



World Food Programme

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Scoping Study on Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition and Managing Risks and Shocks in Asia and the Pacific Through Support to Social Protection Systems

Pakistan



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This report was written by Rachel Slater with research assistance from Daniela Baur. The report is based on document review, data and stakeholder interviews between January and March, 2022, and so does not capture the global effects of war in Ukraine, the change of government in Pakistan in April 2022 and the historic floods from June 2022 onwards. The authors are grateful to WFP staff in Pakistan, especially Peter Holtsberg and Tahir Nawaz, and staff of the Regional Bureau Bangkok. It is also thankful for the various staff of the Government of Pakistan and development and humanitarian agencies that provided inputs and insights for the scoping study. The analysis presented in this paper is the responsibility of the authors alone.

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Executive Summary

This study is one of a set of country scoping studies and part of a wider project commissioned by WFP's Regional Bureau Bangkok exploring the use of social protection to enhance WFP's work on improving food security and nutrition, and shock response.

The study aims to:

- enable a deeper understanding of existing national social protection policies, programmes and related instruments;
- provide an overview of notable challenges and opportunities for social protection in Pakistan to support humanitarian and development goals; and
- provide strategic and programmatic recommendations to WFP towards the formulation of future strategic direction, policy, and partnership goals.

The study was based on a comprehensive review of policy and programmatic documentation and key informant interviews with stakeholders in government, UN and other international agencies and NGOs.

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN PAKISTAN

Social protection is relatively well established in Pakistan but with low coverage levels for social assistance and social insurance among informal economy workers. Existing social protection schemes are dominated by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). However, the recent development and implementation of the overarching social protection and poverty eradication framework signals a shift from fragmented schemes towards a more systemic, harmonized and programme-based approach. Social protection faces other significant challenges, notably geographical disparities in the need for and capacity to deliver social protection, and substantial risks and shocks, especially environmental and climate change-related disasters.

In Pakistan, WFP's social protection work has historically focused on nutrition, school feeding and shock responses, but the more recent government focus on tackling stunting resonates strongly with WFP mandates and priorities. As WFP Pakistan moves into a new country strategy planning cycle, this is a timely moment to consider the role of WFP in supporting social protection in Pakistan.

Pakistan's national social protection priorities and systems focus predominantly on SDG 1 (End Poverty), but all stakeholders agree on the importance of tackling stunting through social protection. Food security is threatened by

low resilience to climate-related shocks and susceptibility to other threats that have emerged following the Covid-19 pandemic, including economic slowdowns and food price inflation. Specific groups are especially exposed. Women of childbearing age have high rates of underweight and deficiencies in zinc, and vitamins A and D, with knock-on effects on unborn children. Children of low birth weight are then reported to have an increased likelihood of becoming stunted in the short term and/or overweight and vulnerable to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the long term (WFP et al. 2019). Dietary diversity is limited with a predominantly wheat-based (hence energy-dense but low-nutrition) diet due to poverty, subsidies, or lack of knowledge (WFP et al. 2019). Social protection can contribute directly by making a diverse range of foods more accessible to the poor and also indirectly through complementary initiatives such as: education on the health consequences of poor diets and dietary guidelines; supplementation and fortification; and interventions on price, food safety, market infrastructure and supply.

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND WFP'S ROLE, IN PAKISTAN

In common with many other countries in the region, social protection in Pakistan has followed a sequence where schemes and programmes have emerged first (with the earliest policy statements, such as the National Social Protection Strategy (2007), focused on supporting the establishment of BISP). Serious investments in policies and systems have followed with investments in an overarching system and a wider coordinated programmatic approach. In terms of WFP's engagement, it has longstanding programming in school feeding. In the last decade, engagement with national social protection systems has also emerged, particularly following the establishment of BISP. This evolution is important – suggesting a growing role for WFP in supporting national social assistance systems and programming.

At the heart of WFP's most recent investments is the Nashonuma programme focused on health and nutrition. It aims to address stunting in children under 24 months through cash stipends, nutritional food, medical examination, and training. Nashonuma centres are opening in 14 districts in the first phase of the programme with a three-year budget of PKR 8.52 billion, fully funded by the Government of Pakistan. WFP is the implementing partner, providing on behalf of government. WFP has also played a substantial role in actions seeking to respond to climate-related shocks using social protection instruments. WFP has supported timely

access to adequate food and nutrition during and after natural disasters and shocks. For example, WFP Pakistan has worked closely with provincial disaster management authorities to support disaster-affected populations. A significant contribution by WFP at this level was support in revising targeting criteria – shifting criteria towards vulnerability and intersectionality, resulting in improved targeting. As shock-responsive social protection has become a focus for government, WFP has supported the integration and expansion of safety net interventions through top-up cash assistance to the most marginalized populations under the BISP programme. This support has offset the negative effects of multiple shocks. These experiences leave WFP well-positioned to contribute to further developing and strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems in Pakistan.

MOVING FORWARDS: WFP'S ROLE IN SOCIAL PROTECTION IN PAKISTAN

In the future, effective engagement by WFP that optimizes the available resources requires recognition that social protection in Pakistan is a crowded space, with substantial government capacity and longstanding engagement by other agencies. While WFP has a longstanding presence, particularly in nutrition, school feeding, and its shock-responsive complementary programmes, its direct engagement with core national social protection policies and programmes is relatively recent. For these reasons, WFP needs to identify gaps and shortcomings in the current national social protection landscape and to clarify where it can contribute specific added value and complement rather than compete with other development partners. From the document analysis, mapping of policies, programmes and actors, and the interviews with various stakeholders, three areas stand out in the social protection landscape where WFP could make a substantial and distinct contribution: closing the gap between social protection and food security; advancing shock-responsive social protection; and strengthening social protection in the most challenging areas and among the most excluded groups.

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

While tackling stunting is widely acknowledged as an objective for government social protection, much of the dialogue on social protection remains relatively tightly focused on income poverty and shock responses. Food security and nutrition are not embedded into Pakistan's social protection policies, systems and programmes.

There are certainly specific programmes focused on food security and nutrition but systemically tackling food security and nutrition is important. Work to maximize social protection's contribution to helping Pakistan achieve SDG2 would be timely. Some programmes focus highly on food security and nutrition (especially Nashonuma). WFP could leverage from its engagement on Nashonuma, and the diagnostic work that led to the Nashonuma design, to add value in the wider social protection policy space. WFP could work with the Ministry of Planning, where it also has a strong relationship with the parts of the Ministry that focus on nutrition, to build a more strategic, high-level dialogue and commitment to tackling stunting in Pakistan through social protection.

Influencing and supporting a high-level dialogue requires solid evidence about the current social protection portfolio and how it supports food and nutrition security. WFP could work towards ensuring that the portfolio of programmes under the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Department (PASS) offers a combination of food security and nutrition-specific and food security and nutrition-sensitive approaches that are clearly explained and justified. Both approaches exist but have little explicit articulation of how and why specific programmes are developed and designed to ensure coverage through both specific and sensitive routes. Specific actions could include a comprehensive mapping of specific and sensitive approaches, identifying gaps and appropriate revisions and new programming. WFP has substantial experience in this area that is perhaps not being explicitly demonstrated.

Supporting a high-level dialogue also requires cross-sectoral coordination, which is both important and challenging. While many programmes, actions and stakeholders have been brought together under a single umbrella, there remain a complex set of institutional mandates and activities to navigate, with a high potential for particular vulnerabilities or groups to fall through the gaps. Participants in interviews for this scoping study noted that nutrition, in particular, is highly cross-sectoral with a range of Ministries (such as planning, health, education, water and social protection,) and development partners (WFP, UNICEF, WHO and others) all working on nutrition. Participants highlighted the range of policy and programmatic responses (from the availability and quality of food to access to clean water). WFP can play a strong role in, for example, enabling the availability of and access to high quality and nutritious food, but it needs to coordinate with other development and humanitarian partners to capture other expertise such as UNICEF's technical experience delivering water and sanitation (WASH) initiatives.

ADVANCING SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

WFP and the Government of Pakistan are already working toward strengthened shock-responsive social protection with a strong commitment from both sides. WFP has engaged with different parts of government bilaterally in the past. For example, WFP collaborated with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to develop the Integrated Context Analysis (ICA), offering food security outcome data at district level for the whole country. In 2017, WFP sought to work more multilaterally in Pakistan, working across the disaster risk management, humanitarian, and social protection sectors to identify which coordination mechanisms and institutional arrangements to establish to accelerate the move to shock-responsive social protection systems.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Pakistan's use of BISP systems to provide both 'vertical' top-ups to existing beneficiaries and 'horizontal' expansion to new beneficiaries was internationally lauded. Despite these successes, the extent to which social protection systems in Pakistan are prepared for deployment for other shocks (especially 'national' disasters such as drought, flood, and earthquake, and those related to conflict and insecurity such as displacement) is more of a concern. The existing policy framework provides for addressing catastrophic shocks, but there is less clarity on lower level, more localized responses.

WFP could support in several areas. Firstly, it could provide support on how to adapt targeting systems to capture better or indicate those households likely to be most exposed to shocks. Current scorecard approaches measure proxy indicators that do not include or overlap with criteria that determine vulnerability to shocks. WFP could share its experience in data analytics and vulnerability monitoring in ways that ensure that WFP does not crowd out or compete with existing national data analytics capacity.

Another valuable contribution for WFP would be about alternatives or complements to social assistance. Globally, WFP has growing experience with insurance mechanisms and anticipatory action, especially for responding to climate shocks. Given that the Government of Pakistan has a strong social protection system and requires little help with basic and foundational system operations at federal level, WFP might add value by supporting government to identify options for ex-ante management of climate-related shocks whether through risk reduction, risk transference, risk retention or promoting prudent risk taking (WFP 2021d). At present, anticipatory actions are not directly linked to WFP's social protection initiatives in Pakistan, but this might be a pathway for extending the options around social protection that warrants further investigation.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN THE MOST CHALLENGING AREAS AND AMONG THE MOST EXCLUDED GROUPS

Capacities to diagnose poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity and directly address them are highly varied across Pakistan. Many of the activities identified above would need to take place both at an aggregate, national level and at a provincial level and below. For example, the mapping of food and nutrition-specific and -sensitive social protection would need to take place not just at federal level but would also need to capture if and how provincial and tehsil (administrative sub-district) -level actors are focusing on addressing food security and nutrition through social protection programmes, and the obstacles to doing so effectively and efficiently. The focus on provincial and tehsil-level initiatives highlights the importance of strengthening capacities in provinces and areas with the most vulnerable and food insecure households and where capacities to deliver social protection may be at their lowest. There is a strong rationale for WFP to work to strengthen local level capacities – both to deliver programmes and to ensure accurate and useable data collection, diagnosis, and MIS systems. In these locations, the need for social protection is either greatest or growing rapidly.

WFP is well placed to support programmes in some of the most difficult-to-reach parts of Pakistan. In many cases, this is because of the programmes it delivers jointly with provincial governments. For example, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the SPRING (Stunting Prevention Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain) Programme is implemented in four districts. The programme is co-funded by the Government of KP and WFP. It provides pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6–24 months with locally produced specialized nutritious food to enhance their dietary intake and reduce the incidence of chronic and acute malnutrition. The initiative also provides deworming and iron and folic acid tablets.

The KP SPRING programme highlights that geographical exclusion is just one of the challenges in Pakistan. Social exclusion is also prevalent, with specific groups facing distinct risks and in need of social protection that explicitly takes their situations into account. Bringing more focus on food security and nutrition into social protection also matters for excluded groups, especially where exclusion is based on gender. While many programmes target women and girls, including Nashonuma and WFP's own livelihoods programmes, the distinction between *gender-targeted* and *gender-sensitive* programmes in relation to food security and nutrition is not clearly articulated, either by WFP, government, or other international actors. Understanding how to strengthen gendered outcomes across all programmes depends on this clear understanding of the outcomes of both gender-specific and gender-sensitive programmes.

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Abbreviations, acronyms and other terms

BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CBT	Cash-Based Transfers
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CO	Country Office
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FNIS	Food Security and Nutrition Information System
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GCRI	Global Climate Risk Index
GDI	Gender Development Index
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
ICA	Integrated Context Analysis
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILO	International Labour Organization
Kafaalat	Programme – also known as BISP
KP SPRU	KP Social Protection Reform Unit
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Province)
Nashonuma	Programme 'No-one sleeps hungry'
NCD	Non-communicable Disease
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NMD	Newly-Merged District
NNS	National Nutrition Survey
NSER	National Socio-Economic Registry
PASSD	Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Department
PBM	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal
PKR	Pakistan Rupees
PoU	Prevalence of Undernourishment
PPAF	Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (Survey)
PSPA	Punjab Social Protection Authority
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SNF	Specialized nutritious food
SOFI	State of Food Security and Nutrition
SPRC	Social Protection Research Centre
SPRING	(Programme) Stunting Prevention Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain
SUN	Scale-up Nutrition
Tehsil	administrative sub-division of a district
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
Union council	administrative sub-division below tehsil
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WASH	(Programme) Water, sanitation and hygiene
WeT	Waseela-e-Taleem (CCT programme within BISP)
WFP RBB	World Food Programme Regional Bureau Bangkok
WFP	World Food Programme
Zakat	Alms/charitable provision under a pillar of Islam

Figure 1: Map of Pakistan provinces and administrations



1. Introduction

1.1 Background, rationale and objectives

Social protection is relatively well established in Pakistan but with low coverage levels for social assistance and social insurance among informal economy workers. Existing social protection schemes are dominated by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). However, the recent development and implementation of the overarching social protection and poverty eradication framework signals a shift from a set of fragmented schemes towards a more systemic, harmonized and programme-based approach.

In Pakistan, WFP's social protection work has historically focused on nutrition, school feeding and shock responses, but the more recent government focus on tackling stunting resonates strongly with WFP mandates and priorities. As WFP Pakistan moves into a new country strategy planning cycle, this is a timely moment to consider the role of WFP in supporting social protection in Pakistan.

This study is part of a wider project commissioned by WFP's Regional Bureau covering Asia and the Pacific (WFP RBB) to conduct a series of scoping studies and a regional synthesis report on enhancing food security and nutrition and managing risks and shocks in Asia and the Pacific through support to social protection systems. The objective of the wider project is to influence the formulation of social protection in Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) for selected Country Offices (COs) by carrying out four country scoping studies on social protection in the Asia Pacific region (Cambodia, Pakistan, Samoa and Sri Lanka). The scoping studies and regional synthesis report seek to consolidate lessons about and understanding of the social protection landscape, significant actors, policies and initiatives, and opportunities and challenges that can help integrate social protection into the WFP CSPs. This understanding will help ensure that CO's engagement in social protection is well-defined with clear objectives, outputs and activities, including capacity building actions to support the design and delivery of social protection. The studies also seek to inform a wider community of actors working on social protection in the region about developments and new perspectives in the sector.

Specifically, this study seeks to:

- a) **Enable a deeper understanding of existing national social protection policies, programmes and related instruments** with a focus on food security, nutrition and shocks in Pakistan; and the main national and international social protection actors in-country or regionally, their priorities, roles and activities.
- b) **Provide an overview of the challenges and opportunities of social protection** in Pakistan to: address multidimensional vulnerability better; help people better manage risks and shocks; and contribute to zero hunger.
- c) **Provide strategic and programmatic recommendations to WFP CO** that can feed into the formulation of the new generation of the CSP to better define and improve their strategic direction, policy, programmatic and partnership engagement in support of national social protection systems and goals.

1.2 Focus of the study

The study is focused on government-led social protection programmes where WFP plays a supporting role through providing technical or operational support. It focuses on WFP's own activities, such as cash-based transfers, only where they are directly linked to government initiatives or can generate lessons for future government programming.

While social protection can encompass multiple objectives, this study focuses on those elements of social protection most directly related to WFP mandates. As noted in the *WFP Strategy for Support to Social Protection* (WFP 2021a), social protection typically covers 'social assistance' (a range of cash and/or in-kind transfers and fee waivers), 'social insurance' mechanisms which are contributory (i.e., financed by or on behalf of the recipient) and active labour market programmes. Social assistance relates far more directly to WFP's mandate and so is the focus of the study.

Beyond this, however, it is also important to recognize the following.

- The potential role of social insurance, especially to support informal economy workers who experience food insecurity or nutrition deficits.
- WFP activities which are ‘socially protecting’. By this we mean activities that contribute to reducing vulnerability, poverty or food insecurity but are not part of social protection. Examples are providing supply chain logistics that help stabilize prices in food markets to support food availability and access or investments in water infrastructure that reduce water-borne disease and contribute to reducing stunting.
- WFP initiatives supporting health, education and nutrition that take place outside the social protection sector but might be viewed as social protection. Specifically, initiatives relating to social services (for groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services) and social equity (to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse).

Putting these elements together means prioritizing a focus in this study on: i) understanding social protection and related initiatives that prioritize efforts to tackle stunting, but without ignoring initiatives in response to wasting/acute malnutrition (WFP 2022a); and ii) identifying mechanisms to tackle the root causes of poverty and food insecurity, but without ignoring emergency response activities that are linked to or delivered through social protection systems and schemes.

Regarding the study’s timeline, three substantial events took place in 2022 that have a strong bearing on social protection in Pakistan and how WFP seeks to support it. First, the war in Ukraine began partway through the document review and, in most cases, after key informant interviews. Second, similarly, a change of government in April 2022 resulted in the halting of specific initiatives undertaken by the previous government. Third, the worst floods in Pakistan’s history began in June 2022 with estimated losses of USD 40 billion. All these events created challenges in tracking changes in social protection priorities and programmes. Rather than try and retrospectively re-analyse data, or consistently update and adjust the analysis, this study instead notes where the specific challenges in Pakistan will have become more severe given the global and national disruptions and their knock-on effects (See Section 5.4).

1.3 Structure of the study

The structure of the remainder of this study is as follows. Section 2 overviews the Pakistan context, looking at poverty, vulnerability, food security and shocks. Section 3 discusses national social protection priorities, institutions, and systems in Pakistan, while Section 4 provides an overview of currently operating social protection programmes. Section 5 looks at the country’s responses to shock, and Section 6 looks at significant actors operating in the social protection space. Section 7 discusses how social protection could advance zero hunger, and Section 8 proposes how WFP could strategically support national social protection in Pakistan.

2. Pakistan context

PAKISTAN – AT A GLANCE

- Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world, with a population of 232.2 million, more than half (63.6 percent) of whom live in rural areas. The country has an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent (Bureau of Statistics 2017).
- Approximately 54.6 percent of the population in rural areas are multidimensionally poor.¹ Covid-19 has led to a growth in multidimensional poverty, especially among the elderly, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), women, children, youth, and workers in the informal economy.
- The World Bank has classified Pakistan as a lower-middle-income country that aims to graduate to upper-middle-income status by 2025. Pakistan is located along major regional economic corridors, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC) (World Bank 2021a).
- The country remains highly vulnerable to the threat of climate change, closely linked to its semi-arid climate, rapid population growth, and increased water scarcity.
- Despite notable progress, including the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national priorities and including Vision 2025, Pakistan is unlikely to achieve most SDGs by the 2030 deadline. Progress towards the 2030 Agenda has been constrained by multiple complex factors, including exacerbated inequality driven by Covid-19.

(Source: draft WFP Pakistan Country Strategy Plan 2022 and Pakistan Social and Living Standards measurement Survey. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2021) (PSLM) 2019–2020)

2.1 Poverty and inequality in Pakistan

Income poverty is declining in Pakistan (World Bank 2021b) but with substantial geographical and demographic variation and challenges. Considering poverty as multidimensional, presents a starker picture: Pakistan's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2019 placed Pakistan in the 'medium' category, and the country ranked 154 out of 189 countries in the index based on Health, Education and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita; improvements in HDI lag those of Bangladesh and India between 1990 and 2019 (UNDP 2020).

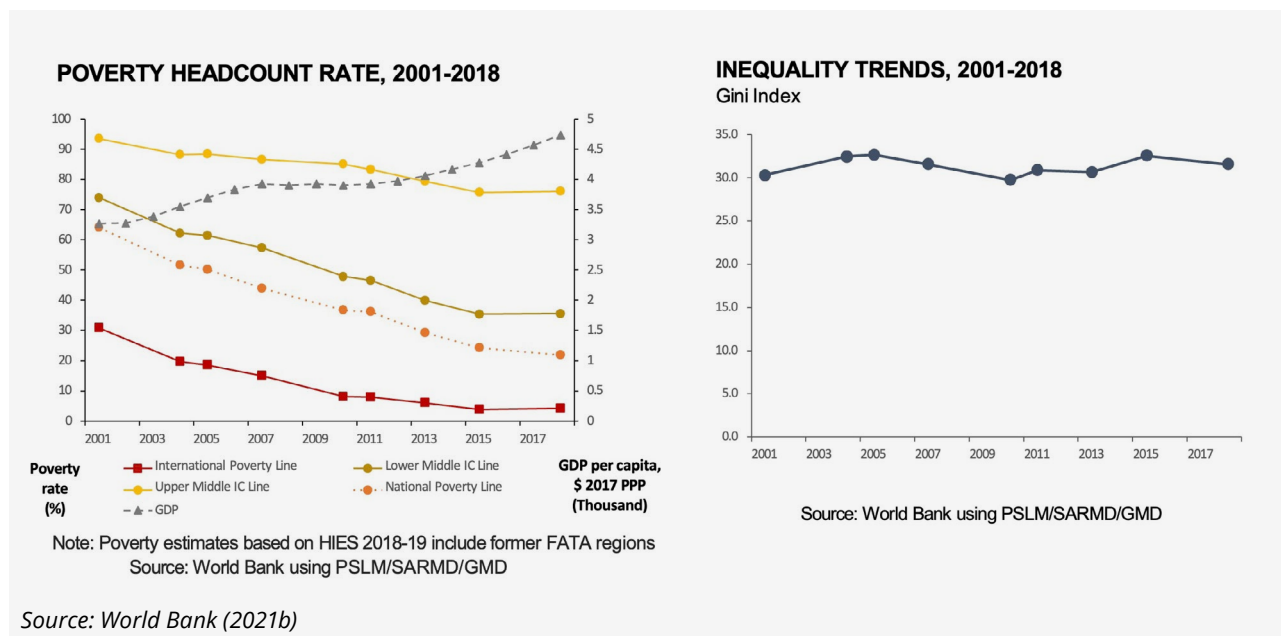
Longstanding broad patterns in poverty include a preponderance of severe and chronic poverty in rural areas and more transitory poverty in urban centres (Arif and Bilguese 2007). More recently, four dynamics/trajectories of poverty have been identified: chronic poverty, impoverishment, transitory poor, and resilience with Farooq (2019) finding that while some 12–15 per cent of rural households are in chronic poverty, about a third of rural households moved either into or out of poverty. An adequate social protection response, therefore, requires support for both the chronic and the transient or churning poor – those that regular move above and below the poverty line. The geographical disparities in poverty suggest that investments in infrastructure are required alongside social protection in the most deprived and remote regions (Farooq 2019, SPRC 2020).

¹ A multidimensional approach to poverty captures deprivations beyond income and basic consumption and includes health, education, living standards, disemployment, quality of work, threats of violence and living in hazardous areas. United Nations Development Programme, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform (2015). Multidimensional Poverty in Pakistan. Islamabad: UNDP.

Table 1: Pakistan poverty data

Poverty	Number of poor (million)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	46.5	21.9	2018
International Poverty Line	9.4	4.4	2018
75.1 in Pakistan Rupee (2018) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita			
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line	75.8	35.7	2018
126.6 in Pakistan Rupee (2018) or US\$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita			
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line	161.8	76.2	2018
217.5 in Pakistan Rupee (2018) or US\$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita			
Shared Prosperity			
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		1.14	2013-2018
Inequality			
Gini Index		31.6	2018
Shared Prosperity Premium + Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		-0.32	2013-2018

Figure 2: Poverty and inequality trends: Pakistan 2001–2018



2.2 Vulnerability to shocks

2.2.1 CLIMATE RISK AND DISASTERS

PAKISTAN'S VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE RISKS AND DISASTERS – AT A GLANCE

- Pakistan ranks eighth in the 2021 Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI) and will continue to experience extreme weather events that will impact the country's water resources. In response, the Ministry of Climate Change has called for the ecological restoration of the Indus River Basin, which the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) will support through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027.
- Pakistan's smallholder farmers are directly affected by climate change, as their livelihoods rely highly on weather and natural resources. The subsistence nature of agricultural production, compounded with limited access to productive and financial resources, limits smallholder farmers' capacities to provide for their families' caloric needs exposing them to periodic moderate to severe food insecurity (UNDESA 2021a, National Institute of Population Studies, 2020).
- Climate change and associated shocks result in large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre² estimates that in 2020, around 829,000 people were internally displaced and that by the end of the year, Pakistan had 806,000 IDPs. Of this number, 104,000 were displaced due to conflict and violence, with the vast majority displaced by disasters.

Source: *draft WFP Pakistan Country Strategy Plan 2022*

The prevalence of climate-related and environmental shocks strongly influences social protection approaches, with a combination of support for chronically poor people who experience seasonal food shortages and benefit from consumption smoothing mechanisms and/or those who need shock-responsive transfers.

2.2.2 OTHER SHOCKS

More recent shocks, specifically Covid-19 have shifted the geographical distribution of vulnerability, with households in urban areas particularly susceptible to food supply chain problems because of transport disruption, higher prices, and restrictions to livelihoods during lockdowns and other public health mechanisms to reduce vectors of infection. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics found that 55 percent of the working-age population in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province were either affected by job losses or reduced income during the pandemic. The financial implication at household level was 67 percent reduced household income in urban areas (compared to 63 percent in rural areas) in KP (Government of Pakistan 2021).

Political instability, conflict and displacement are further shocks faced by households in Pakistan. Rapid shifts in control of government can destabilize the economy. Counter-insurgency operations are frequent – both to tackle internal insurgents and border incursions from Afghanistan – resulting, in the last decade or so, in the displacement of millions, especially from Newly-Merged District (NMD). Displacement has reduced substantially after the 'Swat operation', with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reporting in 2020 that just over 100,000 people were internally displaced. Pakistan has housed Afghan refugees since the Soviet-Afghan war beginning in 1979, with refugee numbers growing to over 4 million, then declining to around 1.5 million by 2020 and increasing again following the fall of the Afghanistan government to the Taliban in August 2021. Many Afghan refugees are third or fourth generation, creating complex questions about if and how social protection might absorb long-term refugees into national programmes.

² <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/pakistan>

2.3 Food security and nutrition

PAKISTAN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION – AT A GLANCE

- The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2021 considers Pakistan a food crisis country with high levels of acute food insecurity (FAO, 2021). The SOFI 2021 estimates Pakistan's Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) to be 12.9 percent. Pakistan ranked among countries with the highest PoU in 2020 (WFP, 2021b). A decline in food production 2018–2020, high food prices, and uneven access to food contribute to high rates of food insecurity (United Nations Country Team, 2021), with 35 percent (1.7 million people) food insecure, while in some districts, food insecurity reaches 62 percent (Bureau of Statistics, 2021).
- Based on Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) data, 16.4 percent of the population are moderately or severely food insecure, and of these, 1.8 percent are severely food insecure. However, FIES data disaggregated by gender/sex of the household head is not yet available. The FIES indicator revealed high geographical disparities in food insecurity. As expected, households headed by women are particularly disadvantaged due to their lack of productive assets (e.g., livestock and agricultural land) and discriminatory inheritance laws.
- Government of Pakistan/WFP's study on Minimum Cost of the Diet, Pakistan 2016 revealed that 68 percent of households were unable to afford staple adjusted nutritious food considering a per capita requirement of 2,350 Kcal per person per day (Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform et al 2016).
- Malnutrition remains an area of concern underscored by the Pakistan National Nutrition Survey (NNS) 2018 finding that wasting among children under five stood at approximately 18 percent, exceeding the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (Government of Pakistan and UNICEF 2018). The survey also found that more than 40 percent of children under five are stunted. In addition, the number of children under five years suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severely Acute Malnutrition (SAM) has also increased over the past few years. Child malnutrition is highest at the provincial level and most alarming in Sindh, Balochistan and the Newly-Merged District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Analysis by UNICEF indicates that boys in Pakistan are more likely to be affected by all forms of malnutrition, with some evidence of regional disparities (Mahmood et al 2020).

(Source: *draft WFP Pakistan Country Strategy Plan 2022*)

Beyond these features of food security and nutrition in Pakistan, some further points are important.

- Food security is threatened by low resilience to climate-related shocks and susceptibility to other threats that have emerged following the Covid-19 pandemic, including economic slowdowns and food price inflation.
- Analyses of food security expose strong geographical disparities. As noted by WFP et al. (2019), some provinces (Sindh and Balochistan) becoming more food insecure are the worst affected by child malnutrition. Furthermore, while rural households are more food insecure in terms of economic access and have lower dietary diversity, overweight and obesity are rapidly increasing, especially in urban areas of Pakistan, indicating a nutrition transition. Specific groups are especially exposed. Women of childbearing age have high rates of underweight and deficiencies in zinc, and vitamins A and D, with knock-on effects on unborn children. Children of low birth weight are then reported to have an increased likelihood of becoming stunted in the short term and/or overweight and vulnerable to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the long term (WFP et al. 2019).
- Dietary diversity is limited with a predominantly wheat-based (hence energy-dense but low-nutrition) diet due to poverty, subsidies, or lack of knowledge (WFP et al. 2019). Social protection can contribute directly by making a diverse range of foods more accessible to the poor and also indirectly through complementary initiatives such as education on the health consequences of poor diets and dietary guidelines; supplementation and fortification; and interventions on price, food safety, market infrastructure and supply.

2.4 Gender equality, social inclusion and anti-discrimination

PAKISTAN GENDER, INCLUSION AND DISCRIMINATION – AT A GLANCE

- Pakistan ranked equally low on the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The 2019 female HDI value for Pakistan was 0.456 in contrast to 0.612 for males. Pakistan has a GII value of 0.538, ranking 135 out of 162 countries in the 2019 index (UNDP 2020).
- The country's ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2021 declined, joining the ranks of the bottom four countries, down from 151 in 2020 to 153 out of 156 countries (World Economic Forum 2021). Significant disparities between women and men also exist regarding income, access to justice, land ownership, and inheritance rights (World Economic Forum 2021).
- People with disability (PWD), who comprise 3.41 percent of the population according to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2020, face extreme marginalization in terms of access to social services while women with disabilities suffer most as they face the double burden of gender-based discrimination and disability. However, reliable data is urgently needed to understand the correlation between hunger and disability.

(Source: *draft WFP Pakistan Country Strategy Plan 2022*)

WFP (2022b, p. 1) notes that in some parts of Pakistan, women are excluded even more. In terms of labour market engagement, 'Female participation is even lower at 6% in the Newly-Merged District of KP, where most women do not participate in labour outside of their homes'. Some reasons behind this low rate are cultural norms, household responsibilities, and the lack of education and knowledge regarding opportunities.

Inequality is also a cross-cutting challenge. Adjusting Pakistan's HDI for 2019 to account for inequality results in a significant loss in HDI from 0.557 to 0.384 (UNDP 2020). The average loss due to inequality for medium HDI countries is 26.3 percent and for South Asia 25.9 percent. Pakistan's human inequality coefficient is 30.2 percent.

2.5 Telecommunications, digital and financial inclusion

Many parts of Pakistan, particularly remote, sparsely populated, and hard-to-reach areas, have substantial telecommunications and digital and financial inclusion deficits.

From 2008 to 2015, the proportion of the adult population served by the formal financial sector in Pakistan rose from 12 percent to 23 percent, according to data from two rounds of the Access to Finance Surveys (A2FS) for Pakistan (2008 and 2015) (World Bank 2019). However, women are still frequently excluded from financial systems and banking, and information on access to and eligibility for social protection schemes. According to World Bank (2017a), the share of adults with a bank account in Pakistan was still low at around 20 percent, leaving some 100 million people unbanked. Substantial progress has been made, doubling the figure since 2011, but the gender gap for account ownership is still nearly 30 percentage points (World Bank 2017a).

Regarding communications, WFP's draft CSP notes that Pakistan has achieved a slow but steady growth in fixed internet broadband subscriptions and individual usage. The proportion of individuals accessing the internet has increased from 17 percent in 2019 to 19 percent in 2020.

The implications for social protection are manifold. Digital payment systems must work around many social protection recipients' 'unbanked' status and provide alternatives (including mobile money transfers or physical cash collection). Solutions should avoid complex identification and data verification systems that can, in turn, create stress and anxiety and obstacles to access for illiterate recipients. Communications attached to social protection programmes – especially understanding eligibility and applications processes – need to be simple and accessible to be effective.

While financial inclusion can support the effective delivery of social protection, social protection can also contribute indirectly to communications and financial inclusion. WFP's Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) programmes have indirectly contributed to enhanced internet coverage through financial service providers using prepaid cards, mobile money and online cash disbursements in remote areas of the country. This contribution aids financial inclusion and access to banking services.

3. Social protection in Pakistan: policy priorities and systems

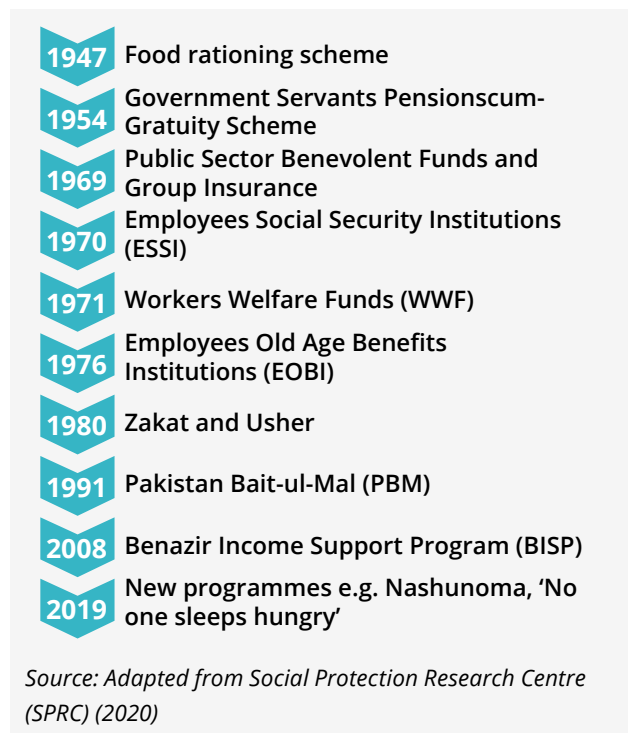
3.1 Summary points

- Pakistan’s social protection system is focused predominantly on SDG 1 (End Poverty) rather than SDG2 (End Hunger), but stakeholders widely agree on the importance of tackling stunting through social protection.
- In common with many other countries in the region, social protection in Pakistan has followed a sequence in which schemes and programmes have emerged first (with the earliest policy statements, such as the National Social Protection Strategy (2007) focused on supporting the establishment of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). Serious investments in policies and systems have followed with investments in an overarching system and wider coordinated programmatic approach.
- Existing systems and priorities are defined in Pakistan’s social protection and poverty eradication initiative, aimed at tackling fragmentation of social protection and poverty eradication schemes.

3.2 Evolution of social protection

Social protection in Pakistan has emerged steadily since independence (Figure 3). The development began with building social insurance on the food rationing scheme that existed at independence, to systematizing Zakat (alms/charitable provision under a pillar of Islam), to expanding beyond religious affiliations that determined Zakat, to social assistance. In terms of WFP’s engagement, it has longstanding programming in school feeding. However, beyond this, in the last decade, engagement with national social protection systems has also emerged, particularly following the establishment of BISP. This evolution is important – suggesting a growing role for WFP in supporting national social assistance systems and programming.

Figure 3 Evolution of social protection in Pakistan



3.3 Constitutional commitments and policies

Pakistan’s constitution provides guarantees for social protection – namely for social security and life’s necessities.

Other policies are also significant, especially those related to nutrition, including the Protection of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Act, the Food Fortification Act, and the Early Marriage Restraint Act. Pakistan is part of the Scale-Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms has a dedicated SUN secretariat. Provincial planning and development departments also have SUN units, facilitating coordination at the provincial level. National and provincial food fortification alliances have been established through the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. These initiatives are shifting the focus from treating acutely malnourished children to preventing stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies through nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions related to agriculture, health, education, gender equality and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

3.4 BISP's expansion

The expansion of BISP was launched in 2019 through several initiatives and is described as Pakistan's most extensive ever social protection and poverty eradication initiative (Government of Pakistan 2021). With a new strategy approved by the federal Government in 2020, 134 programmes/initiatives/schemes are organized under four pillars delivered through a complex set of institutional mandates. (Section 4 describes the schemes relevant to WFP's engagement in social protection and Section 6 describes the institutions and coordination arrangements.) The critical institutional change was the establishment of a new Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety that houses different components of the safety nets programme.

Pillar 1 focuses on addressing elite capture and making the government system work for equality. Pillar 2 is the most relevant for social protection work, as it is based on safety nets. Pillar 3 focuses on enhancing human capital development and Pillar 4 on supporting jobs and livelihoods .

Under Pillar 2, the Government notes that prior to Covid-19, 38.8 percent of people in Pakistan suffered from poverty in one form or another, and 24.4 percent did not have enough money to satisfy their basic food and non-food needs. Pillar 2 encompasses both a systems and a programmatic focus. Overall, the Government seeks to use Pillar 2 to enhance government social protection spending; increase the scope and coverage of safety nets; strengthen the governance of institutions implementing safety net programmes; support targeting and registries; build systems for efficiency and integrity; and link safety nets to other services through a 'one-window' approach. On targeting and registries, the priority is for government to identify the poor more effectively to precisely target government support for the maximum poverty reduction impact. Pillar 2 underpins the development of a National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), with the aim of multiple validations through follow-up review surveys and big data analytics to identify the poor and the eventual conversion of the registry correctly and precisely into a live registry.

3.5 Governance systems

A large part of this extensive expansion process aims to overcome challenges in Pakistan's social protection system related to systems and governance. Programmes and benefits are fragmented, there is a proliferation of small-scale interventions and concerns about impact at scale (ILO 2021) (Table 2).

The challenges have emerged mainly because of the pathway by which social protection has emerged in Pakistan. Social protection has followed a typical pathway where social security has existed for some time for formal sector workers, especially public sector workers, and social safety nets have emerged only later through a single flagship programme (BISP) that has grown substantially with high levels of international support. As well as BISP, multiple other small-scale, fragmented schemes have also emerged. The result, though, is a set of systems for designing and delivering safety nets dominated by the objectives and operations of BISP. The challenge is somewhat akin to changing the direction of an oil tanker. BISP has brought multiple activities under a single umbrella, though it has done less so far to reduce the proliferation of programmes and activities.

Governance at provincial level is a challenge. While the 18th amendment to Pakistan's constitution was approved in 2010 and devolved various social sector and service delivery responsibilities to the provinces, there are substantial inter-provincial disparities in poverty and food insecurity, social protection needs and the capacities of provincial, tehsil (administrative subdistrict) and union council administrations to deliver. All of Pakistan's four provinces and the regions have established social welfare departments; however, Pakistan differs from many other countries in that its main social protection initiatives are often provided through specialist agencies outside of social welfare ministries/departments. Only two of Pakistan's provinces have social protection coordinating bodies (ILO 2019) – The Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA) and the KP Social Protection Reform Unit (SPRU). Where provinces develop programmes and schemes separate from the federal initiatives, for example, the PSPA's new Disability Cash Transfer and Brick Kiln Worker Cash Transfer, they are implemented by the provincial Department of Social Welfare, because it has the required district structure available (ILO 2019).

Table 2: Challenges for social protection in Pakistan

Processes	Issues
Policy and programme design	<p>The social protection system is shaped by programme design rather than through a policy-level strategic approach.</p> <p>(Some stakeholders believe that) social protection elements in the BISP need to be delinked from poverty alleviation and placed within a broader framework that focuses on social protection and its broader range of objectives.</p>
Registration and enrolment, citizen/community groups, grievance redress mechanisms, collection points, payment systems (community-facing processes)	<p>Multiple service points complicate access for citizens (e.g., the BISP has offices at the tehsil level, the Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA) uses the Social Welfare Department’s district level offices, etc.).</p> <p>There is currently no systematic, local-level mechanism for ongoing registration in contributory and non-contributory schemes. Larger social assistance interventions use information from the National Socio-Economic Registry to determine eligibility according to the proxy means testing formula. Current contributory schemes use registration at the enterprise level.</p> <p>The KP Social Protection Reform Unit piloted the ‘one-window operation’ for integrating services in selected districts. The initiative was not rolled out and was subsequently used solely for disability benefits.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation, integrated data and information systems, beneficiary registries, payroll management, programme evaluations (bridging level processes)	<p>There is currently no integration of beneficiary systems, although the BISP has pioneered bridging-level systems that can be expanded. Similarly, the PSPA oversees overall coordination across contributory and non-contributory schemes. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems it has developed offer a solid basis for further integration.</p> <p>There is currently no systematic provincial-federal data integration.</p> <p>There is no interprovincial system for beneficiary registration, which would be required, for example, for setting up benefits mobility across jurisdictions in the future.</p>

Source: adapted from ILO (2021)

3.6 Data and information systems

In recent years, registries have become the aspiration for those seeking to improve social protection effectiveness, efficiency and outcomes. There are substantial steps towards a registry in Pakistan through the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) Survey. The survey goes door-to-door nationwide, gathering data about the socioeconomic status of households and will be used to determine household eligibility for various programmes and to facilitate enrolment. By June 2021, the survey covered 87 percent of the country. Completing the survey at district level allows the establishment of registration desks that facilitate self-registration. The aim is to establish desks across the country at tehsil level. Initially, 63 registration desks were established in 15 districts.

These desks help ensure that missing households can be added to the survey and demographic data updated.

Under BISP, a ‘one window’ information and service approach provides better access to the multiple programmes outlined in Section 4. The aim is to extend maximum facilitation and information to disadvantaged populations to enhance access, understanding of eligibility and take up. It is also establishing 500 digital hubs at the tehsil level where government digital resources will be made accessible as a public good (information systems, online curricula, one-window social protection interfaces) to create opportunities for poor families to graduate out of poverty.

3.7 Knowledge and policy

BISP has established distinct expert groups and an Observatory. These groups seek to improve the level of analysis and knowledge to guide policymaking and programme design, establish service standards and ensure transparency and accountability. Examples include the BISP Labour Expert Group, one of several groups mandated to provide evidence-based practical recommendations extending labour welfare measures to the informal sector; the stakeholders' committee establishing living standards for orphanages and childcare centres; and the Observatory for governance and integrity.

3.8 Budgets and financing systems

Pakistan finances most of the social protection in the country, with international agencies largely providing technical assistance (TA). In some cases (see Section 4.2 for information about WFP's engagement with the Nashonuma programme), international agencies and NGOs provide direct implementation. The Government of Pakistan (2021, p. 245) confirms the increase in pro-poor expenditures in the social security and welfare sector (including BISP and SDG expenditures) (Table 3).

ILO (2019) suggests that a conservative estimate places the

Federal Government's expenditure on social protection in a representative year at approximately PKR 405.6 billion. It finds that, in terms of relative estimates, expenditure on social protection schemes was about 8 percent of the federal budget outlay in 2016/2017, which amounted to PKR 4,894.9 billion.

The forthcoming WFP CSP for Pakistan notes that inflows of Foreign Direct Investment (SDG 17.3) steadily declined from 2016 to 2018 but slightly increased in 2019 (2218 million USD) (UNDESA 2021b). Traditional sources of humanitarian funding continue to decline as a share of support, with government contributions to social protection and humanitarian assistance increasing over time. While provincial governments are making budgetary allocations for joint initiatives in various sectors, tracking social protection expenditures is far more challenging (ILO 2019), with estimates for social protection's share of provincial expenditures as follows: Balochistan – 6.5 percent; Punjab – 9 percent; Sindh – 8 percent; KP – 11 percent but with most of this spent on pensions and the benevolent fund rather than social assistance.

Overall, the policy approach and direction of travel suggest that routine, regular social protection will be funded by government, but contingency, for example, for shock-responsive social protection, may also include international actors.

Table 3: Social security and welfare expenditures and BISP yearly cash grants

Sector	Expenditure (Rs billion)					
	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–19
Social security and welfare	93.48	155.73	173.53	259.46	257.53	Nd
BISP yearly cash grants made	66.3	89.0	98.5	104.4	102.2	124.7

Source: adapted from Government of Pakistan (2021: p. 245–246)

4. Social protection in Pakistan: programmes

4.1 Overview

Despite a multitude of schemes and programmes identified by ILO (2021) covering scores, if not hundreds of programmes, overall coverage of social protection is low. ILO (2019) estimates that spending on social protection by both federal and provincial governments was 2.36 percent of GDP in 2016–2017. Social assistance constitutes 0.9 percent of GDP (Bloch 2020). Some 9.2 percent of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit. Pakistan's social protection system does not sufficiently cover the so-called 'missing middle' – those that are too poor to afford contributory insurance but not poor enough to receive social assistance.

ILO 2021 finds that social protection coverage, both in terms of who is covered and the level of benefits, is insufficient. In 2018, the country's flagship scheme, BISP, reached 7.2 percent of the population, while an estimated 31 percent of Pakistanis lived below the poverty line. Emergency cash transfers reached 16.9 million families (including 5 million BISP beneficiaries and 11.9 million new beneficiaries), although government estimates warned that 18.5 million people would become jobless because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The coverage of other poverty-targeted schemes, such as Zakat, is also low. Employment-based contributory schemes only cover workers in the formal economy. This leaves workers in the informal economy, who account for 71.7 percent of the non-agricultural workforce, without any coverage (ILO 2021).

Challenges identified in ILO (2021) and from key informant interviews with the existing suite of programmes include the following.

- Safety net disbursements are small, and benefit amounts have not been revised in line with the rising cost of living.
- Different entities provide similar types of benefits, creating duplication.
- Providing multiple types of benefits from limited funds is counterproductive and fails to ensure adequate benefits in any category.

- Benefits for the working poor in the formal economy are inadequate or inaccessible, while there is no provision for those in the informal economy.
- There are limited grievance mechanisms and systems for accountability, and information about eligibility for programmes is not widely available.
- There is significant imbalance at provincial level (from strong/established to weak/fledging systems) respectively in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan).

4.2 Social safety nets

Social safety nets are dominated by a focus on poverty reduction and tend to be needs-tested, with additional social and demographic categorical targeting, particularly for conditional cash transfer programmes.

4.2.1 BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME (BISP)/KAFAALAT

BISP, more recently also known as Kafaalat, remains Pakistan's flagship social protection programme. BISP/Kafaalat is an unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programme providing monthly cash stipends of PKR 2,000. It is delivered through bank accounts to 7 million recipients and (based on an average of 6 people per household nationally) reaches around 42 million people. (Government of Pakistan 2021). Beneficiary numbers are high but still make little impact on the 30–40 percent of people in Pakistan living below the poverty line, depending on the measurement used. BISP was established in 2008 and has grown substantially since then (Table 4).

Table 4: BISP disbursements and beneficiaries

Financial Year	Released	Funds Transfer to Cash Grants (Rs in billion)			Number of Beneficiaries (million)
		Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)	Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT)	Total (UCT+CCT)	
2008-09	15.32	0.04	15.81	15.85	1.76
2009-10	39.94	2.89	31.94	34.83	2.58
2010-11	34.42	5.30	29.66	34.96	3.10
2011-12	49.53	4.28	41.60	45.88	3.68
2012-13	50.10	3.17	43.30	46.47	3.75
2013-14	69.62	1.20	65.11	66.31	4.64
2014-15	91.78	0.45	88.59	89.04	5.05
2015-16	102.00	1.88	96.65	98.53	5.21
2016-17	111.50	2.27	102.10	104.37	5.46
2017-18	107.00	3.20	99.00	102.20	5.63
2018-19	116.50	4.01	104.60	108.60	5.78
2019-20	243.71*	3.70	228.67*	232.37	14.40
2020-21**	194.91	0.51	138.78	139.29	6.78
Total	1,226.33	32.90	1,085.81	1,118.70	-

* Including Emergency Cash Transfer (Covid-19)

Source: Government of Pakistan (2021)

** Until 30th April 2021

Impact evaluations from BISP demonstrate strong results. The World Bank (2017b) noted that 'The latest impact evaluation (2016) finds positive effects on reducing wasting — a measure of short-term malnutrition—among girls (ages 0–59 months). It also shows an increase of 11 percent in per adult equivalent monthly consumption expenditures and positive effects on variables associated with women's empowerment. The data indicates that women are more likely to have obtained a national ID card, to have permission to travel alone to various locales in the community and to report being able to vote. The impact evaluation finds no work disincentive effects on households' labour supply, which is consistent with findings from other countries implementing similar programmes. Furthermore, there is evidence that the programme is enabling households to save and invest in small livestock. The impact evaluation of Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) found that it has a positive impact on school enrolment. The full package of the BISP basic cash transfers and WeT benefits has increased primary school enrolment by 10 percentage points, with the marginal impact of the WeT program leading to a 9-percentage point increase in primary school enrolment' (World Bank, 2017b).

Despite the growth of BISP/Kafaalat in recent years, the challenge of low coverage remains, and coupled with low transfer levels, impedes the impact of BISP/ Kafaalat impact on poverty (Durr-E-Nayab and Farooq 2014, Cheema et al. 2016, Saeed and Hayat 2020). Other challenges include concerns about the accuracy of beneficiary data, targeting database updates and public trust/accountability and the functioning of grievance mechanisms. Since the establishment of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, significant investments have been made in the survey process to establish and update the national registry.

4.2.2 EMERGENCY CASH

In 2020, the Government of Pakistan delivered emergency cash transfers as part of the Covid-19 response. According to the Ehsaas Emergency Cash Report, prepared in 2021, the Government provided a one-off payment of PKR 12,000 to 16.9 million families (Table 4). 5 million of these families were existing BISP beneficiaries. Given family size, more than 100 million people and at least half the country's population were supported. (Section 5.1 provides lessons from the Covid response for social protection in the longer term.)

4.2.3 CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS (CCTS)

BISP includes CCTs for education (sometimes known as Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT)). Initially, the programme covered primary school enrolment of 3.69 million children across 160,246 public and private schools and the disbursement of PKR 15.7 million as of June 2020. Expansion and reform of the education CCT is underway, with four significant areas of reform: first, end-to-end digitization of a number of procedures that were previously managed manually, including the development of apps to register children and monitor compliance with conditions; second, a shift away from reliance on NGOs for delivery to a more centralized delivery infrastructure; third, the stipend has been increased to PKR 1,500 for boys and PKR 2,000 for girls per quarter dependent on 70 percent attendance at school; and fourth, the programme is being expanded to all districts of the country.

4.2.4 NASHONUMA

Nashonuma is focused on health and nutrition. The programme aims to address stunting in children under 24 months through cash stipends, nutritional food, medical examination, and training. Nashonuma centres are opening in 14 districts in the first phase of the programme with a three-year budget of PKR 8.52 billion, fully funded by the Government of Pakistan. WFP is the implementing partner, providing on behalf of the Government.

The programme provides CCTs to the poorest pregnant women, nursing mothers and those with children under two every quarter; Rs 1500 for a boy child and mother and Rs 2000 for a girl child. Nashonuma disburses stipends to mothers through the biometrically enabled payment system. Payments are conditional upon the consumption of locally produced and developed specialized nutritious food (SNF), immunizations and attendance in health awareness sessions. All facilitation centres are equipped with breastfeeding corners, waiting areas and information on services for preventing and getting support for gender-based violence (WFP 2022b).

4.3 Social Insurance and other forms of social protection

4.3.1 SOCIAL INSURANCE

ILO (2021) notes that ‘Social insurance is currently only accessible to public servants or those in larger formal-sector enterprises. Resolving adverse incentives for employers to hire workers informally to avoid both Employees’ Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) pension contributions and severance payments (in lieu of unemployment insurance) could make social insurance more inclusive and drive the formalization of semi-dependent employment relationships. There is promise in the expansion of pension schemes such as the EOBI to the informal sector and making voluntary schemes such as the Voluntary Pension System (more) inclusive of earners of lower or informal incomes.’

Social insurance programmes include the Employees’ Old-Age Benefits Institution, the Workers’ Welfare Fund, and various provincial Employees’ Social Security Institutions. However, workers in the informal economy constitute a gap – they fall between social safety nets and social insurance. Even in the formal economy, not enough workers are covered, or coverage is inadequate because of i) wage ceilings for eligibility; ii) comprehensive scope but inadequate levels of benefits; iii) poor access for contract workers; and iv) inadequate benefits for pensioners (ILO 2021). The planned labourer’s initiative is a contributory social insurance scheme for workers in the informal economy. There is also a planned launch of a welfare and pension scheme for the informal sector, resulting from the labour expert group’s recommendations.

4.3.2 OTHER SOCIAL PROTECTION

Alongside safety nets and social insurance, the Government of Pakistan acknowledges the role of remittances and informal systems of philanthropic networks in contributing to poverty alleviation.

Chief among these is the Zakat system, formalized through a 1980s Ordinance with Zakat charges based on certain assets and collected for each Zakat year (beginning on the first of the month of Ramadan). In 2010 responsibility for Zakat was devolved to the provinces at the enactment of the 18th Amendment. ILO (2019) finds that Zakat funds are provided to target populations directly through local Zakat committees, or indirectly through educational, vocational or social institutions and hospitals. The connections and interlinkages between Zakat and BISP – for example, the extent of support duplication to households – are unclear.

4.4 Other projects outside the BISP umbrella or overlapping with other sectors

4.4.1 HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The BISP's Undergraduate Scholarship Programme was launched in November 2019 and awards 50,000 need-cum-merit based scholarships to deserving students yearly. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is an implementing partner. The programme will award 200,000 scholarships over four years, 50 percent of which will go to girls.

BISP's Tahafuz is Pakistan's first health shock-oriented safety net. It aims to protect vulnerable populations from catastrophic health expenditures and is being piloted in a single hospital in Rawalpindi. There is specific support, such as access to legal aid and support for widows. The Sehat Sahulat Programme provides social health insurance for in-patient costs to poor and vulnerable households in 38 districts covering 3.3 million people. Both programmes stem from the recognition that out-of-pocket payments represent 56 percent of health costs, and 70 percent of the economic shocks experienced by poor households result from catastrophic health expenditures.

4.4.2 LIVELIHOODS AND LABOUR

BISP's Amdan (Income) Programme aims to create livelihoods opportunities for the most disadvantaged people in Pakistan. The programme provides small assets to those living below the poverty line, such as livestock, agricultural inputs, rickshaw bodies and inputs for small enterprises. The programme is delivered in 375 rural union councils in 23 of the poorest districts across four provinces. The goal is to provide 200,000 assets to households (including targets to reach 60 percent women and 30 percent youth beneficiaries). The budget is PKR 15 billion over four years. The programme is implemented by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), which is attached to the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Department (PASSD). By March 2021, nearly 42,000 assets had been transferred to ultra-poor and vulnerable households, 95 percent of which went to women beneficiaries.

There is also a programme focused explicitly on providing graduation opportunities to BISP beneficiaries in lagging districts through the PPAF's National Poverty Graduation Programme, using the outreach of rural support programmes and community organizations.

The BISP's Langars Programme primarily supports casual labourers by providing cooked meals at 34 designated sites in the four provinces – for example, bus stands, industrial areas, railways stations and other places where labourers tend to congregate. The BISP's Koi Bhooka Na Soye (EKBNS) Programme is an extension of Langars operating in urban areas, notably Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad and Peshawar.

4.4.3 OTHER RELEVANT PROGRAMMES

BISP includes a number of housing initiatives, including the provision of accommodation for 10,000 orphans, shelter homes with meals (Panagahs) for labourers and daily wagers who need shelter. Panagahs have been upgraded in some cities. A new programme also provides shelter for homeless senior citizens. There is also a housing scheme for the poor (including landless farmers) through interest-free loans.

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal is an autonomous body established in 1991 that seeks to address poverty through delivering poor-focused services and aiding the destitute, widows, orphans, invalids, and the infirm and other needy persons. It delivers a range of other programmes, including universal access to assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs and other assistive devices).

BISP also focuses on the welfare of workers abroad, but these initiatives are not covered in this study because they are not relevant to WFP's work.

5. Managing Risks and Shocks through support to Social Protection Systems

Shock-responsive social protection

5.1 Covid-19 response

Covid-19 and its economic ramifications are posing a substantial challenge to countries' social protection systems. Elements of the challenge include the scaling of social assistance, either vertically or horizontally, outdated registries and the need to meet the needs of the 'missing middle', covered by neither social assistance nor social insurance (Markhof and Arif, 2020). WFP's forthcoming CSP notes how Covid-19-related restrictions on the movement of goods and people and various lockdowns adversely impacted livelihoods, food access, security, and nutrition of poor people, daily wagers, and workers in the informal sector. The restrictions led to increases in the prices of major food items.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Government of Pakistan passed a policy package worth 3.5 percent of GDP with a combination of monetary and fiscal elements, including reducing interest rates by 5.25 percentage points, creating flexible and expanded credit provisions for individuals and firms and several interventions relating to social protection. It introduced the Emergency Cash Programme, covering 5 million existing BISP/Kafaalat beneficiaries and 11.9 million new, temporary beneficiaries who were either uncovered or ineligible before the pandemic. Identified through an SMS campaign, many new beneficiaries are daily labourers and informal workers who lost their livelihoods during the crisis. Beneficiaries received 4 months' worth of cash benefits upfront at biometric payment points, corresponding to 15 percent of average household income of the poorest quintile (Markhof and Arif, 2020).

Provincial governments also announced relief and stimulus packages, such as Punjab, where a PKR 10 billion relief package to support the families of 2.5 million daily wage earners was announced, with families outside BISP entitled to PKR 4,000 in financial assistance. The Government of KP approved a PKR 32 billion stimulus package for economic relief.

Drawing on the review of the Emergency Cash Transfer Programme, ILO (2021) identified lessons from the Covid-19 response for social protection in Pakistan. While vertical expansion through BISP was simple to achieve, 'the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance

of an agile and responsive system, as Pakistan's existing systems designed for poverty targeting proved unable to reach the 'new poor' (p. 10).

Box 1: Significant dates in the Pakistan social protection Covid-19 response

February 2020

First cases

End March

Most of country in lockdown

24th March

PM approved PKR 1.2t economic relief package with 12.5 percent of funds allocated to low-income groups.

31st March

Federal cabinet approved relief package including PKR 100b supplementary grant for an emergency relief fund and a special package for emergency cash transfers.

2nd April

Lockdown extended

April

BISP stipend increased from PKR 2000 to PKR 3000, emergency payments began on 8th April 2020.

6th April

The Government announced 30.5 million messages on a helpline for emergency assistance. The final total was over 66 million unique requests for support.

5.2 Climate and 'natural' disasters

Instruments associated with social protection (for example, cash and food transfers) have been a longstanding feature of emergency responses to climate-related shocks in Pakistan but have not been directly associated with social protection programmes until recently. Since the earthquake of 2005, the Government has delivered cash and in-kind transfers to households facing 'natural' disasters. These responses have tended to be delivered as single-episode emergency responses and through disaster management agencies (Watson et

al. 2017a), drawing on the 2010 detailed action plan and policy guidelines 'Federal disaster response action plan for cash transfers'.

Following the 2010 floods, the Citizen's Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP) provided relief and early recovery support to over one million families. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was critical to the 2010 flood response, as it hosts the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) – an increasingly comprehensive and up-to-date registry covering more than 85 percent of the population and using a poverty scorecard approach (Watson et al. 2017b).

Some emergency responses are devolved, with greater capacities in particular provinces. For example, in Punjab, the Khadim-e-Punjab Imdadi Package provides a cash transfer food response through the provincial DRM system. In other provinces, responses are more challenging.

NGOs and humanitarian agencies are key actors in contributing to disaster management, relief and rehabilitation, especially through the coordinated delivery implementation of emergency cash transfers, through various committees, working groups and alliances. Some provinces have some mechanisms, such as cash working groups.

WFP has played a substantial role in these actions, including supporting timely access to adequate food and nutrition during and after natural disasters and shocks. For example, WFP Pakistan has worked closely with provincial disaster management authorities to support disaster-affected populations. A significant contribution by WFP at this level was support in revising targeting criteria, shifting criteria towards vulnerability and intersectionality, resulting in improved targeting. As shock-responsive social protection has become a government focus, WFP has supported the integration and expansion of safety net interventions through top-up cash assistance to the most marginalized populations under the BISP programme. This support has offset the negative effects of multiple shocks. These experiences leave WFP well-positioned to contribute to further developing and strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems in Pakistan.

5.3 Conflict and displacement

There is a similar picture in relation to displacement – with cash transfer programmes being provided predominantly outside the social protection system. Grey Meral and Both (2021) note that responses depend on the type of displacement, especially whether internal or across an

international border. Pakistan hosts IDPs and refugees, but only IDPs are included in state programmes. IDPs are a government priority and are incorporated into national, especially state programmes. For example, the Government provided support in 2016 to over 3 million internally displaced people in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA).

Non-state actors do seek to align support for refugees with government programmes. Hagen-Zanker and Both (2021) find that the UNHCR-implemented large-scale emergency cash transfer for

refugees during the Covid-19 pandemic had benefit levels explicitly aligned with benefits provided by the state in the Emergency Cash Transfer intervention. However, they note that refugees' needs had been identified as higher than those of nationals because they often worked as daily wage labourers and lost their income during the lockdown.

This picture suggests that international actors such as UNHCR and WFP may play an important role in ensuring programming for refugees is harmonized with government programmes but does not directly attempt to replicate every feature of targeting, delivery, benefit levels, etc. Furthermore, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021 has resulted in political uncertainty and a likely increase in regional instability and challenges, particularly by increasing Afghan refugees in Pakistan since August 2021.

5.4 Implications of the war in Ukraine and the new government in Pakistan

Most of the analysis included in this report is based on document review, data and stakeholder interviews between January and May 2022. During that time, Russia has invaded Ukraine and the knock-on effects in the global economy and for food insecurity are increasingly apparent and concerning. At the same time, a change of government in Pakistan took place in April, impacting what is possible in social protection programming and the wider political, socioeconomic and financing landscape. Current insights from WFP Pakistan suggest the following impacts for Pakistan:

1. According to the World Bank's Pakistan Development Update, rising food and energy prices are expected to decrease the real purchasing power of households in Pakistan, disproportionately affecting poor and vulnerable households that spend a larger share of their budget on these items.

2. Tighter global financing conditions, potential world energy prices and domestic political uncertainty within the country due to a new government that took over in April can further deteriorate the economic situation due to macroeconomic imbalances.
3. Pakistan has also missed an in-country wheat production target by almost 3 million tons against annual estimated requirements of 30 million tons, including the strategic reserves. The procurement of 3 million tons of wheat from the international market will remain a challenge due to the conflict in Russia/ Ukraine and hence can further increase poverty and acute malnutrition in the country.
4. Moreover, Pakistan experienced an intense heat wave, with five cities declared the top fifteen hottest places in the world during the second week of May 2022. There are knock-on effects for crop production. Similarly, Pakistan has recently been included among 23 countries globally facing drought emergencies over the past two years.
5. The Government of Pakistan is seeking to manage wheat prices, ensuring parity of prices between provinces to avoid inter-provincial illegal movement. However, shortages are further entrenched due to smuggling to Afghanistan through the western border because of higher prices in neighbouring countries.
6. Pakistan has state-owned enterprise that operates more than 5,000 'Utility Stores' throughout the country, providing basic commodities to the public at subsidized prices. Government is ensuring that all basic commodities, including wheat, are available in these stores.
7. Initiating any new programme with additional borrowing from international financial institutes for a large-scale social protection shock response under the umbrella of social protection, including school meals, remains practically impossible at the time of writing. However, philanthropists and local NGOs are involved in a few selected districts through provision of cooked meals at a very small scale.

Source: pers. comm. Tahir Nawaz, WFP Pakistan, 24th June 2022

6. Significant actors and governance arrangements

Pakistan has a complex configuration of actors working on social protection within government, across sectors and among wider stakeholders.

A new federal division has been set up to oversee the implementation of the policies, programmes and initiatives related to poverty alleviation and social safety nets (Table 5). BISP is further organized across multiple institutional mandates across government – Table 6 describes those related to Pillar 2. Table 8 in Annex 1 describes institutions contributing to Pillars 1, 3 and 4.

The federal structure of Pakistan means there are actors at both federal and provincial levels. The forthcoming WFP CSP notes that Pakistan has established mechanisms to strengthen policy coherence on sustainable development, country-owned federal and provincial frameworks, and planning tools for development aligned with annual development plans (United Nations Country Team, 2021). At a provincial level, there is some progress in Punjab, with the establishment of the Punjab Social

Protection Authority (PSPA) in 2015 to coordinate and consolidate social protection in the province. Similarly, a Social Protection Reform Unit was established in KP in 2012 (and subsequently renamed the Public Policy and Social Protection Unit) in addition to a Gender and Social Protection Section in 2020 (ILO 2021). A Social Protection Strategy Unit (SPSU) for the preparation and implementation of a provincial social protection strategy has been established as an attached office to the Chief Minister’s Secretariat Sindh. The functions of the SPSU include the design of Social Protection programmes under an overarching Social Protection Strategy, and in line with the priority areas and goals set out by the Social Protection Board. Nevertheless, progress and capacities at provincial (and tehsil and union council) levels are patchy.

Overall, establishing the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Department (PASSD) has created a major change from a scheme-led approach to a more coordinated, systems-based approach (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Institutional arrangements before and after creation of the PASSD

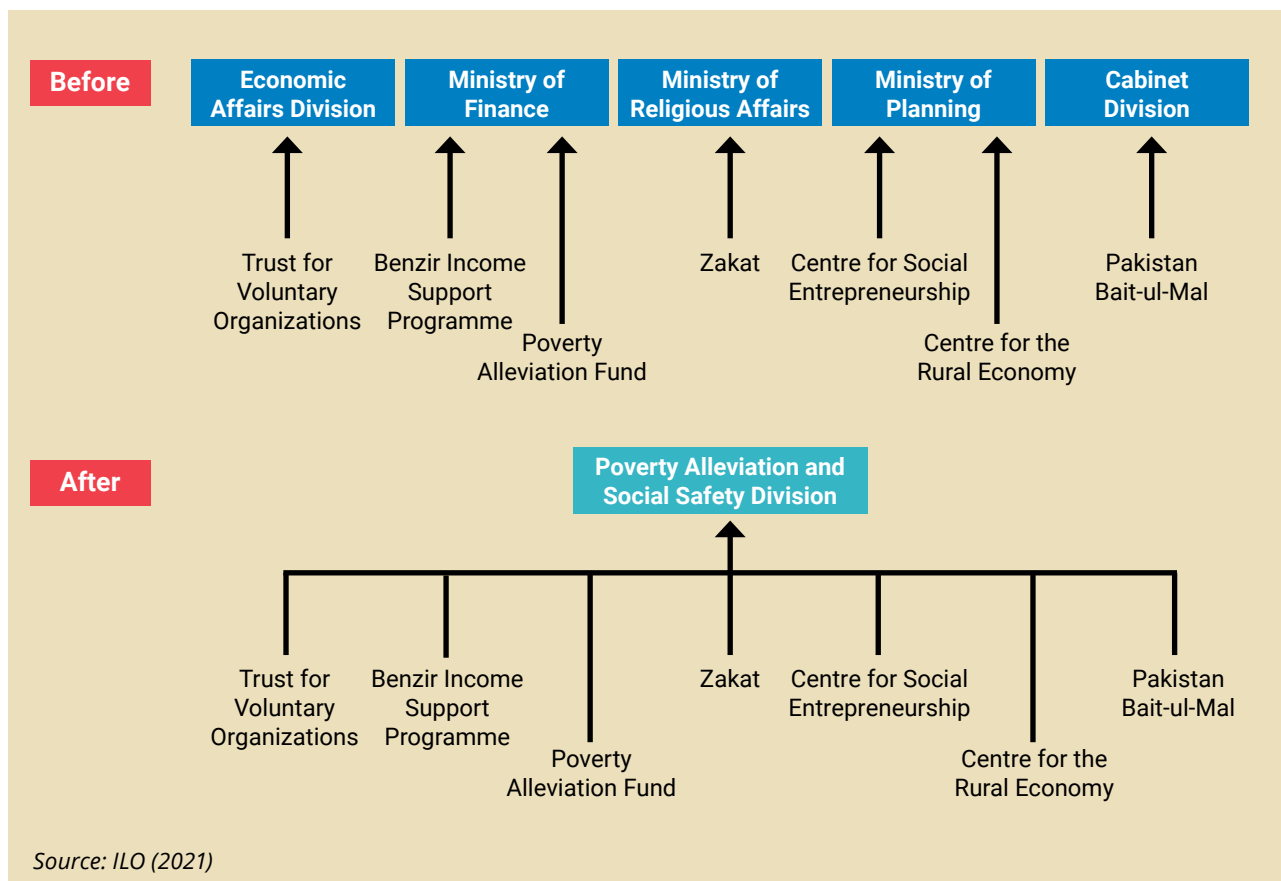


Table 5: Operationalizing the safety net pillar

Institutional arrangement	The Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD) was established in April 2019. Agencies responsible for executing BISP related various programmes that previously reported to different ministries are now attached to the PASSD.
Financial resources	Budget is set aside in the federal budget to broaden safety nets.
Data	The Government has invested in building a new National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) (completed in June 2021) and big data analytics is in use for targeting.
Governance and Integrity Policy	A Governance and Integrity Policy has been announced to eliminate abuse, misaligned incentives and inefficiencies and ensure effective targeting, Compliance with the policy is binding for all PASSD agencies. A Governance Observatory has also been setup to track implementation.
Systems building	The digital payment system was installed in 2019.
One-Window	The one-window will facilitate citizen's access to all the social protection programmes and online public goods
Scope (policies, programmes and initiatives)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BISP's Kafaalat: stipends, financial and digital inclusion of women 2. BISP's Tahafuz: safety net to enable protection against catastrophic risks 3. Waseela-e-Taleem: digital, education-related conditional cash transfers 4. BISP's merit and needs-based under-graduate scholarships* 5. BISP's Nashonuma: health and nutrition centred CCT and specialized nutrition food for mothers and children up to 2 years 6. BISP's Langars 2 7. Interest-free Loans 8. Emergency Cash 9. BISP's Amdan: asset transfer programme 10. BISP's Kafaalat: for differently-abled and Overall Disability Policy** 11. Dar-ul-Ehsaas: new standards for orphanages expanding base 12. One-Window 13. Sehat Card: a health insurance scheme****

Notes: Activities operated through ancillary agencies of PASSD except: *Executed by PASS in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission ** Multisectoral responsibility ***Execution: Ministry of Human Resource Development and Overseas Pakistanis ****Execution: Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination

International actors working on social protection include UN agencies beyond WFP (notably UNICEF, ILO, FAO, UNDP), the World Bank, FCDO and other bilateral agencies. The initiatives performed by these agencies, overall, correspond to their orthodox mandates, with ILO focused on social insurance and the social protection floor, FAO on linkages to livelihoods and resilience programming, UNICEF on social protection outcomes for women and children (especially those associated with education, nutrition, health, and WASH) and the World Bank focused on systems building and improving targeting.

Table 6: Mandates, programmes and responsibilities for Pillar 2

Organization	Mandates, programmes, responsibilities (policy or activity number)
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the new validated live 2019 National Socio-Economic Registry (#26-28) • Kifalat: One woman one bank account initiative and Inflation-adjustment in the size of the cash transfer to more than 60 million women (#29) • Food debit card scheme for the most marginalized, initially for 1 million households (new #116) • Creation of a one-window social protection (#4) • Governance & Integrity Policy for safety net institutions (#114-115) • Establishment of 500 digital hubs at tehsil level under Kifalat (#31) • Launch of the shock-oriented precision safety net, Tahafaz (#33) (poor widows assistance (#34), legal aid (#35), assistive devices (#42), health aid protecting against catastrophic expenditure (#40-41) • Trust for voluntary organizations to upscale programmes for the most marginalized (street children, seasonal migrants, transgender, victims of child abuse & bonded labour and daily wage workers) (#36) • Policy/forum on civil society stakeholders involved in welfare activities, including orphanages (#37) • Solutions Innovation Challenge policy (#81) • District Development Portal to drive resource allocations according to need (#25) • Specialized nutrition food made available for stunted and wasted children (#65) • 20 centres for the physically challenged in under-privileged districts in the PPP model (#43) • Education conditional cash transfer, impacting 4.5 million children, 50% girls (#73) • Homes for the elderly (#46) • Ensuring universal access to assistive devices for the disabled (#42) • Freely available elearning content as a public good (#71) • Use of chatbots in local languages for dispersed populations (#72) • Need-based undergraduate scholarships, partnership of HEC and BISP (#75) • Research on the drivers of poverty in local settings (#82)
Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy to increase the role and number of Community Welfare Attaches (#49) • Increase in the number of Protector of Emigration Offices (#50) • Initiative to improve quality of pre-departure briefing for intended migrants (#51) • Protector of Emigration Offices to create one-window for all types of requirements (#52) • Negotiations with foreign governments to extend the duration of the first contract agreement for workers to a minimum of 3 years (#53) • Subsidized air tickets policy for low-paid workers abroad who haven't returned home in 7 years (#54) • Labour pension increased from PKR 5,250 to 6,500 through EOBI (#44) • Biometric payments of pensions through EOBI (#45)
Ministry of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint ownership of houses for women in each of the Government's new housing schemes (#112) • Housing scheme for the poor (including landless farmers) through interest-free loans (#39) • Panagahs in several major cities (#38)
Min of National Health Services Regulation & coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance card for 10 million households for 60 million people (#40) • Cards for all disabled (#122)
Ministry of Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting the Child Protection Commission (#37) • Homes for the elderly (#46) • Quotes in government jobs (2% disabled) (#123), government accommodation (1% disabled government employees) (#124), Naya Pakistan housing scheme (2% disabled) (#125) • All public sector hospitals to issue disability certificates as per UN definitions (#126)
Division of Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy of subsidy on air tickets for low paid workers abroad who have not returned home in seven years (#54)

7. Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition through support to Social Protection Systems

Social protection in Pakistan is focused on SDG1, specifically ending poverty. This section explores how social protection could advance zero hunger in Pakistan, focusing on the potential for social protection programmes to contribute to improving nutrition, help people better manage shocks, build systems that advance zero hunger, and coordinate with complementary initiatives that further support zero hunger.

An accurate assessment of Pakistan's progress towards SDG2 targets is challenging, given the limited availability of reliable data. On Access to Food (Target 2.1), fragmentation of food and nutrition security data continues to reduce the effectiveness of national policies and legislation and increases the likelihood of misallocation of national resources.

For Ending Malnutrition (Target 2.2), the Government is clearly committed to addressing malnutrition, including stunting, through expanding social protection. The successful launch of the Noshonuma initiative and its expansion country-wide, with WFP support, provides a platform for nutrition-specific and sensitive initiatives to overcome malnutrition and stunting challenges.

Beyond this specific programme, there is strong potential for social protection programmes to contribute to improving nutrition across the life cycle, given the specific challenges and causes of malnutrition in Pakistan. This potential can be achieved in various ways, through ensuring that food/nutrition transfers tackle specific nutrition deficits through supplementation and fortification or by addressing the core issues of poverty and food insecurity, including clean drinking water and other components of WASH.

Social protection in Pakistan already has a focus on shock response and risk management. However, further progress can be made by focusing on emerging priority areas in social protection, such as data information systems, vulnerability mapping, and issues of

formalization in the agricultural sector. In particular, UN is supporting systematic monitoring and data collection to strengthen the Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FNIS).

Coordinating social protection programmes with other initiatives is another way to ensure that initiatives further support zero hunger. Examples include leveraging from complementary activities that can support behaviour change around nutrition and consumption, around gender norms (including adolescent/maternal health), linkages to livelihoods and economic opportunities, and supporting (not undermining) informal social protection systems. School meals is another initiative that the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, has committed to under the recently signed commitment to global coalition on school meals, ensuring that every child has access to healthy and nutritious food by 2030.

Overall, achieving zero hunger requires a multi-sectoral, multi-actor, multi-scheme approach, including but not restricted to social protection and WFP. Tackling stunting is an example. Stunting needs to be tackled not just through the availability of and access to high-quality and diverse food (areas where WFP offers expertise and added value) but also through various other interventions, such as ensuring access to safe water.

8. WFP's role in social protection in Pakistan

8.1 Approach and main activities of WFP Pakistan in social protection going forward

In terms of the emerging WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) objectives and strategic outcomes, social protection features directly and explicitly as follows:

Strategic Outcome 2 focuses on tackling the root causes of food and nutrition insecurity and aims to ensure that 'Pakistan's most vulnerable people, especially women and children, have greater access to affordable, nutritious diets, and basic social services (education, health, nutrition), by 2027'. The outcome aligns with national priorities (for example, Pillar 4 in Pakistan's Vision 2025 and with the provincial priorities of six administrative areas/provinces that identified improving equitable access to basic social services (nutrition and education) as priorities. It also contributes to the UNSDCF's Outcomes 1 (basic social services). Expected outputs and activities include:

Expected outputs	Expected activities
<p>Government institutions enabled to provide nutrition services and nutrition-sensitive safety net to vulnerable populations and private sector capacitated to increase availability of specialized nutritious food.</p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to provincial and federal governments to provide effective nutrition interventions and improve enabling environment while concurrently supporting private sector to produce nutritious food.</p> <p>WFP will support provincial and federal governments' capacities to design, implement, and monitor nutrition interventions, including strengthening the enabling environment to deliver on malnutrition commitments in a more integrated and diversified manner. WFP will support the establishment of governance and tracking mechanisms to improve programme coherence and quality.</p>
<p>Government institutions have strengthened capacity to design and implement evidence-based, inclusive, and shock-responsive social protection system to better address food security and nutrition needs of vulnerable communities.</p> <p>WFP will focus its support on strengthening the existing national social protection systems through interventions related to targeting and data collection/analysis to ensure that vulnerable populations are identified and targeted for food security and nutrition assistance.</p>	<p>Provide capacity strengthening to provincial and federal governments to improve safety net design and delivery, including through hybrid modalities, inclusive targeting, enhanced food security and nutrition monitoring, and data analysis.</p> <p>WFP will provide support to provincial and federal governments to include contingency planning in social safety nets for improved response to sudden onset of disasters.</p>
<p>Government supported to develop and implement national school feeding policy frameworks to ensure children receive nutritionally adequate daily meals in targeted communities.</p> <p>To promote schools as a platform for the delivery of health and nutrition packages, WFP will support the Government with the formulation of a coherent policy framework that guides provincial and federal implementation of school feeding initiatives.</p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to provincial and federal governments to foster enabling policy and programme environment for implementation of school meals safety net programme(s).</p> <p>WFP will support provincial and federal governments with strengthening safety nets and creating an enabling environment. WFP will also support the formulation and implementation of a school meals policy framework while facilitating provincial piloting of school meals programmes.</p>

In terms of wider partnerships beyond government, WFP will collaborate with ILO, FAO, and UNDP to increase social safety nets coverage and develop provincial social protection authorities' capacities for integrated safety nets programming. WFP will also work with UN Women to ensure safety net programmes are gender-sensitive and responsive. WFP will engage with financial institutions to support school meals and social protection programming.

8.2 Options for strategic, technical and operational engagement emerging from document review and stakeholder consultation

The WFP draft CSP articulates the social protection outcomes and actions by embedding them in the context of WFP's full programme of activities. Beyond the draft CSP, the following options for WFP engagement in social protection in Pakistan have emerged following document review and interviews with stakeholders.

Social protection is a crowded space in Pakistan, with substantial government capacity and longstanding engagement by other agencies. While WFP has a longstanding presence, particularly in nutrition, school feeding, and its own shock-responsive complementary programmes, its direct engagement with core national social protection policies and programmes is relatively recent. For these reasons, it is important for WFP to identify gaps and shortcomings in the current national social protection landscape and to clarify where it can contribute specific added value and complement rather than compete with other development partners.

From the document analysis, mapping of policies, programmes and actors, and the interviews with various stakeholders, three areas stand out as elements of the social protection landscape where WFP could make a substantial and distinct contribution. These areas are: closing the gap between social protection and food security; advancing shock-responsive social protection; and strengthening social protection in the most challenging areas and among the most excluded groups. This section discusses each area, with a table summarizing the more specific and material actions that would be appropriate for WFP.

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

While tackling stunting is widely acknowledged as an objective for government social protection, much of the dialogue on social protection remains relatively tightly focused on income poverty and shock responses. Food security and nutrition are not embedded into Pakistan's social protection policies, systems, and programmes. There are certainly specific programmes focused on food security and nutrition; however, it is important to tackle food security and nutrition systemically. Work to maximize social protection's contribution in helping Pakistan achieving SDG2 would be timely and important.

Some programmes focus highly on food security and nutrition (especially Nashonuma). WFP could leverage from its engagement on Nashonuma, and the diagnostic work that led to the specific Nashonuma design, to add value in the wider social protection policy space. WFP could work with the Ministry of Planning, where it also has a strong relationship with parts of the Ministry of Planning that focus on nutrition, to build a more strategic, high-level dialogue and commitment to tackling stunting in Pakistan through social protection.

Influencing and supporting a high-level dialogue requires solid evidence about the current social protection portfolio and how it supports food and nutrition security. WFP could work towards ensuring that the portfolio of programmes under PASSD offers a combination of food security and nutrition-specific and food security and nutrition-sensitive approaches that are clearly explained and justified. Both approaches exist but there is little explicit articulation of how and why specific programmes are developed and designed to ensure there is coverage through both specific and sensitive routes. Specific actions could include a comprehensive mapping of specific and sensitive approaches, identification of gaps in coverage and appropriate revisions and new programming. WFP has substantial experience in this area that is perhaps not being explicitly demonstrated.

Supporting a high-level dialogue also requires cross-sectoral coordination – something that is important and challenging. While many programmes, actions and stakeholders have been brought together under a single umbrella, there remain a complex set of institutional mandates and activities to navigate, with high potential for particular vulnerabilities or groups to fall through the gaps. Participants in interviews for this scoping study noted that nutrition, in particular, is highly cross-sectoral with a range of Ministries (for example, planning,

health, education, water, social protection) and a range of development partners (WFP, UNICEF, WHO and others) all working on nutrition. Participants highlighted the range of policy and programmatic responses (from the availability and quality of food to access to clean water). WFP has a strong role to play in, for example, enabling the availability of and access to high-quality and nutritious food, but it needs to coordinate with other development and humanitarian partners to capture other expertise such as UNICEF's technical experience delivering water and sanitation (WASH) initiatives.

In other consultations, the need for short-, medium- and long-term solutions was highlighted with the recognition that much of WFP's model is predicated on short-term solutions. Suggested actions that WFP might take to play a stronger role in medium- and long-term solutions included providing orientation and information on healthy diets, sanitation, and hygiene as a complementary component of its wider programming.

It was also noted by key informants and during analysis that WFP working to strengthen food security and nutrition outcomes through social protection programming should not be automatically presumed to mean WFP's social protection staff working with the social protection staff of government and other agencies. Instead, WFP might contribute to social protection activities through cross-sectoral coordination where WFP's nutrition and/or protection or VAM or CBT staff work with government staff and other development partner staff working on social protection. WFP's social protection staff can be a helpful conduit to improve cross-sectoral programming by opening WFP's wider expertise (especially on nutrition and inclusion/protection) to other social protection actors. WFP can make a substantial contribution and add significant value by bringing in its wider food security, nutrition, inclusion, protection, logistics, supply chain management, fortification, MIS, targeting and other experience to social protection. Working this way, WFP's social protection work in Pakistan would be strategic, as in neighbouring countries. It would create entry points for and facilitate dialogues; identify capacity gaps in the social protection sector that WFP can plug through broader technical assistance; and create coherence in WFP's engagement on social protection. Informants viewed this contribution as important as WFP's direct social protection technical assistance. Some analysis of the existing capacities (and possible gaps) that could enable or disable such an approach is required to assess feasibility.

ADVANCING SHOCK RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

WFP and the Government of Pakistan are already working towards strengthened shock-responsive social protection with commitment from both sides (Box 2). WFP has engaged with different parts of government bilaterally in the past. For example, WFP collaborated with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to develop the Integrated Context Analysis (ICA) offering food security outcome data at district level for the whole country. In 2017, WFP sought to work more multilaterally, working across the disaster risk management, humanitarian, and social protection sectors to identify which coordination mechanisms and institutional arrangements to establish to accelerate the move to shock-responsive social protection systems in the country.

Box 2: Commitment to shock-responsive social protection in Pakistan

"I can tell you with conviction that during this pandemic I saw social protection as the most important tool of food security in a crisis situation. [...] I strongly feel that we must appreciate its potential, institutionalize it and use it for interventions at scale—because it can be a very powerful tool in the quest for building back better"

Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant of Pakistan's Prime Minister and Federal Minister,

Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Ministry,
Government of Pakistan

Source: WFP 2021c, p.32

Following the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Pakistan's use of BISP systems to provide both 'vertical' top-ups to existing beneficiaries and 'horizontal' expansion to new beneficiaries (See Section 4.2) was internationally lauded. Despite these successes, the extent to which social protection systems in Pakistan are prepared for deployment for other shocks (especially 'national' disasters such as drought, flood and earthquake, and those related to conflict and insecurity such as displacement) is more of a concern. The existing policy framework provides for addressing catastrophic shocks, but there is less clarity on lower-level, more localized responses. Despite the discussion in 2017, there are no substantive linkages between BISP and disaster risk management mechanisms, which was one of the major reasons for success during a joint Covid-19 response.

To further advance Pakistan's shock-responsive social protection system, WFP could offer support in several areas. Firstly, it could provide support on how to adapt targeting systems to capture better or indicate those households likely to be most exposed to shocks. Current scorecard approaches measure proxy indicators that do not include or overlap with criteria that determine vulnerability to shocks. WFP has substantial experience in this area and could share its experience in data analytics and vulnerability monitoring in particular. This would need to be done in ways that ensure that WFP does not crowd out or compete with existing national data analytics capacity. One approach would be a diagnostic of existing data analytics, the extent of their interoperability and their potential to provide information and vulnerability analysis that spans both the chronic drivers of stunting and poverty and the variables that cause intermittent deprivation following a specific type of shock.

Another valuable contribution for WFP would be around alternatives to social assistance. Globally, WFP has growing experience with insurance mechanisms and anticipatory action, especially for responding to climate shocks. Given that the Government of Pakistan has a strong social protection system and requires little help with the basic and foundational operations of the system at federal level, WFP might add value by supporting government to identify options for ex-ante management of climate-related shocks whether through risk reduction, risk transference, risk retention or promoting prudent risk-taking (WFP 2021d). At present, anticipatory actions are not directly linked to WFP's social protection initiatives in Pakistan, but this might be a pathway for extending the options around social protection that warrants further investigation.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION IN THE MOST CHALLENGING AREAS AND AMONG THE MOST EXCLUDED GROUPS

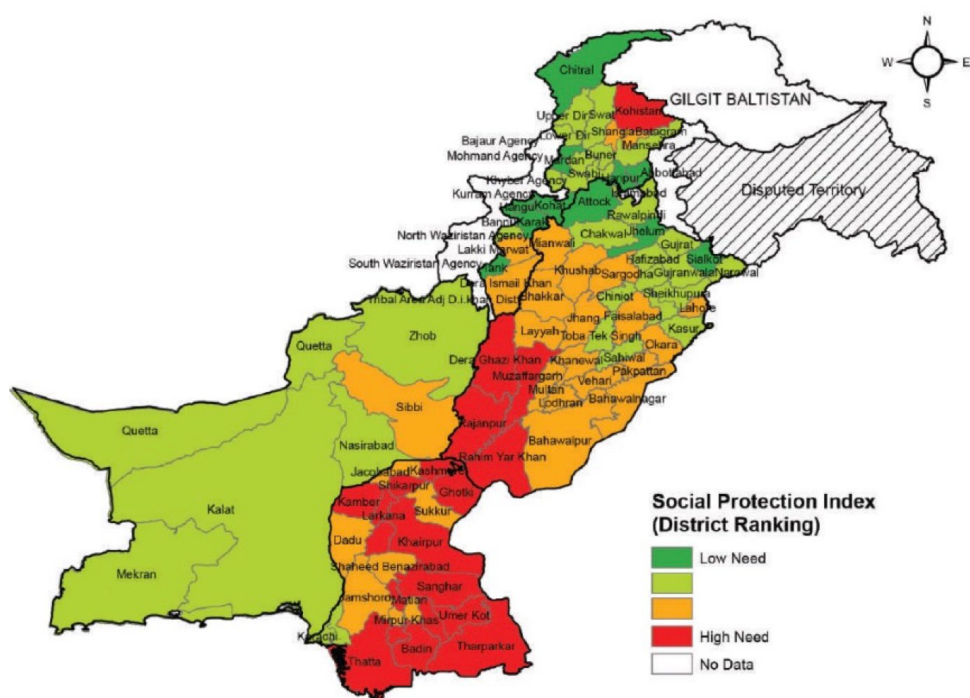
Capacities to diagnose poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity and directly address them are highly varied across Pakistan. Many of the activities identified above would need to take place both at an aggregate, national level and at provincial level and below. For example, the mapping of food and nutrition-specific and -sensitive social protection would need to take place not just at federal level but would also need to capture if and how provincial and tehsil-level actors are focusing on addressing food security and nutrition through social protection programmes, and the obstacles to doing so effectively and efficiently. The focus on provincial and tehsil-level initiatives highlights the importance of

working to strengthen capacities in provinces and areas with the most vulnerable and food-insecure households and where capacities to deliver social protection may be at their lowest. There is a strong rationale for WFP to work to strengthen local level capacities – both to deliver programmes and to ensure accurate and useable data collection, diagnosis and MIS systems. In these locations, the need for social protection is either greatest or growing rapidly (Figure 5).

WFP is well placed to support programmes in some of the most difficult-to-reach parts of Pakistan. In many cases, this is because of the programmes it delivers jointly with provincial governments. For example, in KP, the SPRING (Stunting Prevention Rehabilitation Integrated Nutrition Gain) Programme is implemented in four districts. The programme is co-funded by the Government of KP and WFP. It provides pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6–24 months with locally produced specialized nutritious food to enhance their dietary intake and reduce the incidence of chronic and acute malnutrition. The initiative also provides deworming and iron and folic acid tablets. As of March 2022, the programme had supported 21,512 women and children, with 81 percent of assisted beneficiaries being women and girls.

The KP SPRING programme highlights that geographical exclusion is just one of the challenges in Pakistan. Social exclusion is also prevalent, with specific groups facing distinct risks and needing social protection that explicitly considers their situations. Bringing more focus on food security and nutrition into social protection also matters for excluded groups, especially where exclusion is based on gender. WFP delivers the Nashonuma social assistance programme on the Government's behalf, explicitly targeting marginalized pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6–24 months. WFP also delivers its own livelihoods programming, where targeted groups receive cash or food transfers conditional on participation in community rehabilitation activities and training, such as carpet weaving, food preservation, poultry management and kitchen gardening. The goal is not only to meet women's immediate needs but to empower them to establish sustainable livelihoods (WFP 2022b). While many programmes target women and girls, the distinction between gender-targeted and gender-sensitive programmes in relation to food security and nutrition is not clearly articulated, either by WFP, government, or other international actors. Understanding how to strengthen gendered outcomes across all programmes depends on this clear understanding of the outcomes of both gender-specific and gender-sensitive programmes.

Figure 5: Ranking of social protection needs in Pakistan



Note: Ranking of Balochistan province is shown at Division level. This map reflects the Government of Pakistan’s official recognition of territory. Map by: Social Protection Resource Centre (SPRC), www.sprc.org.uk

OVERARCHING REFLECTIONS ON WFP’S ROLE IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

Across these three different areas of work where WFP could add substantial value, some broader reflections are important.

First, while WFP can contribute strongly to core social assistance systems and programmes, many programmes are already well established in Pakistan, and the systems architecture is well ahead of its regional comparators. For these reasons, WFP’s most significant contribution will come from providing experience, advice, and support on elements of social protection beyond social assistance. This contribution might include identifying climate insurance mechanisms where government subsidizes or pays premiums on behalf of vulnerable households or finding other types of anticipatory actions that can integrate with existing social protection programmes.

Second, part of WFP’s added value is its broader focus on food security and nutrition. WFP takes a multitude of actions in countries, including Pakistan, that, while not defined as social protection, could reasonably be described as ‘socially protecting’. These are activities that support the functioning of supply chains, storage and staple food markets to keep prices stable and affordable or ensure the quality and safety of food. These are actions that, rather than respond to a shock when it happens,

help reduce shocks and mitigate their impact. One of the good ways in which WFP can support poor and vulnerable people in Pakistan is by focusing on the ends (reducing risk and vulnerability) rather than solely on the means (social protection). Doing things that are ‘social protecting’, i.e., that reduce vulnerability, are as important as social protection itself. This means bringing WFP’s wider expertise to bear on challenges with multiple drivers and causes and getting these wider actions working in tandem with social protection.

Third, these three areas of focus for WFP’s work on social protection in Pakistan align well with wider WFP strategic priorities and WFP’s global strategy for support to social protection (2021a). Table 7 demonstrates the alignment of the identified actions by WFP in Pakistan with the building blocks articulated in the global strategy (Figure 6). The findings presented here align strongly with WFP Pakistan’s forthcoming CSP. The focus of social protection in the forthcoming CSP is on achieving food and nutrition security outcomes and strengthening shock-responsive social protection. Beyond these specific outcomes, the CSP is guided by a similar approach – a focus on relevance, value and comparative advantage and on thinking about social protection alongside other actions, including supply chain management. In this way, social protection complements and reinforces other WFP investments and initiatives to ensure a multisectoral and integrated approach to addressing food insecurity across a range of contexts and timescales.

Figure 6: Building blocks for WFP's strategy for support to social protection

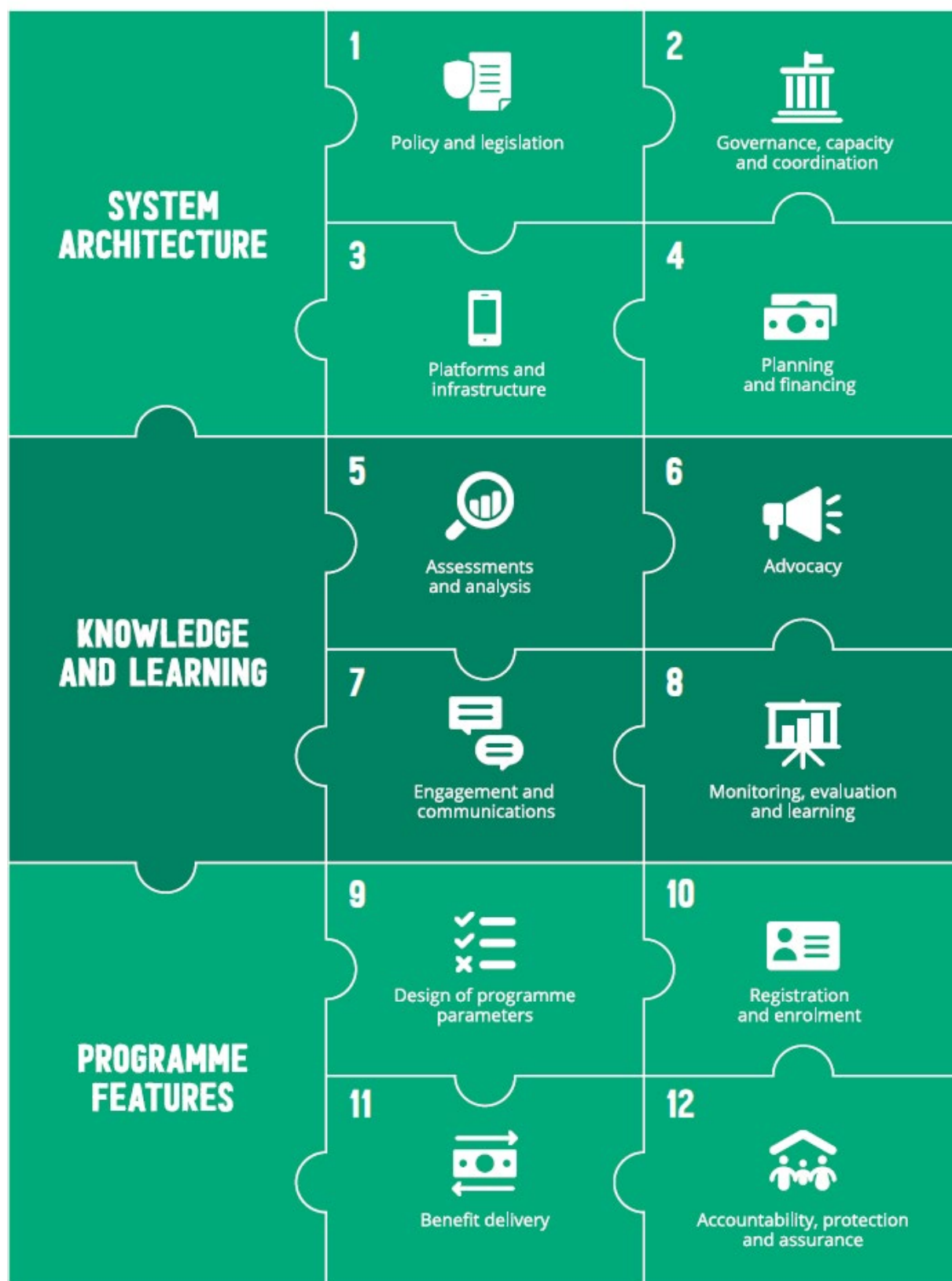


Table 7: Future WFP actions on social protection in Pakistan by building block

System Architecture	Policy and legislation Advise on the inclusion of food security and nutrition objectives in social protection policy revisions, including contributing to evidence generation to support drafting processes. Advise on incorporating resilience building and shock-responsive social protection goals into social protection policies and strategies. Translate the global school meals coalition pledge (signed by government in 2021) by supporting the formulation and implementation of a school meals policy framework.	Governance, capacity and coordination (Continue to) support more coordinated planning between PASSD and NDMA (and provincial DMA) for improved shock-responsive social protection. Develop standard operating procedures and guidelines for linking emergency/disaster response with social protection systems. (Continue to) participate in and provide analysis to established cash working groups (national and KP/FATA) and support the establishment of new provincial CWGs within food security clusters.
	Platforms and infrastructure Continue to co-chair and support the National Education Development Partners Group (NEDPG) for coordinated sector education activities, mobilize partnerships through the forum to progress school meals coordination.	Planning and finance Calculate the cost, return on investment and value for money of Nashonuma to make the case for future social protection financing. Develop guidelines for releasing funds for shock-responsive social protection programmes, such as weather-related triggers for use in forecast-based financing.
	Assessments and analysis Deliver a comprehensive mapping of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive approaches and identification of gaps in coverage and appropriate revisions.	Advocacy Support social protection actors in government to advocate for the inclusion of food security, nutrition and disaster risk management outcomes into social protection strategies and budgets.
Knowledge and Learning	Engagement and communications Deliver coordinated communications on dietary diversity/nutrition, and eligibility and application processes to enhance both programme uptake and outcomes. Use accessible, adapted modes of communication such as radio that work in remote marginalized and crisis-affected situations and can reduce exclusion gaps.	Monitoring, evaluation and learning Advise on the design of monitoring and evaluation frameworks (including to monitor food security and nutrition outcomes, or the ability of social protection to build resilience and respond to shocks). Deliver (third-party, independent) evaluation of Nashonuma – focusing not only on understanding impact but also generating lessons on cooperation and partnerships for WFP’s role in social protection implementing on behalf of the government.
	Design of programme features Deliver analysis to identify programme features that make social protection programmes nutrition-sensitive and gender-sensitive.	Registration and enrolment Provide technical assistance to government for identification and coverage of the most vulnerable geographical areas and beneficiaries, drawing on SCOPE where required.
Programme Features	Benefit delivery Maintain (and extend as planned) Nashonuma coverage.	Accountability, protection and assurance Support the establishment and expansion the Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism within the government system for greater accountability to affected communities.

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Annex 1

Table 8: Implementing across for Pillars 1, 3 and 4

Ministry/Agency	Pillar/Activity
Pillar 1	
Finance Division and State Bank of Pakistan	<p>Increase in <u>social protection</u> spending (#2)</p> <p>New <u>National Finance Commission Award</u> (#7)</p> <p>Promotion of <u>microfinance banking services</u> (#83)</p> <p>Promotion of <u>agriculture credit</u> (#85)</p> <p><u>Slab for remitters</u> of up to US\$ 100 (#101)</p> <p>Products to make <u>remittances agile</u> and cost effective (#102)</p> <p>Policy to catalyse development of warehouses and <u>warehouse receipt funding</u> (#109)</p>
Law Division	<p><u>Constitutional amendment</u> to move article 38(d) from the 'Principles of Policy' section into the 'Fundamental Rights' section (#1)</p> <p>Mechanism to address weaknesses in the <u>justice system</u> for the vulnerable, especially women (#13)</p> <p><u>Guidelines on conflict-of-interest</u> for state and government functionaries (#15)</p>
Ministry of Interprovincial Coordination	<p>Need-based system of <u>National Finance Commission Award</u> (#7)</p> <p>Need-based system of <u>Provincial Finance Commissions</u> (#8)</p>
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	<p>Free electronic media airtime to promote <u>information as public good</u> (#23)</p>
Local Governments and CDA	<p>Fixing the local government system to facilitate <u>need-based community decision making</u> (#22)</p> <p>Earmarking a share for the poor when allocating <u>vending stalls</u> (#16)</p> <p>Earmarking a share for the poor while auctioning shops in <u>Town and Tehsil committees</u> (#17)</p> <p>Earmarking a share for the poor in <u>Market Committees</u> (#18)</p> <p>Earmarking a share for residents of <u>Katchi Abadis</u> in the event of commercialization (#19)</p> <p>A <u>policy of community co-ownership</u> where land is freed up from land grabbers (#20)</p> <p>A policy of community co-ownership where government gives <u>hunting permits</u> (#21)</p>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<p>Policy of community co-ownership where government gives hunting permits (#21)</p>
Pillar 3	
Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination and provincial departments of health	<p>Provision of deworming <u>drugs</u>, iron, folic acid, micronutrient supplements (#56)</p> <p><u>Food fortification</u>, wheat and oil (#56 and #63)</p> <p><u>Health promotion awareness</u> regarding breastfeeding and complimentary feeding (#57)</p> <p><u>Universal health coverage</u> policy to be adopted at federal and provincial levels (#77)</p> <p>Measures to address <u>regulatory capture</u> in health regulatory agencies (#78)</p> <p><u>Transparency placard placement</u> policy for health facilities funded by government (#79)</p> <p>Policy to accelerate <u>reform of public hospitals</u> with increase in budgets (#80)</p> <p>Awareness campaign on toilet use and handwashing by soap (#120)</p> <p>Eradication of <u>open defecation</u> (#121)</p> <p><u>Population Task Force</u> will be housed under the direct supervision of the Prime Ministers Secretariat (#113)</p>

Ministry of Education and Trainings and provincial departments of education	<p>Awareness drive aimed at article 25-A (#67)</p> <p>Private school vouchers/contracting out to private schools where public schools do not exist (#68)</p> <p>Increase in the budget of the National Education Foundation (#70)</p> <p>A second chance programme for girls in schools and colleges (#74)</p> <p>Need-based undergraduate scholarships, partnership of HEC and BISP (#75)</p> <p>Transparency placard placement policy for all schools funded by government (#76)</p> <p>University-hosted National Centre for Human Nutrition (#59)</p>
Food Security & Prov. Depts. of Agriculture	<p>Labour Expert Group to formalize tenancy farming system and informal sector (#47 & 103)</p> <p>Policy to address fragmented and small land holdings (#104)</p> <p>Crop diversification Policy as a counter to elite capture in this area (#105)</p> <p>Incentivize local manufacturing of farm equipment, drip irrigation materials and solar equipment (#106)</p> <p>A policy to promote effective husbandry and hay and silage making (#107)</p> <p>Publication of biannual Agriculture Terms of Trade Report (#108)</p> <p>Warehouse receipt financing (#109)</p> <p>Policy to reduce cost of agriculture inputs by minimizing import duties and taxes (#110)</p> <p>Policy to provide market stimulus for livestock and fisheries in arid zones (#111)</p> <p>5+1 model of desi chicken asset transfer (#60)</p> <p>A Kitchen Gardening initiative (#62)</p> <p>Initiative to address spurious, and adulterated milk (#66)</p> <p>Promotion of seed distribution through the Utility Stores Corporation (#64)</p> <p>Promotion of subsidized certified seed and seedlings through the entrepreneurial model (#62)</p>
Ministry of Industries	Oil cans to accompany seed packets policy (#63)
Pillar 4	
Ministry of Education and Trainings and provincial TVETs	<p>Introduction of skills training in school curricula and 2-year college programmes (#92)</p> <p>Rationalizing requirements of 8th class as conditionality for enrolment in TVETs (#93)</p> <p>Decrease in the age of enrolment from 18 to 15 in TVET institutions (#94)</p> <p>Review of legislation relating to apprenticeship in the informal sector (#95)</p> <p>Change in NAVTCC's law to curb unregulated Trade Testing Centres (#96)</p> <p>Increase in NAVTCC's budget (#97)</p> <p>International recognition of TEVT courses (#98)</p>
IT Division	<p>Policy of architecture-based approach to digitize government (#88)</p> <p>Promotion of freelancing (#89)</p> <p>Facilitation of electronic payments (#89)</p> <p>A policy to promote startups (#90)</p> <p>Enhancement of broadband and basic telephony in lagging districts through USF (#91)</p> <p>Handset policy to facilitate access (#91)</p>
Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development	<p>A consolidated labour market information system for overseas employment (#99)</p> <p>Launch of welfare and pension scheme for the informal sector (#48)</p> <p>Accelerated foreign policy drive to promote overseas employment (#100)</p> <p>Products to make remittances agile and cost effective (#102)</p>
PASSD	National Poverty Graduation Initiative where 16.8 million individuals will access interest-free loans (#84 & 87), skills development and asset transfers (#32 and #61)

Ministry of Communications and Postal Services	Additional role in Kifalat: One woman one bank account initiative to be determined (#29)
Ministry of Power	Off-grid solutions to electricity (#86)
Ministry of Railways	Earmarking a share for poor while allocating vending stalls on government-owned land including railway stations (#16)
Across pillars	
National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA)	Supports electronic disbursement of funds for regular cash transfers and shock response, including registration, provision of biometric verification systems and complaint management systems. It has supported BISP, the Watan Card for flood-affected people, the Citizens Damage Compensation Programme, Afghan Refugee Registration and Internally Displaced Persons.

Photo Credits

Cover: Condition cash assistance recipients receive training in traditional dressmaking in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as part of the livelihood development programme. Photo Credit: WFP Staff

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