

Tripartite Regional Meeting on Social Protection & Formalization

Social Protection Governance

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Introduction

- Good governance of social protection systems is one of the preconditions for the effective realization of the human right to social protection.
- Governance starts at the highest levels of policymaking and permeates every level of social protection implementation.
- Well-governed social protection systems benefit from strong accountability structures, active participation of the stakeholders, transparency of operations and viable access to information.
- Effective governance also encompasses good financial management, benefit delivery, accessibility, adequacy, contribution collection, management information systems, data protection and privacy, and complaint and appeal procedures.

Social protection system governance at the service of universal social protection – working definition

- There is no single, universally agreed definition.
- The “definition often depends on the goals to be pursued, the entities involved, and the socio-political environment” (ISSA, 2019).
- Here: Social protection governance examined from the perspective of the whole national system.
- “Administrative efficiency is only as good as the policies it supports” (McKinnon et al., 2014).
- “Individual schemes... have their own roles to play and objectives to meet, but...they must also serve the objectives of an overall national social protection policy. [And] just like each of its component schemes, the national social protection system should be assessed in terms of its objectives, notably coverage, effectiveness and efficiency” (ILO, 2010).

Governance as a multi-dimensional concept

- Participation of all stakeholders involved (democratic governance);
- Efficient and effective administration, management and monitoring of benefits and services (technical governance);
- Clear, transparent and accountable legislative and executive powers (political governance);
- A comprehensive legal framework guaranteeing predictability, rights-based entitlements and well-functioning complaints and appeals mechanisms (legal governance).

- The importance of good governance has long been recognized in international commitments to social protection and in the establishment of social security minimum standards (Convention No.102).
- The growing diversity of actors and institutions involved in social security policymaking and delivery has made it increasingly challenging to interpret and apply these original governance principles in practice.
- “Unlike other government sectors, social protection has been developed and delivered by several institutions and stakeholders focusing on certain population groups (e.g., workers of the formal sector), delivering specific services (e.g., health care), or certain types of transfers (e.g., family allowances). Therefore, the design and implementation of a Social Protection Floor will require coordination among all of the different organizations involved in the provision of social protection services and transfers” (United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and ILO, 2016).

Defining the core principles of good governance of social protection systems

- High degree of coherence and coordination
- High degree of financial, fiscal and economic sustainability
- High degree of accountability
- Clear channels of transparency
- High levels of predictability and equal treatment
- Wide avenues for participation by stakeholders
- High potential for adaptability, dynamism, and responsiveness to the constant need for improvement

Governance across the social protection policy process

- Governance is not reserved for the highest levels of policy making, just as it should not be relegated to the tail end of delivery and operations.
- Governance permeates all levels of the social protection policy process.
- The principles of good governance should apply at all levels, and across all governance mechanisms and spaces.

Governance mechanisms

