

Social Protection Assessment-Based National Dialogue in Myanmar



Facilitated by the
United Nations
Country Team

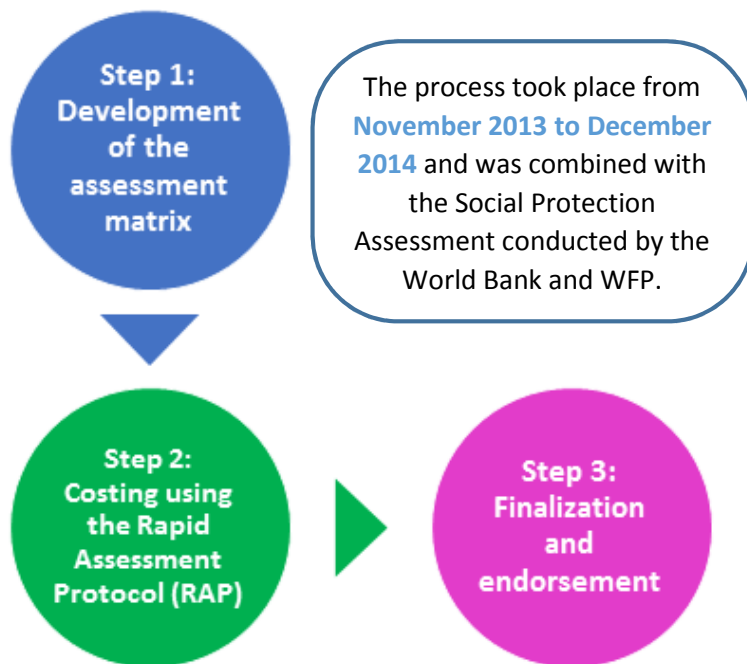
A participatory approach

Assessment-based national dialogue (ABND)

The ABND provides a consensual picture of the existing nation-wide social protection provisions provided by the central Government of Myanmar, it also identifies policy gaps and implementation issues as well as priority recommendations to close the coverage gaps. Through the exercise, on the basis of their recommendations, the national dialogue participants formulate concrete policy options and propose a number of extended or new social protection schemes. The cost of implementing a national social protection floor (a basic set of social security guarantees that should be extended to all) is estimated and projected over a ten years period so as to facilitate fiscal space mobilization.

The ABND methodology was used in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Honduras and is currently underway in Mongolia, Philippines, Solomon, Kyrgyzstan and Mozambique.

3 steps of the ABND



Multi-Stakeholder Participation

The national dialogue facilitated by the ILO alongside a number of UN Country Team members, convened a wide range of actors:

- **Line ministries** (Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement; Labour, Employment and Social Security; Health; Finance; Education; Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development; National Planning and Economic Development; and Home Affairs);
- **Workers' and employers' representatives** (AFFM, FTUM, MTUF, UMFCCI, UTA);
- **UN agencies** (ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS, WHO, WFP) and **development partners** (JICA, World Bank);
- **Civil society organizations, INGO's and NGO's** (Action Aid, Care, FES, HelpAge International, Oxfam, MMCWA, MRCS, MWAF, MWCDF, Save the Children, SPPR, World Vision);
- **Research Institutions** (IGC, MDRI-CESD, SPPRG,).

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STEP 1 - Development of the social protection assessment matrix



The preliminary assessment matrix built upon the World Bank social protection inventory and was presented and reviewed at the first national dialogue on social protection on 23-25 March 2014. The dialogue provided a clear consensus on the picture of the social protection provisions in Myanmar and identified coverage gaps and implementation issues as well as priority recommendations to fill those gaps. Several concrete policy recommendations emerged from this meeting to further design and implement social protection provisions with a view to close the social protection floor gaps.

Main policy gaps

- Rights to health and education are mentioned in the Constitution, individual entitlements are not yet detailed.
- Lack of a general framework for social protection schemes design and coordination.
- Many programmes are not yet embedded in the law.
- A number of existing provisions do not provide long-term income security (i.e. earmarked financing, indexation of benefits).

Main implementation issues

- Limited consolidated monitoring of key coverage indicators at national level.
- Supply-side shortages and geographical inequity.
- Lack of enforcement of existing social protection laws and programmes.
- Low awareness of intended beneficiaries.
- Limited delivery capacity at States and Regions level.

Summary of Recommendations

	Additional or extended provisions	Structural reforms	Improved operations
Health	-Social Health Protection for all, integrating existing programmes. -Scale-up the HIV/AIDS treatment and counselling programme.	-Strengthen the Health System.	-Develop a detailed package for the Social Security Medical Care Scheme.
Children	-Introduce a new-born nutrition-sensitive social protection scheme. -Support families with children, including through the reinforcement of existing mechanisms. -Protect children with disabilities.	-Ensure coordination among interventions directed at children.	-Ensure that free primary education is enforced.
Active Age	-Develop social protection mechanisms against seasonal under-employment. -Extend maternity protection. -Create a social protection scheme for adults with permanent disabilities.	-Apply the same social protection schemes to the whole formal sector. -Move towards a unified and enforced labour legislation. -Include social protection in the legislative framework for overseas migrants.	-Enforce all social security schemes under the Social Security Law, 2012. -Extend provisions for access to TVET. -Review the benefit levels of workmen's compensation in case of work injury. -Revise the voluntary social security scheme to ensure financial access to informal workers. -Raise awareness on workers' right to social security.
Old Age	-Create a social pension -Address the special needs of elderly dependent persons.	-Coordinate and ensure portability of benefits across different pension schemes.	-Ensure current pension schemes are indexed on inflation and wages.
Coordination and delivery	-Establish a sustainable coordination and monitoring mechanism at both central and state and regional levels. -Improve the delivery of social protection schemes through the establishment of a single entry point for the identification, registration and benefit delivery to beneficiaries, especially in hard-to-reach areas with limited administrative presence.		

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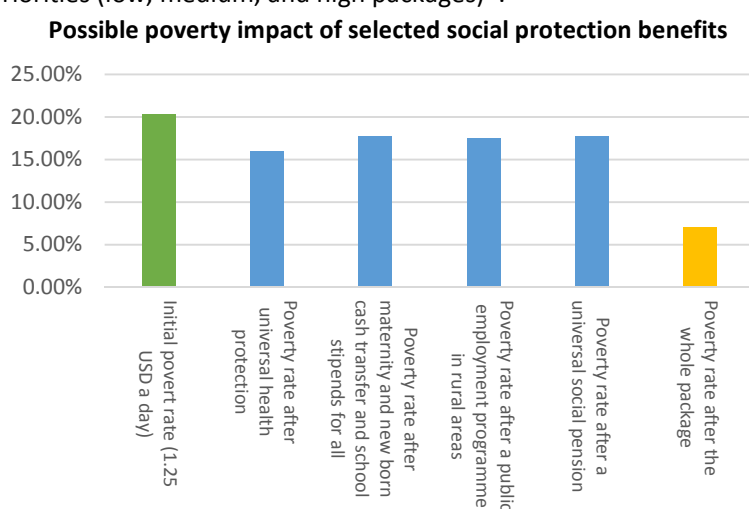
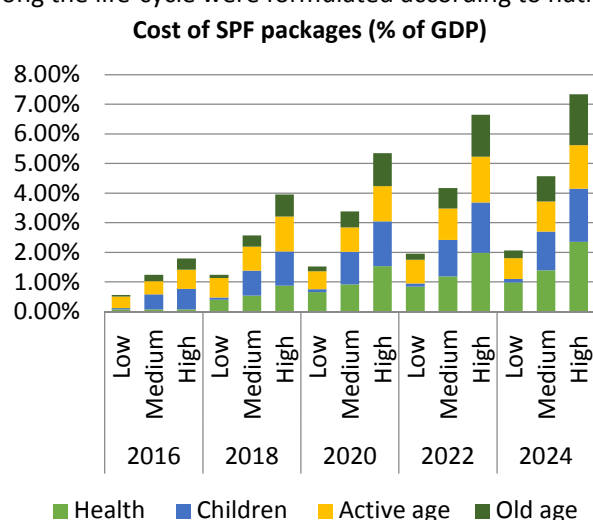
STEP 2 - Costing using the Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP) model



During the second national dialogue on 18-20 June 2014, the recommendations formulated in March were translated into concrete policy options, i.e. specific social protection schemes that need to be introduced or further expanded to fill the coverage gaps. Discussions were informed by the World Bank – WFP social protection assessment (SPA) preliminary analysis. The costing exercise was facilitated by the ILO and received inputs from other UNCT members, line ministries, and INGOs.

Cost estimates and poverty impact

The policy options elaborated in June were presented and reviewed at the third national dialogue on social protection on 3-5 September 2014. The participants benefited from a training on the RAP model and three packages of social protection benefits along the life-cycle were formulated according to national priorities (low, medium, and high packages)*.

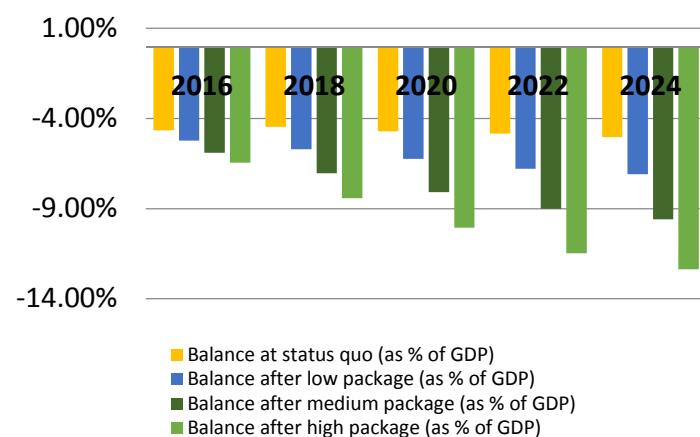


Poverty impact simulations suggest that some of the ABND recommendations could contribute significantly to poverty reduction in Myanmar. Introducing single benefits could reduce monetary poverty by 2.5 to 4.3 percentage points, with universal social health protection having the highest impact, a comprehensive package could have an even greater impact.

Fiscal space considerations

- Budget reallocation and changes in the revenue structure would be needed to ensure the sustainable financing of additional social protection measures.
- At the moment, government revenues rely heavily on State-owned enterprises and proceeds from the sales of licences to international companies entering the Myanmar market. A number of countries have successfully financed the extension of social protection through the creation of additional taxes (i.e. taxes on extractive industry financing social pensions in Bolivia).
- Additional fiscal space could also be mobilized through expenditure reallocation within the current expenditure envelope. In 2012, 12% of the government budget was allocated to social ministries and pension awards, representing over 3 per cent of GDP, whereas the OECD average is 22% of GDP.

Government budget balance (as % of GDP) at status quo and with different SPF packages



* The cost calculations and projections were completed for 2014-2024 for the proposed provisions using the ILO costing tool: the RAP. Poverty impact was assessed based on simple and static micro-simulations on the IHLCA survey data.

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STEP 3 - Finalization and endorsement



The ABND report was produced in September 2014 and submitted to the national social protection Technical Support Group (TSG) in order to feed the drafting process of the national social protection strategic plan.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the national social protection Working Committee adopted a national social protection strategic plan at the end of 2014.

This strategic plan includes 8 new flagship programmes for the extension of social protection, which are all policy options developed through the ABND process.



What next?

How to increase social protection coverage?

Mobilize sustainable fiscal space

- Use the ABND results to advocate for impactful interventions;
- Phase in the implementation of priority policy options.

Scale-up existing schemes and create new ones

- Extension plan for existing schemes and legal framework revisions;
- Feasibility studies for the new schemes;
- Use of technology to scale up coverage.

Strengthen sector coordination

- Multi-stakeholder coordination;
- Integrated delivery to improve access for the most vulnerable.



To learn more about the ABND methodology, please visit: <http://secsoc.ilo.org/abnd/index.html>

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Social protection assessment-based national dialogue in Myanmar
<http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowProject.action?id=2487>