancing their contribution to the social SDGs.

Methodologies and tools are being developed under the Global Accelerator

initiative to measure the ex ante impact of economic and sectoral investments and social and employment policies, and of their combination, which is necessary to achieve better results. The Global Accelerator also demonstrates that the implementation of social policies contributes to stronger and more sustainable economic growth.

The Global Accelerator is therefore pursuing collaboration not only with labour and social development ministries, but also with those responsible for the economy, planning and finance, and seeking to convince policymakers of the merits of investing in social protection and employment policies and schemes. It can support national planning and investment agencies, along with PDBs, in developing investments and projects with a stronger social impact. Moreover, it is sensitizing the private sector to the importance of a business environment that respects and promotes social standards. All types of investors, public and private, are encouraged to measure and maximize the social impact of their investments.

In view of these considerations, the Technical Support Facility has drawn up a unifying results framework that enables governments, UN agencies, donors, PDBs and public and private investors to measure the impact of actions taken (not just ex ante, but also ex post). This framework is key to consolidating the results and impact from different countries and interventions with a view to building an evidence base in support of the Global Accelerator approach.



The expected outcomes of the Global Accelerator initiative extend across three main categories: (a) policy and institutional changes; (b) improved financing; and (c) impacts on people and enterprises (Global Accelerator 2024j; see also figure 2). The aforementioned results framework comprises 15 core indicators that are to be universally adopted by all pathfinder countries, with progress on these to be regularly reported. In addition, a wider range of indicators that are related to the priorities laid down in the Global Accelerator national road maps can and should be identified by pathfinder countries.

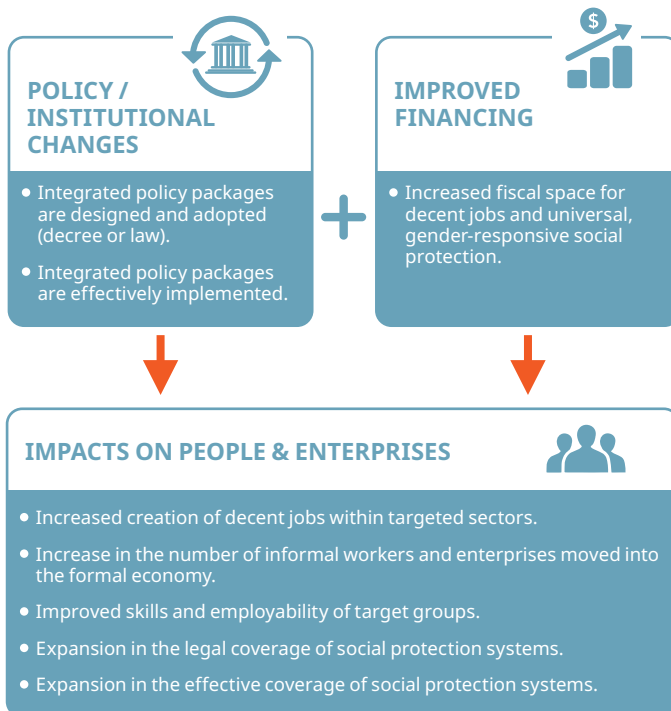
- **Policy and institutional changes** are achieved through the establishment and effective implementation of comprehensive policy packages that incorporate both stand-alone interventions and the more complex integrated policy approach. There should be a focus on reforms to legal and regulatory frameworks. Policy and institutional changes are necessary to unlock the transformative social and economic benefits envisioned under the Global Accelerator.
- **Improved financing** – in terms of both the mobilization of financing and the effective use of those funds – is

essential to achieve the Global Accelerator's goals. The underlying rationale is that the expansion of fiscal space, increased budgetary allocations and improved budgeting systems are key to accelerating change. The relevant indicators in the results framework cover both financial commitments (e.g. annual change in social protection- and employment-related public spending) and the capacity to report on their implementation.

- **Impacts on people and enterprises** are the core outcomes that the Glob-

al Accelerator initiative is intended to achieve, the focus being on the direct effects of interventions on individuals, enterprises and communities. These outcomes are the highest in the hierarchy of results and will depend on the success of enhanced policy frameworks and improved financing mechanisms. They embody the Global Accelerator's aspiration to improve livelihoods, increase social equity and achieve just transitions through tangible improvements in employment and social protection (Global Accelerator 2024j).

**Figure 2. Expected results of the Global Accelerator**



This global results framework is currently being adapted in pathfinder countries. **Senegal** has reviewed all the indicators and collected baseline data for each one. To develop the specific results framework for implementation of the Global Accelerator in Senegal, a workshop was held in Dakar from 8 to 10 July 2025. The workshop was organized under the leadership of UNICEF, in collaboration with the ILO and with technical leadership from Senegal's General Directorate for Planning and Economic Policy (DG-PPE). It brought together technical representatives of various ministries and institutions involved in the design of the Global Accelerator national road map – including the DGPPE, the Ministry of Vocational Training and Employment, the Professional and Technical Vocational Education and Training Fund (3FPT), the General Delegation for Social Protection and National Solidarity, and the Senegalese Retirement Pension Institute – as well as national agencies responsible for evaluation and the production of official statistics, such as the National Agency for Statistics and Demography. Thanks to the workshop, significant progress was made in detailing each action included in the road map. Participants jointly identified the relevant monitoring data, their sources and the institutions best positioned to lead the follow-up for almost every action. Targets were set for 2029, along with annual milestones over the next four years. In addition, outcome indicators were incorporated into the monitoring framework to ensure that each thematic area of the Global Accelerator in Senegal is linked to a relevant overarching outcome. These indica-

tors sometimes intersected with the broader results framework proposed by the Technical Support Facility, which was also refined during the workshop to better reflect the national road map's specific priorities. A secondary objective of the workshop was to initiate discussion on the road map's financing strategy and the detailed budgeting of each action – topics that were introduced but not addressed in depth. Two follow-up sessions took place in August 2025 to revisit work on remaining gaps, including baseline data and budgeting elements, which it was agreed would be completed by the most relevant institutions by the end of September 2025.

In most countries, however, development of the national results framework is at an early stage. As they start implementing the Global Accelerator, country representatives have highlighted the need for baselines to be established and for technical assistance in adapting the results framework to their national context.

The Director of the Planning Department at the Ministry of Labour of **Malawi** expressed the need for support on monitoring the Global Accelerator's progress at the country level. She called for existing structures that collected and analysed data to be strengthened.

A member of the National Planning Commission of **Nepal** highlighted the importance of collecting baseline data for indicators related to social protection and employment. A labour force survey would be launched soon, and an integrated database of social protec-

tion programmes would help to maintain an overview of all programmes, including those run by local governments, and increase efficiency.

In the **Philippines**, the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Inter-Agency Council, through its Technical Working Group dedicated to the Global Accelerator initiative, tracks the design and implementation of the Global Accelerator road map at its regular meetings. This helps to ensure that all stakeholders stay informed

of developments. The Department of Labor and Employment further indicated that the Philippines had all the necessary baseline data for the core indicators of the Global Accelerator results framework.

In **Uzbekistan**, the National Agency for Social Protection collects data for the social protection-related indicators of the Global Accelerator results framework.



3



# Conclusion



The country experiences reflected in Part I show how the Global Accelerator initiative, which was launched by the UN Secretary-General in September 2021 amid the global COVID-19 crisis, has gained considerable traction far beyond the crisis. Recognized as a promising tool for creating more sustainable social and economic development, the Global Accelerator is being implemented in 18 pathfinder countries and is receiving much visibility and support at high-level forums.

It is still too early to declare this initiative an all-round success. In tracing what has been undertaken so far, this volume also shows the road that remains to be travelled. However, on the basis of the numerous testimonials and experiences documented here, it is possible to identify several factors that have contributed to the progress made and the results achieved to date.

**Visibility and political support:** The initiative's high global visibility and its launch by the UN Secretary-General helped to convince pathfinder countries to commit themselves at the highest political level to prioritizing decent jobs and universal social protection for just transitions in their development strategies. This is supported by the Technical Support Facility (TSF) of the Global Accelerator, as well as the UN Resident Coordinators and coun-

try teams, with funding support from the Joint SDG Fund and other donors.

**Funding:** Thanks to several donors, notably Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Republic of Korea and Spain, and funding of joint programmes and TSF support by the Joint SDG Fund, the UN country teams and the corresponding teams from the World Bank receive catalytic funding that enables them to provide technical support to the governments of pathfinder countries. A share of the resources mobilized also goes to the TSF through the Joint SDG Fund, which coordinates the initiative under the leadership of the ILO.

**Technical expertise:** The work of the TSF has made it possible to develop approaches and tools enabling all countries to promote the development, integration and financing of social policies and to respond to the specific challenges that they are facing.

**Collaboration:** Multilateral collaboration was also improved through the establishment and strengthening of coordination, validation, advocacy and exchange structures at the global and country levels, providing the participants in the initiative with opportunities to exchange ideas and arrive at a common understanding and strategy.

Five years before the clock runs out for the SDGs, the Global Accelerator offers an accelerated pathway towards decent work and universal social protection, and ultimately contributes to

social justice. The promising progress achieved under the initiative so far highlights the key elements required: political will, financing, technical capacity and multi-stakeholder cooperation.



# Appendices



## Appendix I: Interview questions

Objective	Question
<b>Vision, ambition, political will</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the ambition of the Global Accelerator in your country?</li> <li>2. What is the underlying “theory of change”?</li> <li>3. What do you expect to achieve in the medium term?</li> </ol>
<b>Collaboration, cooperation, social dialogue</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. How is the collaboration working out with the many various stakeholders in the National Steering Committee (NSC), including the social partners and civil society?</li> <li>5. Does working on the Global Accelerator (through the NSC) increase cooperation between the various ministries, especially the ministries of labour and social affairs and the ministries of finance, economy and planning?</li> <li>6. Which specific measures were taken to ensure the involvement of the social partners and civil society? Which additional measures are required?</li> <li>7. Does working on the Global Accelerator open up new avenues for building partnerships with international partners? If yes, is there any indication of potential for these new avenues – and any partnerships that are eventually formed – to be sustained?</li> </ol>
<b>Financing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Do you think that becoming a pathfinder country has increased the importance given to jobs and social protection policy within key ministries such as the planning and finance ministries? Please provide evidence of this change in attitude (if any).</li> <li>9. Does becoming a pathfinder country help with building / maintaining / strengthening social protection in the current conflict and fragility context; or in the context of cumulative shocks that your country is facing? (if relevant)</li> <li>10. Has working on the Global Accelerator helped to improve the quality of information on current social protection and employment expenditures, and to develop strategies for increasing social investments?</li> <li>11. Have public expenditures on decent jobs and social protection increased?</li> <li>12. Even if there is no additional financing available yet, are you able to work more effectively towards mobilizing investments by invoking the national road map?</li> </ol>

Objective	Question
<b>Design and development of integrated policy approaches</b>	<p><b>13.</b> Is/was the development of integrated policy approaches easy or difficult within the NSC?</p> <p><b>14.</b> What are the challenges and the bottlenecks in relation to the design and development of integrated policy approaches? To what extent do you think that the policy approaches developed so far are truly integrated (as opposed to being merely a sum of parts)?</p> <p><b>15.</b> What are some of the benefits that have been reaped, already at this stage, by the development of integrated approaches?</p> <p><b>16.</b> And what benefits have there been regarding prioritized transitions and sectoral transformations specifically (if relevant observations can already be made at this stage)?</p> <p><b>17.</b> On the basis of the integrated policy approaches that have been developed, do you think it is/will be easier to convince donors/banks/the ministry of finance to invest more in jobs and social protection?</p>
<b>Effective implementation</b>	<p><b>18.</b> Where do you stand in terms of implementation and the next steps for fulfilling the ambition of the Global Accelerator in your country?</p> <p><b>19.</b> What are some of the challenges and opportunities that you envisage may constrain or facilitate implementation going forward?</p> <p><b>20.</b> What measures are you taking to address these challenges?</p>
<b>Building evidence</b>	<p><b>21.</b> How are you monitoring progress on the Global Accelerator?</p> <p><b>22.</b> What are the opportunities offered by existing national data sets (for assessments and monitoring)?</p> <p><b>23.</b> What are the gaps and to what extent has the Global Accelerator helped/can help to address some of them?</p> <p><b>24.</b> Have you selected any institution to track the Global Accelerator indicators and impact?</p> <p><b>25.</b> Have you constructed preliminary data sets that will allow for ex post impact assessments?</p> <p><b>26.</b> What are the statistical tools and other methodologies/ tools that you plan to use to assess the Global Accelerator's impact?</p>
<b>Technical Support Facility</b>	<p><b>27.</b> What type of support have you already received from the United Nations (UN)?</p> <p><b>28.</b> What type of support do you need in addition?</p> <p><b>29.</b> Is your country's engagement with the UN on the Global Accelerator clear and efficient?</p> <p><b>30.</b> Do you have advice for the UN to improve its support as we move forward?</p>

## Appendix II: Overview of references to the Global Accelerator in high-level documents

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
4 November 2025	Second World Summit for Social Development	Doha Political Declaration	“We reaffirm our commitment to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. To this end, we commit to considering to support the implementation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and noting the work of the Global Coalition for Social Justice on full and productive employment and decent work for all” (Doha Political Declaration, art. 30(h))
27 July 2025	G20 Development Ministers Meeting	Call to Action: Towards Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Development through Universal Social Protection Systems with Special Priority on Social Protection Floors	“International support mechanisms such as the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty and the <b>UN Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> , both supported by the <b>multistakeholder engagement (M-GA)</b> – an initiative between the World Bank and the UN – are encouraged to explore innovative approaches to financing, technical assistance, and peer-to-peer learning, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.” (para. 5(vii))
23 July 2025	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025	Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2025 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2025 HLPF convened under the auspices of the Council	“We take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and encourage all countries to consider supporting its implementation.” (para. 78)

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
28 February 2025	Fifth Finance in Common Summit (FiCS 2025)	Final Communiqué of FiCS 2025	“Accelerate growth through sustainable and inclusive investments. Participants ... recalled the importance of aligning growth, jobs and sustainability by embedding social investments and by ensuring just transition principles at program and project levels ... They highlighted the need to work with a broad range of partners, and proposed to rejuvenate international cooperation focusing on inclusive and sustainable investment, beyond official development assistance.”
23 July 2024	G20 Development Ministers Meeting	Leaving No One Behind: G20 Development Ministerial Declaration for Reducing Inequalities	“Committed to leaving no one behind, we are striving to promote the social, economic, and political inclusion and empowerment of all, to ensure equal opportunity, and to reduce inequalities, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard. We commit to accelerating progress toward fully and effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through recognizing the role of local and regional governments, and other local actors, in a whole-of-society approach. This is in line with the ambitious commitments from the 2016 G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the G20 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on the SDGs, and other past G20 commitments and achievements, especially those focused on development, as well as having also regard to the UNGA SDG Summit Political Declaration, and the <b>UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.</b> ” (para. 5)

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
17 July 2024	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2024	Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2024 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2024 HLPF convened under the auspices of the Council	“We commit to foster sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, employment and decent work for all, equal pay for work of equal value, economic diversification and productive capacities in developing countries, as drivers to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and achieve sustainable development, including through strengthening support for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. We note the significance of decent jobs and social protection for eradicating poverty and, in this regard, take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and encourage all countries to support its implementation.” (para. 39)
25 April 2024	Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (FfD Forum) 2024	Outcome document of the FfD Forum 2024	“We recall our commitment to strengthening social protection systems to reduce inequalities, eradicate poverty, build resilience to climate change and shocks, reduce disaster risk, support just and inclusive transitions and promote fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth. We also reiterate our commitment to expanding investment in social protection floors as a percentage of national budgets and extending social protection for all, especially child-sensitive and gender-responsive social protection, including workers in the informal and emerging sectors of the economy and those who intend to reintegrate into the work force. We take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and encourage Member States to consider supporting its implementation.” (para. 20)

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
14 February 2024	62nd session of the Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council	Resolution on fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication	“Encourages Member States to consider supporting the implementation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition</b> , including through the promotion of decent work and sustainable and universal social protection systems;” (operative para. 43)
21 November 2023	Meeting of the Council of the European Union (Foreign Affairs/ Development)	Council conclusions on a social, green and digital transition	“[T]o make full and effective use of all the instruments available to promote just transitions, including the <b>UN Global Accelerator</b> and the ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all, following the Team Europe approach;” (para. 15(d))
19 September 2023	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals Summit)	Political declaration adopted at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023	“We also remain resolved to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, and equal pay for work of equal value, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities. We take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and encourage all countries to consider supporting its implementation. We commit to ensuring that persons with disabilities actively participate in and equally benefit from sustainable development efforts.” (para. 14)
10 September 2023	G20 Leaders’ Summit	G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration	“We commit to addressing skill gaps, promoting decent work and ensuring inclusive social protection policies for all. Towards this aim, we ... [s]upport progress on the implementation of the <b>UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.</b> ” (para. 20(vi))

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
20 April 2023	Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (FfD Forum) 2023	Outcome document of the FfD Forum 2023	“We recall our commitment to strengthening social protection systems to reduce inequalities, eradicate poverty, build resilience to climate change and shocks, reduce disaster risk, support just and inclusive transitions and promote fair, equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth. We also reiterate our commitment to expand investment in social protection floors as a percentage of national budgets and extend social protection for all, especially child-sensitive and gender-responsive social protection, including workers in the informal and emerging sectors of the economy and those who intend to reintegrate into the work force. We take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b> and encourage Member States to consider supporting its implementation.” (para. 11)
14 September 2022	G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting	G20 Chair’s Summary of the Labour and Employment Ministers’ Meeting 2022	“We will accelerate progress towards universal social protection for all by 2030. To that end, we welcome the UN Secretary-General initiative for a <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition</b> , which aims to create 400 million decent jobs including in the green, digital, and care economies and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded. The initiative could make an important contribution to poverty reduction, decent work and achieving the SDGs.” (para. 19)

Date of adoption of document	Event	Title of document and link	Reference
28 June 2022	G7 Leaders' Summit	G7 Leaders' Communiqué <a href="#">[link]</a>	<p>"We emphasise the value of social protection, particularly in times of crises and in the face of climate change and environmental degradation, and underscore the human right to social security. The effects of climate change disproportionately affect the marginalised and most vulnerable in society, exacerbating poverty and economic, gender and other social inequalities. To address these effects, we will accelerate progress towards universal, adequate, adaptive, shock-responsive, and inclusive social protection for all by 2030 in line with the UN Secretary-General's initiative for a '<b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition</b>', which aims to create 400 million jobs and to extend social protection." ("Employment and Just Transition" section)</p>
15 July 2022	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2022	Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2022 HLPF convened under the auspices of the Council <a href="#">[link]</a>	<p>"We recognize the urgent need to create conditions for decent work for all, protect labour rights of all workers and achieve universal social protection, including by strengthening social protection systems. We take note with appreciation of the <b>Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions</b>, launched by the Secretary-General jointly with the International Labour Organization (ILO)." (para. 110)</p>

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# Part II.

# CASE STUDIES





# Introduction



Part II of the report presents countries' experiences with already existing integrated policy and financing approaches, including the successes and challenges of the various measures. Each case study includes a section explaining its relevance to the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, and a section outlining the main takeaways for the Global Accelerator.

The case studies were selected to cover several areas of work falling under the scope of the Global Accelerator initiative.

They show how social protection, employment and skills policies and programmes are prerequisites for making economic, demographic and climate-related transformations more equitable. They cover a range of transitions – for example, transitions related to agriculture (**Brazil, Burundi, Costa Rica, Paraguay**), environmental sustainability (**China, Paraguay**) and demographic change and gender equality with the development of a comprehensive care system (**Uruguay**) – and several of them address, more specifically, poverty reduction (**Senegal, Zambia**) and the formalization of employment and enterprises (**Algeria, Argentina, Costa Rica, Jordan**).

These case studies also reflect the diversity of possible financing strategies,

which include: (a) budgetary reallocations, such as ending fuel subsidies to increase social protection expenditure (**Senegal**); (b) financing through the Global Climate Fund (**Paraguay**), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (**Zambia**) and World Bank concessional financing (**Burundi**); (c) the provision of concessional loans (**Paraguay**); (d) a combination of public funds and social security contributions (**Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, China, Uruguay**) or social security contributions and official development assistance (**Jordan**); (e) cross-subsidization within the social security system (**Argentina**); and (f) the involvement of cooperatives (**Costa Rica**).

Several case studies provide evidence of the multiplier effects of investments in public policy and services. For example, the development of a care system in **Uruguay** and the expansion of school meals in **Burundi** have led to multiplier effects in terms of creating decent jobs and achieving other human capital returns (gender equality, nutrition, education). The case of **Senegal** shows how the removal of fuel subsidies to increase social protection spending can contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequality.

Some countries have leveraged new technologies to facilitate enrolment and create bridges between programmes (**Jordan**), while others have

introduced innovations in their social security systems to make affiliation and the payment of contributions simpler (**Argentina**) or automatic within a group (**Costa Rica**).

The case studies also illustrate how the development of integrated policy and financing approaches was negotiated at the country level. This is a process that may (a) involve several ministries and public institutions (**Brazil, Paraguay, Senegal, Uruguay**); (b) draw on evidence to support policymaking and social dialogue between governments,

workers and employers (**Algeria, Uruguay**); and (c) involve the participation of local communities and civil society organizations (**Paraguay**), and of cooperatives and associations (**Costa Rica**).

As far as possible, all of the case studies highlight how integrated policy approaches and delivery mechanisms, integrated and sustainable financing, and enhanced multilateral cooperation contributed to the success of the measures in question (see table 4). They also discuss how these measures can be further strengthened.

**Table 4. Main highlights of the country case studies**

Country	Policy areas and objectives	Financing strategies	Collaboration model
<b>Algeria</b>	Social security extension Formalization Employment of women and young people	Social security contributions Government budget	Social dialogue
<b>Argentina</b>	Social security extension Formalization	Social security contributions Government budget	Social security system Tax authority
<b>Brazil</b>	Social security extension in agriculture Access to markets and credit Formalization	Social security contributions Government budget	Social security system Interministerial collaboration Social dialogue
<b>Burundi</b>	Rural livelihoods School meals and education	Government budget World Bank	Interministerial collaboration Government, donors, UN and World Bank collaboration Area-based approach
<b>China</b>	Social security extension in fisheries sector Active labour market policies and skills development Ecological restoration	Social security contributions Government budget	Interministerial collaboration Communication and outreach

Country	Policy areas and objectives	Financing strategies	Collaboration model
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Social security extension in agriculture Formalization	Social security contributions (based on presumptive income) Government budget	Social security system Participation of communities
<b>Jordan</b>	Social security extension Formalization Inclusion of refugees	Donor support Social security contributions	Government, ILO and development partners
<b>Paraguay</b>	Improving livelihoods in agriculture Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Government budget Green Climate Fund	Government, FAO, Green Climate Fund Intergovernmental collaboration Participation of communities
<b>Senegal</b>	Extension of social assistance Environmental sustainability	Government budget reallocations	Interministerial collaboration Social dialogue
<b>Uruguay</b>	Care system Job creation in the care sector 5Rs Social security extension	Government budget	Interministerial collaboration Social dialogue
<b>Zambia</b>	Universal health coverage Poverty reduction	Government budget Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	Interministerial collaboration WHO, ILO



4

# Extending social protection and decent jobs to informal economy workers and refugees in Jordan: The *Estidama++* programme



*This case study was prepared by Fernando Martínez Cure (ILO).*

## Summary

The *Estidama++* programme<sup>7</sup> exemplifies an innovative approach to extending social protection and promoting the labour market inclusion of informal economy workers and refugees. Leveraging **integrated policy approaches**, the programme bridges social insurance and labour market activation, offering tailored subsidies and incentives to include refugees, informal workers and women in Jordan's national social security system. *Estidama++* is currently financed by donors, but, through **integrated financing**, it is set to be gradually financed from the national budget, ensuring longer-term sustainability. The programme's success is underpinned by **multilateral cooperation**, with partnerships between Jordan's Social Security Corporation,

the ILO and development partners driving innovation and capacity-building. *Estidama++* not only extends protection to marginalized groups but also fosters job creation, formalization and gender equity. In that regard, it serves as an instructive example of policy integration that could be adapted to other countries or contexts.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

**Transition to formality:** *Estidama++* provides evidence of how the innovative design of social insurance can enhance labour market inclusion while addressing challenges such as informality and economic vulnerability. It has reached over 40,000 informal workers, or nearly 7 per cent of all low-income insured

7 The Arabic word *estidama* (إستدامة) means "sustainability".

persons in Jordan – a significant expansion of coverage among those typically excluded (ILO 2025; Jordan, SSC 2025). With 85 per cent of participants remaining enrolled after the subsidy is lifted, the programme confirms that tailored incentives, affordability and simplified processes can lead to sustained formalization (ILO 2025; 2024a).

**Inclusion of women and refugees:** *Estidama++* expands access to social insurance for groups that are largely excluded from Jordan's formal systems, in particular for refugees and women. Nearly half of all participants in the programme are non-Jordanians, and the initiative has significantly increased social security coverage for women across several sectors. By addressing issues of affordability, trust and administrative barriers, *Estidama++* offers a tried-and-tested model for the use of social protection to promote equity and inclusion, even in fragile or migration-affected contexts (ILO 2025; 2024a).

**Integrated financing:** The example of *Estidama++* also highlights the importance of aligning short-term international support with long-term domestic resource mobilization. The programme's approach, based on a gradual transition from donor funding to self-sustained financing, provides a replicable model for progressing from measures with an immediate impact to lasting reform.

## Context

Jordan has made progress in expanding social protection coverage, but major gaps persist, especially among

refugees, women and low-income households. Despite improvements, only 45.7 per cent of the labour force are covered by social insurance, with coverage for non-Jordanians as low as 15.1 per cent. This hampers inclusive growth and leaves large segments of the population without access to protections such as pensions, maternity benefits or unemployment insurance (Jordan, SSC 2025; ILO 2025). At the same time, many international efforts to support refugee livelihoods have been undertaken through humanitarian assistance programmes. While these interventions have brought short-term relief, they often operate outside Jordan's national frameworks, limiting their sustainability and integration. As a result, they fall short of providing long-term social protection and risk further fragmenting the system (UNHCR 2024; ILO 2024b).

The *Estidama++* programme addresses these challenges by reinforcing national systems to include vulnerable Jordanians and refugees in the social security framework. Through temporary contribution subsidies, digital enrolment and localized outreach, it promotes formalization, reduces exclusion and strengthens long-term resilience. By ensuring that refugees and informal workers are included, *Estidama++* supports a shift away from fragmented approaches towards integrated, sustainable protection for all (ILO 2025).

## *Estidama++*: Closing social protection gaps in Jordan

The *Estidama++* programme addresses two persistent challenges in Jordan's social protection system: **limited**

**coverage** and **widespread informality**. Implemented by the **Social Security Corporation**, the programme extends contributory social insurance to informal workers, who have historically been excluded from formal protection – whether due to their employment status, gender, migration background or the sector in which they work.

At its core, *Estidama++* offers a **temporary contribution subsidy** that lowers the cost of social security for low-income workers and their employers. The subsidy was introduced on a pilot basis for three years through funding from official development assistance. Going forward, domestic funding through a mix of taxes and cross-subsidization within the social security system is expected to finance the programme in the coming years. The subsidy enables access to essential protections provided under the main contributory programme, including pensions, maternity leave, work injury insurance and unemployment insurance, and encourages workers to remain enrolled in the programme after support ends, as evidenced by an **85 per cent post-subsidy retention rate** (ILO 2025).

The programme combines **digital enrolment tools** and **targeted outreach strategies** to reduce barriers and build trust. This includes both online solutions and direct community engagement, tailored to the circumstances of informal workers in different sectors.

*Estidama++* also emphasizes **inclusive participation**, ensuring that women and non-Jordanian workers, who face additional obstacles, are effectively

reached and supported. By anchoring these efforts within national systems, *Estidama++* strengthens the sustainability of social protection in Jordan and offers a replicable model for tackling informality on a grand scale. Refugees newly included in the social security system through *Estidama++* have been arriving in Jordan since 2011. Almost one in four participants in the programme are Syrians (whereas Syrians make up 10 to 12 per cent of Jordan's population) (ILO 2025; Jordan, Department of Statistics 2024). Efforts have been made to document the impact of extension initiatives through randomized controlled trials, the first of which evaluated a behaviourally informed awareness-raising campaign that increased enrolment by 14.4 per cent in the targeted firms (ILO 2025). The second such trial will evaluate the impact of the *Estidama++* subsidy and the introduction of child benefits.

## Impact and challenges

The *Estidama++* programme has had a profound impact in terms of extending social security coverage to Jordan's most vulnerable workers, including refugees, women and those in informal employment. To date, over 41,500 workers have registered under the programme, with more than half being non-Jordanians (ILO 2025). Informal employment in Jordan is estimated to affect just over 50 per cent of the country's total workforce of 3 million (Jordan, Department of Statistics 2024). A significant share of informal workers are non-Jordanians, with Egyptians comprising 35 per cent and Syrian refugees 22 per cent (ILO 2024b). Most participants in the *Estidama++* programme

earn less than 300 Jordanian dinars (US\$420) per month, highlighting its ability to reach workers who face significant financial constraints (ILO 2025).

One of the standout features of *Estidama++* is its ability to sustain the long-term engagement of workers and people in general with the social security system. Data from the programme's first phase, which was launched in October 2022, revealed that 85 per cent of beneficiaries who completed the subsidy period had transitioned to regular schemes of the Social Security Corporation, continuing to make contributions independently (ILO 2024c). This sustained participation attests to the programme's effectiveness in fostering a culture of compliance and improved financial resilience among vulnerable workers.

Despite its achievements, *Estidama++* faces challenges that require targeted solutions. Higher attrition rates among women and self-employed workers point to structural barriers such as short-term contracts, especially in sectors like education, and affordability issues for self-employed individuals (ILO 2025). Moreover, workers in sectors such as construction and agriculture also exhibit high attrition rates, highlighting the need for sector-specific strategies to enhance retention.

The integration of diverse groups into a unified social protection framework remains a complex task. Refugees often face legal and administrative hurdles, such as difficulties in obtaining work permits, that limit their access to formal systems. Women, particularly those shouldering a heavy bur-

den of unpaid care work, are less able to participate in the labour market. The nature of employment in sectors such as agriculture and construction, where workers are often on short-term contracts, also makes sustained engagement difficult, requiring additional design-based adjustments such as flexible contribution mechanisms that better match the earnings profile of these workers. Overcoming these challenges will necessitate tailored interventions, broader structural reforms and continuous collaboration among stakeholders to address each group's unique needs and further strengthen Jordan's national social protection system.

The case of *Estidama++* also underscores the importance of addressing formalization from a wider perspective. While the programme successfully incentivizes participation in social security systems, achieving sustainable formalization requires complementary measures such as regulatory reforms, sector-specific strategies and broader economic alignment. For example, in view of the barriers faced by small enterprises and workers in high-informality sectors such as construction and agriculture, more tailored solutions are required to ensure workers' inclusion. A holistic approach to formalization is essential to connect social protection with labour market and fiscal policies, ensuring its long-term impact and scalability.

### What next?

Building on the progress achieved so far under *Estidama++*, the next phase of the programme will focus on insti-

tutionalizing its contribution subsidy model to ensure long-term sustainability and scalability. This involves embedding the subsidy within Jordan's national social protection framework, allowing for dedicated funding through public budgets and donor contributions. Institutionalization will also provide a clear regulatory framework, enabling the Social Security Corporation to expand and adapt the programme to better meet the evolving needs of vulnerable workers, including women, refugees and the self-employed.

Expanding sector-specific interventions is another critical priority for *Estidama++*. Insights from the programme's successful implementation in sectors such as hospitality and manufacturing can inform the development of targeted strategies for the construction, agricultural and real estate sectors, where attrition rates remain higher. The next phase will also prioritize addressing the structural barriers faced by women and self-employed workers by refining the design of subsidies, offering flexible contribution options and enhancing outreach activities tailored to their needs. These steps will help to ensure that social protection coverage becomes more inclusive and equitable across all segments of the workforce.

Looking ahead, the aim is to strengthen the alignment of *Estidama++* with Jordan's broader economic modernization goals by integrating social protection with labour market activation and fiscal policies. The next phase will explore new mechanisms to incentivize formalization, such as linking social security contributions to job creation

in the green and digital economies. By fostering greater collaboration among national and international stakeholders, *Estidama++* will continue to serve as a blueprint for innovative, sustainable and inclusive social protection systems in Jordan and beyond.

### Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator

The experience gained in the implementation of *Estidama++* offers valuable insights into how **integrated policy approaches** can align social protection with labour market inclusion and just transitions. The programme fosters the creation of formal employment by making it easier for enterprises and workers to access decent work opportunities with social protection coverage. Its contribution subsidies and streamlined processes not only support vulnerable groups such as refugees and informal workers, but also enable enterprises to formalize employment, contributing to a more inclusive and resilient labour market. This integrated approach shows how social insurance can go beyond being a mere protection mechanism and actively support job creation and economic growth through improved working conditions, enhanced worker health and well-being, and increased productivity.

The programme's financing model reflects the value of **integrated financing** and its potential for promoting sustainability. Initially supported by donor funding, *Estidama++* is set to transition towards a nationally sustained system embedded within Jordan's social protection framework. This gradual shift

will ensure financial sustainability while maintaining affordability for beneficiaries. In addition, *Estidama++* exemplifies the power of **multilateral cooperation**. Partnerships between the Government, the ILO and development partners have facilitated innovation and the alignment of humanitarian and development

goals. With regard to the Global Accelerator, *Estidama++* illustrates both the successes and the ongoing challenges in integrating social protection with labour market inclusion, offering a replicable model for achieving just transitions globally.



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5



# Simplified tax and contribution schemes supporting the transition to formality in Argentina



*This case study was prepared by Guillermo Montt (ILO) and benefited from inputs by Oscar Cetrángolo and Ariela Goldschmit (both affiliated with the Interdisciplinary Institute of Political Economy, University of Buenos Aires; and the National Scientific and Technical Research Council).*

## Summary

In 1998, Argentina instituted a simplified tax scheme for small taxpayers that includes pension and health insurance contributions. Designed by the Ministry of Economy and the tax authority, the *monotributo* was developed as a voluntary mechanism to formalize small economic units and own-account workers, and as a transitional stage for independent or self-employed workers and micro-entrepreneurs before their entry into the regular tax and social security schemes. It provides for the collection of social security contributions (at a subsidized rate) and the payment of taxes, and has helped to extend social security coverage. The *monotributo social*, a further subsidized version of the *monotributo* for which only vulnerable workers are eligible, allows them to participate in the scheme, with the Government

subsidizing part of the beneficiaries' social security contributions.

The *monotributo* has proved to be an effective way of extending social security coverage and formalizing enterprises and workers. The scheme has grown steadily, reaching 2.2 million people in 2023, or 23 per cent of all contributors to the national social security system. However, it has not become a major source of revenue (the income generated is around 0.2 per cent of public revenue) or a stepping stone to fully fledged formalization.

Argentina's experience highlights the potential of simplified tax and social security contribution schemes to expand social security coverage, but it is also clear that complementary measures are required to ensure sustainability and an effective transition to formality.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

Argentina's simplified tax and contribution scheme, the *monotributo*, integrates social security contributions and the payment of taxes, and it is helping to extend social security coverage through contributory social protection.

The *monotributo* has mobilized a greater share of workers and employers to contribute to social security financing. It has mobilized explicit public subsidies (in the case of the *monotributo so-*

*cial*) and implicit cross-subsidization within the social security schemes to offer health and pension coverage to previously uncovered workers. Moreover, the *monotributo* has helped to advance the transition from the informal to the formal economy (see box 9), in line with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). By offering alternative financing modalities for social security coverage, it extends the principle of solidarity in financing enshrined in the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).



### Box 9. How the *monotributo* is promoting social security extension and formalization in Argentina

- The *monotributo* scheme in Argentina integrates tax and social security policies to effectively extend social security coverage to the informal sector. With over 2 million workers now making monthly contributions, the scheme has succeeded in simplifying procedures and expanding health and pension coverage. It has served as an effective tool for bringing previously informal activity into the formal sector and extending social security coverage to own-account workers and small enterprises.
- Several lessons have been learned from its implementation:
  1. The low cost, direct social security and formalization benefits, and simple administrative procedures are attractive: the *monotributo* has brought many previously informal workers into the formal economy.
  2. Design matters: beneficiaries may inadvertently be “locked” into the scheme if graduating out of it is too expensive or complicated.
  3. Formalization and effective extension of social security coverage do not occur immediately: the first *monotributistas* (that is, workers benefiting from the *monotributo*) were registered own-account workers; only after a few years with the scheme in place did workers from the informal sector begin to transition into the formal sector.
  4. Owing to the large numbers of workers participating in the scheme and their limited contributory capacity, the tool has been more effective in formalizing economic activity and extending social security coverage than in increasing public revenue.

### Context

One of the main challenges in providing social protection to workers in Argentina is the fact that around 45 per cent of them operate in the informal economy. Informality is especially high among independent or self-employed workers, who account for roughly a quarter of the workforce. They are

a very heterogeneous group in terms of type of employment (ranging from owners of large companies to small shopkeepers), their qualifications and their income levels (ILO 2025).

A large number of self-employed individuals work in precarious conditions, with low and unpredictable income, no access to social security and inadequate

workplace protection measures. In addition, many of them may not be in self-employment by choice, but, rather, because of a lack of opportunities for salaried employment (ILO 2018; 2025).

High informality among the self-employed poses a challenge for the collection of taxes and social security contributions. In response to this, several Latin American countries, including Brazil and Uruguay, have introduced simplified mechanisms for the payment of taxes and social security contributions, seeking to facilitate a gradual transition to formality for such workers (Cetrángolo et al. 2014; Bertranou, Casali and Cetrángolo 2019).

In 1998, Argentina was one of the first countries in the region to include the payment of social security contributions for old-age pension and health insurance schemes under the umbrella of a simplified tax scheme. This has enabled Argentina to collect information on the turnovers and profits of the self-employed, providing a basis for more effective tax collection efforts. The ultimate aim of the *monotributo* scheme is to facilitate a transition into the general tax and social security scheme for the self-employed (Cetrángolo et al. 2013).

### Description of the *monotributo* scheme

Act No. 24.977 of 3 June 1998 introduced a simplified scheme for small taxpayers known as the *monotributo*

(meaning “single tax” or “monotax”). This law established an integrated and simplified tax scheme for collecting income and value-added taxes, pension system contributions and, later on, health insurance contributions. Small taxpayers eligible for filing taxes under the *monotributo* scheme include people involved in commercial activities, individual service providers and members of work cooperatives.

Workers who choose to enrol in the scheme are subject to conditions such as: (a) not exceeding an annual income ceiling (US\$24,700 in the case of individual service providers or US\$37,000 for those involved in commercial activities in 2021); (b) a maximum price per unit of sale (US\$400) for commercial activities; (c) not having imported commercial goods for their export in the last 12 months; and (d) not carrying out more than three commercial activities simultaneously or owning more than three establishments.<sup>8</sup>

Workers self-classify into different categories according to their gross income, the size of the area in which the activity is carried out, their electricity consumption and the value of accrued rentals. There are eight general categories (A to H) plus three additional categories only for the sale of commercial goods (I to K). The amount of the monthly fee for each taxpayer comprises two components: (a) a fixed tax that depends on their category (from US\$2 to US\$168); and (b) a social security rate, which corresponds

<sup>8</sup> The amounts in Argentine pesos were taken from the federal tax authority's website (<https://www.afip.gob.ar/monotributo/categorias.asp>) and converted to US dollars using the reference exchange rate of the Central Bank of the Argentine Republic as at 16 June 2021 (US\$1 = 95.32 pesos).

to a pension contribution (from US\$11 to US\$27) and a fixed health insurance contribution (US\$15). Once they have enrolled in the scheme, taxpayers must confirm their status every four months and are required to change their category as soon as they become ineligible.

Each participant's contribution to the pension system allows them to maintain their status as a taxpayer and to obtain a pension upon retirement, subject to the relevant statutory conditions. Argentina has a defined benefit pension system, and pension benefits are calculated on the basis of the contributions made in the past ten years of activity. If workers complete the full ten-year contribution period under the *monotributo* scheme, they become eligible for an old-age pension with statutory minimum rates. Under the scheme, workers also have the right to disability and survivor's pensions, other old-age benefits and family allowances (participants in the highest income categories do not have access to family allowances).

Participants not covered by any other health insurance scheme can access the basic medical assistance coverage provided under the Compulsory Medical Programme (*Programa Médico Obligatorio*). Additionally, family members may be covered on a voluntary basis by paying the corresponding fee. The benefits offered can be complemented with supplementary plans through additional contributions.

The scheme's characteristics, in particular the possibility of receiving comprehensive benefits while paying relatively

low contributions, help to explain its rapid uptake. Since its inception in 1998, the number of participants in the *monotributo* scheme has grown swiftly: by 2018 they accounted for nearly a fifth of the total contributors to the Argentine Integrated Social Security System (*Sistema Integrado Previsional Argentino*) (see figure 3).

The *monotributo* scheme is part of a government effort to expand social protection coverage and facilitate the transition to formal employment. Additionally, a number of special arrangements for low-income workers from certain economic sectors have been incorporated into the scheme over the years. In these cases, workers are exempt from paying the tax component of the *monotributo* while still being covered by the social protection system. These special schemes are described below:

- Under the Social Inclusion and Promotion of Self-Employment Scheme, which includes low-income workers, participants pay a "social inclusion fee" for the pension system and may voluntarily enrol in the health insurance scheme.
- The Simplified Scheme for Local Development and Social Economy Providers (also called the *monotributo social*) is designed for low-income workers. They enjoy the same benefits as those under the general *monotributo* scheme, including an old-age pension, with reduced contribution rates of 50 per cent for both primary beneficiaries and their dependants. The remaining 50 per cent is subsidized by the Ministry of Hu-

man Capital (formerly Ministry of Social Development).

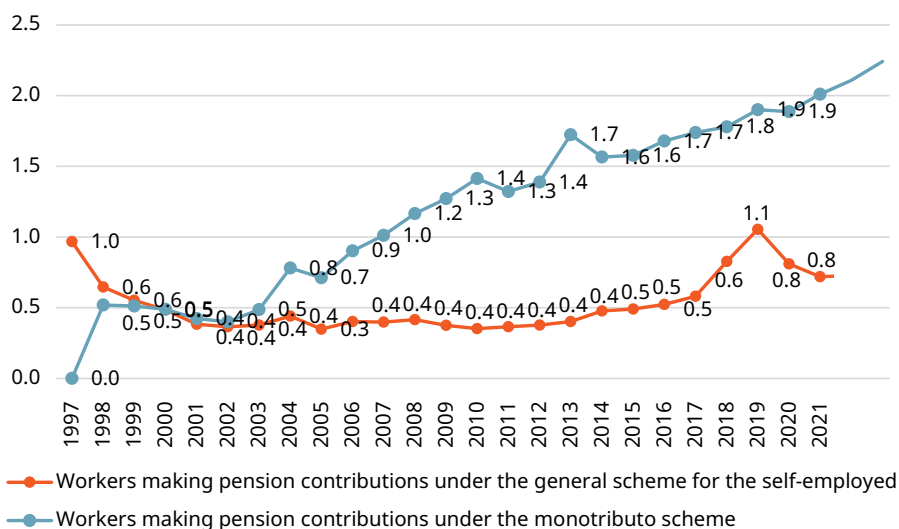
- The Special Scheme for Cooperative Workers covers the members of such organizations, under certain conditions related to income and type of activity.

### Impact and challenges

The main achievement of this simplified scheme is that it provides social security to workers who were previously excluded. Since its launch in 1998, the number of participants has grown steadily to reach 2.3 million workers in 2023, covering over 10 per cent of the workforce.

While the *monotributo* scheme in its first years seems to have attracted, at least to a certain extent, self-employed workers previously enrolled in the general scheme, its expansion subsequently seems to have been driven by the formalization of workers previously operating in the informal economy (see figure 3). The level of contributions paid by participants depends on their self-classification into one of ten income categories. In 2024, more than 70 per cent of participants were self-classified into the lowest income category: they may have selected that category either because it really did correspond to their financial situation or because they had few incentives to register in a higher category.

**Figure 3. Number of workers in Argentina enrolled in the *monotributo* scheme and the general scheme for the self-employed, 1997–2023 (millions)**



Source: Author's own elaboration, based on Argentina, Ministry of Human Capital (n.d.).

The *monotributo* scheme also exemplifies the principle of solidarity in social security. Participants receive an implicit subsidy, as their contributions are low relative to the pension and health benefits that they receive. For those enrolled in the *monotributo social* scheme there is, in addition, an explicit subsidy, as the Government pays a share of their pension and health insurance contributions. The reduced administrative burden and the benefits that it offers have made the *monotributo* scheme very attractive in comparison with the general scheme for the self-employed. If left unmonitored, this may lead to a situation where participants either underreport their activities or deliberately fail to further develop their enterprises in an attempt to avoid progressing into the more formal scheme. Owing largely to its design and the difference in contributions between the *monotributo* scheme and the general scheme for self-employed workers, the former has not proved to be the stepping stone to fully fledged formality that it was intended to become (Goldschmit and Cetrángolo 2025).

Nor has the *monotributo* developed into a significant source of tax revenue for the Government. Income from the scheme accounted for 0.22 per cent of public revenue in 2023 (equivalent to 0.10 per cent of GDP). Overall, contribution levels are unsustainably low, impacting Argentina's fiscal position in the medium and long term. However, the fiscal implications need to be set against the alternative of millions of workers relying solely on non-contributory social protection (Goldschmit and Cetrángolo 2025).

Trade union federations have been critical of the *monotributo* scheme, as it has not ushered in an effective transition to fully fledged formalization. Trade unions have also pointed out that the scheme can be abused, increasing the precariousness of employment, and that it has resulted in the emergence of a group of workers with second-tier labour rights.

### What next?

Although the *monotributo* scheme has certain challenges, many workers rely on it for social security coverage. Its impact depends on wider societal and policy developments, which must be coordinated in order to increase the formalization of employment and help participants in the scheme to transition to full formality.

Some measures can be implemented to improve the scheme and its linkages with the broader social protection system, such as:

- Analyze the incentive structure for workers and employers to use, and remain in, the scheme while supporting participants to transition to higher income categories and out of the scheme, for example by providing them with access to training, markets and financial services.
- Analyze the explicit and implicit subsidies and cross-subsidization involved in the scheme so as to accurately gauge its effectiveness against that of other mechanisms for expanding social protection coverage.

- Monitor groups of workers and contributors who may need special support, in particular in the wake of economic and other shocks.

### Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator

The *monotributo* scheme illustrates the potential of **integrated policy responses** to expand social protection coverage. By leveraging tax simplification, social security contributions and streamlined administrative procedures, the scheme has effectively increased social protection coverage.

The experience gained with the scheme also highlights the importance of combining the extension of social protection with a clear **integrated financing**

**approach** in order to address the coverage needs of groups that may lack the capacity to pay the full contribution rates. This may be done either by offering cross-subsidization within the social security scheme or by directly subsidizing the contributions paid by workers in vulnerable situations.

Simplified tax and contribution schemes can effectively formalize workers, if they are designed so as to incentivize participants to eventually move to the general contribution scheme and if they do not result in second-tier access to social security. As they involve implicit subsidies, equity and fiscal concerns need to be considered in the design, implementation and monitoring of such schemes.



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6



# Social protection and employment in Algeria: Towards sustainable formalization?



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## Summary

Algeria has been implementing a series of measures over the past decade to improve social security coverage and extend it to workers in the informal sector.<sup>9</sup> These include a combination of voluntary incentives and legislative innovations. The present case study sets out to analyse the impact of two key measures aimed at promoting the formalization of employment and micro- and small enterprises in Algeria. First, it looks at the changes introduced by the 2015 Supplementary Finance Act, which provide for voluntary social security affiliation and the elimination of late payment penalties for employers and the self-employed – provisions designed to encourage enrolment in the National Social Security Fund for the Self-Employed (CASNOS). Secondly, it considers a more recent meas-

ure, namely the 2022 law establishing self-employment status, which aims to simplify access to formalization for the self-employed. The impact of the two measures is assessed on the basis of the available data in order to identify successes, challenges and lessons to be learned. They are intended to serve as a reference and a source of inspiration for other countries seeking to promote formalization in their economies.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

Algeria's experience shows how a combination of incentives, active labour market policies and targeted social protection can produce tangible results. The widespread adoption of self-employment in the country – once its advantages for business growth became clear – demonstrates that

<sup>9</sup> Although formalization measures have been adopted in the country since the 1990s, this case study will focus exclusively on the past decade, from 2015 to 2025.

integrated approaches can enhance participation in the formal economy. This underscores the importance of linking social security with economic opportunities in order to expand coverage and inclusion. Other countries seeking to strengthen social protection and employment can also harness such synergies, as long as structural barriers hampering access to finance and markets are addressed. In Algeria, unemployment benefits, initially designed to foster labour market integration, also had the effect of increasing women's labour force participation by providing temporary income security that encouraged job-seeking and reduced gender inequalities. This ties in with global evidence that social policies can promote decent work for women. The Global Accelerator initiative can profitably draw from Algeria's example by promoting adaptable, inclusive systems that empower women and address structural inequalities.

## Context

With a population of 46.7 million in 2024 (Algeria, ONS 2024a) and an economy heavily dependent on oil, which accounted for more than 90 per cent of exports in 2023 (World Bank 2024), Algeria faces major socio-economic challenges. Based on the most recent data collected for the Global Economic Diversification Index, Algeria ranks among the 20 least diversified countries (Prasad et al. 2024).

The transition to a diversified and inclusive economy is a priority for the Government. The country is seeking to reduce its dependence on oil, as

revenues have been volatile in recent years owing to fluctuations in global prices. According to the national labour force survey from 2024, the active population is estimated at 13.8 million (of whom 3.2 million are female). The labour force participation rate is estimated at 41.7 per cent (63.9 per cent for men and 19.8 per cent for women). Unemployment remains a major challenge, having increased from 11.4 per cent in May 2019 to 12.7 per cent in October 2024. Unemployment particularly affects young people (aged 16–24 years) and women, whose unemployment rates stood at 29.3 per cent and 25.4 per cent respectively in 2024 (Algeria, ONS 2019; 2024b). The share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) reached 27.6 per cent in 2024, compared with 26.2 per cent in 2019. Women are also the most affected, with a NEET rate of 32.4 per cent versus 23.2 per cent for men in 2024. Informal employment, which represents nearly 39 per cent of total employment (Algeria, ONS 2024b), acts as a structural brake on development, leaving a large proportion of the population without social protection coverage. This leads to lost opportunities for enhancing productivity, health, well-being and, ultimately, the realization of human rights. Informal employment is concentrated in agriculture and the construction and public works sectors (Merouani, Hamouda and El Moudden 2014).

**Table 5. Evolution of selected labour market indicators in Algeria, 2019–24**

	2019	2024
<b>Unemployment rate<sup>1</sup> (%)</b>	11.4	12.7
<b>Youth unemployment (population aged 16–24 years) (%)</b>	26.9	29.3
<b>Female unemployment rate (%)</b>	20.4	25.4
<b>NEET rate (%)</b>	26.2	27.6
<b>Informal employment<sup>2</sup> (%)</b>	42	39

NEET = not in employment, education or training.

1 An unemployed person as defined by the ILO is a person aged 15 years or over who simultaneously meets three conditions: (a) being unemployed in a given week; (b) being available to take a job within two weeks; and (c) having actively sought a job in the last four weeks or having found one starting in less than three months.

2 The definition of informal employment used here follows the ILO definition and refers to workers not covered by the social security system.

Source: Algeria, ONS (2019; 2024b).

In Algeria, the contributory social security system comprises five funds protecting workers against various professional and social risks:<sup>10</sup>

1. The National Social Insurance Fund for Employees (CNAS): It provides coverage for employees in the case of illness, maternity, work accidents, occupational diseases, disability and death.<sup>11</sup> Although this fund ensures the collection of workers' and employers' contributions for all branches of social security,<sup>12</sup> the payment of employees' old-age pensions is handled by a separate entity, the National Pension Fund.
2. The National Pension Fund (CNR): It manages pensions and retirement benefits for salaried workers in the public and private sectors. The defined-benefit, pay-as-you-go scheme guarantees a maximum replacement rate of 80 per cent, with a minimum pension amount equivalent to 75 per cent of the guaranteed national minimum wage. The CNR also pays survivor's pensions to the beneficiaries of deceased retirees.
3. The National Social Security Fund for the Self-Employed (CASNOS): It manages health insurance and

10 For more details on the risks covered and the levels of benefits provided, see Act No. 83-11 of 2 July 1983 on social insurance (JORADP 1983).

11 It is worth noting that CNAS has made remarkable progress in digitalizing its services. In 2016, it launched the *El Hanaa* app, which allows social security beneficiaries to track their medication reimbursements and complete several administrative procedures. Furthermore, since 2017, CNAS has provided an online reporting space, allowing employers to register their employees and pay contributions online.

12 Contributions are collected on behalf of the National Pension Fund (CNR), the National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC), the National Fund for Paid Leave and Weather-Related Layoffs in the Construction, Public Works and Hydraulics Sectors (CACOBATPH) and the National Fund for the Equalization of Social Services (FNPOS).

pensions for the self-employed, offering benefits similar to those of CNAS, with the exception of coverage for work accidents and maternity leave.<sup>13</sup>

4. The National Fund for Paid Leave and Weather-Related Layoffs in the Construction, Public Works and Hydraulics Sectors (CACOBATPH): It offers specific benefits to workers in the construction and hydraulics sectors, including paid leave and unemployment benefits in the event of a temporary cessation of activity due to weather conditions.
5. The National Unemployment Insurance Fund (CNAC): It manages unemployment benefits for workers on open-ended (permanent) contracts who have lost their jobs for economic reasons or following the cessation of their company's activity.

Although social security coverage is open to all workers by law, labour force survey data point to a structural lack of social protection coverage for some workers. Indeed, 39 per cent of the workforce were not covered by social security according to the 2024 labour force survey. It is in this context that the Algerian authorities have taken steps to formalize the economy and integrate informal workers into the social security system. The 2015 Supplementa-

ry Finance Act marked an important milestone in that it introduced two key measures: voluntary social security coverage and the elimination of late payment penalties and surcharges for employers and the self-employed. The objective was twofold: (a) to broaden the base of contributors with a view to extending social security coverage and strengthening the sustainability of the social protection system; and (b) to provide informal workers with full realization of the right to social security. Subsequently, in 2022, the Government established self-employment status, an initiative aimed at simplifying administrative and tax procedures for the self-employed. This measure, which simplified the process of registration for social security and introduced the option of paying contributions as a lump sum, has been a notable success, with 25,000 self-employed cards issued in 2024.<sup>14</sup>

In Algeria, the design and reform of social protection policies, such as those described above, are rooted in a structured process that involves social dialogue at multiple levels. All proposed legislation in the field of social protection generally follows a standardized pathway: it begins with the identification of needs through the collection and analysis of administrative and field data (including labour force survey data), followed by the preparation of draft legal texts. These drafts are then sub-

13 Since 2016, CASNOS has been implementing a "mobile counter" initiative to reach the most isolated areas that do not have a CASNOS branch, and to facilitate access to social security services for the populations of these areas. In particular, the initiative has targeted workers in the agricultural and fisheries sectors, enabling them to take advantage more easily of the benefits and support offered by CASNOS. In terms of digitalization, CASNOS launched an online service in 2021 allowing self-employed workers to carry out several administrative procedures online. Since its launch, CASNOS has continued to enrich this platform with new digital services to facilitate access to social benefits.

14 Discussion with an expert at the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

mitted for intersectoral consultation and dialogue, which serves to align the proposed measures across ministries and sectors, ensuring policy coherence and preventing overlaps or contradictions between laws. This stage provides a critical forum for social dialogue, where stakeholders – including line ministries, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security and relevant technical bodies – engage in discussion and consensus-building. Once this process is complete, the proposed legislation is submitted to Parliament for approval. Upon adoption, the measures are implemented and administered by the competent ministry or institution. This institutionalized process of consultation and coordination reflects Algeria's commitment to embedding social dialogue in the governance of social protection.

### Description of measures adopted to extend social security and facilitate formalization in Algeria

Several policies have been implemented by Algeria since the 1990s to support the extension of social security and facilitate the transition of informal workers to the formal economy:

1. The **voluntary affiliation of informal workers to the social security system** was enshrined in article 60 of Ordinance No. 15-01 of 23 July 2015 (JORADP 2015). It gives employed persons access to health insurance benefits, more specifically health and maternity insurance (no maternity leave), upon payment of a monthly contribution of 12 per cent of the

guaranteed national minimum wage. This is administered by the National Social Insurance Fund for Employees (CNAS). This voluntary affiliation was planned to be valid for a transitional period of three years from 2015 to 2018. From a discussion with the heads of social security funds at the local level it emerged that voluntary affiliation is still in force in 2025. It is also important to note that, once they have obtained formal salaried employment, employees have the option to retroactively pay their pension contributions for the transitional period in which they were working without contributing to a pension scheme. A total of 16,288 informal economy workers had registered in the voluntary scheme by June 2016 (Oumehdhi 2016).

2. **Removal of penalties for late payment of past contributions and introduction of new penalties:**

- a) To facilitate the payment of contributions, article 57 of Ordinance No. 15-01 of 23 July 2015 allowed employers and self-employed workers who were in arrears with the payment of their social security contributions to benefit from a payment schedule and an exemption from surcharges. This exemption was also extended to employers and self-employed workers who had benefited from a payment schedule during the years preceding the ordinance's promulgation and were supposed to pay penalties (art. 58). However, failure to com-

ply with this schedule results in the loss of the benefits granted.<sup>15</sup> By June 2016, some 170,266 employers (47 per cent of the total) had taken advantage of these exceptional measures, of whom 83 per cent (that is, 141,166 employers) had paid the full amount of their contributions and benefited from the cancellation of surcharges and late payment penalties (Oumehdhi 2016).

b) Article 59 of Ordinance No. 15-01 of 23 July 2015 deals with new penalties moving forward. Employers who fail to comply with the legal deadlines for registering their workers for social security are liable to fines ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 Algerian dinars (US\$755–1,500) per unregistered worker, and also to imprisonment for two to six months. If the offence is repeated, the fines are increased to up to 500,000 dinars (US\$3,800) and the term of imprisonment can be up to 24 months.

3. Another important measure is the **creation of the scheme for the self-employed**, implemented through Act No. 22-23 of 18 December 2022 (JORADP 2022a). It

supports informal workers without social security coverage by offering them incentives to formalize their activity and join the National Social Security Fund for the Self-Employed (CASNOS). This scheme is intended for workers who have reached the legal working age and are carrying out predefined activities,<sup>16</sup> mainly in the platform economy. Simplified online registration<sup>17</sup> is offered to eligible young people.<sup>18</sup> The new scheme allows them to obtain a self-employed person card offering several advantages, such as the opening of a commercial bank account, the payment of a reduced tax (0.5 per cent of declared turnover) and a reduced social security contribution of 24,000 dinars (US\$180) per year (compared to 32,400 dinars (US\$250), which is the minimum required for other self-employed workers).

4. The unemployment benefit programme, introduced by Executive Decree No. 22-70 of 10 February 2022 (JORADP 2022b), is designed to support the integration of young people into the labour market. First-time jobseekers aged between 19 and 40 years, without income and registered with the National Employment Agency (ANEM),

15 Pursuant to article 57 of Interministerial Decree No. 005 of 18 November 2015, workers in the agricultural and fisheries sectors benefit from specific measures and additional facilities for the payment of their contributions. With this in mind, CASNOS counters have been set up at the branch offices of the National Agricultural Mutual Fund (CNMA), which are visited more frequently by farmers. This initiative is aimed at bringing social security services closer to agricultural workers and simplifying the administrative procedures involved.

16 For more details on the approximately 1,300 activities eligible for self-employed status, see the website of the National Agency for the Self-Employed (ANAE), <https://activities.anae.dz/>.

17 For more details of the online registration process, see the ANAE website, <https://www.anae.dz/user/ae/register>.

18 For more details on the eligibility criteria, see article 3 of Act No. 22-23 of 18 December 2022 (JORADP 2022).

are eligible for this benefit. Recipients also benefit from health insurance coverage provided by CNAS, with contributions paid by the State. Payment of the unemployment benefit is conditional on compliance with several requirements, including regularly appearing in person at the local ANEM office, accepting proposed training courses and not turning down two job offers that match the beneficiary's qualifications. The training programmes offered are implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education, which monitors labour market needs. In addition, the training programmes must be aligned with the beneficiaries' educational background. They are generally short-term, lasting between three and six months, and are provided at vocational training centres under the jurisdiction of that ministry.

### Impact and challenges

The impact of the measures discussed in the previous section has received very little attention in the literature or in policy debates. Although the data required for a comprehensive empirical assessment are not available, this section argues that their impact was limited and temporary, based on available data and discussions with key experts at the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security and local social security funds.

**Voluntary affiliation of informal workers to the social security system.** CNAS data indicate that the number of insured persons in special

categories increased by 31 per cent in 2016, likely due to the introduction of voluntary affiliation for workers under article 60 of Ordinance No. 15-01 of 23 July 2015 (JORADP 2015). The number of workers who had opted for voluntary affiliation was estimated at 3,000 in March 2016 (Djama 2016) and at 16,288 by June 2016 (Oumehdhi 2016). However, the rate of increase quickly dropped to 2 per cent in 2017, suggesting a temporary effect linked to the implementation of this measure. Its fleeting nature was confirmed by an expert at a local CNAS agency, who emphasized that the limited social security guarantees under this scheme did not provide sufficient incentives for voluntary participation. Indeed, workers affiliated under this arrangement receive only in-kind benefits, including reimbursement for medication, without access to other social benefits (such as a pension or benefits for work-related accidents). An expert from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security attributed the decline in the affiliation rate to insufficient awareness-raising. Although intensive outreach to promote voluntary affiliation had been conducted in 2015–16 at the time of the scheme's launch, the lack of sustained awareness-raising efforts meant that individuals had tended to forget about the existence of that specific mechanism.

**Removal of penalties for late payment of past contributions and introduction of new penalties.** The number of active CASNOS members increased significantly in 2016, growing by 30 per cent since 2015. Similarly, the amount of CASNOS contributions collected increased by 57 per cent be-

tween 2015 and 2016 (Guefifa 2017). However, these growth rates declined in subsequent years, suggesting that the 2015 Supplementary Finance Act and the abolition of late payment penalties had only a temporary effect on workers' participation in social security.

**Creation of the regime for the self-employed.** The growth rate in the number of CASNOS-insured persons has started to rise again, reaching 11 per cent in 2022 and 8 per cent in 2023, which is due, at least in part, to the implementation of the scheme for the self-employed. Indeed, this scheme, administered by the National Agency for the Self-Employed (ANAE), issued more than 25,000 micro-entrepreneur cards between 2022 and 2025.<sup>19</sup>

**Unemployment benefit programme.** Although detailed statistics are not available, an interview with an official from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security highlighted the programme's significant impact on the labour force participation rate, particularly among women. CNAS data indicate that 2 million beneficiaries were affiliated in 2023, a figure that rose to 3 million in 2024. If the impact of this measure on labour market activity is positive, it could increase the unemployment rate (Souag and Assaad 2024). Indeed, the unemployment rate reached 12.7 per cent in 2024, up from 11.4 per cent in 2019. This increase could be partly attributed to the programme, which encourages individuals who were previously inactive to become active and register in order to benefit from the allow-

ance. Furthermore, a recent report by the Court of Auditors indicates that only 5.8 per cent of beneficiaries found a job thanks to the support of ANEM, raising questions about the programme's effectiveness in terms of sustainable integration into the labour market. That report included recommendations for enhancing the unemployment benefit programme, focusing in particular on a better match between the training offered and labour market needs, and on the development of individualized support for jobseekers. In order to improve the financial sustainability of the programme and reduce its impact on public finances, the Court of Auditors also recommended strengthening the mechanisms for detecting fraud and identifying beneficiaries who were not actually entitled to the benefit, particularly through better coordination between the different institutions involved (Aouadi 2025).

### Towards sustainable formalization?

On the basis of the available data it is not possible to conclude that the measures undertaken by the Government to encourage formalization have had a long-term impact. This is in line with the findings of Jessen and Kluge (2021), who note that one-off incentives or policy interventions often lead to an increase in formalization at first, followed by a decline once the measures expire or awareness wanes. The example of Algeria illustrates this phenomenon, as shown by the voluntary affiliation scheme, which saw high

<sup>19</sup> Although the ANAE website indicates that 10,000 cards have been issued, a source within the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security suggested that the number was closer to 25,000.

uptake in 2015–16 before losing effectiveness owing to the lack of ongoing incentives and awareness-raising efforts. Without continued support, many firms and workers return to informality, often as a result of administrative constraints, financial difficulties or failure to appreciate the long-term benefits of formalization.

To achieve a sustainable increase in formalization, the Government should make the social security system more flexible and attractive by adopting innovative approaches. First, the introduction of a progressive contribution system, inspired by the “Save More Tomorrow” model (Thaler and Benartzi 2004), would enable young workers to start off paying contributions at a low rate that increases gradually over time. Secondly, it would be essential to make the payment of contributions more flexible for the self-employed, allowing more frequent payments (monthly or even daily) instead of a single annual payment that is often difficult to afford.

Furthermore, sustained awareness-raising campaigns, targeting both employers and workers, are essential to remind people of the benefits of formal employment and provide up-to-date information on existing schemes. A better understanding of workers’ preferences and behaviours (ISSA 2021) would make it possible to tailor social benefits to their real needs and make them more attractive. Since social security affiliation is influenced by the change of preferences over time and by risk aversion, it is essential to adapt systems so that they take these factors into account (Merouani, Hamouda and El Moudden 2016).

Institutional capacity in Algeria to foster formalization could be strengthened by simplifying business registration procedures and improving the mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance with regulations. In that regard, studies have shown that coercive measures (“sticks”) are often more effective than financial incentives (“carrots”) in promoting formalization (Jessen and Kluge 2021). A well-calibrated combination of flexibility, progressive incentives, coercive measures and institutional strengthening could help to sustainably advance the integration of workers into the formal system.

A major challenge is data availability, which remains inadequate for conducting robust evaluations of social policies. It would be essential for the Government to regularly collect suitably disaggregated data and for its labour market and social protection policies to be informed by rigorous data analysis, including evaluations based on experimental and quasi-experimental approaches.

### **Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator**

Algeria’s experience shows that a combination of incentive schemes, active labour market policies and targeted expansion of social protection can effectively move self-employed persons from informal to formal employment, even if the results have been somewhat limited so far in Algeria. The popularity of the scheme for the self-employed – particularly once its benefits for business development became evident – reflects how integrated policies encourage more active par-

ticipation in the formal economy. This suggests that, as far as certain groups are concerned, establishing a link between social security and economic opportunities is essential to expand social protection coverage and promote inclusion. For other countries seeking to strengthen their social protection system while boosting employment, such synergies could serve as a model, as long as structural barriers hampering access to finance and markets are addressed.

In addition, our case study has highlighted how unemployment protection can enhance women's participation in the labour market by encouraging active job-seeking and potentially reducing gender inequalities. The tem-

porary economic security provided by unemployment benefits has enabled more women in Algeria to seek employment, mitigating certain systemic barriers to their labour market participation. This unexpected result is consistent with international findings about the role of social policies in promoting decent work for women. With regard to the Global Accelerator, this underscores the importance of designing flexible systems that can be adapted to different population groups, taking their needs and expectations into account. Social security systems based on a combination of several policies would be able not only to cushion shocks but also to promote women's empowerment and address structural inequalities.

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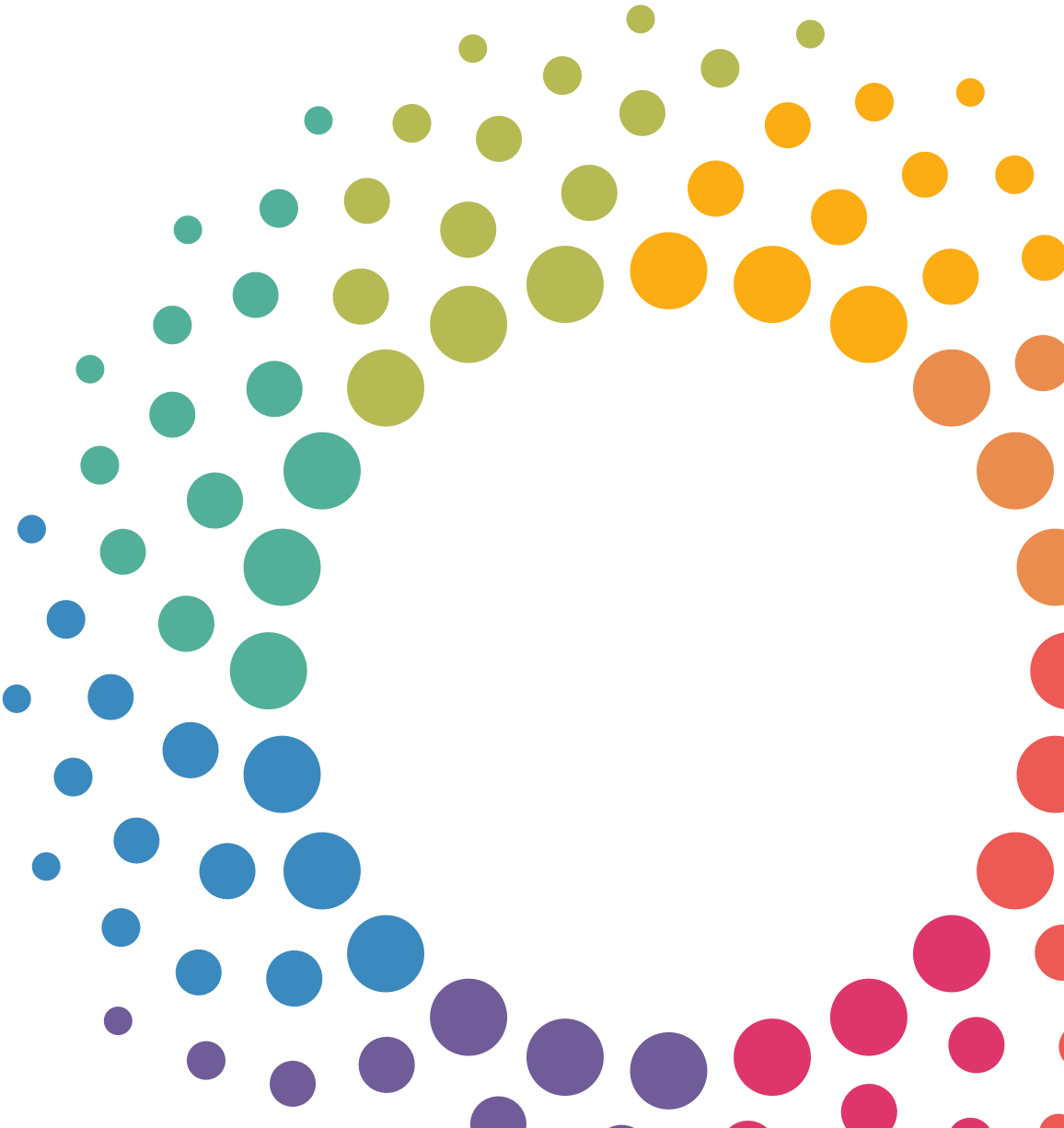
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7



# Fostering economic and environmental goals through social protection: The PROEZA project in Paraguay



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## Summary

The PROEZA project, developed by the Government of Paraguay in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is a flagship initiative addressing social and environmental challenges in the country. Short for “*Pobreza, Reforestación, Energía y Cambio Climático*” (Poverty, Reforestation, Energy and Climate Change), the PROEZA project advances climate-resilient sustainable development through a two-pronged strategy: strengthening the resilience of rural livelihoods and reducing emissions. Led by Paraguay’s Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the project’s governance structure comprises nine government institutions.

Approved by Congress in 2019, the project kicked off in 2020. One of its key innovations is under Component I,

“Planting for the future”, which supports indigenous and rural communities living in vulnerable conditions. Beneficiaries of the *Tekoporã* (“Better Living”) programme — the country’s main social protection programme based on a conditional cash transfer — receive environmentally focused cash transfers conditional on the implementation of agroforestry systems and the adoption of energy-efficient cooking stoves.

Implemented with the support of FAO, the project is set to run until 2027, with a total investment of US\$90 million, co-financed by the Government of Paraguay (72 per cent) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) (28 per cent). This significant financial commitment underscores the Government’s leadership and dedication to advancing climate resilience, poverty reduction and sustainable development as national priorities.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

The PROEZA project can inform global and national efforts to leverage social protection systems so as to promote more sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation practices. Moreover, it is aligned with the Global Accelerator's key pillars: integrated policy approaches, integrated financing and multilateral cooperation.

### 1. Integrated policy approaches:

PROEZA combines poverty reduction and climate action by linking social protection (*Tekoporã* cash transfers) with environmental goals (agroforestry and energy-efficient cooking stoves) to support and promote sustainable rural livelihoods. Its specific focus on family farmers, indigenous communities and rural women is a key feature of the project design, recognizing not only the disproportionate impact of climate change on these population groups, but also their key role in food security and biodiversity conservation. An estimated 8,400 households will benefit from PROEZA by the end of the project in 2027, amounting to 87,210 direct beneficiaries and 720,000 indirect beneficiaries (GCF, n.d.).

### 2. Integrated financing:

The project leverages diverse financing sources, including international grants and government funds. It supports small farmers through grants while also providing incentives and concessional loans to encourage private sector investment in the forestry sector.

**3. Multilateral cooperation:** The project's governance structure is composed of nine government institutions, supported by FAO and the GCF, maximizing impact through shared expertise and resources.

## Context

Paraguay, a landlocked country in Latin America, faces several socio-economic challenges despite its growing economy. With a population of approximately 6.1 million, Paraguay is classified as an upper-middle-income country. However, it has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the region. Since the 2000s, the country reduced poverty by half, but around 22.7 per cent of the population still live below the national poverty line, with 4.9 per cent suffering extreme poverty. In rural areas, the extreme poverty rate is four times higher than in urban areas (Paraguay, INE 2024).

Food insecurity and malnutrition remain critical concerns. Over 20 per cent of Paraguay's population face food insecurity, with children being particularly vulnerable (FAO et al. 2024). Both overweight and undernutrition rates are higher in indigenous communities, driving up the overall prevalence of malnutrition (Bubak and Sanabria 2023). Around 60 per cent of the workforce are employed informally (Paraguay, INE 2025). This high informality is contributing to low productivity and limited economic opportunities for many Paraguayans. Many informal workers lack access to services and rights-based entitlements, such as social protection.

The social protection system in Paraguay has made considerable progress, marked by a substantial increase in coverage and diversification of programmes. In 2005, only 3.6 per cent of the population benefited from social protection programmes, but by 2024, this share had grown to over 36 per cent (ILO 2024), reflecting major advances in inclusivity. Programmes such as *Tekoporã*, launched in 2005, provide conditional cash transfers to families in extreme poverty, reaching over 1 million people, or almost 14 per cent of the population (ECLAC, n.d.(a)). A complementary initiative is the Tenonderã (“Moving Forward”) programme, launched in 2014, which focuses on promoting economic self-sufficiency by supporting families transitioning out of extreme poverty through entrepreneurship projects, and which benefited more than 9,000 households in 2021 (ECLAC, n.d.(b)). In addition, the food pension programme for elderly persons living in poverty, established in 2009, provides non-contributory pensions to individuals aged 65 years and older in vulnerable situations; it reached more than 300,000 beneficiaries in 2023 (ECLAC, n.d.(c)). The national social protection strategy launched in 2019 and the ratification, in 2021, of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) demonstrate the Government’s commitment to strengthening social protection and reducing inequality.

### Description of the PROEZA project

The PROEZA project is one of Paraguay’s principal initiatives to advance climate mitigation and adaptation

while reducing poverty and promoting sustainable agroforestry production in rural areas. It was approved in 2019 through Act No. 6.466/19, becoming part of the national legal framework, and its implementation began in 2020.

The project combines the objectives of poverty reduction, reforestation, renewable energy and response to climate change, which are pursued through an integrated sustainable development strategy. It is being gradually rolled out to indigenous and rural families in eight departments in eastern Paraguay: Concepción, San Pedro, Canindeyú, Caaguazú, Guairá, Caazapá, Itapúa and Alto Paraná. The districts were selected on the basis of environmental and social vulnerability, taking into account forest coverage, prior deforestation, poverty levels and the expected impact of climate change.

### Governance

Coordination of the project is led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, and its implementation is carried out through a governance structure involving nine government institutions: the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Office of the Deputy Minister for Mining and Energy, the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs, the National Institute of Rural and Land Development, the National Forestry Institute and the Development Finance Agency. During the project’s design phase, the Government led a broad consultation process involving public

institutions, civil society organizations, private sector associations and indigenous representatives to ensure ownership and inclusiveness. These partnerships are maintained during its implementation through regular coordination with government bodies, civil society and local communities, including indigenous organizations through the Special Indigenous Commission, ensuring that stakeholder engagement remains an ongoing feature of the project's governance and monitoring processes. Civil society organizations, such as the Network of Indigenous Women Leaders, were involved in the design of the project and are part of its implementation.

Technical support is provided by FAO, which is responsible for managing and overseeing the project's implementation.

The total investment in the PROEZA project amounts to US\$90 million, of which the GCF contributed US\$25 million (28 per cent) in the form of grants, while the Government has provided US\$65 million (72 per cent). The Government's contribution includes US\$15.9 million in the form of grants and US\$49.3 million allocated as loans for producers.

### Project components

The project has three components:

**Component I, "Planting for the future".** This component is aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change and improving the resilience of rural households who benefit from the Tekoporã programme,

the country's main conditional cash transfer programme. These households receive technical support and agricultural inputs to enable them to implement agroforestry models that provide shade, conserve soil, store carbon dioxide and support small-scale agricultural production and food security, contributing to both climate adaptation and mitigation objectives.

The project offers six agroforestry models for participants to choose from. Households receive environmentally conditioned cash transfers linked to the successful implementation of these models. In addition, technical assistance with agroforestry practices, training on accessing markets and legal advice on how to improve land tenure are provided. Both the amount and the periodicity of the environmentally conditioned cash transfers vary depending on the agroforestry model chosen. The six available models are as follows:

- Model 1: 80 per cent exotic species, 20 per cent native species
- Model 2: 50 per cent exotic species, 50 per cent native species
- Model 3: Restoration of natural forests
- Model 4: Regeneration of forests with yerba maté
- Model 5: Agroforestry with citrus fruits
- Model 6: Agroforestry with yerba maté.

In accordance with the technical feasibility study conducted for the project, the proportion of exotic and native species in the agroforestry models was defined to balance economic viability with environmental sustainability. Models with a higher share of exotic species provide faster growth and earlier income generation, while those with greater native composition prioritize biodiversity, soil protection and ecological restoration. The choice of model depends on local site conditions, such as soil fertility and rainfall, and the household's production goals and time horizon for returns.

This component is intended to promote a balance between economic and social/environmental impacts, as exotic species grow faster and can generate marketable timber and exports, while native species are culturally valued, better for biodiversity and more suitable for local soils and climate conditions. In addition, energy-efficient stoves are being introduced to improve households' living conditions while reducing biomass use and preventing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Component II, "Sustainable landscapes and responsible markets"**

This component is aimed at promoting access to concessional loans for medium-sized producers so that they can establish high-yield plantations, combined with the preservation or restoration of natural forests. Forestry projects of up to 300 hectares must include at least 20 per cent native forest reserves in biodiversity corridors. The implementation of this component is part of the National Reforestation Plan.

**Component III, "Good governance and law enforcement"**. This component is intended to strengthen institutional capacities for enforcing existing laws and regulations, conducting market studies and promoting a paradigm shift towards a public policy that combines social and environmental protection goals.

### **Intercultural approach**

Indigenous communities are key actors in climate change mitigation and adaptation, contributing to the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. The indigenous peoples participating in the PROEZA project are the Ava Guaraní, the Mbya Guaraní, the Aché and the Paĩ Tavyterã, all from the Guaraní language family. Over 50 per cent of total participants in Component I are indigenous individuals.

PROEZA upholds indigenous peoples' right to participation by conducting consultations to ensure free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), a mandatory condition for the project's implementation. The Paraguayan State consults with, and seeks the formal and informed approval of, indigenous peoples through a process of ongoing dialogue, in accordance with internationally and nationally recognized rights. The FPIC framework was adopted by Paraguay in 1993 through Act No. 234/93 ratifying the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and is regulated by the 2018 Protocol for the Process of Consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent with the Indigenous Peoples Inhabiting Paraguay (adopted through Decree No. 1.039/18).

A Special Indigenous Commission (CEI) was created as part of the project's governance structure. Made up of technical representatives from all the institutions involved, the CEI is tasked with guiding and agreeing on the project activities that are directed at indigenous communities. The Commission supports the implementation process both methodologically and technically.

### Empowering rural women

In accordance with Act No. 5.446/15 on Public Policies for Rural Women, the Government is promoting the empowerment of women and gender equality in rural areas. All of its programmes, projects and actions aimed at rural development are informed by this approach, which recognizes that the reduction of inequalities is directly related to the fight against poverty and environmental protection.

Accordingly, a Gender Action Plan has been developed under the PROEZA project setting out strategies to advance the implementation of Act No. 5.446/15 and comply with the social and environmental safeguards established by both FAO and the GCF. The action plan includes activities such as advising technical staff at the institutions involved, training participants on their rights and creating spaces to promote the participation of rural women in decision-making bodies, such as the PROEZA Network of Indigenous and Rural Women Leaders. It is being implemented in collaboration with the Special Committee on Gender, which comprises representatives of all the institutions involved in the project's governance structure and is coordinated

by the Ministry of Women. Significantly, almost 80 per cent of participants in Component I are women.

## Impact and challenges

### Impact on people and livelihoods

- **Beneficiaries:** Around 8,400 vulnerable households, comprising some 39,400 people, will directly benefit from the PROEZA project activities under Component I by adopting diversified, climate-resilient livelihood options through the establishment of agroforestry systems that combine income generation with environmental restoration.
- **Social protection:** All participating households are beneficiaries of the *Tekoporã* programme, Paraguay's main social protection system for families in situations of extreme poverty. In addition to conditional cash transfers, *Tekoporã* provides various forms of support, including family visits by social workers, access to health, education and identity services, and linkages with complementary social programmes.
- **Environmentally conditioned cash transfers:** To support the most vulnerable households during the early, non-productive years of their plantations, PROEZA has introduced cash transfers that are conditional on the proper establishment and maintenance of the agroforestry system chosen. These transfers help households to sustain their income and food security while their trees mature, facilitating the transition towards the productive stage and

the generation of long-term environmental benefits.

- **Capacity-building and livelihoods:** Up to **1,500 households** will be provided with training on market access to strengthen income diversification, and at least **30 per cent** of participants will receive legal assistance to improve land tenure security and the formalization of land rights.

### Impact on land use and forestry

- **Agroforestry establishment:** The project will establish approximately 6,500 hectares of climate-smart agroforestry systems centred around poor and extremely poor households, contributing to sustainable land management and climate adaptation, and an additional 24,000 hectares of certified “new generation forest plantations” through Component II.
- **Forest conservation:** Activities include the restoration of natural forests, the adoption of shade-grown *yerba maté* systems and the promotion of multifunctional agroforestry models that integrate native and exotic species for both environmental and productive purposes.
- **Emission reductions:** These measures are expected to lead to the sequestration of around **2.3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents** and avoid further emissions through improved land use and forest management practices.

### Impact on energy and resource efficiency

- **Energy-efficient cooking stoves:** The installation of 3,450 improved cooking stoves will reduce household firewood consumption by approximately 20 per cent and emissions by 0.29 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents while improving health conditions and easing pressure on native forests.

**Overall impact:** The activities implemented under the PROEZA project will expand social protection coverage, strengthen rural livelihoods and promote sustainable forestry practices that contribute to poverty reduction, resilience-building and climate change mitigation in Paraguay.

### Challenges

1. **Balancing environmental and social objectives:** While PROEZA supports reforestation and sustainable energy initiatives, it is important to ensure that reforestation strategies promote biodiversity, avoiding the potential risks of monoculture plantations. Large-scale plantations, particularly those established for bioenergy production, may harm biodiversity, deplete water resources and alter local ecosystems. The challenge lies in introducing diverse, ecologically sound reforestation strategies that are aligned with community needs.
2. **Community inclusion and land rights:** Ensuring that local and indigenous communities are actively involved in decision-making is es-

sential. Land tenure and resource access issues can exacerbate vulnerabilities among groups if not adequately addressed. Accordingly, the project places considerable emphasis on robust safeguards and close collaboration with the authorities.

3. **Sustainability of funding and support:** Challenges include access to credit, insufficient technical support for forestry projects and a lack of knowledge among producers and financial institutions regarding the forestry business. Long-term success requires consistent provision of financial resources and technical assistance. The project must secure continued support so that the benefits it brings last beyond the initial implementation phase, particularly for smallholder farmers.
4. **Scaling practices:** Logistical and capacity challenges need to be overcome for the successful expansion of agroforestry systems and the introduction of energy-efficient cooking stoves. With regard to agroforestry, these include a limited number of providers, extreme climate phenomena and working with vulnerable populations who have little experience of agroforestry practices. When it comes to the introduction of improved cooking stoves, the challenges include high costs, limited availability of suppliers and large-scale logistics. Effective training and resource distribution are essential for broader adoption.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Robust mechanisms to monitor envi-

ronmental and social impacts are needed to assess project outcomes and adapt strategies accordingly. Transparent reporting and independent evaluations will help to mitigate concerns about unintended consequences.

6. **Integration with national and global policies:** It is essential to align the project's objectives with Paraguay's broader sustainable development and climate goals, and with international frameworks like the Paris Agreement. Policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration are necessary to maximize the project's impact.
7. **Climate change resilience:** As climate change intensifies, the project must continuously adapt its strategies to address evolving risks, such as extreme weather events, droughts and shifts in agricultural productivity.
8. **Adapting to delays:** The restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in national authorities led to significant delays, compressing timelines and requiring adaptive measures. Despite these setbacks, the project's implementation was successfully adjusted so that it could stay on track to meet its targets.

By addressing these challenges, it will be possible to enhance the project's contribution to poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and climate resilience while safeguarding the rights and well-being of vulnerable populations.

## What next?

The PROEZA project is set to run until 2027. In the last two years of implementation, the focus will be on ensuring that all targeted participants are effectively reached by the project. In addition, it is critical to consolidate capacities at the government level to continue with the project and, at the same time, strengthen the Government's poverty reduction, economic inclusion and climate adaptation efforts in the medium and long term. The project was explicitly designed to **prepare households for eventual access to contributory systems** (such as health insurance and pensions) by raising and stabilizing incomes. After completion of the project, the Government is expected to maintain its commitment to the sustainability of the activities enabled by PROEZA for a five-year period. This implies ongoing institutional support and follow-up by the participating entities to ensure that the results achieved – in particular, the various agroforestry systems established – continue to have beneficial effects.

## Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator

The PROEZA project in Paraguay offers a number of valuable insights and lessons for the Global Accelerator, particularly with regard to linking social protection, sustainable development and climate resilience goals. These takeaways can be categorized under the Global Accelerator's three pillars: integrated policy approaches, integrated financing and multilateral cooperation:

### 1. Integrated policy approaches

- Policy integration and national alignment:** PROEZA is embedded in Paraguay's existing legal and policy architecture for sustainable development. The adoption of Act No. 6.466/19, which formalized the PROEZA Project Agreement between the Government and FAO, exemplifies the integration of poverty alleviation, forest restoration and promotion of renewable energy under one framework. Moreover, the project is also aligned with the National Development Plan 2030, the National Climate Change Policy, the National Forest Policy, the National Reforestation Plan, the National Energy Policy for the period up to 2040, the Zero Deforestation Act and the country's nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. This coherence across multiple national instruments illustrates how coordinated policy action can simultaneously deliver social, environmental and climate benefits.
- Combining social and environmental objectives:** PROEZA shows how social protection can reinforce environmental action when implemented as part of an integrated strategy. By combining social assistance under the long-standing *Tekoporã* programme with support for climate-smart agroforestry and reforestation, the project provides households with a stable foundation that allows them to set up and run beneficial agroforestry systems. This integration contributes simultaneously to poverty reduction and climate adaptation goals.

- **Leveraging conditional cash transfers:** In addition to social assistance, PROEZA has introduced environmentally conditioned cash transfers tied to the proper establishment and upkeep of agroforestry systems. These incentives ensure that households receive income during the unproductive years of plantation growth while promoting sustainable land management practices. Such an approach bridges short-term income needs with long-term environmental and economic gains, serving as a replicable model for inclusive, climate-resilient rural development.
- **Promoting climate resilience:** By fostering the development of diversified activities that combine trees, crops and sustainable energy solutions, PROEZA strengthens the adaptive capacity of poor and extremely poor households. The agroforestry systems established under the project improve soil fertility, regulate microclimates and improve access to food, fuel and income, reducing vulnerability to droughts and market shocks. The project thus turns climate adaptation into a driver of rural productivity and long-term resilience.
- **Balancing reforestation goals:** PROEZA highlights the need to reconcile environmental and social priorities. While large-scale reforestation supports carbon sequestration, the project's design ensures biodiversity conservation and prevents negative social impacts by promoting diverse, community-based models.
- **Inclusion of vulnerable groups:** By targeting population groups that are

both vulnerable and essential for food security and environmental stewardship – such as indigenous communities, family farmers and rural women – PROEZA serves as a case in point of how integrated policy approaches can more effectively address both social and environmental vulnerabilities.

## 2. Integrated financing

- **Blending public and private funds:** PROEZA demonstrates the potential of combining substantial domestic financing – which accounts for 72 percent of total investment in the project through national budget allocations and concessional loans – with international climate finance from the GCF. This innovative hybrid model leverages national leadership to mobilize private investment through concessional loans in the forestry sector in particular, reducing dependency on a single source and enhancing project resilience.
- **Conditional incentives for sustainability:** The project links multiple financing instruments to sustainable practices. Participants receive regular social protection payments under the *Tekoporā* programme, additional environmentally conditioned cash transfers in reward for successful agroforestry implementation, and daily wages during plantation activities. These combined incentives promote sustainable land management while improving short- and long-term household income.
- **Sustainability of funding:** Long-term financial planning is key to sus-

taining results beyond initial implementation. The 2019 law establishing the PROEZA project guarantees government engagement and budgetary support for a further five years after the project ends in 2027. By embedding project activities within existing national programmes such as *Tekoporã* and the Development Finance Agency's concessional credit lines, and aligning them with the National Reforestation Plan, the project paves the way for financial sustainability and potential scale-up without dependence on external grants.

### 3. Multilateral cooperation

- **Institutional coordination:** PROEZA's governance structure is anchored around two inter-institutional bodies that ensure effective coordination among national and international partners. The Executive Committee brings together key implementing institutions – including the Ministry of Social Development, the National Forestry Institute, the Development Finance Agency and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development – under the leadership of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance and with technical support from FAO. The Steering Committee provides strategic oversight, ensuring policy coherence and alignment with national priorities.
- **Global-local collaboration:** The partnership between the Government, the GCF, FAO and other stakeholders showcases how multilateral expertise can be leveraged for large-scale implementation of projects and

programmes. Within Paraguay, the coordination of PROEZA encompasses multiple governance levels: national ministries provide policy direction and financing, while local authorities, technical teams and community facilitators support beneficiaries on the ground, ensuring that global partnerships translate into tangible local action.

- **Stakeholder engagement and inclusion:** From design to implementation, the project has maintained an inclusive approach. More than 9,000 people were consulted during the design phase, including representatives of civil society, the private sector and indigenous communities. These actors continue to be engaged during the implementation phase through national, regional and local meetings, the Special Indigenous Commission and FPIC-based consultations, ensuring transparency, cultural relevance and local ownership of the results.

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8



# Collective insurance agreements for rural workers in Costa Rica's agricultural sector



*This case study was prepared by Hazel Elizondo Barboza and benefited from inputs by Fabio Durán Valverde (ILO), Anna Brachtendorf (ILO) and Valérie Schmitt (ILO).*

## Summary

Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements for rural agricultural workers demonstrate how integrated policies, innovative financing and community partnerships can be used to extend social protection to workers in the informal economy, offering a replicable model for universal coverage. This model was originally created for agricultural organizations, but it was later extended to other sectors as well. Collective insurance agreements have contributed to the extension of social protection through the introduction of "presumptive income calculations" (estimated earnings based on sector averages) to set contributions for workers lacking formal records of income – a process facilitated by the adoption of digital technologies and by state subsidies to top up contribution levels. The Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund has worked closely with local cooperatives and associa-

tions, extending the State's reach into rural areas.

Formally launched in 1984 (with roots in policies from the 1970s), the scheme currently covers over 38,000 beneficiaries through 306 organizations in the primary sector, enabling group-based affiliation to pension and health insurance schemes.

This case study outlines the scheme's design, relevant contextual factors and lessons learned while highlighting solutions for expanding social protection in high-informality rural settings.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements exemplify the Global Accelerator's integrated approach to social protection in high-informality contexts. This group-based formalization mechanism facilitates the transition from

informal to protected work for rural agricultural labourers through:

- integrated policies (pillar 1) – bridging regulatory gaps through presumptive income calculations and mandatory affiliation reforms
- integrated financing (pillar 2) – ensuring affordability through blended financing (combining state subsidies and worker contributions)
- multilateral cooperation (pillar 3) – leveraging grassroots organizations as trusted intermediaries to expand social security affiliation and facilitate the payment of contributions.

For Global Accelerator pathfinder countries, it offers a replicable model for:

- reducing rural informality and advancing just transitions in agriculture by formalizing existing employment;
- scaling up social protection coverage through blended financing; and
- developing partnerships between the State and local communities to support the adaptation and implementation of public policies.

#### **Box 10. Key lessons learned from Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements for rural workers in the agricultural sector**

- Integrated policy approaches (Global Accelerator pillar 1): Introducing presumptive income calculations to calculate levels of social insurance contributions without formal income verification, and mandatory affiliation reforms (in 2005) that contributed to the formalization of rural informal workers. Supported by digital technology, the adoption of the presumptive income method has helped to close regulatory gaps.
- Integrated financing (Global Accelerator pillar 2): State-subsidized social security contributions – covering 0.25 per cent of the contributory base, plus the difference between workers' payments and the full amount due – ensure that the scheme is affordable for low-income farmers. This blended financing model (public funds plus workers' contributions) has contributed to equitable inclusion despite informality.
- Multilateral cooperation (Global Accelerator pillar 3): Grassroots organizations (cooperatives/associations) served as critical intermediaries, leveraging local trust to communicate the benefits of the scheme, reduce transaction costs and manage enrolment. Such community-level partnerships extended the State's reach into rural areas with limited institutional presence.

## Context

By the 1970s, the Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund (CCSS) had achieved four decades of mandatory health and pension insurance coverage across the formal productive sectors. However, critical gaps remained. Despite the economic significance of agriculture in Costa Rica, the rates of affiliation to health and pension insurance schemes were low among independent rural workers. At the same time, socio-economic constraints highlighted the need for State-subsidized coverage for vulnerable population groups unable to contribute to social insurance schemes (Valverde et al. 2013).

The structural barriers impeding the expansion of social protection coverage could be categorized as follows:

- Barriers related to geographical and institutional access: the minimal regional presence of the CCSS in the 1980s, exacerbated by inadequate public transport, severely restricted rural communities' access to the social insurance system.
- Barriers related to perception and awareness: low institutional visibility led rural communities to undervalue social security benefits.

The introduction of collective insurance agreements in 1984 directly addressed these barriers by:

- leveraging trusted intermediaries – partnering with grassroots agricultural organizations helped to close gaps in institutional coverage and facilitated communication on benefits through culturally resonant channels;
- reducing transaction costs – enrolment and the payment of contributions were made easier by having local organizations close to the target populations, eliminating the need for arduous travel and offering convenient access outside standard office hours;
- ensuring affordability – the State's subsidization of workers' contributions made it possible to set lower contribution rates for comprehensive health services, thereby making social health insurance, pensions and other benefits not only affordable but also attractive, which resulted in a significant extension of coverage.

The initiative's success can be ascribed to its incorporation of two core principles underpinning Costa Rica's shift towards universalism:

- State financing: subsidies covered social security contribution gaps, ensuring equitable access.
- Proximity–trust dynamics: local organizations built up essential CCSS credibility in areas where the State's direct presence was weakest.

### Description of the collective insurance agreements for rural workers in the agricultural sector

Introduced in 1984, collective insurance agreements (*convenios colectivos de aseguramiento*) enable the CCSS to negotiate collective agreements with local associations of non-salaried workers. Initially targeting organized smallholder farmers, the agreements were later expanded to cover other rural/agricultural workers and self-employed groups. Whereas the scheme at first offered only health and maternity insurance, subsequent reforms added pension coverage (1995) and made affiliation to the agreements mandatory (2000), which is in line with the integrated policy approaches envisaged by the Global Accelerator's first pillar. However, these changes increased participants' contributions, which in turn reduced the incentives for affiliation among informal workers in the agricultural sector.

The model relies on using "presumptive income" (estimated earnings based on sector averages) to set contributions for workers lacking formal records of income. Some workers, though, move between the formal and informal sectors because of the irregularity of their labour income. To address this situation, the CCSS created a mechanism that allows workers to carry their contributions with them so that they do not lose coverage or benefits when moving between sectors.

A key step in protecting self-employed workers in Costa Rica was the adoption, in 1975, of the Regulations for

Extending Social Security to Own-Account Workers, which marked the first formal attempt to incorporate this group into the Costa Rican social security system. The CCSS acts as the social insurance agency, while grassroots organizations (cooperatives and local associations) serve as intermediaries tasked with organizing and carrying out the collection of contributions at the local level.

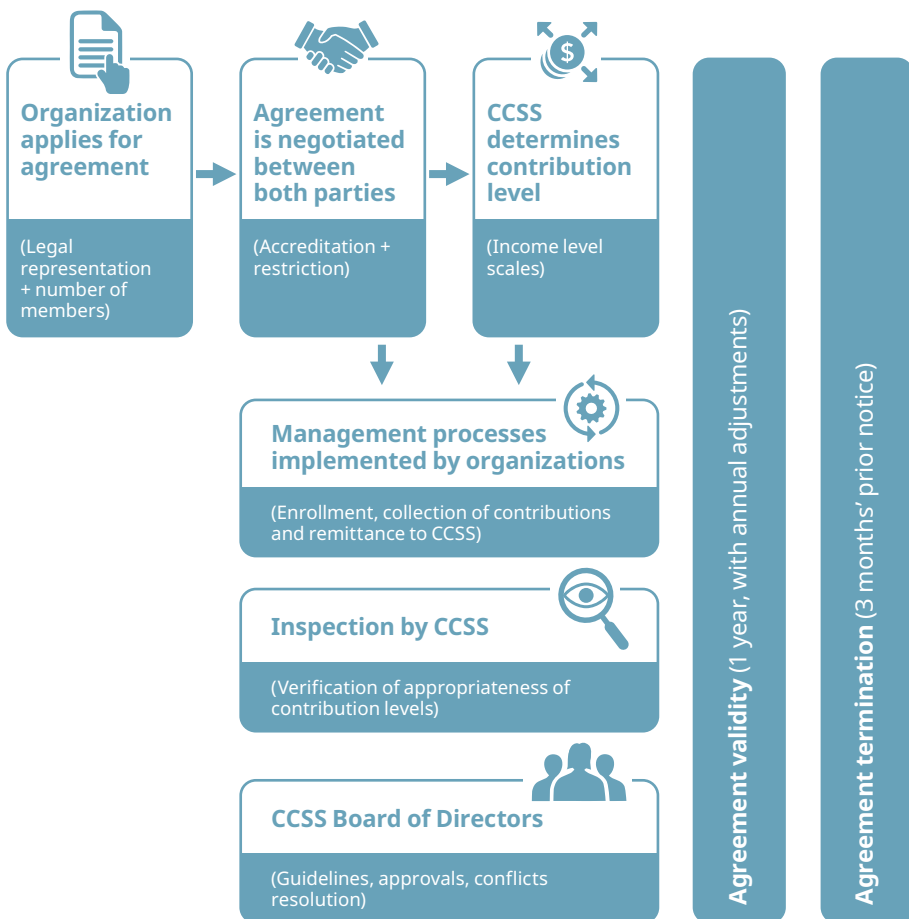
Figure 4 below illustrates the operational mechanism of collective insurance agreements. To enter into such an agreement with the CCSS, an organization must fulfil two key criteria: (a) have a minimum of 12 members; and (b) have valid legal representation. Several documents are also required, including up-to-date social security payment records, legal certificates (such as articles of incorporation) and a formal board resolution authorizing the agreement. Once all these documents have been submitted, a CCSS official visits the organization to confirm that the requirements have been met. Both parties then negotiate the terms of the agreement, subject to certain restrictions: salaried workers cannot be included, and beneficiaries of the scheme must be performing work related to the organization's economic activity. The next stage in the process involves determining the contribution or income level scales, which are based on the organization's activities and the contributory capacity of its members. The CCSS sets the income and contribution scales that the organization applies to its members.

Grassroots organizations manage enrolment, adjustments to the con-

tributions and verification of benefits, while the CCSS oversees compliance through its social security inspection service. CCSS inspectors regularly visit the organizations to ensure that the level of contributions has been set correctly. To enrol new members, the

organization must notify the social security inspection service in advance. The CCSS Board of Directors is responsible for strategic decisions such as defining guidelines, approving agreements and resolving conflicts (CCSS, n.d. a, CCSS, n.d. b).

**Figure 4. Operational mechanism of collective insurance agreements in Costa Rica**



CCSS = Costa Rican Social Insurance Fund.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

The financing of collective insurance agreements combines social security contributory payments (scaled according to presumptive income tiers) and state subsidies. Workers pay reduced contributions, while the State covers the difference between workers' payments and the full contribution rate; it also pays an additional 0.25 per cent of the contribution base. This combined financing reduces contributory barriers for low-income rural workers. Grassroots organizations collect contributions through consolidated "payrolls" and remit the amounts to CCSS, lowering transaction costs.

The agreement is valid for up to one year. Renewal is permitted for a maximum of three consecutive years, subject to the original qualifying criteria still being met.

Originally designed as a voluntary mechanism to extend coverage to remote areas, collective insurance agreements are a good example of successful institutional cooperation between the CCSS, the State and local organizations. The model's key innovative features are:

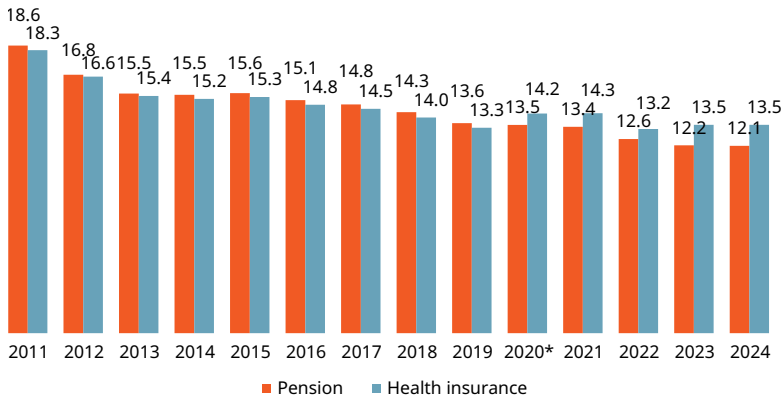
- portability of social security contributions between salaried and non-salaried work;
- State-subsidized contributions enabling access for low-income groups;
- grassroots trust-building and lower transaction costs through the involvement of local organizations.

In 2025, the agreements covered over 38,000 individuals (organized into 306

registered groups), accounting for 25 per cent of all direct CCSS social security beneficiaries employed in the agricultural sector. In 2024, total contributions amounted to 822.3 million Costa Rican colones (US\$1.6 million), with the following allocations: 53 per cent for health and maternity insurance, and 47 per cent for pension coverage (CCSS, n.d. a, CCSS, n.d. b).

Moreover, in 2024, the collective insurance agreements scheme (including beneficiaries from all economic sectors) accounted for 12.1 per cent of non-salaried workers enrolled in pension insurance and for 13.5 per cent of non-salaried workers enrolled in health insurance. As can be seen in figure 5 below, both of these indicators have exhibited a steady decline since 2011. This trend may be attributed to two principal factors. First, there has been a gradual decrease in the share of agricultural labour within the overall workforce. Secondly, the shift from preferential conditions under collective agreements to a more generalized scheme (with mandatory health and pension schemes) has reduced incentives for participation. The CCSS has maintained the scheme offering preferential conditions under collective agreements, as it encompasses a large number of insured individuals, but it is not actively promoting it.

**Figure 5. Share of beneficiaries covered by collective insurance agreements in total number of non-salaried workers affiliated to pension and health insurance in Costa Rica, 2011–24 (percentage)**



Source: Elaborated by the author based on Costa Rica, CCSS (n.d. a; n.d. b).

Even if this scheme is available for non-salaried workers in other economic sectors, beneficiaries from the agricultural sector accounted for 76 per cent of the total workers registered with the CCSS under collective agreements.

### Impact and challenges

Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements have significantly expanded formalization among rural agricultural workers by empowering local organizations to enrol workers under presumptive income criteria, that is, by enabling coverage without formal proof of income. As at May 2025, the agreements covered a total of 38,205 beneficiaries specifically from the agricultural sector: one in four CCSS contributors engaged in agricultural activities were thus affiliated under the scheme.

The main challenges faced by the scheme have to do with the inclusion of ineligible members (and those who are in arrears) and with the misreporting of income. Some groups who are ineligible for such agreements owing to their income level have managed to “play the system” and get themselves included. In addition, the CCSS inspectors have identified some beneficiaries who do not exercise the economic activity linked to the grassroots organization managing the collection of contributions.

### What next?

This scheme is no longer considered an attractive model for non-salaried agricultural workers in Costa Rica because of the following factors: (a) social security affiliation has become mandatory for health and pension insurance; (b) transaction costs have been further reduced by the adoption of newer technologies; and (c) the CCSS has

expanded further into rural areas in recent years. Nevertheless, it remains relevant as it covers a significant proportion of rural and agricultural workers. Going forward, the introduction of differentiated contributory incentives could enable the scheme to be adapted to other highly informal economic sectors in the country. For example, street vendors could be allowed to pay reduced contribution rates for health and pension insurance.

Internationally, the model serves as a benchmark for countries with contexts similar to Costa Rica's when the scheme was originally launched, offering lessons for informality reduction strategies.

### **Main takeaways for the global accelerator**

The example of Costa Rica's collective insurance agreements demonstrates

that extending social protection to high-informality rural sectors calls for: (a) innovative policy approaches (in this case combining presumptive income mechanisms with mandatory affiliation reforms); (b) innovative financing (combining state subsidies with worker premiums); and (c) collaboration between the national social security institution and organizations at the local level. Having succeeded in formalizing over 38,000 agricultural workers, the Costa Rican model offers a replicable blueprint for:

- just transitions in agriculture and the green economy;
- reducing informality through community-driven enrolment;
- equitable financing that prioritizes low-income groups through public-private cost-sharing.



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9

# Rural benefits and support for smallholder farmers in Brazil: Addressing rural poverty and climate vulnerability



*This case study was prepared by Raquel Tebaldi (UNU-MERIT) and benefited from inputs by Helmut Schwarzer (ILO).*

## Summary

To address rural poverty and the long-standing exclusion of rural workers from social protection systems, Brazil introduced significant legislative reforms in 1991 that provided for the extension of social protection to rural workers and smallholder farmers. Workers from these groups now have access to social security benefits through a special system which takes into consideration their limited contributory capacity and the small scale of their productive activities. Contributions are collected as a percentage of the produce that they sell. Rural retirement pensions guarantee a minimum income and have been a key tool for addressing poverty in Brazil. Rural benefits are part of a system of contributory and non-contributory social protection that has achieved near universal coverage (around 90 per cent) among older people.

This case study examines the scheme's core design features while setting it within a broader context of policies to support smallholder farmers throughout their life cycle. These policies address notable disparities that smallholder farmers face in accessing credit, markets, insurance and other key productive inputs. In line with the Global Accelerator's focus on integrated policy approaches, this study shows how Brazil's rural policy framework offers a compelling model for successfully tackling rural poverty and promoting rural economic development.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

Brazil's rural benefits and its policies to support smallholder farmers are an exemplary case of an integrated policy approach. The country's social security system also combines contributory and non-contributory mechanisms

and prioritizes the extension of social protection to historically marginalized smallholder farmers.

An important lesson for other countries that can be learned from Brazil's experience is that it is crucial to consider the diverse needs and gaps faced by smallholder farmers in order to promote their economic and social inclusion. Income

support through rural benefits is a core element of the Brazilian system, but this is also complemented with access to credit, insurance, markets and other productive inputs.

This policy framework directly addresses rural poverty, population ageing and the need for inclusive economies amid climate vulnerabilities.

### Box 11. Key lessons learned from Brazil's rural benefits and policies to support smallholder farmers

- Smallholder farmers have access to social security benefits in Brazil through a special system which takes into consideration their limited contributory capacity and the small scale of their productive activities. Contributions are collected as a percentage of the produce that they sell. Rural retirement pensions guarantee a minimum income and have been a key tool for addressing poverty in Brazil.
- Smallholder farmers face structural barriers in areas such as market access, credit and technical support. The Brazilian experience shows how a robust policy package can effectively tackle these barriers and promote resilience.
- Challenges related to equity and efficiency need to be addressed in order to further strengthen these policies.

### Context

Historically, Brazilian rural workers were excluded from the social protection system because that system emerged with industrialization and was centred around urban workers' demands as channelled by trade unions. While urban formal workers expanded their access to social protection throughout the twentieth century, rural workers remained excluded in large part owing to their

weaker organizational capacities. This started to change slowly over several decades, culminating in the creation of the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) in 1963 and, most notably, the establishment of the Assistance Fund for Rural Workers (FUNRURAL) during the military regime in 1971, which introduced basic benefits for rural workers. This scheme remained limited in several ways, such as its focus on household heads, which excluded most married

women who were also smallholder farmers. A minimum floor of social insurance for all smallholder farmers was guaranteed only with the 1988 Constitution and the ensuing legislative reforms of 1991. The introduction of rural pensions in Brazil was a key factor in reaching near universal social protection coverage for older people. On the strength of its role in fighting rural poverty and its innovative design, Brazil's rural benefits system is internationally recognized as a best practice in social policy (Schwarzer and Querino 2002; Barbosa 2011).

Rural benefits are also integrated with a wider set of support policies for smallholder farmers that seek to address the specific gaps faced by these workers and their establishments, together with the increased risks they are exposed to as a result of climate change. While smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to climate shocks, they are also key actors in ensuring the resilience of food systems (Chao 2024; Gervazio et al. 2025) and in Brazil they play a notable role in agricultural production and in climate-adaptive outcomes (Magalhães et al. 2025). Despite the dominance of export-focused large agribusinesses in the country's agricultural production, smallholder farmers still account for 23 per cent of the total output value (IBGE 2019) and make a key contribution to safeguarding domestic food security (IPC-IG 2013). Coupled with the persistent reality that families in rural areas are substantially more likely to experience poverty (Serra, Maia and Yalonetzky 2023), these dynamics highlight the crucial role of rural benefits schemes

and policies tailored to smallholder farmers in recognizing these workers' essential contribution to the economy and providing them with income security in old age.

### **Description of the rural benefits scheme and broader policies to support smallholder farmers**

Following the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, Acts Nos. 8212 and 8213 from 1991 introduced specific provisions to improve social protection coverage for smallholder farmers, creating the category of "specially insured" workers, which recognized their limited contributory capacity and the small scale of their productive activities. The reforms also established a lower retirement age for rural workers and extended eligibility to spouses – a significant victory for rural women's movements (Schwarzer and Querino 2002; Barbosa 2011).

Rural benefits are part of the General Social Security Scheme (RGPS), which includes all social insurance benefits and is managed by the National Social Security Institute (INSS), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Retirement benefits are the largest component of the RGPS. The minimum age of eligibility for rural retirement pensions is 60 years for men and 55 years for women (INSS 2023a). The minimum amount of benefits is the official minimum wage, which is what 98 per cent of rural pensioners receive (Zviniene and Tsukada 2023). Eligible workers are those who can provide evidence of 180 months (15 years) of work in a rural activity (INSS 2023a). It

is important to note, therefore, that it is not a worker's residence in a rural or urban area, but, rather, the nature of their productive activities that determine whether they are eligible for rural pensions.

Different rules apply to different categories of rural workers, and likewise in the case of indigenous or *quilombola* workers.<sup>20</sup> Smallholder farmers must have exercised most of their activities on rural land, and there are legal limits pertaining to the size of their farms, the employment of others outside their own family in agricultural activities, and the sourcing of raw materials. They have to prove how long they have worked by submitting a "rural self-declaration form", which is then cross-referenced against data collected under the federal Government's National Programme for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (PRONATER). The INSS is rolling out an automatic verification process for rural activities exercised since 2023 (INSS 2024).

Social security contributions amounting to 1.3 per cent of turnover (with 1.2 per cent going to the INSS and 0.1 per cent for employment injury) are collected on the basis of smallholder farmers' invoices (SEBRAE 2021; INSS 2023b). However, only around 6 per cent of total annual government expenditure on rural benefits was covered by contributions in 2022 (Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024).

The deficit is covered by federal transfers financed through taxation (OECD 2023; Zviniene and Tsukada 2023). Over time, public spending on rural benefits grew from just over 0.6 per cent of GDP in 1997 to 1.6 per cent of GDP in 2022 (with a deficit of 1.53 per cent) owing to a combination of factors, including patterns of slow growth in the economy and increases in the minimum wage (Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024).

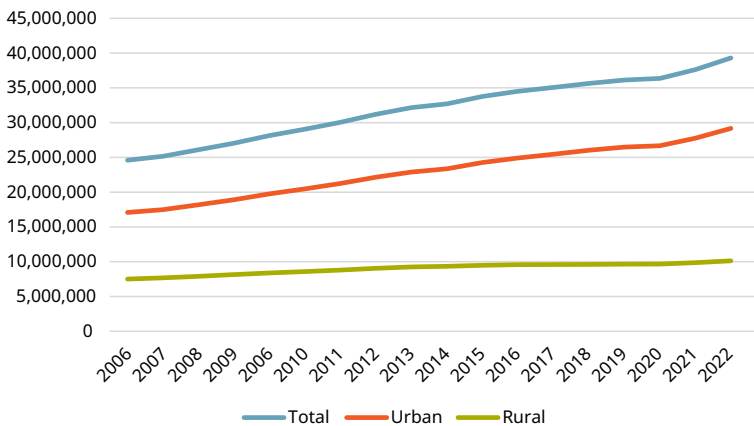
Out of all INSS benefits paid out in 2023, just over 25 per cent went to rural recipients, corresponding to 10.1 million rural benefits, of which almost 7.5 million were retirement pensions (Brazil, MPS 2025; 2024). Rural pensions are thus a crucial component of the wider pension system in Brazil, which achieves near-universal coverage through contributory and non-contributory benefits. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, total coverage of the system peaked at around 90 per cent of the population aged 65 years and over. After the pandemic-induced dip, coverage rates have rebounded to 88 per cent and above since 2022 (IPEA, n.d.; ILO, n.d.). Between 1980 and 2022, the number of rural benefits paid out by the INSS grew at an average rate of 3.4 per cent per year, with a significant increase in coverage after the 1991 reforms (Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024). Figures 6 and 7 below show, respectively, the evolution over time of the number of all INSS benefits paid out and the number of

<sup>20</sup> *Quilombolas* are Afro-Brazilian residents of *quilombo* settlements first established by escaped slaves in Brazil. They are the descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until their abolition in 1888.

RGPS pensioners actively receiving retirement benefits, with disaggregation by urban versus rural status.

It is important to consider rural benefits as part of the broader framework of programmes and policies designed to support smallholder farmers

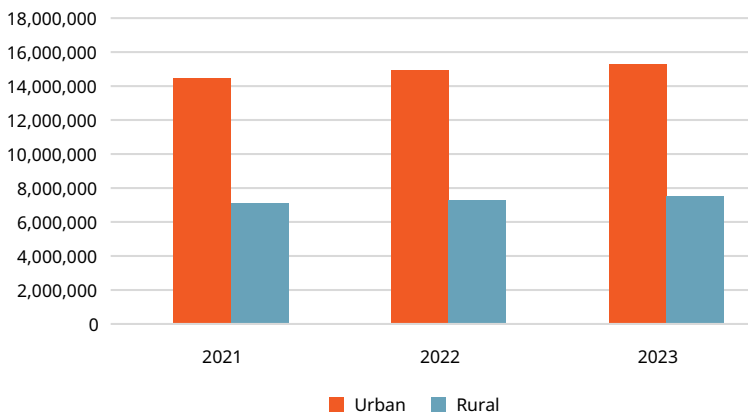
**Figure 6. Number of benefits paid out by Brazil's National Social Security Institute, total and by urban versus rural status, 2006–22**



Note: The number of benefits includes both contributory and non-contributory benefits.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Brazil, MPS (2025).

**Figure 7. Number of retirement pension benefits paid out under Brazil's General Social Security Scheme, total and by urban versus rural status, 2021–23**



Source: Elaborated by the author based on Brazil, MPS (2024).

throughout their productive lives until retirement (see figure 8 below). This framework includes the country's largest social assistance programmes: the Continuous Cash Benefit (*Benefício de Prestação Continuada*), a means-tested social pension and disability benefit that does not require previous contributions; and the *Programa Bolsa Família*, Brazil's flagship conditional cash transfer programme that addresses poverty in rural and urban areas. While these social assistance programmes do not focus exclusively on the countryside, they still play an important role in tackling rural poverty. In addition, there are specific policies to support smallholder farmers, including the following:

- Access to credit for agricultural activities and housing through the National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF), the National Land Credit Programme (PNCF) and the National Rural Housing Programme (PNHR).
- Access to markets: public procurement through the Food Acquisition Programme (PAA) for hospitals and other public institutions, and through the National School Meals Programme (PNAE).
- Access to agricultural insurance: the Harvest Guarantee programme guarantees smallholder farmers' income in the event of crop losses due to drought or excess rain, while the Family Farming Insurance (SEAF) provides protection against specific risks.

- Access to training, technology and productive inputs through: (a) technical assistance and rural extension (*assistência técnica e extensão rural*, ATER) services; (b) a cisterns programme providing water storage technologies to low-income rural families, notably in drought-impacted areas; and (c) seed distribution by state governments;
- Cash transfers for productive and conservation activities: agricultural and non-agricultural activities are supported through grants under the Rural Productive Activities Promotion Programme (*Fomento Rural*) and payment for ecosystem services is provided through *Bolsa Verde*.

## Impact and challenges

Several studies have noted the important role played by rural benefits in reducing poverty and inequality in Brazil (Schwarzer and Querino 2002; Lara Ibarra et al. 2023; Barrientos et al. 2003; Guedes et al. 2019). For instance, the 1991 reform is estimated to have reduced the incidence of poverty among eligible families by as much as 40 per cent (Assunção and Chein 2009). Conversely, Valadares and Galiza (2016) simulated the impact of a hypothetical complete revocation of rural pensions and found that this would lead to a projected increase of around 17 percentage points in rural poverty rates.

Beyond income security, rural benefits also have a positive impact on labour market and education outcomes. The 1991 reform expanded coverage to women, which in turn led to a 26 per cent increase in employment for

Figure 8. Programmes and policies to support smallholder farming in Brazil



ATER = *assistência técnica e extensão rural* (technical assistance and rural extension); BPC = Continuous Cash Benefit; PAA = Food Acquisition Programme; PBF = *Programa Bolsa Família*; PNAE = National School Meals Programme; PNCF = National Land Credit Programme; PNHR = National Rural Housing Programme; PRONAF = National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming; SEAF = Family Farming Insurance.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Grisa and Schneider (2014); Brazil, MDA (2024); GAAHP (n.d.); Wesz Junior et al. (2024).

married women who were previously not eligible (Khanna et al. 2025). Effects on schooling are also observed, as young boys living in families with rural pensioners have been found to be less likely to leave school, though the same impact is not observed for girls (Nishida et al. 2022).

Evaluations of smallholder farming support programmes such as PRONAF also demonstrate positive effects

on earnings across all regions (Faria de Abreu Campos et al. 2024) and on smallholder farmers' engagement in commercial activities (Wesz Junior et al. 2024). Similarly, the aforementioned cisterns programme has been found to increase recipients' income by as much as 5.9 per cent (Casagrande et al. 2024).

Among the challenges related to rural pensions, analysts have pointed to the need to update eligibility criteria, such

as the age of retirement, in line with demographic trends and to address the issues behind conflicting interpretations of these criteria by the INSS and the judiciary, given the high degree of judicialization (Maranhão and Vieira Filho 2018; Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024). The rejection of benefit claims often leads to legal disputes, with attendant additional costs for the Government (Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024; Costanzi 2023). The latest INSS statistical bulletin shows that 28.9 per cent of rural benefits granted in March 2025 were sought through judicial channels (Brazil, MPS 2025).

With regard to the broader set of policies and programmes to support smallholder farming, ensuring equitable access is still proving to be a challenge. Studies have shown that only around 15 per cent of smallholder farmers have access to credit; moreover, there are significant disparities between farmers from the north and the south when it comes to accessing credit through PRONAF, along with disparities related to the crops that are cultivated and to education and income levels (Souza and de Albuquerque 2023; Zeller and Schiesari 2020).

### What next?

With a rapidly ageing population, Brazil is undergoing profound demographic shifts. According to the 2022 census, the total population is expected to peak at around 220.4 million in 2041 before declining to just under 200 million by 2070. Meanwhile, the proportion of older people (aged 60 years and over) has nearly doubled since 2000 (rising from

8.7 per cent in 2000 to 15.6 per cent in 2023) and is projected to reach 37.8 per cent by 2070 (Bello 2024). These demographic trends are putting significant pressure on Brazil's retirement pension system. The 2019 pension reform, which introduced several modifications to the eligibility and contributory requirements applicable to urban workers, notably excluded rural pensions from its broader restructuring. The age of retirement for rural workers thus remains 55 years for women and 60 years for men (whereas for urban workers these age thresholds are now 62 and 65 years, respectively), and other criteria were not modified either.

However, critics have argued that the rationale for maintaining a lower retirement age for rural workers has weakened over time. As demographic trends and labour market dynamics evolve, there is increasing discussion on whether a more unified approach, potentially integrating the Continuous Cash Benefit with rural pensions, could offer a more sustainable and equitable model (Giambiagi, Nagamine and Sidone 2024; Zviniene and Tsukada 2023). Any future reforms of social protection programmes will also need to set clearer eligibility criteria in order to tackle the ongoing issue of judicialization (Maranhão and Vieira Filho 2018).

Smallholder farming policies likewise need to be enhanced to achieve greater fairness and efficiency and to support better climate adaptation. For instance, bureaucratic bottlenecks have been found to be one of the most common challenges in the public food purchase programme (Soares et al. 2024) and, as already discussed, there are considera-

ble disparities in access to credit under PRONAF (Souza and de Albuquerque 2023; Zeller and Schiesari 2020).

### **Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator**

Rural benefits in Brazil illustrate how the integration of social protection measures with specific sectoral measures in agriculture can have a strong impact on (a) reducing poverty and inequality; (b) enhancing access to the labour market and employment for groups facing structural barriers to decent work; and (c) improving educational attainment among children. The evidence cited above shows clearly that spending on rural benefits is not a cost, but an investment with positive social returns going far beyond the welfare of the immediate beneficiaries.

The introduction of these measures was a crucial development in a social protection system that historically excluded rural workers. Its strong legal framework and the widespread support it enjoys within Brazilian society have ensured the scheme's longevity. Many studies have highlighted the key role that rural benefits play in tackling poverty, thereby enabling a more just transition for rural workers.

The Brazilian system offers some valuable insights into how rural workers can be supported even in the absence of standard contributions based on monthly income, which is typically associated with formal urban work. This is also in line with international experience, which shows that a certain degree of public subsidization is always necessary to ensure coverage for smallholder farmers, given their limited contributory capacity (Schwarzer 2000). Promoting income security among smallholder farmers is also a strategic priority in terms of climate resilience and food security (Chao 2024; Gervazio et al. 2025).

Finally, the combination of rural pensions and policies to support smallholder farming is in keeping with the Global Accelerator's commitment to integrated policy approaches that generate synergies across sectors. By means of several mechanisms improving their access to credit, insurance, markets, training and other assets, and thanks to the income security that comes from social protection, smallholder farmers in Brazil are supported throughout their productive lives and into old age.

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10



# Integrated programming to strengthen social protection and jobs in Burundi



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## Summary

Burundi's integrated approach to school meals and social protection connects local food systems, cash-based assistance and human capital development. Anchored in the Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM) programme and the World Bank-funded Cash for Jobs project locally known as *Merankabandi*, the model stimulates rural markets, strengthens local food chains, supports vulnerable households (including refugees) and could create up to 161,000 jobs in the country (Bigirimana et al. 2024; WFP and World Bank 2024). The HGSM programme in Burundi has already helped to generate rural employment by involving over 60 farmer associations, many of which have reported significant increases in revenue due to their contracts to provide food for schools. While most jobs created so far are informal, the programme is laying the groundwork for more structured and potentially formal employment opportunities in agriculture, food supply

chains and school-based services. A national impact evaluation is under way to quantify these effects more precisely. Moreover, it is estimated that every US dollar invested yields about US\$5.8 in lifetime human capital returns if one takes education, health, nutrition and lifelong earning potential into account (Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025). Cross-country studies looking at multiple sectors suggest a return on investment of US\$7–35 for every US dollar invested (Verguet et al. 2020). The ongoing impact evaluation will provide further insights for the authorities of Burundi. Strong government leadership, coordinated multilateral support and integrated financing efforts – linking education, agriculture, nutrition and social protection – have been the key drivers of the progress made. While there are still broader ambitions to be fulfilled, such as formalizing employment pathways, involving the private sector and linking to contributory social insurance systems, Burundi's experience offers a scalable, in-

tegrated model that is highly relevant for low-income, fragile and displacement-affected settings of the kind faced by many countries nowadays.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

There is growing recognition of the value of school meals programmes as multifaceted interventions that bolster human capital while stimulating local economies. In 14 low- and middle-income countries, school meals investments worth US\$11 billion have generated estimated annual human capital returns of US\$210 billion, along with annual social protection benefits of US\$7 billion and gains of US\$23 billion for local rural economies (Verguet et al. 2020). Globally, school meals for every 100,000 children translate into approximately 2,000 jobs – primarily in informal sectors such as agriculture, food preparation and transport (WFP 2022; WFP 2024a). That estimate reflects only direct employment, and so further analysis is required to assess how many decent, indirect and permanent jobs are generated through such programmes.

In Africa, where agriculture accounts for about 43 per cent of total employment (World Bank, n.d.), school feeding programmes create income opportunities for smallholder farmers and contribute to the strengthening of rural livelihoods. While most agricultural jobs remain informal, these programmes can help to improve the quality and predictability of such employment by fostering more stable demand, fair prices and stronger linkages with local markets. In countries such as Burundi, where informal rural employment is the norm, the priority is to support more stable and better-pay-

ing jobs within existing structures while laying the groundwork for future collaboration with the Government and various partners to promote the creation of formal and productive jobs.

Burundi exemplifies how integrated national systems can drive social and economic development. Its Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM) programme has significantly boosted the local agricultural economy, increasing the share of local procurement to over 40 per cent of total food purchases in 2022, with 63 farmer associations reporting productivity gains of between 29 and 42 per cent and, in some cases, the doubling of their income (Bigirimana et al. 2024; Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025). Such local procurement strengthens rural food systems; creating a stable demand for farmers, many of whom are connected through cooperatives. Significantly, this supply chain is increasingly supported by cash-based social protection through the World Bank-funded Cash for Jobs project known locally as *Merankabandi*, which targets vulnerable households and refugees, linking direct assistance with productive inclusion. The cash assistance provided not only meets immediate consumption needs but also enables recipients to invest in productive activities, such as agricultural production and linkages with farmer associations that supply the HGSM programme, reinforcing local market inclusion, social cohesion, household resilience and economic empowerment. If the HGSM approach were adopted throughout the whole country, it could potentially create up to 160,000 rural jobs.

Given Burundi's status as a fragile, low-income country with strong political commitment, and its integration of refugees

into national systems, the success of the circular economy approach there in promoting social cohesion and resilience could be replicated in other countries with similar circumstances (WFP 2024b;

2024c). Burundi's inclusive, integrated model is closely aligned with the Global Accelerator's three pillars of integrated policy approaches, integrated financing and multilateral cooperation (see box 12).

### Box 12. Key lessons learned from the school meals programme in Burundi

#### Integrated policy approaches

- Aligning school meals, agriculture, education and social protection within national frameworks increases efficiency and sustainability.
- Integrating refugees systematically into the national Merankabandi cash transfer programme promotes social cohesion and reduces parallel humanitarian structures.
- Area-based approaches strengthen coherence across service delivery, economic development and human capital outcomes while promoting the development of associations and the formalization of the agricultural sector.

#### Integrated financing

- Blended financing – linking government allocations, support under the World Food Programme (WFP) and World Bank financing – allows interventions to be scaled up while strengthening national ownership.
- Political commitment to the expansion of national financing for school meals is essential to ensure sustainability, especially in fragile settings.
- Productivity increases and the development of farmer associations help to enhance the income of agricultural workers, with positive spillover effects on the local economy.

#### Multilateral cooperation

- Coordination among the WFP, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), donors such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands, local authorities and associations has enabled coherent programming that connects humanitarian needs with development objectives.
- Collaborative impact evaluations and cost-benefit analyses to generate evidence – including evaluations conducted in partnership with academic institutions — have strengthened the investment case for integrated approaches.
- Future opportunities exist to expand partnerships with the private sector and with financial inclusion actors in order to amplify economic impacts.

## Context

Burundi remains one of the world's most fragile and poorest countries. With over 70 per cent of its population living below the poverty line and more than 80 per cent dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, the country faces persistent challenges of food and nutrition insecurity, limited access to basic services and vulnerability to shocks (World Bank, n.d.; WFP 2024b). Agriculture accounts for approximately 85 per cent of total employment in Burundi (World Bank, n.d.); informal rural work dominates the labour market, underscoring the relevance of approaches that stimulate agricultural productivity and local economies.

The country also hosts a growing number of refugees and returnees, a trend driven by regional instability. In 2025, Burundi was hosting over 160,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in addition to managing high levels of internal displacement (UNHCR 2025). Refugees are increasingly included in national development planning through the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and direct enrolment in national cash transfer programmes such as *Merankabandi* (WFP 2024c).

Burundi has demonstrated a growing commitment to social inclusion through the piloting and subsequent nationwide roll-out of cash transfers under the *Merankabandi* programme, which prioritizes vulnerable households, and also through its efforts to expand basic social services despite significant fiscal constraints. The Government has embedded school meals within its "Vision 2040–2060" through dedicated funding

and national strategies, viewing school feeding not only as a social assistance programme but also as an engine for rural economic transformation (School Meals Coalition, n.d.). Building on the solid evidence of the impact of such measures and on its participation in the School Meals Coalition, the Government recently tripled its financial commitment to the HGSM programme, to which it is now contributing US\$9 million per school year. This programme, which prioritizes local procurement from smallholder farmers, exemplifies the dual objective of strengthening human capital while stimulating local economic opportunities (Bigirimana et al. 2024; Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025).

Scaling up school feeding and social protection interventions is particularly relevant in view of global trends. School meals programmes are expanding rapidly across Africa and exhibit strong returns on investment for human capital, the local economy and agriculture while facilitating job creation (WFP 2022; Verguet et al. 2020).

Burundi presents a compelling case because it demonstrates that even in fragile settings – where the scope for formal job creation may be limited – integrated approaches can generate economic multipliers, support rural livelihoods and productive inclusion, and build resilience. Although the returns to the local economy still need to be quantified, a recent rigorous cost-benefit analysis estimated a lifetime human capital return of US\$4.6–7.6 for every US dollar invested in school meals. Impact evaluation data also point to improvements in school attendance,

dietary diversity and savings among beneficiary households. Illustrating what can be achieved with strong political will, coherent policy alignment and operational partnerships between humanitarian and development actors, Burundi's approach offers valuable lessons for countries seeking to build inclusive, job-rich pathways to human capital development.

## Description of the intervention

### I. Design embedded in an integrated policy approach

Burundi's integrated approach combines school meals expansion, productive inclusion and social protec-

tion programming to foster inclusive economic development and resilience. The Home-Grown School Meals programme, embedded within the National School Feeding Programme, delivers meals to children in public schools using food sourced increasingly from local smallholder cooperatives (Bigirimana et al. 2024; Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025). A commodity voucher-based procurement model, which involves sourcing locally produced and available food commodities, has strengthened direct linkages between schools and farmer groups, increasing predictability of demand for local producers and empowering decentralized administrations to assume greater ownership (WFP 2024c).

### Box 13. What is an area-based approach?

An area-based approach integrates multiple interventions – school meals, nutrition, social protection, social and behaviour change communication, and productive inclusion – within a defined geographic area. It is aimed at strengthening local food systems by linking schools and crisis response platforms with local producers, processors and service providers. A minimum package of interventions is being developed through local consultations, targeting groups such as schoolchildren, smallholder farmers, village savings and loans associations, pregnant and lactating women, and refugees. Cash-based social assistance plays a catalytic role by enabling vulnerable populations to participate in local markets, reinforcing value chains and fostering inclusive local development, resilience and human capital outcomes.

The HGSM programme is complemented by the national cash transfer programme, *Merankabandi*, under which refugees and vulnerable Burundians receive cash-based assistance for basic needs, combined with livelihood seed capital, financial literacy train-

ing and support in setting up village savings and loans associations (WFP 2024b). When combined, these two programmes have the potential to create a virtuous cycle, connecting school meal demand with increased local production and social protection support,

**Figure 9. The World Food Programme's area-based approach to integrated food systems in Burundi**



Local agri-food value chain linked to HGSM programme in Burundi. The World Food Programme and government partners support a structured ecosystem that encompasses input supply, production, processing, storage, marketing and consumption, and which is anchored in local procurement for school meals.

HGSM = Home-Grown School Meals; PIP = Participatory Integrated Plan; SBCC = social and behaviour change communication; SNF = specialized nutritious foods; VSLA = village savings and loans association.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

thereby strengthening food security, livelihoods and social cohesion.

**A new area-based approach for integrated food systems** (see figure 9 and box 13) is being piloted to geographically align school meals, social protection, nutrition (including distribution of specialized nutritious foods), social and behaviour change communication, and productive inclusion programming. Under this approach, schools and crisis response platforms are embedded within local food systems, acting as hubs for service delivery and as engines of rural economic growth (WFP 2024b).

With regard to **target groups**, the primary beneficiaries are **preschool- and primary school-aged children in public basic education schools**, particularly in food-insecure rural areas (Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025); **smallholder farmers organized into associations** supplying food commodities for school meals (Bigirimana et al. 2024); **extremely poor households** receiving *Merankabandi* “cash plus” support (WFP 2024b); **and refugee households** who are integrated into national social protection and productive inclusion initiatives, as opposed to being served through parallel humanitarian systems (WFP 2024b; UNHCR 2025), thereby reducing long-term dependence on humanitarian assistance.

## II. Implementation embedded in strong multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation

Implementation is led by the Government – through the ministry in charge of agriculture, the ministry in charge

of education, the National Directorate for School Canteens and the ministry in charge of social affairs – and with financial, technical and operational support from the World Bank and the WFP.

**Farmer associations** are being strengthened through targeted capacity-building efforts so that they are able to meet school procurement standards. A national social registry is under development, building on the *Merankabandi* information system and the delivery systems of various partners (such as the WFP’s SCOPE platform) that are currently underpinning cash transfers and targeting mechanisms for vulnerable populations (WFP 2024b).

These interventions are not implemented in isolation but are deliberately “layered” to generate synergistic impact. For example, linking the productive activities of vulnerable households and refugees to associations already supplying the HGSM programme creates new economic opportunities, particularly in view of the plans to expand the model of locally sourced school meals. This integrated delivery model reinforces food security, improves dietary diversity for schoolchildren and generates rural employment across the farming, transport and food processing sectors.

Multilateral cooperation also drives **evidence generation, adaptive learning and joint financing**. Joint operational research includes a randomized controlled trial of procurement models (WFP and World Bank 2024), national cost-benefit studies (Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025), and ongoing operational learning loops. Academic partnerships have

further strengthened the investment case for integrated approaches.

By embedding programme delivery within national systems and maintaining close collaboration with the World Bank, UN agencies (notably the WFP, the ILO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) and donors, Burundi is building a delivery ecosystem capable of scaling up and sustaining complex, multisectoral transitions.

### III. Sustainability embedded in integrated financing strategies, efficiencies and return on investment

Financing for Burundi's integrated approach combines **national government contributions, bilateral and multilateral donor support, and technical assistance** from international partners. The Government has committed itself to gradually increasing the national budget for school feeding programmes through the Finance Act, aiming to expand coverage from 24 to 50 per cent by 2027, and to 100 per cent by 2032. The financing of school meals has accordingly been embedded into the national budget and development frameworks, including "Vision 2040/2060" (School Meals Coalition, n.d.; WFP 2024b).

The **World Bank** provides substantial financing for the *Merankabandi* programme and the HGSM programme, while the **World Food Programme** sup-

ports programme design, implementation and technical delivery in relation to school meals, cash transfers and the area-based approach. Efforts are under way to **consolidate co-financing models** that progressively shift financial responsibility towards national systems while retaining multilateral support during the transition.

Importantly, Burundi's model has been **proven to be economically efficient**. As already discussed, the development of associations and the increase in farmers' income also have a direct effect on local economic development (WFP 2024c), and a national cost-benefit analysis estimates that every US dollar invested in school meals generates **returns of approximately US\$5.8** in lifetime human capital returns,<sup>21</sup> reflecting gains in terms of nutrition, education, local economic growth and poverty reduction (Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025).

These returns are achieved not only through long-term human capital development, but also through immediate economic stimulation. School meals and social protection transfers inject liquidity into rural economies, increase demand for locally produced goods and support the development of smallholder farmer associations and microenterprises.

Beyond macro-level returns, integrated financing also enhances programme coherence and delivery efficiency. Embedding school meals and cash-based assistance within national systems,

21 The estimated return on investment for the HGSM programme in Burundi reflects long-term benefits over a 40-year working life, discounted at 3 per cent annually. It combines projected gains in lifetime earnings from increased educational attainment (1.8 additional years on average) and monetized health improvements (such as reduced anaemia), using GDP per capita as a proxy for the value of a healthy life year.

supported by digital delivery platforms (such as the national social registry currently under development), reduces fragmentation and allows better coordination across funding sources. This is enabling Burundi to stretch its limited fiscal space more effectively, ensuring that social protection and economic inclusion efforts reinforce rather than duplicate each other.

Burundi's integrated model also addresses social and economic fragility, reducing tension and competition over scarce resources between displaced and host communities and providing the foundations for durable solutions to forced displacement, particularly through the *Merankabandi* programme, which empowers vulnerable refugees and host households by stabilizing their incomes and enabling them to participate in local markets. This could prevent or mitigate potential damage to the local economy and ecosystems

(as suggested by emerging evidence, such as that presented by Tefera Taye et al. 2024). Coupled with the HGSM initiative, which creates steady demand for locally produced food from farmer associations, this approach fosters economic interdependence and shared benefits between communities.

Looking forward, the Government is exploring **new financing pathways**, including:

- **public-private partnerships** to expand local procurement and agro-processing linkages;
- linkages to community-based and contributory social insurance schemes over time;
- strengthened **alignment between public investment and humanitarian funding** for fragile and displacement-affected settings.



Together, these efforts mean that Burundi's integrated model is not only impactful and inclusive, but also **fiscally responsible and investment-worthy** – a model that can be scaled up sustainably with the right mix of national leadership, technical assistance and coordinated financing.

## Impact and challenges

### Impact

Burundi's integrated interventions are generating significant impacts on social protection, productive inclusion, human capital development and rural economic growth.

The Home-Grown School Meals programme has increased the share of local procurement to over 40 per cent of total food purchases in 2022, involving 63 farmer associations that reported productivity gains of between 29 and 42 per cent and, in some cases, a doubling of their income (Bigirimana et al. 2024; Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025). If scaled up to cover the whole country, school meals are projected to create between 48,000 and 161,000 rural jobs, stimulating employment in rural areas and boosting rural GDP proxies such as local market activity (Verguet et al. 2020; WFP 2022).

### Box 14. What is the commodity voucher model in social assistance?

In line with the long-term objective of expanding the Home-Grown School Meals programme and gradually transferring ownership and the management of operations to the Government of Burundi, the World Food Programme in October 2022 supported the National Directorate for School Canteens and provincial education directorates in piloting the “commodity voucher” model. Under this model, the World Food Programme channelled resources to the provincial governments so that these could source food locally from smallholder farmers. This has created structured demand and improved livelihoods and incomes for smallholder farmers.

A pilot randomized controlled trial conducted in 2023–24 confirmed that the commodity voucher model for local purchases (see box 14) significantly enhanced delivery performance and cost-efficiency (WFP and World Bank, 2024). Schools using this model delivered nearly twice as many school meal days on average than those without commodity vouchers (13 versus 7.4 days per month), while achieving a lower

annual cost per child (US\$40.61 versus US\$46.85). The model also fostered direct market access for local associations, reinforcing the structured demand link that is central to the HGSM approach.

The evaluation further found that, in nine out of 12 associations, almost all the revenue appeared to come from sales to schools. With an average annual revenue of US\$116,000 per farmer

association, the structured market access enabled by this model is strengthening rural value chains, confirming the significant potential that school meals hold for local farmers and their associations (WFP and World Bank 2024). School meals can thus not only improve nutrition and education outcomes, but also boost productivity and income in rural areas, reduce poverty, promote gender-responsive livelihoods (through women-led associations and village savings and loans associations), enhance the employment prospects of young people and contribute to the organization of agricultural workers into member-based organizations that can defend their interests and rights.

Cost-benefit analyses estimate that every US dollar invested in school meals generates US\$4.6–7.6 in multi-sectoral returns, encompassing social protection, nutrition, education and rural economic development (Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025). This is in line with global findings that suggest returns of US\$7–35 for every US dollar invested (WFP and World Bank 2024; Verguet et al. 2020).<sup>22</sup>

The “cash plus” model of the *Merankabandi* programme contributes to immediate poverty reduction through consumption smoothing to meet immediate food needs, savings increases and microenterprise formation among vulnerable and refugee households

(WFP 2024b; UNHCR 2025). In facilitating the integration of refugees into national economic systems, *Merankabandi* not only reduces inequality but also strengthens social cohesion by promoting shared economic opportunities, encouraging collaboration between refugees and host communities, and fostering mutual trust and support. This inclusive approach helps to break down social barriers and build trust, and it supports peaceful coexistence and community resilience.

The area-based approach further reinforces local resilience by geographically concentrating investments in school meals, productive inclusion and social protection, the aim being to promote the emergence of localized economic multipliers, strengthen climate resilience and empower young people, women and marginalized groups (WFP 2024b).

The success achieved so far as a result of Burundi’s inclusive approach and political commitment suggests that, even in fragile settings, integrated interventions can build sustainable pathways towards poverty reduction, gender-responsive development, rural economic transformation and resilience to future shocks.

### Challenges

While Burundi’s integrated approach has yielded strong initial results, several operational and strategic challenges

<sup>22</sup> In 14 low- and middle-income countries (Botswana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chile, Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa), school feeding programmes reaching 190 million children in total were found to generate annual returns of US\$210 billion – including US\$156 billion from education, US\$24 billion from health and nutrition gains, US\$7 billion in terms of social protection impact and US\$23 billion in gains to local agricultural economies – against an annual investment of US\$11 billion.

must be addressed if it is to fully realize its transformative potential.

At the operational level, sustaining livelihoods and productive inclusion impacts over time remains a core concern. Households benefiting from cash transfers and seed capital initiatives require continuous market linkages, timely access to quality agriculture inputs, technical support and risk management tools to prevent dependency or backsliding into extreme poverty during shocks (WFP 2024b). Similarly, ensuring the long-term capacity of farmer associations, schools and local governance structures to manage decentralized procurement and service delivery models through commodity vouchers calls for continued investment (WFP 2024c). This includes strengthening institutional capacities and ensuring that effective accountability mechanisms are in place.

The area-based approach requires robust cross-sectoral governance at the decentralized level. Although concentrating resources geographically can generate localized multiplier effects, it also risks leading to perceptions of exclusion among non-targeted communities if not managed sensitively. Effective community engagement and transparent communication strategies are therefore essential.

Embedding shock-responsiveness more deeply into social protection and productive inclusion interventions is crucial, particularly in view of Burundi's high exposure to climate risks and recurrent fragility. Building climate resilience across agricultural supply chains and vulnerable households

remains an unfinished agenda. This implies that the integration of early warning systems and climate smart agricultural practices will need to be prioritized.

From a systemic perspective, while immediate impacts on rural livelihoods, education and nutrition are evident, broader ambitions have yet to be fulfilled as regards formalizing employment pathways, scaling up financial inclusion, linking to health insurance schemes (such as community-based health insurance) and other forms of contributory social insurance and mobilizing private sector partnerships. Gender equality, youth employment and financial sustainability pathways must be integrated more explicitly into future programming to unlock the model's full potential.

At the political level, while the *Merankabandi* cash transfers are making a notable positive impact on the livelihoods of many Burundian and refugee households, there is still a question mark over the programme's long-term institutionalization. Government contributions to programme funding are still limited, and it has not yet been fully integrated with the broader social protection system. Broader consensus across the Government on the role and value of unconditional cash transfers is still evolving, and planning for sustained national ownership is ongoing.

Finally, measurement and evidence gaps persist. While pilot evaluations have identified promising trends, more general longitudinal studies are necessary to rigorously capture impacts on child learning outcomes, household re-

silience, the empowerment of women, climate adaptation and rural economic growth. Strengthening monitoring, learning and adaptive management systems will be key to sustaining momentum and replicating success on a larger scale.

### What next?

Despite the challenges discussed above, Burundi by virtue of its strong government leadership and integrated programming architecture is a promising pioneer of scalable social protection, productive inclusion and human capital development in fragile and displacement-affected settings. The next phase of the Government's efforts will focus on consolidating current initiatives while strengthening the links between them, thereby ensuring that social protection, locally sourced school meals and interventions to promote rural livelihoods are designed and implemented in a carefully sequenced and mutually reinforcing manner. The area-based approach offers a unique opportunity to operationalize such integration from the outset, building layered systems of support that enhance efficiency, resilience and long-term impact.

The immediate priorities are as follows:

- **Scaling up social protection coverage:** Burundi's commitment to reaching 100 per cent of basic public schools by 2032 under the School Meals Coalition requires sustained investment in local food production (including timely access to quality agriculture inputs), storage and transport systems, the strengthening of
- rural cooperatives and decentralized governance mechanisms (School Meals Coalition, n.d.; WFP 2024c). Upscaling must be accompanied by the development of supply chains and local livelihoods to maximize synergies across interventions. In parallel, the coverage of the national cash transfer programme has to be gradually increased in order to reach those most in need. Expanding contributory social protection to agricultural workers involved in the Home-Grown School Meals programme is another promising avenue that will allow them to access more decent and productive jobs while being protected from life-cycle risks such as ill health. Such an expansion of coverage would be in line with recently adopted regulations (February 2025) that make the medical assistance card mandatory for all households and individuals aged 18 years or over who do not have other health insurance coverage. This measure serves as a transitional step in the implementation of universal health coverage, which envisages, inter alia, the establishment of health insurance for informal workers.
- **Applying the area-based approach more widely:** Implementation of the area-based approach in further parts of the country is essential to multiply localized economic impacts and ensure comprehensive rural development. The sequenced layering of school meals, cash transfers, nutrition and livelihood interventions will allow communities to move progressively from relief to resilience and inclusion (WFP 2024b).

- Embedding shock-responsiveness:** The development of risk-informed mechanisms within national cash transfer and school meals programmes is essential to safeguard the gains achieved against climate, market, health and conflict-related shocks. This includes disaster response protocols, triggers for anticipatory action, pre-positioned financing and use of the national social registry (currently under development) to support adaptive responses.
- Securing sustainable financing:** The expansion of co-financing strategies – leveraging multilateral donor and private sector contributions and innovative financing instruments – is crucial to sustain and scale up integrated programming while reinforcing national ownership (School Meals Coalition, n.d.). With the support of the Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition, the Government is currently developing a sustainable financing strategy for its school meals programme.
- Strengthening systems for measurement and learning:** The adoption of standardized indicators and digital data systems to support continuous adaptive learning will help to refine policies and strengthen the evidence base for cross-sectoral integration (Bigirimana et al. 2024; Government of Burundi, WFP and Harvard University 2025).

There are several opportunities that can be seized to expand the ambition and scope of Burundi's interventions in the areas discussed in this case study:

**Strengthening refugee inclusion:** Burundi can deepen the integration of refugee households into national systems by expanding their access to social protection, livelihood support and procurement opportunities linked to school meals and local food systems, fostering both resilience and social cohesion (WFP 2024b; UNHCR 2025).

**Formalizing pathways to employment:** Building on the foundations of rural livelihoods and productive inclusion, programming can evolve to include skills development, entrepreneurship support, employment promotion and linkages to contributory social (health) protection, in particular for young people and women.

**Linking to broader social protection mechanisms:** The gradual integration of agricultural workers involved in the HGSM programme into contributory social protection schemes (notably for health protection), other insurance mechanisms (such as crop insurance) and micro-pension schemes will enhance long-term economic security and reduce reliance on basic assistance.

**Strengthening coherence across sectors:** Closer alignment with farmer associations, financial inclusion initiatives, agricultural value chains and private sector actors could help to improve the sustainability of local economic development and reduce fragmentation.

**Building the investment case for cross-sectoral financing:** Systematic documentation of the returns achieved in terms of human capital, economic productivity and social cohesion will support cross-sectoral financing and serve as an advocacy tool to mobilize

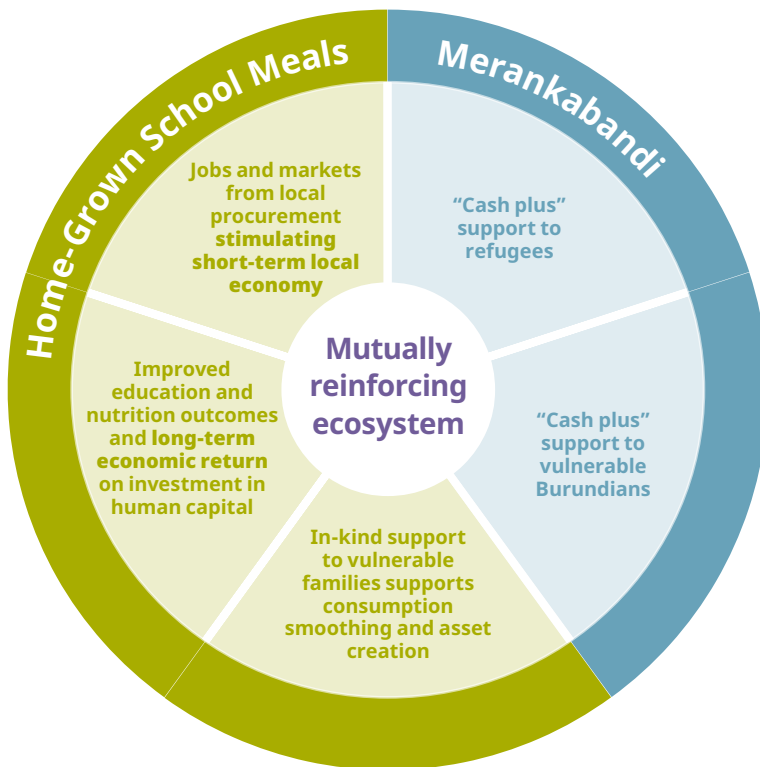
investment in inclusive, integrated systems. The area-based approach is ideally suited to generate relevant insights in a coordinated manner.

Having laid the groundwork for stronger programmatic linkages and sequenced

interventions in the future (see figure 10), Burundi's experience offers a blueprint for other countries in fragile settings that seek to combine immediate relief with long-term, inclusive economic development.

**Figure 10. Core components and reinforcing pathways of the integrated social protection model in Burundi**

## Integrated social protection in Burundi



### Integration with broader social and economic policies and programmes

Note: Anchored in the Home-Grown School Meals programme and the Merankabandi cash transfer programme, Burundi's approach supports immediate consumption smoothing, stimulates local economic activity and builds up long-term human capital. Integration with broader social and economic policies is pursued in order to sustain and expand these positive impacts systemically.

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11

# Good practices in using social protection to promote a just transition in China: The case of former Yangtze River fishers



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## Summary

This case study deals with China’s use of an integrated approach to support a just transition following the introduction of a ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River Basin, which is aimed at ecological restoration. Imposed in 2021, the ban affected around 231,000 fishers. The Government provided comprehensive support to the fishers concerned through integrated social protection, active labour market programmes and skills training. This response was developed through strong interministerial collaboration, includ-

ing with the Ministry of Finance, and with a clear financing strategy for the support measures. The action taken helped former fishers to transition to new livelihoods and ensured that their basic needs were met. By the end of 2023, 100 per cent of eligible fishers were covered by old-age insurance, and out of those who wished to work, over 100,000 had found new employment. The positive ecological outcomes achieved include improved biodiversity, increased sightings of rare species and better water quality. The initiative exemplifies a human-centred approach and highlights the importance of co-

ordinated governance across regions and ministries. It can serve as a model of how to integrate environmental protection with social policy in order to achieve sustainable development and climate resilience.

### Relevance to the Global Accelerator

- **Just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy and society:** The measures taken made it possible to both restore biodiversity and improve water quality, and also to support the workers and their families who had been affected by the fishing ban by providing them with social protection, reskilling and new employment opportunities.
- **Integrated policy measures:** The policy response combined social protection, active labour market programmes and skills development measures, ensuring that they worked in tandem to respond effectively to the former fishers' various needs.
- **Enhanced cooperation:** The working group that was established bringing together various government departments and ministries was instrumental in clarifying responsibilities and assigning tasks. It included officials from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Finance, among others, and was led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

### Context

Climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss – referred to as the “triple planetary crisis” (UNFCCC Secretariat 2022) – have become significant global challenges profoundly affecting people’s lives and livelihoods. The increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, slow-onset changes and the depletion of natural resources pose great threats to the economic development of all countries. Environmental sustainability is a pressing concern for China, which has made major strategic decisions to achieve “carbon dioxide peaking” and “carbon neutrality”. These initiatives include lowering the intensity of energy, water and land use, and enhancing the circular economy and green development to promote harmony between human beings and nature.

In the context of addressing climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss and promoting green development, some groups have faced the risk of unemployment and difficulties in securing their livelihood during the transition. China has taken steps to safeguard the immediate and long-term livelihoods of these groups through a series of positive initiatives, including social security measures. This case study focuses on social protection policies developed by the Chinese Government to support former fishers who had previously earned their living in the waters of the Yangtze River Basin. By analyzing the effects of these policies and summarizing China’s experience related to social protection, the study highlights China’s solutions – various good practices – that can be used to advance the



global response to the triple planetary crisis and to achieve a just transition.

### **The ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River**

Revered as the “mother river” of the Chinese nation, the Yangtze River is China’s longest waterway, boasting a unique ecosystem and rich biological resources. The Yangtze River Basin is the most representative area for showcasing biodiversity in China. However, in recent years, human activities have degraded the ecological function of the Yangtze River, leading to a decline in rare and endemic fish species and creating an urgent need for protection measures. The situation in the Yangtze River Basin was aptly described by the following phrase: “The more fishing that is done, the fewer the resources are, the worse

the ecology gets and the poorer the fishers become” (ILO 2025).

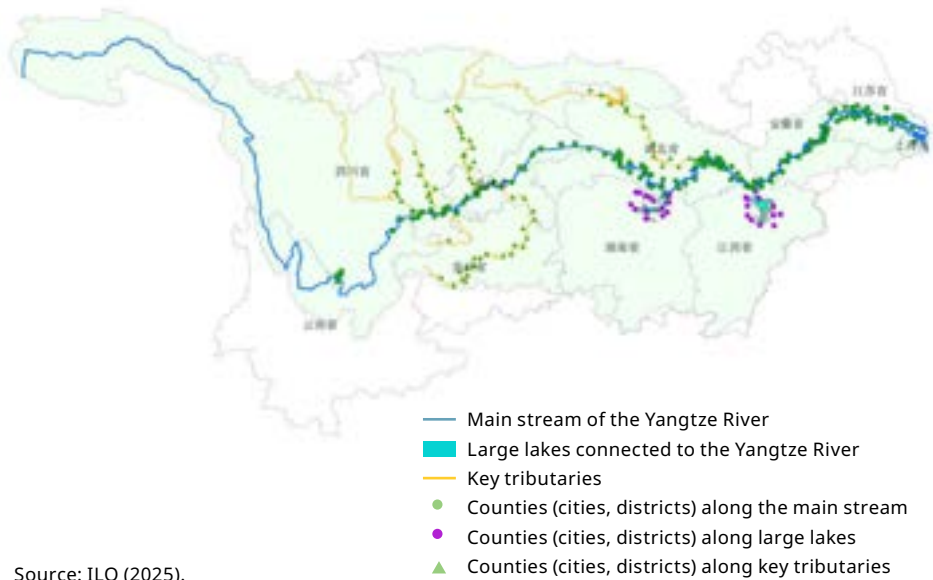
The implementation of a ban on fishing in the Yangtze River is essential to address the ecological crisis of declining aquatic biological resources and decreasing biodiversity in its drainage basin. It is also an effective approach to end the practice of dispersed competitive fishing by individual families and to alleviate the plight of many fishers (summed up as follows: “no fish in the water and no land on the shore”), ultimately serving their long-term interests.

To support the implementation of major strategies for the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt and protect the aquatic biological resources of the Yangtze River Basin, the Chinese Government officially imposed a ten-

year fishing ban starting on 1 January 2021 (see boxes 15 and 16). This ban enforces a year-round fishing prohibition in key waters of the Yangtze River Basin for a decade. The ban involves ten provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze River (Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Chong-

qing, Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan), covering 332 aquatic life conservation areas, the main stream and seven key tributaries of the Yangtze as well as two large lakes connected to the river (see figure 11). The ban affected around 231,000 fishers, who required re-employment.

**Figure 11. Map showing the ten provinces along the Yangtze River in China covered by the ten-year fishing ban imposed in 2021**



Source: ILO (2025).

**Box 15. Main guiding policy documents for the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, China**

In 2020, the General Office of the State Council issued a “Notice on effectively implementing the fishing ban in the Yangtze River Basin”, which set out various action programmes led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) and the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR):

1. Implementation of the fishing ban in key waters of the Yangtze River Basin and the re-employment of fishers (MARA)
2. Special actions to combat illegal fishing in the Yangtze River Basin (MPS and MARA)
3. Special actions to combat the sale of illegally caught fish (SAMR).

In addition, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security issued several guiding documents to support the transition for fishers affected by the ban:

- Circular on old-age insurance for fishers
- Circular on assistance on employment for fishers
- Circular on vocational skills training for fishers

These documents and programmes were designed to ensure the comprehensive deployment and successful completion of the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River Basin on schedule.

### Box 16. Main responsibilities of the various government bodies working on the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River, China

- The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Finance guide and promote the implementation of policies on re-employment and social security for former fishers.
- The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) and the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) lead enforcement and supervision efforts:
  - SAMR leads special actions to combat the market sale of fish illegally caught in the Yangtze River Basin.
  - The MPS leads special actions to combat illegal fishing in the Yangtze River Basin.
- The National Development and Reform Commission coordinates the strategy for green development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.
- The Ministry of Finance coordinates funding arrangements for the fishing ban and the re-employment of former fishers.

### Social protection policies and related institutional arrangements

In 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, together with other relevant government departments, established a special working group to enforce the ban on fishing in the Yangtze River and manage the re-employment

of fishers affected by the ban (hereafter referred to as “former fishers”). The working group convened thematic meetings to clarify the responsibilities and tasks of each department (see figure 12) and actively introduced policies, providing solid institutional safeguards for enhancing the prohibition of fishing and incentivizing fishers to go ashore in key waters of the Yangtze River Basin.

**Figure 12. Division of responsibilities among the government bodies working on the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River, China**



MARA = Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs; MOF = Ministry of Finance; MOHRSS = Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security; MPS = Ministry of Public Security; NDRC = National Development and Reform Commission; SAMR = State Administration for Market Regulation.

Source: ILO (2025).

Since the implementation of the ten-year fishing ban in the Yangtze River, the Government has prioritized the re-employment and protection of the 231,000 former fishers affected. As the lead government body for the work on re-employment and social security, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has, in collaboration with relevant departments, taken comprehensive measures to promote the employment of former fishers, provided targeted training to enhance their

skills and developed tailored policies to safeguard their rights and interests. The provinces and municipalities involved have ensured that eligible former fishers are enrolled in basic old-age insurance (see table 6), and that those who meet the conditions for retirement are receiving pension payments and subsidies. Meanwhile, efforts have been made to maximize employment promotion and ensure that former fishers have access to employment services.

**Table 6. China's basic old-age insurance system**

Schemes	Basic old-age insurance for urban employees	Basic old-age insurance for urban and rural residents
<b>Groups covered</b>	Employees of all types at urban enterprises; employees of government and public institutions; and self-employed individuals and flexibly employed workers	Non-working residents in urban and rural areas
<b>Mandatory or voluntary enrolment</b>	Mandatory for employees of enterprises and government and public institutions Voluntary for the self-employed and flexibly employed workers	Voluntary
<b>Number of participants</b>	520 million	545 million
<b>Sources of financing</b>	Employee: joint payments by the employer and the employee Flexibly employed: personal contributions	Government subsidies plus personal contributions
<b>Level of financing</b>	Employee: 16% by employer plus 8% by employee Flexibly employed: 20% by the individual	Government subsidy standards vary across regions, as do individual contribution levels
<b>Eligibility</b>	Reaching the statutory retirement age <sup>1</sup> and meeting the minimum contribution period requirements	Reaching the age of 60 and having paid contributions for 15 years
<b>Level of benefits</b>	National average level: 3,100 yuan/month	National average level: approximately 200 yuan/month

<sup>1</sup> China adopted a decision in September 2024 to gradually raise the retirement age. The statutory retirement age for men will be raised from 60 to 63 years over a 15-year period starting on 1 January 2025. For women cadres, the retirement age will be raised from 55 to 58 years, and for women blue-collar workers from 50 to 55 years. Starting in 2030, the minimum years of basic pension contributions required to receive monthly benefits will be gradually increased from 15 to 20 years, at a pace of six months annually. See China, SCIO (2025).

Source: ILO (2025).

## Re-employment and social security: Preparatory work

### Communication and awareness-raising

Several measures were taken to ensure that former fishers are informed about the re-employment and social security options available to them. These included, specifically, (a) creating policy

leaflets and leaving them on the doorstep of former fishers' homes or handing them out individually; (b) communicating policies through door-to-door visits and face-to-face conversations; and (c) publicizing policies through channels appropriate to grassroots communities, including policy seminars, television, rural broadcasts, WeChat public accounts and WeChat groups. These efforts were intended

to raise former fishers' awareness of relevant policies through comprehensive outreach.

### Accurate identification and data management of former fishers

To ensure that former fishers can be identified accurately and receive the necessary support, China has created a real-name information system to help synchronize the collection, exchange, and verification of information on fishing boats and the re-employment of fishers. This system operates according to the principles of accuracy, dynamic management, openness and transparency. It records not only basic information about former fishers but also their skill levels, employment preferences, training needs and enrolment in social insurance, ensuring that up-to-date information is available on their insurance and employment status.

### Re-employment and social security: Specific policy measures

The support provided to former fishers covers four principal areas: old-age insurance, employment assistance, skills training and social assistance.

#### Provision of old-age insurance

In November 2020, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs issued an implementation plan to guide ten provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze River in effectively managing old-age insurance for former fishers.

**First**, eligible former fishers were guided to enrol in the basic old-age insurance scheme in accordance with the applicable regulations. Those aged 60 years (men) or 55 years (women) and over and not yet enrolled were included in the basic scheme for rural and non-working urban residents (residents' old-age insurance). Younger individuals could choose between basic old-age insurance for employees (employee old-age insurance) or residents' old-age insurance. This initiative ensured that all eligible fishers have basic protection.

**Secondly**, subsidies have been granted to eligible former fishers for basic old-age insurance contributions. For example, Anhui Province offers 3,000 Chinese yuan (approximately US\$410) per person annually for 15 years. Subsidies for residents enrolled in old-age insurance can be credited to their individual accounts, increasing their savings. In the case of flexible workers enrolled in employee old-age insurance, subsidies can be used to make contributions, easing their payment burden. This policy of subsidizing contributions has enhanced old-age protection for former fishers.

**Thirdly**, in accordance with regulations, local governments pay part of the contributions for former fishers suffering hardship. Specifically, for those receiving minimum subsistence allowances (*dibao*), or with severe disabilities, the local government covers part or all of the minimum-standard contribution to residents' old-age insurance. This ensures that former fishers

in hardship are directly covered and their basic needs met.

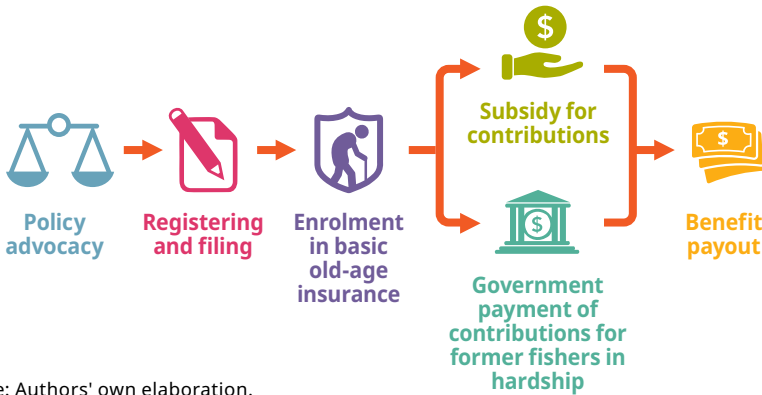
**Fourthly**, administrative services have been improved to ensure the timely payment of old-age benefits to eligible former fishers. Launched in 2021, the relevant information system tracks participation, contributions and ben-

efits. In addition, the procedures for accessing old-age insurance services and subsidies have been optimized and simplified. Measures such as door-to-door visits, centralized offices, proxy services, rural service delivery and on-line platforms make it easier for former fishers to receive their benefits or subsidies (see box 17 and figure 13).

### **Box 17. Process for former fishers to receive old-age benefits in the Yangtze region, China**

- 1. Communication and outreach:** Government departments inform former fishers about social security policies through seminars, door-to-door visits, face-to-face conversations, posters, WeChat and other methods to ensure awareness.
- 2. Registering and filing:** Real-name management is implemented by registering and creating files for former fishers that record their basic information and more detailed information on skill levels, employment preferences, training needs and participation in social insurance. This lays a solid foundation for targeted re-employment and social protection.
- 3. Enrolment:** Guide former fishers on how to promptly enrol in the basic old-age insurance scheme at the social security office.
- 4. Payment of contributions:** There are two main government support policies: (a) the Government provides subsidies for those enrolled and making contributions; or (b) the Government pays part or all of the minimum standard contribution to the residents' old-age insurance scheme for those facing difficulties (low-income or severely disabled).
- 5. Payout of benefits:** After reaching the legal retirement age, eligible former fishers can submit a claim for benefits at the social security office and receive their pensions monthly.

**Figure 13. Step-by-step process for former fishers to receive old-age benefits in the Yangtze region, China**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### Employment and entrepreneurship promotion

Targeted re-employment programmes have been developed for fishers to help them transition from fishing into other industries and sectors, along with tailored policies and support. There are three main channels of re-employment for former fishers: (a) developing local industries; (b) helping former fishers to obtain new jobs; and (c) providing support for entrepreneurship. More specifically, these involve the following:

- Organizing “employment caravans” and other flexible, diversified special recruitment activities near areas where former fishers reside, bringing job opportunities directly to individuals and helping them to find work locally.
- With local realities considered, promoting the employment transition of former fishers by developing specialized industries such as aquaculture and special tourism.
- Creating more fishing-related jobs through public employment programmes in fields such as fish farming, fish protection and fish processing. This is important given the old age of some former fishers and their relatively low skills and education levels, which makes them less competitive on the job market. Moreover, owing to their previous fishing habits, they are not accustomed to a work environment and the regular work hours of enterprises.
- Encouraging enterprises to hire former fishers by offering subsidies and tax exemptions in accordance with the regulations. In addition, one-time subsidies are provided for employment absorption in localities that meet the necessary conditions.
- Supporting former fishers to start their own business by providing lump-sum subsidies for entrepreneurship and offering guaranteed loans.

### Improved vocational training

Former fishers are encouraged to develop practical skills, such as aquaculture and aquatic product processing, through vocational training programmes to help them transition into shore-based employment. In conjunction with the promotion of initiatives to upgrade vocational skills, Jiangxi Province has prioritized former fishers for free vocational skills training, ensuring that all eligible individuals and their unemployed children receive at least one free training session so that they are able to master at least one employable skill.

### Provision of social assistance

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has implemented various support measures for eligible former fishers, including

temporary emergency or expenditure-based financial support, a subsistence allowance (*dibao*), a relief and support system for people in severe financial hardship, and medical assistance (see table 7). In addition, a national database has been established to dynamically monitor low-income population groups, including former fishers in hardship, by collecting comprehensive information on them. Information is gathered through self-reporting by applicants, visits to people in financial difficulties and to recipients of financial support, and cross-comparison of data from various sectors. The database is regularly updated, dynamically adjusted and continuously improved, taking into account the officially defined categories of assistance and support that are available to provide a basic livelihood for former fishers.

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63

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**Table 7. Major social assistance programmes available to former fishers in the Yangtze region, China**

Programme	Description
<b>Emergency assistance</b>	Recipients include families and individuals facing immediate and serious difficulties in their day-to-day life due to unexpected accidents such as fires, traffic accidents, personal injuries, drowning, electrocution or food poisoning. Emergency assistance is also available to those with sudden major illnesses or accidental injuries that are life-threatening without timely treatment for which funds are urgently required. In addition, recipients may be those affected by sudden disruptions to planting and farming, natural or human-made disasters, public health crises, public security issues or other circumstances causing serious temporary difficulties.
<b>Expenditure-based temporary assistance</b>	Transitional assistance is provided to families experiencing severe temporary difficulties in their day-to-day life due to a sudden increase in essential household expenses that exceed the family's financial capacity.
<b>Minimum subsistence allowance (dibao)</b>	This allowance is provided to families whose annual per capita net income falls below the local minimum living standard guarantee (dibao) for urban and rural residents. Eligible families can apply for support.
<b>Assistance for people in severe financial hardship</b>	There are assistance standards, which differ across regions, for individuals facing severe financial hardship. Eligible individuals can apply for support.
<b>Medical assistance</b>	Specialized assistance and support are provided by the State and society to citizens who lack the financial means to seek medical treatment. This initiative is typically led by relevant government departments, with broad societal participation. Medical institutions provide treatment to restore the health and maintain the basic survival ability of impoverished patients.

## Results of policy implementation

### Outcomes of the re-employment and social security policies

All the provinces and municipalities involved have developed and implemented policies to support the re-employment and social protection of former fishers based on local conditions. Authorities in each area have developed tailored policies on old-age insurance participation and contribution payments, employment transition and

skills training, taking into consideration such factors as the number of former fishers, their demographics and regional financial capacities. Years of dedicated efforts have seen the 231,000 former fishers in key waters of the Yangtze River Basin largely included in old-age insurance coverage, and many of them have also received subsidies, vocational training and employment support accordingly. These efforts have effectively met planned goals.

**Old-age insurance coverage:** 100 per cent of the former fishers are covered by the basic old-age insurance scheme.

**Employment:** By the end of 2023, over 100,000 former fishers who wished to be re-employed had found new employment. For example, in Jiangxi Province, nearly 50,000 former fishers who were able and willing to work successfully transitioned to employment. Approximately 50 per cent were hired by enterprises, while about 30 per cent became self-employed or found flexible employment.

**Skills training support:** Vocational training was provided to former fishers with the help of subsidy policies. Many areas have developed good practices and experiences in vocational training. For example, in Yongxiu County, Jiangxi Province, a training course on aquaculture techniques was set up to enable former fishers to take up rice-shrimp aquaculture, thereby helping to address their basic livelihood needs.

### **Environmental protection outcomes**

The ten-year fishing ban has already led to a number of positive environmental outcomes since its full implementation began on 1 January 2021. In general, rare aquatic organisms are now spotted more frequently in the Yangtze River, aquatic resources with economic value have significantly increased and water quality has continued to improve. More specific examples of the progress made are detailed below, with a focus on Jiangxi Province.

**Biodiversity is gradually being restored.** Fish stocks in the key Yangtze waters running through the province have partly recovered. In 2023, according to local monitoring statistics, 81 species of indigenous fish were recorded in Poyang Lake, an increase of five species compared to 2022, including rare fish never observed in the previous ten years.

**The downward trend in aquatic bioresources has been curbed.** The numbers of migratory and predatory fish have gradually increased, and the trend towards a proliferation of smaller, younger and weaker fish species has declined. Specifically, the length and weight of bighead carp and silver carp have increased, indicating that Poyang Lake generally provides favourable conditions for fish growth. The rising numbers of large-size fish and the increasing share of adult fish reflect a reversal of previous trends.

**Rare and endangered aquatic wildlife has been protected effectively.**

Since the implementation of the fishing ban, aquatic wildlife in the natural waters of the Yangtze River Basin has experienced further recovery and the ecological environment of the waters has gradually improved. In 2022, Chinese sturgeon reappeared in Poyang Lake after an absence of 15 years, and the copper fish was spotted in waters in Jiangxi Province for the first time in ten years. Notably, the occurrence rate of swordfish rose to 94 per cent, up from 9 per cent in 2018. In addition, the finless porpoise is now often to be seen with its young in the waters of the Yangtze near Nanchang, making

the Yangtze River a popular attraction for Nanchang residents.

**The water quality of the Yangtze River has continuously improved.** The amount of phosphorus is an important indicator of water quality. Taking Poyang Lake as an example, after years of unremitting efforts, the amount of phosphorus in its waters dropped from 0.068 mg/L in 2021 to 0.059 mg/L in 2023, a decline of 13.2 per cent. From January to September 2024, the average amount of total phosphorus in Poyang Lake was 0.055 mg/L, representing a year-on-year decrease of 8.3 per cent.

### Lessons learned

**China adheres to a “human-centred” principle, prioritizing both the immediate and long-term interests of its people.** To safeguard the livelihoods of former fishers, address their concerns and ensure that they are willing and able to transition to life onshore, the Government has consistently followed a “human-centred” development approach. This involves conducting in-depth research at the grassroots level, mapping out the actual situation of former fishers and listening to their demands in order to develop protection policies that align with their real needs. The implementation of these policies has won the support and understanding of people along the Yangtze River Basin, providing a strong basis for the effective enforcement of the ten-year fishing ban.

**Protection and development of the Yangtze River are intricately linked, and the key is to balance the rela-**

**tionship between current conditions and needs with the long-term vision, and between treating symptoms and addressing root causes.** President Xi Jinping has convened several symposiums on the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, introducing the transformative concept of “prioritize protection, not large-scale development”. Significant decisions have been made, including the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River. These measures provide a comprehensive solution for protecting and developing the river.

Some fishers have expressed their support as follows: “The implementation of the ten-year fishing ban is for the sake of more fish and better water quality; fishing benefits the small family, while fishery protection benefits future generations.” Former fishers have now become fishery protectors, and with basic old-age protection, they have transitioned to new livelihoods. Provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze River have restructured the development of green industries, with the river gradually recovering its health and vitality. This has increased recognition of China’s environmental principle whereby “clear waters and green mountains are as valuable as gold and silver mountains.” As a result, local governments have reinforced their commitment to enforcing the ten-year ban on fishing in the Yangtze River.

**It is essential to focus on strategic planning and strengthen synergies to guide coordination between regions and government bodies.** The ecological protection of the Yangtze River Basin relies on interprovincial

and interregional synergies, that is, on coordination between areas in the upper and lower reaches of the Yangtze. In addition, the measures to provide former fishers with re-employment support and social security involve the collaboration of several government bodies. Effective collaboration requires smooth information-sharing among these bodies and reaching consensus on the actions to be taken.

### **Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator**

This case study highlights the potential of the intervention model promoted by the Global Accelerator for supporting just transitions towards an environmentally sustainable economy and society. Responding to the diverse needs of the former fishers required effective collaboration between ministries and various methods of engagement and outreach. The robust integration of social protection, active labour market programmes and skills development measures to support the former fishers helped to ensure that they would not be left behind.



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12



# The National Integrated Care System in Uruguay



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## Summary

The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions promotes, inter alia, the creation of decent jobs and access to social protection for care workers while fostering the development of a care economy to increase women's participation in the labour market and reduce inequalities (Global Accelerator 2023).

Uruguay's National Integrated Care System (*Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados*, SNIC) serves as a compelling example for the Global Accelerator pathfinder countries by demonstrating how integrated policies and social dialogue can help to advance a comprehensive care system while contributing to the transition of thousands of informal care workers into the formal economy. This example illustrates the value of coordinated investment in public services, employment and social protection policies to create new jobs and promote the formalization of existing ones, in line with the Global Accelerator's core objectives.

Formally established through the adoption of Act No. 19.353 in 2015, SNIC provides care for children up to the age of 3 years, older people aged 80 years or over and persons with disabilities (up to the age of 29 years). It contributes to the professionalization and formalization of care work, the extension of social security and the training of care workers.

With the establishment of SNIC, Uruguay today boasts the most comprehensive care system in the Latin American region. Ultimately, SNIC created a "historic opportunity" for the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work, along with opportunities for the economic empowerment of women in Uruguay (UN-Women 2019). SNIC supports a diverse range of predominantly female care workers, including in-home personal assistants, day-care and residential care staff, tele-assistance operators and early childhood educators. These roles span both institutional and community-based settings, and the support provided under SNIC contributes to improved care coverage and formal employment opportunities for women.

This comprehensive support structure has helped to professionalize the care sector while advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment in Uruguay.

SNIC is presented in this case study as a positive example of how to establish a comprehensive care and support system in order to transform the social organization of care.

### Relevance to the Global Accelerator

Public policies and investments in advancing the care and support agenda are a critical factor in achieving job-rich, gender-equitable and sustainable development. Recognizing care as an issue of societal importance and transforming the social organization of care are necessary to reduce unpaid care responsibilities, which are almost

exclusively shouldered by women and girls and often constitute a barrier to accessing decent jobs and, in the case of girls, to pursuing education and learning-to-earning pathways. Acknowledgement of the societal value of care is also necessary to create decent jobs in the care sector. Ultimately, public investments in care and support can have important multiplier effects in creating decent jobs, enabling individuals to return to work, generating new sources of tax revenues and social security contributions, and advancing gender equality.

Integrated care and support systems comprise a set of policies, services and infrastructure designed to achieve a fairer organization, professionalization and humanization of care work – both for caregivers and the users of care and support services (Barrantes and Cretney 2024).



### Box 18. Key lessons learned from Uruguay's National Integrated Care System

Uruguay's National Integrated Care System (SNIC) offers a number of key lessons that are pertinent to the three pillars of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions: (a) integrated policy approaches; (b) sustainable financing; and (c) multilateral cooperation.

#### **WHAT has Uruguay done?**

Uruguay has implemented a comprehensive and integrated approach that links social protection and employment policies to respond to the country's demographic transition and care needs. SNIC is designed to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work while creating formal employment opportunities, particularly for women. The system is inherently multisectoral and gender-responsive, combining services for young children, persons with disabilities and older people while addressing intersecting inequalities related to gender, age and socio-economic status.

#### **HOW has Uruguay done it?**

SNIC was built through strong social dialogue and inclusive participation, bringing together civil society, the social partners and policymakers to ensure co-creation and public ownership. The system has been institutionalized through effective horizontal and vertical coordination across various sectors and levels of government, supported by a legal framework and dedicated public institutions. Uruguay has also made long-term investments in evidence generation (including time-use surveys and studies on the impact of unpaid care work on gender equality), which have been instrumental for advocacy, public awareness and building cross-sectoral alliances in both civil society and political spaces.

#### **Financing and cooperation:**

Ensuring financial sustainability has been a central challenge, addressed through the gradual integration of care into public budgeting and ongoing efforts to identify innovative financing solutions. Uruguay's experience underscores the need for countries to prioritize investments in care and serves as a compelling example of South-South cooperation and peer learning with regard to institutionalizing and sustainably financing integrated care systems.

**Care** is essential to the well-being and prosperity of individuals and society as a whole (UN 2024). By 2030, the number of care recipients (children under the age of 15 years and persons aged 60 years or over) is predicted to reach 2.3 billion globally (UN-Women 2024). However, the social organization of care is rooted in, and creates, inequalities based on gender, status and power (UN 2024). As a result of care work being highly undervalued, the lack of recognition for care as a public good and a shortage of paid care workers, care work remains largely unpaid (UN-Women 2024). Across the world, unpaid care work has restricted the time that women and girls are able to spend on education, public life, rest and leisure, and socio-economic opportunities (UN 2024). Unpaid care work has been identified as the main reason preventing women from accessing the labour force (Global Accelerator 2023). It has resulted in the labour exploitation of women and girls, particularly of those from ethnic and racial minority groups, migrant women and girls, and women working in informal settings (UN 2024). Ultimately, unpaid care work also implies neglecting the rights of those needing care and support, such as children, persons with disabilities and older people (Barrantes and Cretney 2024). These inequalities and challenges are expected to be exacerbated by rising demand for care and support due to demographic and labour market shifts (Global Accelerator 2023). The UN system has recently committed itself to transforming care systems as a key lever for achieving the

Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2024). Based on the 5R Framework for Decent Care Work (ILO 2018), the UN recommends pursuing measures across the following five axes:

1. Recognizing the value of care work and the rights of care recipients and caregivers
2. Reducing labour-intensive unpaid care work
3. Redistributing unpaid care work between households and the State, businesses and community, and between genders
4. Rewarding paid care workers
5. Representation and meaningful participation of caregivers and care recipients and their organizations.

To transform the social organization of care, an increasing number of countries have moved towards the establishment of integrated care and support systems.<sup>23</sup> Such systems may be defined as comprising “public and private actions aimed at caring for, supporting and assisting dependent persons and those who care for them”, which include an “articulated and consolidated set of different benefits and services, as well as the regulation of people and organizations that provide care services and seek to build a new social organization of care based on its recognition, reduction, and redistribution from women to men” (UNICEF

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<sup>23</sup> In Latin America, for instance, at least ten countries have done so. Beyond that region, interest in integrated care and support systems has been growing continuously. Relevant examples include Cabo Verde and Kenya (UN-Women 2024).

2023, 18). Integrated care and support systems seek to advance an approach of co-operation and co-responsibility between families, the State, the private sector and the community/voluntary care (UNICEF 2023). Public investments in care and support could have important accelerating and multiplying effects in terms of creating decent jobs, enabling individuals to return to work, generating new sources of tax revenues and social security contributions, and advancing gender equality (UN 2024). Large-scale investments in inclusive care policies, services and decent employment could generate close to 300 million jobs globally by 2035. Unpaid care work would generate 9 per cent of the global GDP (or US\$11 trillion in purchasing power parity terms in 2011), if the hours spent on unpaid work were compensated by the minimum wage (Global Accelerator 2023).

## Context

In Uruguay, as in many Latin American countries, the continuous increase in female labour force participation, combined with population ageing and a changing family structure, led to growing family tensions over the division of labour between men and women and put pressure on traditional care arrangements within families. This was exacerbated by the lack of affordable care and support services and the increased demand for care. Uruguay is among the Latin American countries with the highest rates of female labour force participation and oldest populations (UNICEF 2024). In addition, Uruguay has one of the highest rates of formal employment in the region, even though informal employment remains

widespread at over 28 per cent (Maurizio 2021).

Overall, Uruguay maintains a well-developed and comprehensive social protection system that underpins the integrated care system. Since its establishment, Uruguay's social protection system has been largely based on a universalistic stratified model. It provides universal access to education, healthcare and pensions, but the type and level of benefits received by individuals vary depending on their position in the formal labour market. Ongoing changes in demographic, family and household structures as well as labour market trends have been putting Uruguay's social protection system to the test since the late 1990s, causing a crisis of care marked by high levels of child poverty, growing care demands among a rapidly ageing population and increasing vulnerability among women, particularly women in low-income households. From 2004 onwards, there have been efforts to create a broader, more inclusive social protection system with a view to increasing programme coverage and strengthening the system's gender-responsiveness and financial sustainability (UNICEF 2024).

In 2015, Uruguay launched the National Integrated Care System (*Sistema Nacional Integrado de Cuidados, SNIC*), which to this day is regarded as the most robust integrated care system in Latin America and the Caribbean. The launching of SNIC can be traced back to the emerging care needs in Uruguay, the mismatch between the supply of and demand for care, and strong advocacy efforts within civil society (UNICEF 2024).

Although SNIC was formally established in 2015, the trajectory for it began earlier – a process in which women’s organizations and civil society and academia played a crucial role by raising public awareness of the issue of care. During the country’s transition to democracy, feminist activists called for a diagnostic study of the conditions faced by women in the years of the dictatorship (1973–85). In 2002, the Sociological Gender Group of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of the Republic (UDELAR) conducted the first time-use survey in the Montevideo metropolitan region, the findings of which highlighted gender inequalities in time use (UNICEF 2024). Studies based on later surveys have concluded that domestic and caregiving tasks constitute a significant barrier to accessing work and pointed to the urgent need for a reorganization of care (Batthyány 2010). In 2007, Uruguay’s national statistical office launched its first time-use module with national coverage, embedded into the household survey – an exercise that was repeated in 2011 and 2013 (Aguirre et al. 2008). Under President José Mujica’s *Frente Amplio* administration in 2010–15 the efforts to establish a nationwide integrated care system gained further traction (UNICEF 2024). By then, there was a vast body of evidence, amplified by the advocacy of civil society, highlighting the challenges of women having to meet care needs while simultaneously entering the labour market on an equal footing with men (UN-Women 2019). In 2010, an interinstitutional working group was set up to explore the construction of an integrated care system (ANONG 2023). These developments in Uruguay

did not take place in a vacuum but, rather, concurrently with the gradual integration of care and support into the political agenda at the regional level (Bango, Campanella and Cossani 2022). Feminist advocacy and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), in particular the ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs, championed the idea of a care economy at the regional level. Accordingly, the care economy became a central concept in the region ever since the tenth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito in August 2007. International organizations – especially ECLAC, United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the ILO and UNICEF – supported the push for an integrated care and support system through advocacy, research and technical assistance (Mahon 2024).

## Description of the National Integrated Care System

### Policy framework

Adopted in 2015, the Care Act (Act No. 19.353) established the institutional structure of SNIC, the aim being to create a model in which responsibility for care would be shared between families, the State and the community, and also to challenge the unjust gendered division of labour (Government of Uruguay 2015a; UNICEF 2024). To that end, SNIC is guided by the principles of solidarity, universality, autonomy, and social and gender co-responsibility (UNICEF 2024).

With the introduction of SNIC, care was reconceptualized as a societal and human rights issue, meaning in particular that the right to care had to be guaranteed for children, older people and persons with disabilities (UNICEF 2024). The Care Act also recognizes the rights of care workers and emphasizes gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in SNIC-related policies (Bango 2023). Accordingly, the SNIC model seeks to “do away with the unjust gender-based division of work that has historically characterized our [Uruguayan] society and which still does” and to ensure that “caregivers, for the most part, women, are integrated from a gender perspective as an active subject of rights” (UN-Women 2019, 5, 7).

Following the adoption of the Care Act, the National Care Plan for the 2016–20 period was approved. It sets out the foundations, objectives and principles, components and beneficiaries, management guidelines and institutional framework of SNIC (Government of Uruguay 2015b). An updated National Care Plan was launched for the 2021–25 period, the general objective being to “strengthen, professionalize, and humanize the SNIC” (Bango 2023, 11; Uruguay, Ministry of Social Development 2021).

### Scope and target groups

The following dimensions and target populations are covered under SNIC:

- childcare for children in their early years (aged 0–3 years)<sup>24</sup>

- care services for older people (aged over 80 years)
- care services for persons with disabilities (up to the age of 29 years)
- professionalization of care work, extension of social security and training of care workers (UNICEF 2024).

The care policy is primarily funded through allocations from the national budget, supplemented by individual co-payments for subsidized services, mixed financing with contributions from companies and labour unions, and tax exemptions. Between 2015 and 2020, the aggregate SNIC budget totalled 3,084.8 million Uruguayan pesos, representing approximately 0.2 per cent of GDP, equivalent to an accumulated investment of around US\$771 million (UN-Women 2019). This model demonstrates a deliberate effort to institutionalize care financing as part of public fiscal frameworks while creating space for innovative, mixed-source funding to ensure both sustainability and inclusivity.

Under the new care policy, pre-existing programmes and structures were merged and broadened in the light of the following objectives: the recognition and professionalization of care work and the right to quality care; the reduction of unpaid care work through care services; and the redistribution of care work between men and women (UNICEF 2024).

One central aim of SNIC is the **expansion of family-friendly policies,**

<sup>24</sup> Compulsory education in Uruguay starts at the age of 4 years (UNICEF 2023, 28).

such as paid parental leave and the universalization of childcare services for children aged 0–3 years (UNICEF 2023). With the introduction of SNIC, the pre-existing care services provided by Family and Child Support Centres (*Centros de Atención a la Infancia y la Familia*, CAIF) were expanded. SNIC was also intended to achieve greater cohesion among early-care providers and to harmonize supervision mechanisms. In addition, the length of paid paternity and maternity leave was increased. As long-term care and support services for older people and persons with disabilities were less developed at the onset of SNIC, another objective was to ensure access to quality care for these groups and to support approaches promoting personal autonomy (UNICEF 2023). Accordingly, a personal assistance programme for older people and persons with disabilities was developed and the availability of telecare and permanent care centres extended (Government of Uruguay 2015b).

The training component of SNIC is intended to **professionalize and formalize care work** by improving access to training for new service providers and personal assistants and by regulating the training for experienced care workers at long-stay residential care homes. The regulatory component is aimed at creating an environment conducive to the provision of quality comprehensive care irrespective of the nature of the service provider (company or individual) and at advancing social protection for caregivers. Existing regulatory frameworks have been reviewed and adapted, and new ones established (UNICEF 2024).

SNIC also pursues the objective of **extending social security to care workers** (see also box 19). Households are required to register their personal assistants with the social security agency as employees. In addition, to facilitate social security coverage for personal assistants who have multiple employers, Uruguay is currently developing a mechanism so that personal assistants can provide their services through cooperatives. The cooperative acts as the formal employer responsible for paying social security contributions; households do not pay contributions directly, but benefit from a state subsidy that covers the full cost of hiring (UNICEF 2024).

**Financing of care assistance.** Households that receive care are eligible for a non-contributory subsidy designed to incentivize the formal registration and employment of personal assistants. This subsidy fully covers the cost of hiring, including both wages and employer-side social security contributions, which means that families have no direct financial obligation and that the personal assistant benefits from full social security coverage through their cooperative-employer structure.

The information and knowledge management component includes the development of information systems for the management of SNIC, the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system, and the introduction of a national care registry and care portal (UN-Women 2019). Complementing this, the SNIC communications component includes outreach campaigns and initiatives aimed at promoting a cultural transformation towards the

### Box 19. Social security for care workers

**Social security** for care workers refers to the set of protections ensuring that care workers – both paid and unpaid – have access to income security, healthcare and other social benefits throughout their life course. This includes coverage for pensions, maternity and parental leave, health insurance, unemployment benefits and occupational protections in line with the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

Care workers, particularly those in informal or domestic settings, are often excluded from formal social protection systems owing to the nature of their work arrangements, which are frequently informal, part-time or lacking in contracts. Women make up the vast majority of care workers worldwide and are disproportionately affected by gaps in coverage. Extending social security to this workforce is essential in order to reduce gender inequalities, prevent poverty and recognize care as a critical component of economic and social development.

Integrating care workers into social protection systems requires targeted policy measures, including legal recognition of care work, the establishment of contributory and non-contributory schemes, subsidized enrolment for low-income workers and innovative employer arrangements (such as cooperatives or State-supported registries) to facilitate contributions and access to benefits.

sharing of care work between families and society. One such initiative is the declaration of a “Month of Care” (UNICEF 2024).

#### **Institutional architecture**

Within the policy framework, an institutional architecture was created that comprises the following elements: the National Care Board, the National Secretariat for Care and Disability, and the Care Advisory Committee. The National Care Board oversees the setting of guidelines, objectives and policies. The Board is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Social Develop-

ment, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Planning and Budget Office, the National Public Education Administration, the Social Security Bank, the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents, the National Care Secretariat and the National Women’s Institute (UN-Women 2019).

The executive body of SNIC is the National Secretariat for Care and Disability, which is part of the Ministry of Social Development and is tasked with coordinating and implementing the system.

In 2018, a dedicated gender unit was set up within the National Secretariat. In 2020, SNIC was merged with the National Disability Programme (*Programa Nacional de Discapacidad*, PRONADIS). The work of the National Secretariat is complemented by the Care Advisory Committee, which brings together relevant trade unions, civil society and representatives from the private sector (UNICEF 2024).

SNIC is decentralized, with activities implemented at the local level through departments and municipalities in collaboration among local and regional actors and national institutions (Bango 2023). The system is financed from the national budget, but also through extrabudgetary allocations. In 2022, the budget for SNIC amounted to 1.6 billion pesos (US\$39.7 million), representing about 0.34 per cent of total public expenditure (UNICEF 2024).

### **Integrated approach and progressive roll-out of the care system**

SNIC follows an integrated approach in line with the Global Accelerator's first pillar. To advance the rights of people receiving and providing care, SNIC is promoted through a combination of social protection and employment policies, investment in quality services and active labour market policies – all of which are central components of the Global Accelerator (Global Accelerator 2024). SNIC also relies on horizontal and vertical coordination: several different sectors and ministries, and various administrative levels ranging from the local to the national level, are involved in advancing care and support.

Before the creation of SNIC, child-care for children aged between 1 and 3 years had been available through public and private services, most notably through Family and Child Support Centres (CAIFs), which had already been established in the late 1980s (Amarante, Colacce and Tenenbaum 2019). The rolling out of SNIC meant continuing an already impressive expansion of the CAIF programme (UNICEF 2023). In 2016, the CAIF programme was integrated into SNIC with a view to expanding the care provided at such centres to cover 1-year-old children and to increase the number of facilities (Government of Uruguay 2015b). In contrast, long-term care and support had been institutionalized to a much lesser degree before the adoption of the Care Act (UNICEF 2023). Consequently, during the first years of SNIC, the priority in that area was the establishment of a system to ensure quality care and to roll out the personal assistance programme and a telecare programme (UNICEF 2023).

### **Impact and challenges**

Overall, SNIC has contributed to (a) the expansion of services for people receiving care; (b) increasing the professionalization of decent work for a range of paid care workers, including by giving them access to social security; and (c) reducing the gender inequalities in responsibilities for caregiving. Since its inception in 2015, SNIC has supported approximately 12,860 caregiver–recipient relationships, with over 4,000 assistants registered in 2022 alone and around 6,048 active pairs continuing their work in 2023. Beyond these numbers, the initiative has significantly

promoted the formalization of employment in the care sector – extending social security coverage to care workers and enhancing women’s access to the labour market by recognizing and supporting their caregiving roles.

The establishment of an integrated care and support system underpinned by a robust political and legal framework and a dedicated institutional architecture is a noteworthy success. Few countries have achieved a comparable level of integration between the social protection system and related services. The Care Act recognizes the right to care and treats care and support as an integral pillar of social welfare (González Flores and Maqueda Sánchez 2022).

With the adoption of SNIC, a number of positive trends in access to family-friendly policies and care services can be observed. Overall, more than 80,000 families were reached by SNIC between 2015 and 2020 (ANONG 2023). The public coverage of childcare for children aged 0–3 years rose to 50 per cent in 2020 (from 33 per cent in 2015) (González Flores and Maqueda Sánchez 2022). Childcare coverage of 85 per cent for children aged 3 years was achieved (Sistema de Cuidados 2020a). In addition, the part-time childcare subsidy was extended from four to six months. Maternity leave was increased from 13 to 14 weeks and paternity leave from three to ten days (UNICEF 2023). As a result, the number of fathers taking paternity leave almost doubled between 2014 and 2016. The number of personal assistants tripled from 2017 to 2019 (Sistema de Cuidados 2020b). A minimum wage for

personal assistants was established by decree (ANONG 2023). The number of training courses for providers of long-term care and support has increased steadily since 2016 (González Flores and Maqueda Sánchez 2022).

However, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed.

The stated goal of providing universal childcare coverage for children aged 3 years has not yet been achieved (Es-trades and Amábile 2024). Another challenge has to do with the number of hours covered. Most Family and Child Support Centres (CAIFs) and schools continue to operate for only four hours, which does not allow parents to pursue a regular full-time job unless a caregiver can be hired. Similarly, the CAIFs for 1-year-olds open only one day a week. Although childcare services and coverage have already reached a relatively high level, there is still much to achieve in the provision of long-term care and support for older people and persons with disabilities – particularly since there were barely any relevant structures in place before SNIC. Most of those who need long-term care and support must fall back on the work and resources of their families (UNICEF 2023). Owing to the age limit of 29 years, persons with disabilities aged between 29 and 79 years are not eligible for the programme of personal assistance services (HRW 2024). In view of the high demand, the Government has acknowledged that the programme needs to be expanded. The human-centred approach must be further pursued and efforts undertaken to move to a multidimensional assessment of dependency and a comprehensive ap-

proach to care provision (Sistema de Cuidados 2020b).

To achieve the envisioned cultural and normative changes, greater awareness has to be raised regarding social and gender co-responsibility in caregiving and common assumptions about the ideal worker as someone without care responsibilities need to be challenged (UN-Women 2019). Research shows that gender biases in relation to traditional caregiving roles persist within the Uruguayan social protection system (Marzonetto 2019). Thus, although the formalization of care work is being promoted, the overwhelming majority of care workers continue to be women (González Flores and Maqueda Sánchez 2022).

There is still much to be done in terms of evidence generation and the incorporation of a gender perspective that is relevant to the design, implementation and evaluation of policies. For instance, time-use surveys need to be conducted regularly and more evidence collected on the type of care required. Such surveys would provide greater detail on, and a more nuanced analysis of, the paid care workforce and its diverse working conditions and challenges. In addition, the training provided to paid caregivers needs to be enhanced in terms of design and options for specialization (UN-Women 2019).

In a booming sector such as care, it is also essential to uphold the labour rights of all care workers and include these perspectives into collective bargaining to ensure decent work for care workers (UN-Women 2019).

Despite the need to promote and further invest in SNIC, its budget relative to GDP has stagnated (Estrades and Amábile 2024). While SNIC has contributed to achieving inclusive growth and development, experts point to the programme's high cost compared with the return on investment, as only a small proportion of the population currently benefit from SNIC. This issue is all the more important given that care needs are likely to grow with an ageing population, which will also increase pressure on the system's financial sustainability (UNICEF 2024).

### **Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator**

As noted in a strategy document for the Global Accelerator, it is crucial to recognize care as a cornerstone of decent work, well-being and sustainable development. The existing care crisis underlines the need for “urgent and large-scale investments in the care economy, including care policies, services, and decent care jobs that are integrated and transformative and promote people's well-being, gender equality, inclusion, decent work, and social cohesion, as well as sustainable development” (Global Accelerator 2023, 2).

### **Integrated policies for transformative care systems**

The example of Uruguay illustrates the transformative potential of an integrated care and support system that brings together social protection, employment policies and public service delivery. These integrated policies serve the dual purpose of expanding

access to quality care services across the life course and formalizing care work, especially for women, thereby contributing to decent work and poverty reduction. To be effective, such systems must be universal, rights-based and gender-transformative, with a clear commitment to state accountability and the principle of leaving no one behind.

In addition to combining social protection and employment strategies, such systems must address the intersecting needs of women, persons with disabilities, older people and other groups frequently excluded from care and support provision. A life-course and intersectional approach is essential to ensure that care and support systems respond to diverse needs at every stage of a person's life, taking gender, age, disability status and other relevant factors into account.

### **Institutional mechanisms, evidence and political coalitions**

Uruguay's experience underscores the importance of strong institutional mechanisms and multi-stakeholder collaboration. A key driver of progress has been the formation of a broad political coalition, bringing together feminist academics, civil society organizations, advocates of workers' rights and political allies across party lines. Academia has played a central role in generating evidence, such as time-use surveys and analyses of how unpaid care work affects gender equality outcomes. Civil society has transformed this evidence into effective advocacy, awareness campaigns and pressure on decision-makers, while the Gov-

ernment has provided executive capacity to implement reforms. Levels of unionization among care workers – in particular, personal assistants – have traditionally been low, but labour unions and associations such as the Inter-Union Plenary of Workers – National Workers' Convention (PIT-CNT) and domestic workers' unions have actively advocated for care workers' rights, including the right to formal employment and improved working conditions under SNIC.

Institutional coordination across sectors (such as health, education and social protection) and levels of government, and between branches (executive and legislative) and with civil society, has proved to be essential. The establishment of national care bodies and interministerial mechanisms has supported more coherent policy implementation and improved accountability.

### **Financing and South-South cooperation**

One of the main challenges in advancing integrated care and support systems is financial sustainability. Innovative financing models are needed to create fiscal space for care, through solidarity-based care funds, budgetary reallocations and public-private partnerships that expand access to services and ensure care-related benefits in the workplace (UN-Women 2019). Recognizing investments in care systems as core priorities in economic and fiscal policy is key to achieving long-term sustainability and resilience.

It is also essential to foster South–South cooperation. Countries can benefit from the experience of others – such as Uruguay – that have successfully placed care systems on an institutional footing through a combination of political commitment, technical inno-

vation and inclusive governance. Such peer learning offers valuable insights for countries that may be at different stages in the development of their respective systems but are facing similar challenges.



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13



# Advancing social health protection coverage in Zambia through integration and coordination



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## Summary

Zambia's National Health Insurance Management Authority (NHIMA) and the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria ("Global Fund") launched a three-year pilot programme in 2024 aimed at extending coverage under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to 20,000 poor and vulnerable households receiving social assistance. The recipients are beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer programme drawn from across seven districts, for whom the pilot programme subsidizes NHIS contributions, including the following subcategories: treatment for HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis; severe disabilities; and chronic illness in areas with high prevalence of tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS (NHIMA 2023; 2025a).

Among the pilot programme's core measures are intersectoral identification of beneficiaries, enrolment and subsidization of contributions, community sensitization and training for social protection workers (NHIMA 2023). By the end of May 2025, 20,204 household principal members (71 per cent of whom were women) and an additional 36,861 beneficiaries had been enrolled. Since the start of the programme there has been a sustained increase in the utilization of health services and over 8.4 million Zambian kwacha (US\$0.36 million) had been disbursed to meet the cost of health benefits provided as at the end of July 2025 (Moono 2025).

The initiative illustrates how integrated financing can lead to the extension of coverage through multisectoral collaboration, offering protection against

financial risks and supporting progress towards universal health coverage and universal social protection (Global Fund 2023; NHIMA 2023).

### Relevance to the Global Accelerator

The NHIMA–Global Fund pilot programme demonstrates how collaboration between the health and social protection sectors can help to close social protection coverage and benefits adequacy gaps among the most vulnerable population groups (Mchenga 2024; Osei Afriyie et al. 2025). By building on the existing social assistance programme and formally linking it to NHIS enrolment, Zambia is strengthening policy coherence and enabling comprehensive protection that provides both income security and access to healthcare for vulnerable groups.

This has required multisectoral collaboration among government agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The support provided to NHIMA by international partners – including the Global Fund Secretariat, the Global Fund Programme Management Unit, the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism for Zambia, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the ILO – underscores the significance of multilateral cooperation in advancing nationally owned strategies (NHIMA 2023). Zambia’s experience serves as a compelling example of how to embed social health protection within a comprehensive framework of equity and rights-based social policy (see box 20).

#### Box 20. Key lessons learned from the NHIMA–Global Fund pilot programme in Zambia

##### Integrated policy approach:

- The intrinsic nexus between poverty and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as disabilities, has been widely documented (ILO 2021a; UNPRPD, ILO and UNICEF 2021; WHO and ILO 2024). Recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, the pilot programme seeks to provide access to healthcare services for population groups experiencing economic and social deprivation and exposed to ill health. To that end, it follows an **integrated approach combining income security and access to healthcare** so as to both reduce and prevent poverty while also reducing health inequalities (WHO 2025).

- **Multisectoral coordination** between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities has been key in developing and implementing this integrated policy approach.

#### **Integrated financing:**

- This pilot programme demonstrates how **integrating complementary financing sources can enhance the adequacy and comprehensiveness of protection**. By subsidizing contributions to the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (“Global Fund”) are helping to extend NHIS coverage to further beneficiaries and their households, granting them access to a unified, comprehensive package of health benefits beyond health services related to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Integrated financing helps to tackle the fragmentation of benefit packages and enhances their delivery.
- Since the database of Zambia’s Social Cash Transfer programme was used to identify beneficiaries for the pilot programme, integrated funding also leads to efficiency gains in identification and enrolment.

#### **Multilateral cooperation:**

- Multilateral cooperation – primarily through the partnership between the National Health Insurance Management Authority (NHIMA) and the Global Fund – is a cornerstone of the pilot programme’s success. In particular, the Global Fund’s high level of engagement with the Ministry of Health was a major enabling factor. Moreover, the technical assistance provided by the ILO and the World Bank was key in setting some of the programme’s financial parameters. In particular, an actuarial analysis conducted jointly by the ILO and NHIMA determined the amount of contributions that would need to be paid by each vulnerable household in order to cover the monthly NHIMA benefits package.
- Effective coordination among NHIMA, national ministries and Community Welfare Assistance Committees resulted in the full enrolment of 20,204 poor and vulnerable households in the pilot programme despite delayed disbursement of funds and logistical difficulties (NHIMA 2025a).

## Context

Extending social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy and their dependents is one of the principal social development challenges faced by countries with high informality (ILO 2021b). Extension efforts should focus not only on reaching more population groups, but also on enhancing the adequacy and comprehensiveness of social protection benefits while ensuring proper financing. To that end, collaboration among key national and international social protection stakeholders and partners is paramount.

In Zambia, 63.5 per cent of employed persons were working in the informal economy in 2022, predominantly in wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, and accommodation and food service activities (40.7 per cent of employed persons), followed by agriculture, forestry and fishing (29.2 per cent) (Zambia, MLSS and Zambia Statistics Agency 2023). Significantly, just under a third of the Zambian population are covered by at least one social protection benefit (excluding health) (ILO 2024).

Against this backdrop, the Government is committed to alleviating poverty and reducing vulnerability through a sound strategic and policy framework, namely the National Long-Term Vision 2030 and the Eighth National Development Plan (Zambia, MFNP 2022). The country recently adopted a revised national social protection policy (Zambia, MCDSS 2025), providing a renewed approach to income security and access to affordable, quality healthcare over the life cycle. In support of this vision, the

National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) was established in 2019 under the National Health Insurance Act No. 2 of 2018 as a compulsory scheme for all Zambian citizens and legal residents. It was designed to promote equitable access to health services through pooled financing (Zambia, National Assembly 2018; Government of Zambia 2019).

The NHIS has predominantly relied on a compulsory 2 per cent contribution from the formal sector, shared equally between employers and employees, and a 1 per cent rate on declared earnings from informal sector workers (Syacika 2024). However, persistently high poverty levels have resulted in a strong dependence on formal sector contributions, thus restricting the expansion of coverage through contributory mechanisms alone (NHIMA 2023).

Section 16 of the National Health Insurance Act of 2018 mandates the extension of coverage to poor and vulnerable populations without contributory capacity, thereby laying the legal foundations for non-contributory inclusion (NHIMA 2023; Zambia, National Assembly 2018).

Low contribution collection rates have posed sustainability challenges for the NHIS (NHIMA 2023). In order to encourage enrolment among informal economy workers, the “buy-back” option was introduced as an interim measure in 2020, allowing such workers to pay four months’ worth of contributions upfront in order to gain immediate access to healthcare services. However, this resulted in adverse selection and high service utilisation without sustained financial contribu-

tion. The option was revoked in January 2024 and a four-month waiting period reinstated, to help restore financial stability (Syacika 2024).

Seeking to close existing gaps in social health protection coverage under the NHIS, in 2024 Zambia launched a three-year pilot programme in partnership with the Global Fund. The initiative aimed to achieve the registration of 20,000 poor and vulnerable households annually from 2024 to 2026 by subsidizing their contributions to NHIS, with a special focus on persons from such households living with disabilities or with HIV or tuberculosis (NHIMA 2023). This subsidy was intended to enhance access to quality healthcare services and promote better health-seeking behaviours, helping to advance the gradual implementation of universal health coverage.

### Description of the NHIMA–Global Fund pilot programme

The NHIMA–Global Fund pilot programme seeks to help extend social health protection coverage for poor and vulnerable households by subsidizing their contributions to the NHIS. In line with the Global Fund’s mandate, the programme’s target group comprises beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme, with a focus on areas with a high prevalence of tuberculosis and households that include individuals living with HIV, tuberculosis,

severe disability and/or a chronic condition (NHIMA 2025a).

The design of the pilot programme was informed by an ILO actuarial analysis performed in 2023, which determined that the contribution level should be set at 50 kwacha (or US\$2.15) per household per month. The Global Fund committed itself to providing US\$1.5 million annually from 2024 to 2026 to subsidize NHIS contributions for 20,000 SCT-beneficiary households, benefiting an estimated 140,000 individuals,<sup>25</sup> or 0.7 per cent of the Zambian population (NHIMA 2023).

### Governance arrangements

The National Health Insurance Management Authority was designated as a subrecipient of the Global Fund grant to lead the implementation of this pilot programme as part of the Global Fund’s Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) interventions. At the same time, the NHIMA Research and Planning Department, collaborating with the Directorate of Planning and Budgeting at the Ministry of Health, is responsible for developing robust monitoring systems to ensure that the programme is aligned with national social health protection goals (NHIMA 2023).

The pilot programme’s implementation called for close coordination across multiple stakeholders. NHIMA has been leading the operational aspects of

25 The figure of 140,000 individuals is an estimated total representing the potential number of people covered by the pilot programme. It was derived by multiplying the target of 20,000 beneficiary households by the maximum number of eligible individuals covered under NHIS household membership, which is up to seven individuals (a principal member, their spouse and up to five dependents below the age of 18 years).

implementation, including enrolment and the administration of benefits. The Ministry of Health ensures policy coherence and service availability. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services supports the identification of beneficiaries through its SCT database, and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities facilitates verification for households registered under the disability category (NHIMA 2025a). It is worth noting that the Global Fund's support for this pilot programme was aimed at enhancing health system inclusiveness. By engaging with the national ministries, the programme is able to reach rural populations, women and disabled persons – groups often facing stigma and systemic exclusion (NHIMA 2025a). This collaborative governance structure reflects strong multilateral cooperation and sectoral integration aligned with national development priorities.

### Operationalization

A comprehensive strategy was developed to effectively extend coverage to the targeted households, including community sensitization, registration and facilitation of healthcare access (NHIMA 2023; Moono 2025). This also includes conducting awareness-raising campaigns at the provincial, district and community levels to inform potential beneficiaries about the pilot programme and its benefits (NHIMA 2025a). Community health workers and Community Welfare Assistance Committees were trained to provide front-line support for onboarding the poor and vulnerable (NHIMA 2023). NHIMA has developed a real-time dashboard using the Microsoft Power BI data vis-

ualization tool, linked to its registration and claims database, which enables: tracking of membership and service utilization; analysis of beneficiary use patterns; and assessment of the adequacy of the contribution level based on claims behaviour (NHIMA 2025a).

The mandatory waiting period of four months under the NHIS was waived for beneficiaries of the pilot programme, allowing all members to have access to services immediately after registration. Once enrolled, beneficiaries are entitled to NHIMA's comprehensive benefits package, which comprises advanced diagnostics, chronic diseases treatment and rehabilitative care.

In addition to improving access to healthcare services, the pilot programme has helped to enhance service delivery and adequacy of benefits under the NHIS by (a) expanding the NHIS network of providers through the accreditation of all zonal and rural health centres; (b) increasing funding for primary care facilities; and (c) building capacity for the processing of NHIS claims and financial management (Global Fund 2023; Moono 2025).

### Impact and challenges

As at 31 July 2025, the pilot programme had succeeded in enrolling the heads of 20,204 households (and an additional 36,861 beneficiaries) under the NHIS. Out of these, 44 per cent were households headed by persons with disabilities, followed by 41 per cent with a principal member who is HIV-positive and on antiretroviral therapy, while the remaining were households headed by persons with a chronic illness (NHIMA

2025b). Early evidence suggests an improvement in access to healthcare. According to a claims analysis, service utilization increased steadily since the start of the programme, with an average loss ratio of 80 per cent, and projections indicating it may exceed 100 per cent at full scale (NHIMA 2025b; Moono 2025). Between May 2024 and July 2025, a total of 8.4 million kwacha (US\$0.36 million) was claimed, with approximately 75 per cent of that sum attributed to outpatient consultations, diagnostics and essential medicine (NHIMA 2025b). The increase in claims demonstrates the vital role of outpatient services in care planning and continued treatment. Private pharmacy drugs account for the second-highest cost category, particularly drugs for the management of HIV/AIDS (426,016 kwacha, or US\$18,450), which reflects the high medical costs faced by persons living with HIV (NHIMA 2025b).

The pilot programme has also encountered various operational challenges. One of these is the limited enrolment of persons living with HIV compared with the targeted programmes, as HIV status is not among the eligibility criteria for the SCT programme<sup>26</sup> (NHIMA 2025a; Moono 2025). Other challenges have to do with linking health and social protection data systems. Smart-Care, the national electronic registry for patients receiving antiretroviral therapy (used to identify districts with a high tuberculosis burden, given the high correlation between HIV and tubercu-

losis cases), does not consistently apply National Registration Card numbers (NHIMA 2025a). This inconsistency has complicated efforts to match records with the SCT database. Moreover, registration efforts were further hampered by the limited availability of transport for field operations and the centralized printing of NHIMA cards in Lusaka (NHIMA 2025a).

### What next?

Having reached the target and fully registered 20,204 households, the goal for the pilot programme is to continue with district-level sensitization campaigns to enhance awareness of NHIS entitlements, rights and the procedure for accessing services. So far, such awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted in four districts (Chongwe, Kafue, Ndola and Kitwe) (NHIMA 2025a).

Utilization of NHIS services under the pilot programme will continue to be closely monitored through real-time data and implementation research. A beneficiary satisfaction review has already been conducted in the Ndola and Kitwe districts, capturing users' perspectives. The preliminary findings from that review indicate that the programme has advanced financial protection greatly, with 93 per cent of responding households expressing satisfaction over their reduced out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare, which had decreased by 90 per cent

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26 The SCT programme identifies beneficiaries on the basis of socio-economic and demographic vulnerability, including disability, advanced age or labour constraints, rather than specific health conditions. Consequently, being HIV-positive is not an explicit eligibility criterion. Under the Global Fund-supported NHIS pilot programme, which prioritizes households affected by HIV, tuberculosis and disability, enrolment was limited to individuals who were both HIV-positive and already eligible for SCT cash transfers.

since their enrolment in the NHIS (NHIMA 2025a). Moreover, an actuarial review of the household contribution rate (currently set at 50 kwacha, or US\$2.15) is being carried out by the ILO to assess its sustainability in the light of observed claims trends. In 2026, it is planned to conduct an impact assessment in order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the pilot programme (NHIMA 2025a). Led by the WHO and the Global Fund, this will be the first detailed assessment of the pilot programme in addition to the operational reports and claims analyses conducted by NHIMA.

### **Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator**

The Global Fund-supported NHIS pilot programme in Zambia offers insights for Global Accelerator pathfinder countries in terms of how to extend comprehensive health coverage to vulnerable populations by exploring new sources of financing and working across sectors.

The NHIMA-Global Fund partnership serves as a practical example of how external funding – in this case coming from the Global Fund – can subsidize social health protection contributions, allowing targeted households to participate in the national social insurance scheme and thereby avoiding fragmentation in delivery. Cross-subsidization from the NHIS main pool in case of a higher loss ratio serves as a guarantee for the risk pool composed of SCT beneficiaries enrolled through the pilot programme. Moving forward, it will be highly relevant to explore how such external funding support can serve as

a catalyst for governments to also mobilize domestic funding to help extend coverage for the poor and vulnerable. The prioritization of domestic funding is a key element in the sustainability of such schemes.

By ensuring that SCT beneficiaries (who receive some income support) are also enrolled in the NHIS and receive a full subsidy towards their contributions, the pilot programme recognizes the multiple needs of poor and vulnerable people, and the importance of facilitating their access to healthcare through the NHIS instead of them relying only on SCT cash transfers to finance their healthcare expenditures. The pilot programme thus seeks to reduce health inequalities by influencing the socio-determinants of health (notably through income security and healthcare access). It also shows that comprehensive action on health improvement and poverty reduction can only be achieved through intersectoral collaboration. Finally, the initiative highlights the importance of locally grounded implementation partnerships for the identification of beneficiaries and awareness-raising.

Zambia's experience corroborates the feasibility of leveraging national health insurance mechanisms to build more inclusive and equitable social protection and health systems that both tackle and prevent ill-health and poverty. As countries strive to build comprehensive national social protection systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, this innovative example should be widely shared and replicated, always taking the national context into account.

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14



# Creating fiscal space for social protection in Senegal through the reallocation of fuel subsidies



*This case study was prepared by Moussa Dieng (ILO) and benefited from inputs by Anna Brachtendorf (ILO) and Valérie Schmitt (ILO).*

## Summary

In January 2023, the Government of Senegal reduced subsidies for petroleum products (super gasoline fuel) and the social subsidy for electricity. This measure was expected to result in savings of around 99.7 billion CFA francs (US\$177 million) from the reduction of the subsidy for electricity and 158.5 billion CFA francs (US\$281 million) from the reduction of the subsidy for petroleum products, giving total savings of 258.2 billion CFA francs (US\$458 million). (For comparison, social protection expenditure in 2020 amounted to 222 billion CFA francs (US\$394 million) according to the functional classification of the Senegalese budget.) The Government has used these savings to extend the fiscal space for social protection. Specifically, it applied from January 2023 a 40 per cent increase in the relative value of the allowance provided to poor and vulnerable families,

which nominally rose from 25,000 CFA francs (US\$41) to 35,000 francs (US\$58) per quarter. This increase reached all 316,940 households covered by the family allowance programme and directly impacted the lives of approximately 2.7 million Senegalese, among them some of the poorest people in the country. As a consequence, there were no social tensions directly related to the reduction of fuel and electricity subsidies. Through this reallocation of subsidies to social protection transfers, the Government was able to maintain the purchasing power of poor and vulnerable households.

## Relevance to the Global Accelerator

The reform of fuel and electricity subsidies in Senegal and the reallocation of budgetary resources to expand the family allowance programme constitute a specific example of public policies

that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while mitigating the social impact of such measures and compensating for their effect on the poorest households. This initiative also illustrates how social protection can be financed through strategic budgetary reallocations.

Senegal's case therefore demonstrates that social protection can contribute to climate action and offset the social impact of environmental measures, which might otherwise have disastrous social consequences. By highlighting the link between social protection and climate action, this case study opens up the possibility of using climate-related funds to finance social protection systems.

## Context

Senegal is a country in West Africa with around 18 million inhabitants spread over an area of 196,722 km<sup>2</sup>. Census and projections from the National Agency for Statistics and Demography show that the population has almost tripled in the space of 50 years, from 1976 to 2016 (ANSD 2024). Several factors explain this growth, including a high birth rate (32 births per 1,000 people in 2022), a high fertility rate (4.3 children per woman in 2022), a constantly declining mortality rate (5.5 deaths per 1,000 people in 2022) and a continuously increasing life expectancy (which stood at 67.9 years in 2022) (Perspective Monde, n.d.).

The Senegalese population is young: half of the country's citizens are under 19 years of age, which translates into a high dependency ratio, and 75 per cent are under 35 years of age

(ANSD 2024). The country, therefore, has a genuine opportunity to accelerate economic growth and increase per capita wealth by harnessing its demographic dividend. This requires the creation of decent job opportunities for the young adults entering the labour market.

The poverty rate fell by 5 percentage points, from 42.8 per cent in 2011 to 37.8 per cent in 2018/19 (ANSD 2021). This downward trend in the poverty rate was observed in both rural and urban areas and for all 14 regions of the country. However, there is still a strong disparity between rural and urban areas, with a poverty rate of 53.6 per cent in rural areas. Among the countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Senegal has the lowest poverty rate. Nevertheless, the existing poverty levels exert strong structural pressure on public spending, contribute to high demand for social assistance and raise the question as to whether the envisaged national social protection floor is sustainable.

Since 2013, Senegal has experienced a consistent upward trajectory in its GDP. The COVID-19 crisis halted this momentum, causing GDP growth to fall to 1.3 per cent in 2020. Economic activity resumed thanks to the Government's proactive policies taken in response to the crisis, and GDP growth rebounded to 6.1 per cent in 2021. Senegal continues to maintain this growth dynamic, despite a slight decline in 2022, with GDP growth stabilizing at 4.3 per cent in 2023 (ANSD 2024). The upcoming commissioning of oil and gas fields offers favourable growth prospects.

Senegal has embarked on an ambitious policy to protect poor and vulnerable population groups with the adoption of the new National Social Protection Strategy for the 2016–35 period (Senegal, DGPSN 2015). Inspired by the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), this strategy is based on a life-cycle approach and informed by the important role of social protection in reducing poverty and inequality and contributing to inclusive growth.

In addition, the country is considering social protection as one way of dealing with vulnerability to shocks arising from disasters and climate change. Senegal's geographical location means that it is exposed to significant and persistent environmental and climate-related vulnerabilities. This innovative focus on strengthening community resilience (specific objective No. 5 of the National Social Protection Strategy) is already allowing Senegal to make the link between social protection and environmental transitions, which are two major themes of the Global Accelerator.

Senegal conducted a comprehensive review of its social protection system between 2019 and 2021 with technical support from the ILO. This review used several ILO-developed tools and techniques – including the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI), the Social Protection Policy Options Tool (SPPOT) and the Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP) (ILO 2025a; 2025b; 2014) – as part of an assessment-based national dialogue (ABND) approach (ILO 2016). At the end of this review, it became clear that the

Senegalese social protection system was facing several challenges, including two major ones: (a) how to expand it, in particular to cover workers in the informal economy and their families; and (b) how to ensure its sustainable financing so that adequate levels of benefits can be provided under the national social protection floor that is currently being constructed.

To address the challenge of covering workers in the informal economy, a simplified social security scheme for small taxpayers (*Régime simplifié pour les petits contribuables*, RSPC) was established. This scheme has benefited from significant ILO support since the initial discussions in 2015, including throughout a pilot phase launched in 2022 by the National Social Mutual Fund for Artisans of Senegal (MSNAS). The country's social security law has been revised to enshrine this new scheme in legislation.

Senegal's spending on social protection accounts for around 6 per cent of government expenditure: in 2020, the social protection sector received an allocation of 222 billion CFA francs (US\$394 million) out of a total budget of 3,709 billion CFA francs (US\$6.6 billion), or approximately 3.3 per cent of GDP (Senegal, DGPSN 2023). Further financing comes from the contributory social protection system, and, very marginally, from official development assistance. To ensure sustainable and long-term financing of the social protection sector, Senegal must be able to rely to a greater extent on sustainable domestic resources. This is aligned with the Government's strategy of endogenous growth.

To that end, the ILO continued to support the Government in analysing the fiscal space so as to identify the best financing options for social protection. This analysis was carried out on the basis of an ILO and UN-Women technical publication entitled *Fiscal Space for Social Protection. A Handbook for Assessing Financing Options* (Ortiz et al. 2019).

In view of Senegal's country profile, three options for financing social protection were selected on the basis of their capacity to generate additional resources without disrupting economic stability while respecting macro-level budgetary constraints and rules of prudence.

These three measures could bring in additional resources amounting to at least 519.58 billion CFA francs (US\$922 million):

- reallocation of public spending
- increased tax revenues
- extension of social security coverage and increase in contributions.

The analysis showed that additional resources amounting to an average of 3.65 per cent of GDP could be mobilized over the first five years. Total public spending on social protection would then come to over 5.11 per cent of projected GDP. According to these projections – which are based on minimalist assumptions and ignore, for example, improvements in the efficiency of tax administration – the National Social Protection Strategy's objective of devoting at least 7 per cent of GDP to social protection could be achieved by

Senegal over a ten-year horizon. This investment in social protection would have a clear impact in terms of reducing poverty (decreasing the poverty rate by 7.5 per cent) and inequality (decreasing the Gini coefficient by 0.045 percentage points) (ILO 2021).

### Reallocation of fuel subsidies: The technical analysis

Fuel subsidies provide only limited benefits to members of poor and vulnerable households, who spend relatively little on fuel because they use public transport. However, eliminating the subsidies entirely would make the cost of (public) transport and certain goods or services unaffordable for them. Senegal spends the equivalent of more than 4 per cent of its GDP on subsidies for electricity, petroleum products (gasoline, super gasoline and diesel) and butane gas. By way of illustration, the Government subsidized fuel to the tune of 70 billion CFA francs (US\$124 million) in 2019). If half of this amount were reallocated to the social protection system under the National Social Protection Strategy, this would represent an investment of 35 billion CFA francs (US\$62 million) per year in the financing of social protection over a period extending to 2035.

### A targeted non-contributory social protection programme: The National Programme of Family Security Grants

Launched in 2014, the National Programme of Family Security Grants (*Programme national de bourses de sécurité familiale*, PNBSF) offers a quarterly al-

allowance of 25,000 CFA francs (US\$44) to poor and vulnerable households. PNBSF beneficiary households are identified through the Single National Registry (*Registre national unique*, RNU), which represents a major development in non-contributory social protection in Senegal.

The PNBSF is designed to contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion of poor and vulnerable households through a cash transfer that is conditional on the use of education and health services. The rationale for this requirement is to strengthen the development of children's human capital and stop the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

The targeting methodology is based on a combination of approaches: geographical quotas determined through poverty indices; community targeting to obtain the list of candidate households; application of proxy means tests; and final validation by the community.

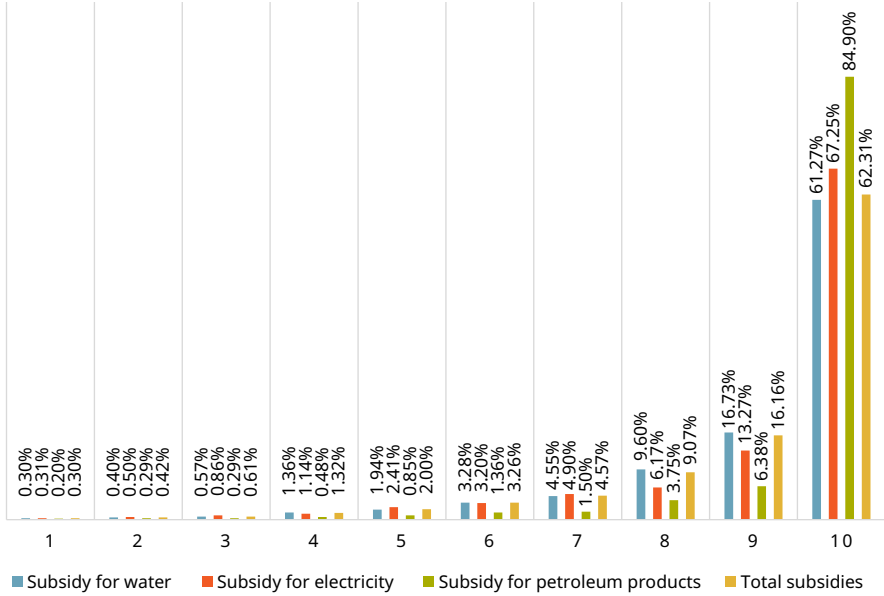
The programme reached its highest number of beneficiaries in 2019 with 316,940 households and has remained stable since then (Senegal, DGPSN 2023). According to the initial design, households were to receive allowances for a period of five years; today, the grant is no longer limited in time but depends, rather, on an assessment of the household situation carried out periodically for the RNU database.

An FAO survey published in 2018 indicates that the PNBSF allowance accounts for between 14 and 22 per cent of the average annual income of the households surveyed, and that it is

often the sole source of income during the lean season before harvests (FAO 2018). In all cases, the allowance is used primarily to meet essential and urgent family needs; it helps to cover food, health and education expenses that households would have difficulty paying otherwise. However, so far, these grants have enabled only a small minority, particularly the least vulnerable, to develop productive agricultural activities or small businesses. The programme has not allowed most recipient households to engage in new economic activities and has had a very limited knock-on effect on their productive capacities or socio-economic integration (in terms of improved access to micro-credits or participation in productive groups and networks).

### **Why reallocate fuel subsidies to social protection spending through a targeted programme like the National Programme of Family Security Grants?**

From figure 14, which shows the share of each different type of subsidy that each decile of the household income distribution receives, it can be seen that the wealthiest households benefit the most from subsidies. Households in the top decile receive more than 60 per cent of the total in the case of indirect subsidies for water, electricity and petroleum, with this share even reaching almost 85 per cent in the case of subsidies for petroleum products (fuels and derivatives). For all categories of subsidies, the shares received by the first three deciles are less than 1 per cent of the total.

**Figure 14. Share of subsidies received by households in Senegal, by decile of household income distribution and by type of subsidy, 2019 (percentage)**

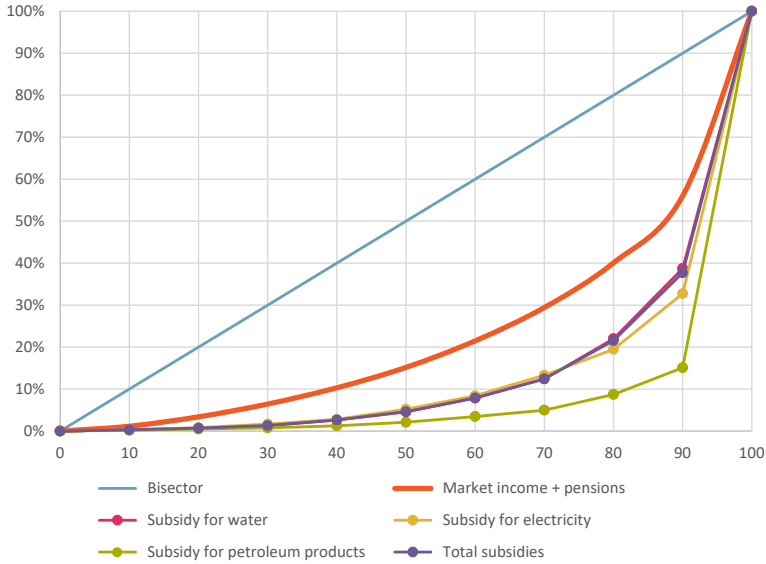
Source: ILO (2021).

Another way to determine who benefits the most from subsidies is to show their progressive or regressive nature using concentration curves (Lorenz curves). All categories of indirect subsidies are regressive, as their concentration curves lie below the Lorenz egalitarian line. However, subsidies for petroleum products are found to be more regressive than those for water and electricity (see figure 15). Assessment of the share of total indirect subsidies received relative to income confirms that they benefit wealthier population groups to a greater extent.

Yet another approach, based on a breakdown by income groups, highlights that the middle class benefits from the largest share of the subsi-

dies (36 per cent), followed by those classed as vulnerable (29 per cent) and those classed as rich (23 per cent). The poorest population group benefits from only 1.14 per cent of the total (ILO 2021). Further in-depth studies have measured the risk of sliding into poverty, particularly for vulnerable households, following a reduction in subsidies. The findings are similar to those reported from other contexts. In Togo, for example, Jellema and Tassot (2018) found that electricity subsidies tend to increase income inequality.

**Figure 15. Level of regressivity of fuel subsidies in Senegal, 2019 (percentage)**



Source: ILO (2021).

In conclusion, these studies showed that subsidies for petroleum products (fuel and derivatives), like those related to electricity and water, benefited the most affluent households in the country. This suggested that public spending in this area was ineffective and strengthened the case for the reduction of subsidies, especially subsidies for petroleum products, with a view to reallocating the funds to basic social services and social protection programmes in general, and the PNBSF in particular.

### Reallocation of fuel subsidies: The political process

**Advocacy.** The following activities were carried out systematically: wide dissemination of the research results;

broad-based discussion and dialogue; information-sharing and awareness-raising among all stakeholders; and technical training and outreach for all operational, institutional and civil society actors. These activities resulted in the drafting of an opinion document by the High Council for Social Dialogue (HCDS) – a tripartite entity consisting of representatives of the Government and employers’ and workers’ organizations – for the attention of the President of the Republic. A hearing and an extraordinary session of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE) on the financing of social protection were also organized. The relevant debates brought together various stakeholders: multisectoral technical actors, civil society associations and

non-governmental organizations, trade unions, employer organizations, state institutions (National Assembly, HCDS, Supreme Council of Local Authorities, CESE, Union of Associations of Local Elected Officials, Association of Mayors of Senegal, Mediator of the Republic) and development partners. These activities dovetailed with other advocacy efforts by the country's multilateral partners, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, on the reduction of subsidies and public expenditures.

**Strategic application of the measures.** With regard to petroleum products, several types of fuel had to be distinguished (such as diesel, diesel oil, premium gasoline and gasoline for small fisheries and canoes), each with different implications for households and businesses. Only premium gasoline and vehicle diesel were affected by the reduction in subsidies.

The Government decided to reduce the fuel subsidies for diesel and premium gasoline, which led to a price increase of 100 CFA francs (US\$0.18) per litre. However, accompanying measures were also adopted to directly support transport companies (taxis, trucks, buses), so that this subsidy reduction did not impact the cost of public transport and the prices of a number of foodstuffs.

At the same time, the Government maintained the level of subsidies for other petroleum products and butane gas (in particular, to support small-scale fishing, which uses specific gasoline for canoes), and implemented a programme to curb deforestation and promote environmental protec-

tion. The social electricity subsidy for low-power domestic users (up to 150 kilowatt-hours) also remained in place, while the subsidies for households using over 150 kilowatt-hours were reduced.

## Impact and challenges

In January 2023, the Government reduced subsidies for petroleum products (super gasoline fuel) and the social subsidy for electricity. This measure was expected to result in savings of around 99.7 billion CFA francs (US\$177 million) from the reduction of the subsidy for electricity and 158.5 billion CFA francs (US\$281 million) from the reduction of the subsidies for petroleum products, giving total savings of 258.2 billion CFA francs (US\$458 million). (For comparison, social protection expenditure in 2020 amounted to 222 billion CFA francs (US\$394 million) according to the functional classification of the Senegalese budget.)

Seeking to improve the adequacy of benefits and create opportunities for structural transformation, the Government was able to use these savings to apply, from January 2023, a 40 per cent increase in the relative value of the allowance provided to poor and vulnerable families under the PNBSF, which nominally rose from 25,000 CFA francs (US\$41) to 35,000 CFA francs (US\$58) per quarter.

This increase reached all 316,940 households covered by the PNBSF and directly impacted the lives of approximately 2.7 million Senegalese, among them some of the poorest people in the country.

As a result, there were no social tensions directly related to this reallocation of fuel and electricity subsidies. A concern for maintaining the purchasing power of workers and families guided both the development of this measure and its implementation.

### What next?

Senegal validated its Global Accelerator national road map in May 2025. The Government intends to further extend social protection through contributory and non-contributory schemes and make use of fuel subsidy reforms to generate additional fiscal space for investments in social protection. Beyond social protection, the Government is also determined to increase the productivity and employability of poor and vulnerable households, young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and other unemployed persons. This can be done by, *inter alia*, reviewing the strategy for, and content of, technical and vocational training to ensure that it responds to the needs of a growing private sector.

Using *ex ante* assessment methodologies, including the ILO's Structural Model for Sustainable Development, the Government also seeks to redirect investments and budgetary allocations towards projects with higher social impact in terms of the reduction of poverty and inequality, the creation of decent and productive employment, and increased access to social protection.

These projects may create employment opportunities for workers from households receiving the PNBSF allowance and, more broadly, households reg-

istered in the RNU. This would provide members of vulnerable and poor households with additional income sources while at the same time improving their employability by enabling them to gain skills in infrastructure construction projects and other projects with high labour intensity. A lack of skills or professional qualifications is a major factor behind the intergenerational transmission of poverty and the low labour market participation rates of members of poor households. Linking these opportunities with the PNBSF would create greater opportunities for them to leave behind this vicious cycle of poverty.

Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Senegal could be accelerated through a combination of policy measures such as: (a) on-the-job training in strategic areas in which the Government and public and private partners are investing (infrastructure, solar energy, eco-construction, school meals, elimination of temporary school shelters, sanitation); (b) work-study programmes that combine academic learning with hands-on experience in companies, thereby providing young people with valuable skills and increasing their employability (such programmes are already being implemented by the Ministry of Vocational Training); and (c) the effective reevaluation of cash transfers under the PNBSF.

### Main takeaways for the Global Accelerator

The example of Senegal shows how fiscal space can be created by discontinuing fuel subsidies, or at least those that foster inequality. In addition, it highlights the importance of accompanying such reforms, which have major repercussions on several groups in society as well as the private sector, with broad-based social dialogue that

brings together national authorities and the social partners. Lastly, this case study highlights the potential for economic growth when a government combines financing and extending social protection for vulnerable and poor households with policies to promote labour market inclusion so as to develop a sustainable social protection system and enable a gradual transition of disadvantaged individuals towards productive and formal employment.



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