

# National dialogue processes



## A national dialogue uniting social protection stakeholders

The Assessment-based National Dialogue (ABND) on social protection is a process that identifies priority areas for government intervention in the field of social protection and estimates the cost of these interventions. It involves several stakeholders:

- national ministries (i.e. labour, social welfare, health, education, rural development, finance, planning and others);
- local governments;
- social security institutions;
- workers' and employers' representatives;
- civil society organizations;
- academia; and
- development partners.

The ABND process brings together different stakeholders to identify the existing social protection situation in the country, policy gaps and implementation issues. It then formulates recommendations to address these problems, establish a social protection floor (SPF) in the country and design a national social protection strategy. The recommendations take into account government priorities and can also inspire new policy development. Ultimately, the recommendations need to be endorsed by policy-makers.

Often, social protection stakeholders work in isolation and only deal with a part of the social protection agenda. The ABND provides a unique opportunity to gather all stakeholders and identify a common diagnosis of the social protection situation, formulate priority policy recommendations and plan a progressive implementation of the SPF. This consensus is achieved through bilateral and multipartite consultations, workshops and training sessions.

The ABND process is conducted by a working group consisting of representatives from stakeholder organizations and led by national ministries and/or development partners.

To date, the ABND methodology has been applied in Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Niger, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Zambia and other countries. More information on these exercises is available in dedicated workspaces at [www.social-protection.org](http://www.social-protection.org).

## A three-step approach

The ABND process can be applied to design a national social protection strategy or a plan for implementing an existing strategy. It follows three steps:

	Govt. strategy	Existing and planned schemes	Policy gaps	Implementation issues	Recommendations
Health	Identifying existing situation in the country	Four SPF guarantees	Identifying policy gaps and implementation issues, addressing which would complete the SPF	Agreeing on priority policy options through national dialogue	Agreeing on priority policy options through national dialogue
Children					
Working age					
Elderly					

### STEP 1 – Assessment matrix

The SPF guarantees are used as a framework to describe existing social protection schemes in a country, identify policy gaps and implementation issues, and draft recommendations to guarantee basic social protection to all people. The preparation of the matrix involves close collaboration between all stakeholders through bilateral consultations and multipartite workshops at national and local levels.

### STEP 2 – Costing of recommendations

The cost of the proposed SPF recommendations is estimated over several years using a costing tool known as the Rapid Assessment Protocol (RAP). This costing exercise can serve as a basis for prioritizing policy recommendations.

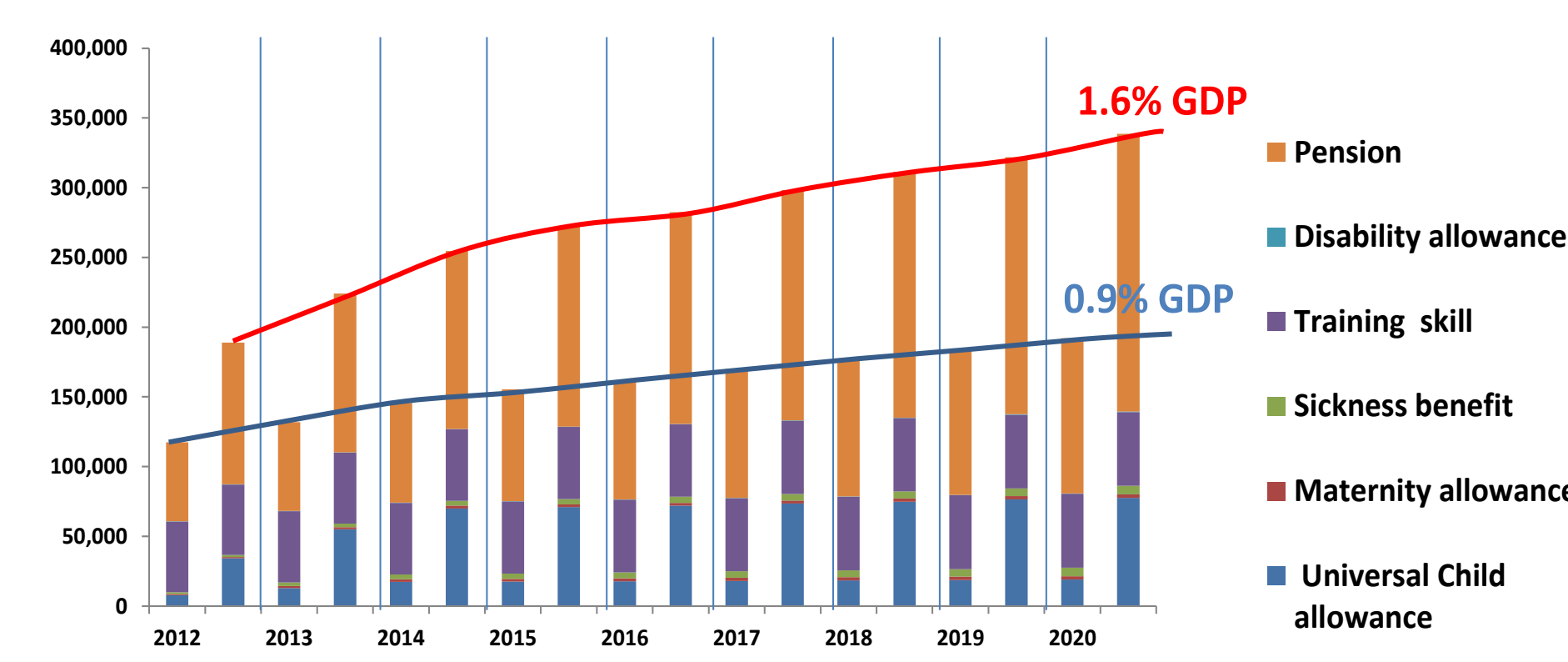
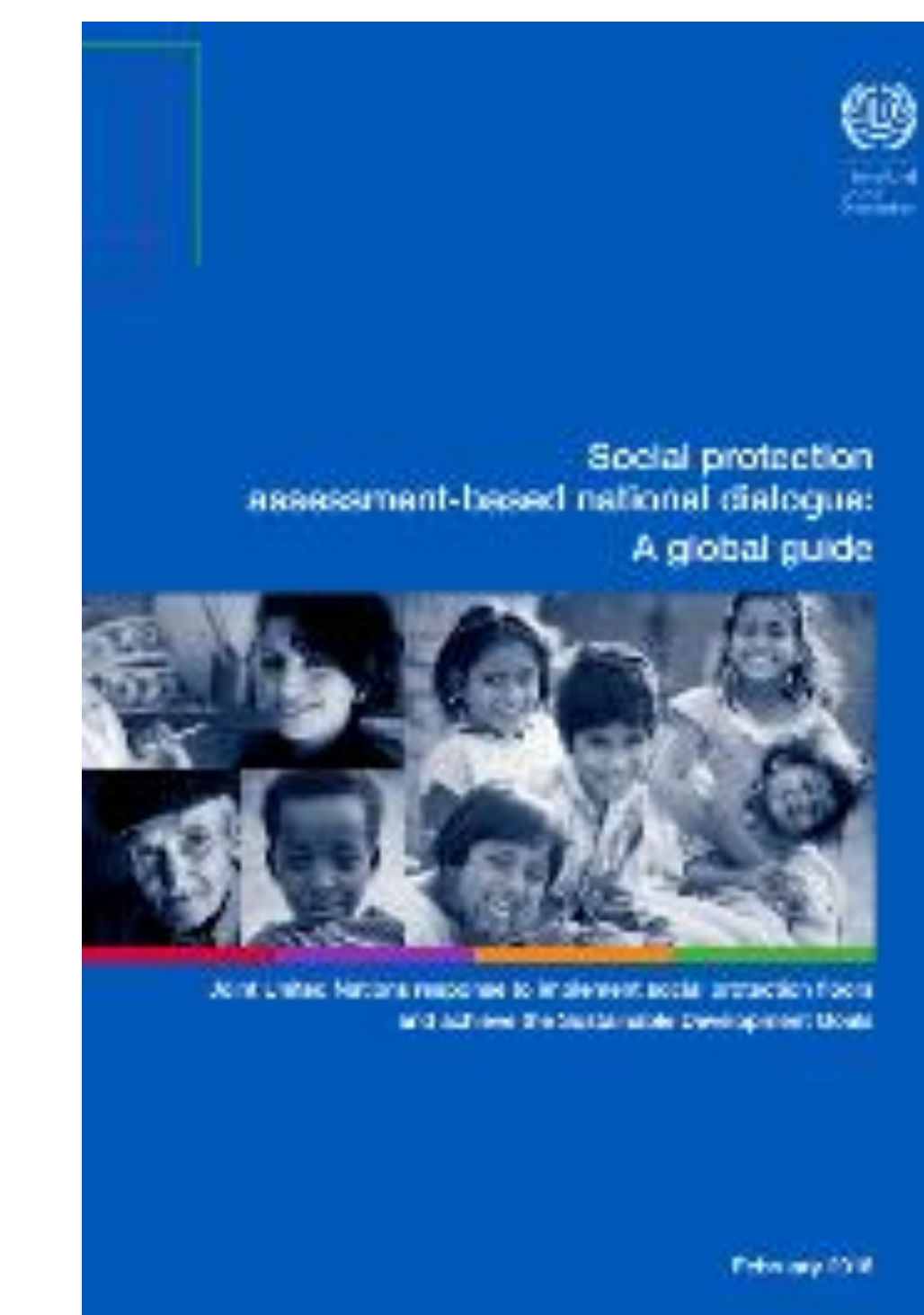


Illustration: Projections for low and high SPF packages, Thailand

### STEP 3 – Endorsement

Once the assessment report is finalized, it is presented to and discussed with high-level government officials for their endorsement and decisions on next steps. As a result of the ABND process, countries have started working on drafting national social protection strategies and the design or reform of social protection schemes. For example, Thailand has embarked on the design of a long-term care scheme, while Indonesia is working on extending health care and HIV benefits.

## Learn how to carry out an ABND



To help countries carry out ABNDs the ILO has published a good practices guide which draws upon practical ABND experiences in 14 countries.

Country briefs describe how the ABND methodology was applied in a number of countries.

#### Assessment-based National Dialogue: A process to define a national SPF

##### Philippines

During 2015, the Government of the Philippines engaged national ministries, social security agencies, employers, workers, civil society organizations and international agencies in a process of multipartite national dialogue, whose ultimate objective was to arrive at a consensus on what needs to be done to complete the Social Protection Floor (SPF) in the Philippines. These consensus-based action or recommendations to high-level policy makers are meant to serve as inputs into a five-year implementation plan for the national Social Protection Operational Framework and Strategy (SPOFS).

**Main lessons learned**

- To ensure that the ABND process engages all relevant stakeholders working in the field of social protection in a country, it is completed within a specific period of time and has an explicit mandate from the government.
- The national dialogue process was conducted using the "assessment-based national dialogue" (ABND) methodology. The ABND helped to assess the social protection situation in the Philippines, develop consensus recommendations to address the problems and complete the national SPF, estimate their cost and present them to policy makers for endorsement. The process was led by national ministries, namely the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), with the ILO process technical assistance.
- The ABND process was aligned to the Philippine context, by following national decision-making processes and utilizing existing coordination mechanisms. This facilitated the process of endorsement by policy makers.
- The scope and final outputs should be decided at the beginning of the process, to manage expectations of different stakeholders.
- Conducting dialogic workshops at the local level was instrumental in understanding ground-level realities and challenges and thus, identifying policy gaps and implementation issues.
- The ABND can help to develop capacities by involving stakeholders during the process as social protection concepts, tools to assess social protection schemes, and financial and quantitative methodologies.

The ABND process received financial support from the [Sida](http://www.sida.se).

#### Towards a Social Protection Floor: Assessment-based National Dialogue

##### Myanmar

The Assessment-based National Dialogue (ABND) process in Myanmar helped to develop a consensus picture of the existing social protection situation in the country. This included identification of social protection schemes, establishment of the central government, challenges, policy recommendations and their estimated cost. The process encompassed several national dialogue workshops which identified and debated on concrete policy recommendations to establish a Social Protection Floor (SPF) in Myanmar.

**Main lessons learned**

- The ABND process helped to define the SPF in Myanmar and provide inputs to the national Social Protection Strategic Policy, discussions on the Rural Development Strategic Framework and universal health coverage.
- At the time of conducting the ABND, Myanmar was in a post-conflict setting and undergoing a transition to full democracy. Against this backdrop, the ABND successfully facilitated participatory dialogic in social policy among ministries and development partners.
- The cost of providing an SPF to all people in the country was estimated, which can form a basis for prioritizing the policy recommendations and exploring the mobilization of fiscal resources.
- The ABND was harmonized with other social protection activities undertaken in Myanmar such as World Bank's social protection inventory. This encouraged collaboration between development partners under the auspices of the Social Protection Emergency Operations Board (SPEOB), based on mutual synergies.

This note presents a successful country experience of expanding social protection.

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## THE PHILIPPINES

## MYANMAR

Learn more at:  
[www.social-protection.org](http://www.social-protection.org)