

Quick Test

of social protection systems

on their gender-sensitivity and inclusivity

Developed by the Competence Centre for Health, Social Protection and Inclusion and the 'Global Alliances for Social Protection' program

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1. Background

Social protection systems must be gender-sensitive and inclusive for persons with disabilities and minorities in order to ensure that these groups are also able to benefit equitably and equally from the services provided by these systems.

Gender-sensitivity plays an important role in establishing and reforming social protection systems that are designed to protect people from economic and social risks. Men and women face different risks and are affected differently by economic shocks and natural disasters. Because of their reproductive role and as a result of social and cultural norms, women often face a higher risk of loss of income and of resultant poverty. In spite of this clear correlation, research indicates that many social protection systems are still gender blind and fail to take into account gender-specific differences.

In 2016 the German government adopted the Development Policy Action Plan on Gender 2016-2020¹ (known in brief as the Gender Action Plan or GAP II) drawn up by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It demonstrates the priorities and specific measures that German development cooperation intends to use to translate the three-pronged approach (gender mainstreaming, empowerment, and political dialogue) into political steering and into practical programmes and projects.

It is estimated that a total of one billion people worldwide are currently living with disabilities, about 80 per cent of them in developing countries. People with functional impairments or handicaps often have limited or no access to services and systems in their society, including health systems, education, and the labour market. Systems are not aligned to the needs of these people. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the pertinent Optional Protocol describe the inclusion of persons with disabilities as a human rights-based approach. More than 160 states have already signed and/or ratified this convention (as at September 2015). Since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted, inclusion of persons with disabilities and minorities as well as gender-sensitivity have been an expressly shared concern of the international community.

It is important to minimise exclusion in national systems and to avoid any violations of national or international normative frameworks. Therefore it makes sense to continuously check a social protection system on criteria of gender-sensitivity and inclusivity during the

¹ In German: entwicklungspolitischer Aktionsplan zur Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter 2016-2020

planning, introduction and continuation of a social protection system. This will enable you to take corrective action if necessary during these processes.

Social protection systems develop over time. In the course of this development, consideration of gender-sensitivity and/or inclusivity may fade away. That is why such system and the services it delivers should be regularly reviewed on the basis of set criteria. Practitioners have called for tests that are easy to use and do not require vast resources, but give orientation for the set-up of thorough and detailed analysis.

The following testing tool is designed to respond to these needs. It provides well-founded indications of need for adjustment or corrective action in a social protection system and its services, with a view to achieving greater gender-sensitivity and inclusivity. This could initially avoid the need for more extensive, resource-intensive analyses on areas in the social protection system that ignore, neglect or not sufficiently consider gender-sensitivity and/or inclusivity. A set of criteria has been drawn up as a testing tool (Quick Test). These criteria can be used to rapidly and easily determine whether or not a social protection system is gender-sensitive and inclusive. The criteria are not country-specific and are thus universally valid within the framework of a social protection system. The Quick Test fully complies with the requirements of the GIZ gender strategy. Feedback from users to inclusive-social-protection@giz.de is appreciated to amend the Quick Test.

2. Methods used to develop the set of criteria of the Quick Test

Outline

- 2.1 Internet- and literature-based research to identify factors used to assess social protection systems for gender-sensitivity and inclusivity for persons with disabilities and minority groups*
- 2.2 Combining experience, lessons learned and results of internet- and literature-based research in order to identify risk areas that are particularly relevant for the gender-sensitive and inclusive nature of social protection systems (called “risk area” in the Quick Test)*
- 2.3 Defining the levels of a social protection system to which the various risk areas are related to (called “social protection system level” in the Quick Test)*
- 2.4 Qualitative benchmarking for labelling the criteria (called “criterion” with associated “criterion check” in the Quick Test)*

2.5 Using criteria to identify the state of a social protection system, subdivided into minority groups, persons with disabilities, and gender groups (categories range from “fully achieved” to “not achieved at all”

2.6 Phrasing key questions to identify the state of a social protection system (called “guiding questions” in the Quick Test)

2.1 Internet- and literature-based research:

In the course of this research, it was not possible to identify tools that would enable the user to make a ‘swift and easy’ qualitative assessment of the extent to which a social protection system is gender-sensitive and inclusive for persons with disabilities and minorities.

However, a number of detailed and complex studies, analyses and tools were found. The complexity of this material makes it difficult to use in the development of a set of criteria and a list of questions to be used as a Quick Test. The internet- and literature-based research then revealed an apparent gulf in the intensity of work done on the topics: Social protection and gender-sensitivity was tackled the most, followed by social protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The least research is available on the connection of social protection and inclusion of minorities.

*2.2 Combining experience, lessons learned and results of internet- and literature-based research in order to identify **risk areas**:*

In the course of the internet- and literature-based research, particularly critical risk areas emerged, in which violations in social protection systems were most prevalent regarding gender-sensitivity and inclusivity for persons with disabilities and minorities. This made the Quick Test even more relevant to be produced. In combination with experience and lessons learned, the following five risk areas can be identified:

- **Risk area A: Participation**

Participation, meaning participation in processes, co-determination and equal and equitable receipt of services, is recognised as a major success factor for systems that are deeply rooted in the structures of a society. Participation of persons with disabilities and members of gender and minority groups in the development, realisation, evaluation and reform of a social protection system is thus a basic prerequisite for a gender-sensitive and inclusive system.

- **Risk area B: Information and communication**

Consciously or unconsciously, selective information as well as communication policies and strategies within a social protection system can support the marginalisation and discrimination of persons with disabilities and members of gender and minority groups.

- **Risk area C: Empowerment**

A gender-sensitive and inclusive social protection system ought to be equally and equitably accessible for persons with disabilities and members of gender and minority groups. There must be a balance between capacities and rights of the different groups within society that are served by a social protection system. A gender-sensitive and inclusive social protection system takes this into account, accords rights to persons with disabilities and to members of gender and minority groups, and ensures that these rights are respected.

- **Risk area D: Accessibility**

The intended impact of a social protection system on persons with disabilities and members of gender and minority groups can be limited due to barriers. These barriers can result from behaviour patterns, attitudes and practices within society, but can likewise be part of the system itself. Gender-sensitive and inclusive social protection will make active efforts to avoid barriers that could be created by the system. At the same time, the system will try to dismantle barriers that arise as a result of the general systemic and societal context.

- **Risk area E: Recognition of diversity in population and society**

A 'one size fits all' approach in social protection systems is very likely to lead to significant disadvantages, marginalisation and discrimination of persons with disabilities, gender and minority groups, and their families. Targeting, product design and service delivery are some of the core elements of a social protection system, which can make a major contribution to establishing a gender-sensitive and inclusive system, given that human diversity is respected and accepted.

Here, it must be pointed out that not all potential risk areas in a social protection system have been considered. In fact, those that are included allow for an easy and quick assessment of gender-sensitivity and inclusivity.

*2.3 Defining the **levels** of a social protection system:*

Different **levels** within a social protection system are defined so that the risk areas can be allocated precisely to these levels. The following levels of a social protection system were selected:

- **Normative framework** (including national and international normative framework; on political level)
- **Institutionalisation** (including strategy development and design, stakeholder consultation and harmonisation, structure and financing design, determination of steering and management structures)
- **Roll-out** / implementation (including product development with targeting, implementation of a monitoring system, conducting evaluation, designing the adjustment and reform processes)

*2.4 Qualitative **benchmarking** (target value) for labelling the criteria:*

The interfaces between risk areas and levels are subdivided into what we call **benchmark clusters**: a) regulations and standards, b) impact achievement (results), and c) transformation.

Qualitative benchmarking essentially proposes a target value (= benchmark) for gender-sensitivity and inclusivity. The **benchmarks are the starting point for defining the criteria**, which are expressed as statements.

		System LEVEL		
		Normative framework	Institutionalisation	Roll-out
R I S K A R E A	Participation			
	Information & communication			
	Empowerment		<i>Benchmarks</i>	
	Accessibility			
	Recognition of diversity			

²

All criteria and their associated benchmarks (criterion checks) are worded as combined criteria/ benchmarks, i.e. they are applicable for gender-sensitivity and for inclusivity of persons with disabilities and minorities.

2.5 Using criteria to identify the state of a social protection system:

A criterion is assessed on the basis of the assessment of one or several associated criteria checks. These assessments of the criteria provide an indication on the state of a social protection system in terms of gender-sensitivity and inclusivity.

In order to determine to what extent a social protection system meets a criterion, it should be assessed with a view on persons with disabilities, gender and minority groups. Four responses are possible in each case: 'fully achieved', 'more than 50% achieved', 'less than 50% achieved' and 'not achieved at all'.

2.6 Phrasing key questions to identify the state of a social protection system:

Key questions intend to simplify the assessment of the state of a social protection system in terms of a benchmark (criterion check). For less complex benchmarks this assistance is not provided in the test.

3. How to use the Quick Test and interpretation of results

The Quick Test is based on Microsoft Excel. The Excel workbook consists of four worksheets which are partly protected against entries that would be destructive for the format or formulas. The worksheets are:

² You will find a detailed classification of the benchmarks in Annex 1.

1. "**Explanation**": Description and explanation on how to understand and use the Quick Test.
2. "**Quick Test**": This is *your* worksheet in which you enter your assessment, guided by the "guiding questions".
3. "**Summary Entries**": On this worksheet, your entries/assessment are automatically summed up per criterion. If a criterion consists of several criterion checks, then there is an automatic weightage in accordance with the number of criterion checks. This is for comparability reasons. The sum is always 1.
4. "**Graphs**": Some sample graphs are automatically created. They are meant to provide inspiration for the interpretation of the Quick Test results. The graphs are drawn from data of the worksheet "Summary Entries".

Worksheet "Quick Test": It consists of a selection of 20 qualitative criteria (criterion 1-20), combining each criterion with a risk area and a level of the social protection system. Each criterion comes with several criterion checks. The criteria and their criterion checks are formulated as statements that can be interpreted as good practice. Each criterion and its respective criterion checks are related to one out of three benchmark clusters, namely regulations and standards, impact achievement and transformation.

What to do:

1. Enter your assessment by inserting the figure 1 in the green (for minority groups), orange (for persons with disabilities) and blue (for gender groups) fields in the boxes corresponding to your valuation 'fully achieved', 'more than 50% achieved', 'less than 50% achieved' or 'not achieved at all'.
2. The "Guiding Questions" provide orientation on how to value the respective criterion check statement. The list of guiding questions is neither complete nor comprehensive, but it allows for orientation.
3. You are invited to use the box "your comments", as it might help to remember aspects that come to your mind when checking your social protection system.

Interpretation of results / graphs:

The results of the assessment are clustered in "safeguard or further development" and "transformative approach" to indicate the type of action that might be useful.

"Safeguard" is pointing out that elements of the social protection system are already existing and need to be sustained. Action should be taken to safeguard these elements.

"Further development" gives a hint that elements of a social protection system are existing. Those build a base for further development into appropriate responses to the needs of persons with disabilities, gender and minority groups. Both appearances of a social protection system are clustered into one cluster, "safeguard or further development" (meaning: where and what to maintain, to reinforce, to develop). The higher the ranking in this cluster, the better a social protection system seems to be with regards to gender-sensitivity and inclusivity.

The cluster "transformative approach" is pointing at fundamental change that is necessary in the social protection system, due to low gender-sensitivity and inclusivity.

4. What the Quick Test can offer as a testing tool

- By using the Quick Test, you can make qualitative statements about the gender-sensitivity and inclusivity of a social protection system with relatively little efforts.
- The results of the Quick Test allow for a rough statement on how and to what extent a social protection system is gender-sensitive and inclusive.
- Results of the Quick Test can be used to make recommendations regarding the mainstreaming of gender in the methodological approach and objectives of social protection programmes.
- Qualitative benchmarks combined with the respective identification of the state of a social protection system provide orientation in terms of action that might be required.
- The results of the Quick Test are comparable for social protection systems in different countries.
- The matrix structure allows to look at individual risk areas, system levels or benchmark clusters. A sample of analysis is provided on the worksheet "Graphs".
- Experts for individual aspects of the social protection system can be involved in specific criteria only and not necessarily in the entire test.
- The methodology selected can be used to develop similar testing instruments for other systems.

5. Limitations

- The Quick Test does not cover all possible criteria that can be applied to assess a social protection system on gender-sensitivity and inclusivity for persons with disabilities and minorities.
- Not all existing risk areas, system levels of a social protection system, benchmarks and benchmark clusters have been taken into account.
- The testing instrument cannot and should not replace detailed analyses of the gender-sensitivity and inclusivity of a social protection system.

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ANNEX 1: Detailed classification of the benchmarks

Criterion	Risk Area	System Level	Benchmark Cluster	Criteria
1	Participation	Normative Framework	Regulations and Standards	A normative framework is regulating and setting standards for equal and equitable participation, provision of co-determination rights and opportunities to persons with disabilities as well as members of gender and minority groups.
2	Participation	Institutionalization	Regulations and Standards	In the course of the institutionalization of a social protection system, standard processes are applied to ensure adherence and compliance to the normative framework, in order to regulate equal and equitable participation and co-determination.
3	Participation	Roll-out	Regulations and Standards	In the roll-out of the social protection system, provisions for participation and co-determination are made to ensure equal and equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
4	Participation	Roll-out	Impact Achievement	Social protection products and benefit packages are apt to serve equally and equitably their purpose, also for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
5	Participation	Roll-out	Transformation	Attitudes and practices in society do not prevent persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups from benefits of a social protection system.
6	Information and communication	Institutionalization	Regulations and Standards	The social protection system determines in its information and communication policies that persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups are reached.
7	Information and communication	Institutionalization	Regulations and Standards	The social protection system informs explicitly about how persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups are considered.
8	Information and communication	Roll-out	Impact Achievement	A strategy exists to reach persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups with comprehensive information about the social protection products.

9	Information and communication	Roll-out	Transformation	Persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups are sufficiently informed and sensitised about possibilities and opportunities the social protection system is providing for them.
10	Empowerment	Institutionalization	Transformation	The social protection system makes provision for empowerment of self-advocacy and advocacy organisations of persons with disabilities, gender and minority groups, in order to ensure their efficient participation in institutionalization processes.
11	Empowerment	Institutionalization	Transformation	The social protection system is promoting capacity building of persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups to efficiently fulfil their roles and mandate in the system.
12	Empowerment	Roll-out	Transformation	Persons with disabilities and members of gender and minority groups can enjoy equal rights to benefit from social protection.
13	Accessibility	Normative Framework	Regulations and Standards	A normative framework ensures accessibility of the social protection system for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
14	Accessibility	Institutionalization	Regulations and Standards	Processes in the course of institutionalization of the social protection systems fulfil standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
15	Accessibility	Institutionalization	Impact Achievement	Prevention and overcoming social, cultural, religious and other barriers for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups is visible in the design and set-up, so that they can benefit from the social protection system.
16	Accessibility	Roll-out	Regulations and Standards	Processes in the course of the roll-out of social protection systems fulfil standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
17	Recognition of diversity in population and society	Institutionalization	Regulations and Standards	Disaggregated statistical data and information that captures the diversity in population and society are consulted for the design and set-up of the social protection system.

18	Recognition of diversity in population and society	Institutionalization	Transformation	Targeting patterns make reference to persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.
19	Recognition of diversity in population and society	Roll-out	Regulations and Standards	Benefit packages of social protection services do satisfy special and particular needs of persons with disabilities as well as members of gender and minority groups.
20	Recognition of diversity in population and society	Roll-out	Impact Achievement	Social protection products are designed to equitably cater for the needs of different groups in society, including persons with disabilities, members of gender and minority groups.