



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL STUDY VISIT TO THE

# GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN NATIONAL SOCIAL ECONOMIC REGISTRY UNDER THE BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME (BISP)



World Food  
Programme

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# 1. BACKGROUND

In November 2015, the Government of Uganda approved the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) along with the Programme Plan of Interventions (PPI). The overarching goal of the NSPP is to promote effective coordination and implementation of relevant social protection interventions and is an integral part of the Uganda Vision 2040 which underscores the importance of social protection in addressing risks and vulnerabilities.

The social protection policy and Programme Plan of Interventions explicitly stipulates the need for a tool—which is commonly referred to as a “Single Registry” for social protection programmes—to harmonize and coordinate information management across the social protection sector. Operationally, Social Registries are information systems that support registration and determination of potential beneficiaries for social programs.

Currently, Uganda does not have a Social Registry although it developed and launched in 2021, the National Single Registry for Social Protection. The difference between a Single and Social Registry is that a Social Registry is a database/list of potential beneficiaries for social protection while a Single Registry is a Database/list/repository of beneficiaries of Social Protection Programmes.

Despite the development of the Single Registry, one of the key challenges that Uganda continues to face in social protection programming is how to strengthen objective and timely identification of beneficiaries (targeting) and even more so during shocks. This was eminent during the response to the COVID 19 pandemic where Government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development rolled out the Covid-19 Relief Cash for the poor who lived on “daily income” but struggled to identify who these poor were and where they were.

Evidence across the globe indicates that countries which had robust socio-economic registries were able to respond promptly due to capabilities that supported timely and transparent identification and payment of the persons living in poverty and vulnerable situations. Social Registries have been successfully implemented in Latin America, Asia and Africa (such as in Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, Mauritius among others).

Drawing from international experiences and lessons learned during Covid, Uganda has prioritized the development of its own National Social Registry. This has been captured as one of the priorities for the National Development Plan (NDP) IV and the Fourth Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF4).

To inform the development of the National Social Registry, Uganda with the support of Development partners conducted a number of benchmarking and learning visits to various countries to understudy the existing models and how they can be adapted to the Ugandan context. Learning visits have been conducted in the following countries;

1. Pakistan -March 2024
2. Kenya -September 2024
3. Pakistan -October 2024

The specific aim of the learning visits was to undertake an in-depth study of the operations and management of a Social Registry, challenges faced and possible solutions for improvement. These visits were conducted by a multi-sectoral delegation drawn from the following institutions; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and National Guidance, Ministry of Local Government, National Planning Authority, National Identification and Registration Authority and Development partners (United Nations World Food Programme, World Bank, United Nations Children Education Fund). The learning visits were financed by the World Food Programme (Kenya -September 2024, Pakistan-October 2024 and the World Bank (Pakistan-March 2024).

## 2. HIGH-LEVEL STUDY VISIT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN ON THE SOCIAL REGISTRY UNDER THE BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME (BISP)

The high-level study visit was organized as a follow-on from the previous study visits held in March and September 2024 by Technical Officers from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The learning visit specifically targeted selected Permanent Secretaries and Heads of relevant line Agencies, led by the Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet and was conducted from the 21st – 25th October, 2024.

### 2.1.Objectives of the learning visit

The main objective of the study visit was to expose Permanent Secretaries and Heads of relevant Agencies to the current international best practice in implementation of regular and shock responsive social protection programmes through an effective and dynamic Social Registry and its eventual application for Uganda.

Specifically, the delegation sought to understudy:

- i) The Pakistan Social Protection portfolio and its evolution;
- ii) The role of the social registry, its coverage, usability, and accessibility;
- iii) The model upon which the social registry is built i.e., census style, on demand and en-mass registration;
- iv) Interoperability of the registry with other administrative systems of government;
- v) The shock responsive capabilities of a registry in enabling the government to quickly scale up to respond to a disaster through efficient and effective targeting;
- vi) The frameworks and institutional arrangements (national and sub-national) for effective management of a social registry;
- vii) Data collection and quality assure mechanisms; and
- viii) Strategies and methods being used to ensure regular update of social registry data.

This report highlights the key lessons learned and the follow up actions to be implemented as a result of this visit.

## 3. OVERVIEW OF THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC REGISTRY (NSER)

The National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) of Pakistan, is a dynamic database established to serve as the targeting platform for all Social Protection programs of the country. The Registry collects data on all poor households and uses a Proxy Means Test (PMT) approach for calculating and assessing the socio-economic status of the households (HHs).

The NSER was launched in 2008 and has evolved over the years as the most reliable dataset used by a variety of stakeholders including, public sector institutions, policy think-tanks and development agencies for designing social protection and poverty alleviation programs and interventions in Pakistan.

Some of the Institutions and programmes using the NSER to identify their beneficiaries include; BISP's UCT and CCT Education and Nutrition Programs, Emergency Cash Transfers (COVID-19, Floods, Earthquake etc.), Targeted Subsidies (Fuel, Wheat Seed Support, Wheat Flour), Provincial Governments (various SP programs) and Federal Institutions.

### 3.1. Highlights of the NSER

The Pakistan NSER collects data from all districts of the country. Through Benazir Income Support Programme, a total of 647 Dynamic Registration Centers were established across the country to enable collection and update of data. These are supported by 25 Mobile Registration Vehicles.

Currently, the NSER has collected data from 35 million households representing 90% coverage. This data is updated in real time and universally after every two years.

### 3.2. Indicators and type of data collected

The NSER collects data across a number of parameters including Demographic, Health, Education, Socio-Economic and Assets. Specifically, the following is collected for each household;

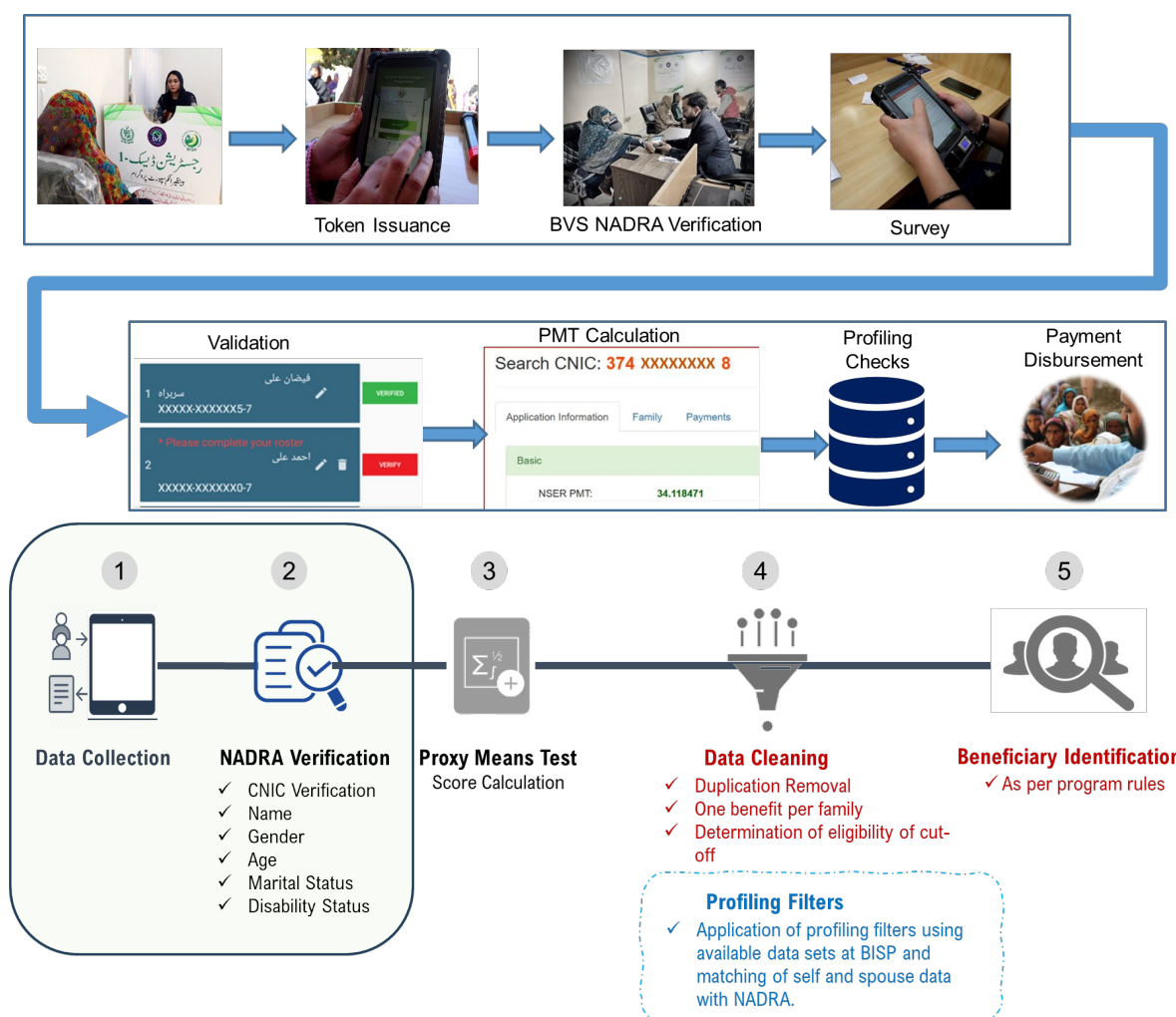
- **Geographic data**-Temporary and Permanent Address, Contact No, GPS Coordinates, Province, District, Block and enumeration Area number
- **Demographics and Family information**; total member of household members, gender profiling, number of children, age profiling and national ID information.
- **Education Status**; Literacy status of the household members, number of, out-of-school children, number of children who have never gone to school, gendered education profiling and reasons for children not attending school
- **Health**-Chronic Disease Profiling (*Heart/ Cardiovascular, Cancer, Obstructed Pulmonary and Asthma, Diabetes, Hepatitis C, TB, Polio*), Infant Mortality and Stillbirth
- **Disability**-Disability Profiling (*Upper Limb Disability, Lower Limb Disability, Mental Disability, Speech Disability, Hearing Disability, Visual Disability (Partial), Visual Disability (Full)*)
- **Employment/Labour Force**-Employment Status (*Employed, Not employed but seeking work, Retired*), Status/nature of employment (*Daily-wage labour force (agri and non-agri), On job (public and private sector), Own business, Employer, etc.*), Working hours and days and Labour force participation.
- **Energy consumption**-Availability of Electricity / Solar / UPS / Generator, availability of Gas, type of Fuel used in household (*fuel wood, etc.*), appliance's profiling being run on electricity.
- **Assets**-Household Assets (*Heater, Washing Machine, Geyser, AC, Fan, Cooking Range, Television, Refrigerator, Sewing/Knitting Machine, Laptop, Motorcycle, Tractor, Car, etc.*)
- **Structure profiling**-Dwelling and Non-Dwelling Structures, type of structure such as houses, offices, health facilities, shops, hostels, hotels etc., construction types and material.



- **Communications**-Internet availability and usage, gadgets used-Laptop / Computers, Mobile Phone etc.
- **Agriculture land holding and use**-Agriculture Land availability, land units/area, cultivated land availability and cultivated land units/area
- **Water and Sanitation**-Formal and informal toilet availability (*Flush connected to public sewerage or pit or open drain, Dry raised latrine, Dry pit latrine*), rate of open defecation and source of Drinking Water
- **Livestock ownership**-Small and Large Livestock profiling and numbers (*Buffalo, cow, goat/ sheep, horse/ mule/ donkey and camel*).

### 3.3. Beneficiary targeting using the NSER

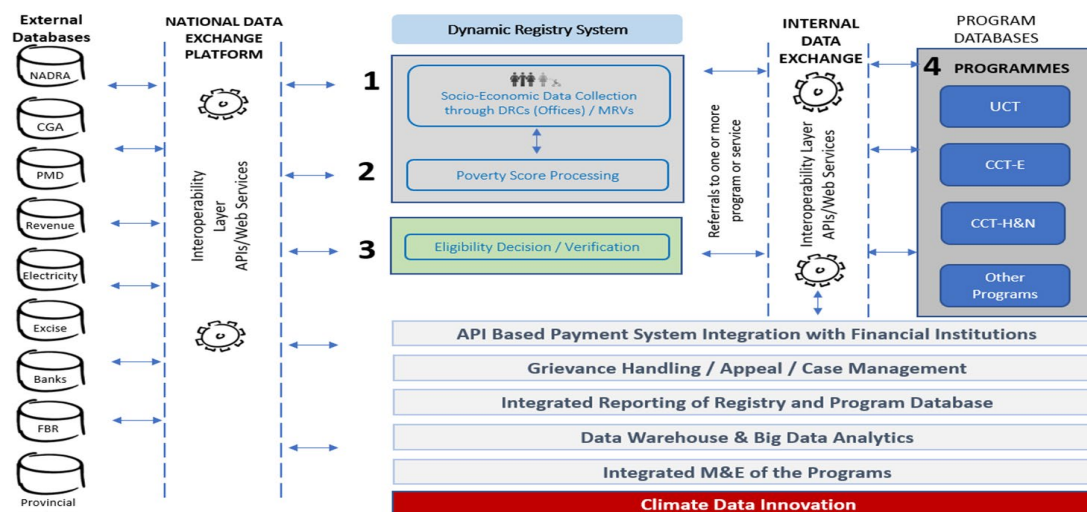
Beneficiary targeting using the NSER goes through a number of processes including; data collection, verification with NADRA, calculation of the Proxy Means Test (PMT) and profile checks as indicated below;



### 3.4. Linkages and integration of the NSER and other systems

To ensure accuracy of data collected, the NSER has been linked/integrated with other relevant government of Pakistan systems that hold different sets of data. Some of the datasets that are linked with the NSER include; NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority), Tax Agency, Land Records, utility Companies, Health Ministry among others;

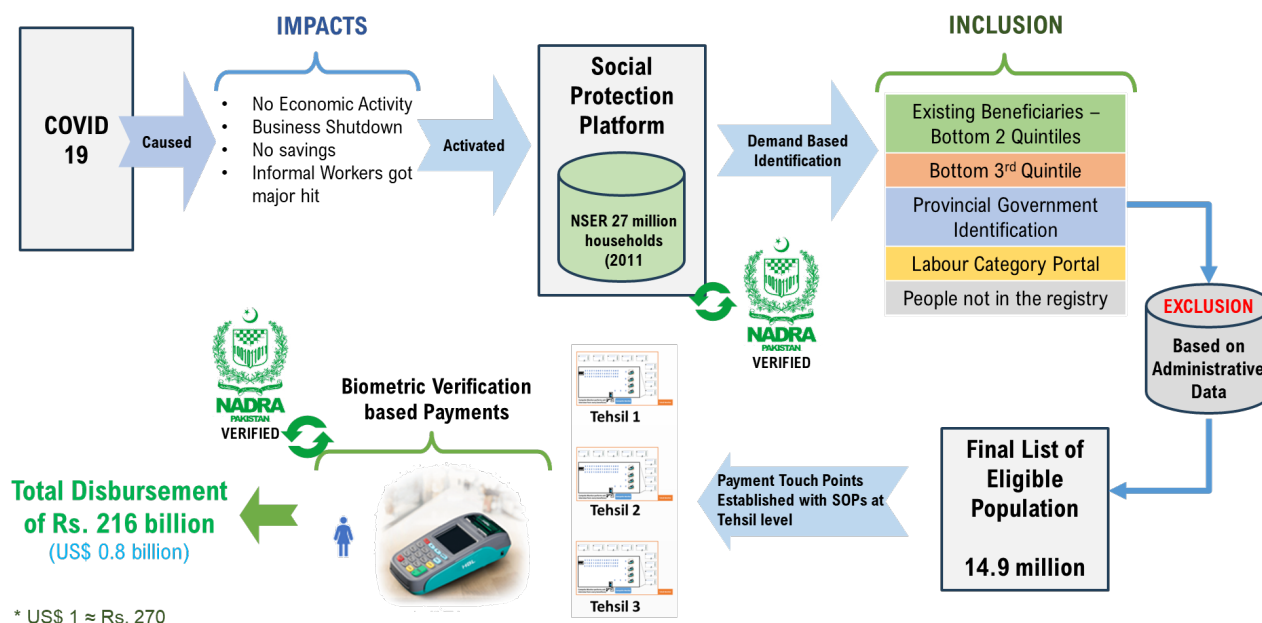
When data is collected, it corroborated with the data from these agencies to ascertain whether what has been declared about a particular household is correct as indicated below. Each program then applies their eligibility criteria to target beneficiaries from the households.



To enable easy payments, the system is linked to payment platforms of the eligible banks to enable triggering of payments.

### 3.5.Utilization of Registry as Shock Responsive Social Protection Targeting Tool

The NSER serves as a critical tool for shock response because it enables quick identification of beneficiaries based on a set criterion (PMT score) without necessarily having to go back for data collection as indicated below;



During the Covid-19 pandemic, Pakistan was able to respond and deliver grants within a period of 2 months to all eligible beneficiaries and more recently in 2022, enabled disbursement of PKR 70 billion (US\$ 260 million) to 2.76 million families affected by floods across the country within a period of 10 days.

# 4. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UGANDA

## 4.1. Observations

Drawing from the diversity of presentations made and the field visit conducted, the following observations were made;

1. A Social Registry is critical for the implementation of a social protection system. Specifically, a social registry plays the following functions;
  - a. Facilitates timely and objective beneficiary targeting for various interventions
  - b. Supports effective and efficient shock response mechanisms and provides an opportunity for vertical and horizontal expansion for shock response (expanding coverage or benefits)
  - c. Provides a platform for multisectoral linkages e.g., link to immunization, education, response to non-communicable diseases, disaster risk management.
  - d. Enables collection of data on socio-economic and other human development indicators.
  - e. Strengthens coordination among stakeholders by providing a single avenue for targeting including policy coherence thus minimizing fraud and double dipping among beneficiaries.
2. The lifecycle approach has the potential to elevate social protection beyond vulnerability and risk reduction to human capital development while promoting layering and integration of interventions for transformative change.
3. A robust National Registration system is a critical ingredient to the effective implementation of ensuring the dynamism of a social registry. There is therefore need to work with NIRA to step up registration of all Ugandans for a National ID, birth and death registration.
4. Effectiveness of a social registry is enhanced with functionality and Interoperability of other systems such as with land management, tax, pensions, Health and School MIS is critical to enhance functionality of a social registry. The interoperability of systems helps to; *Reduce cost of updating information, facilitates real time verification of data collected and access to as well as layering to services*
5. The Social Protection system in Pakistan has evolved overtime right from targeting/identification, delivery and payments. Through progressive improvements, these have moved from paper-based systems to technology driven systems such as Biometric technology for payments among others.
6. In Pakistan, the head of a household is a woman and is the primary recipient of social assistance benefits.

## 4.2. Lessons learned

Following the conclusion of the study visit, the following lessons were learned;

1. Strengthening Coordination between various agencies involved in the delivery of social protection is critical.
2. There is need to adopt use of technology in the delivery of social protection. This includes use of Social Registries for targeting and Biometric verification for beneficiary payments.
3. Focus on women as the primary recipients of social assistance has long terms benefits for the enhancement of family welfare.
4. Social protection programmes need political support as opposed to political ownership if we are to enhance its visibility and financing.
5. For social registry to transcend beyond political cycles, it has to be built as a system with a national outlook that facilitates objective targeting. It must be built as a system that will support Government to operate efficiently.
6. In the delivery of social protection, dignity of beneficiaries must be respected.



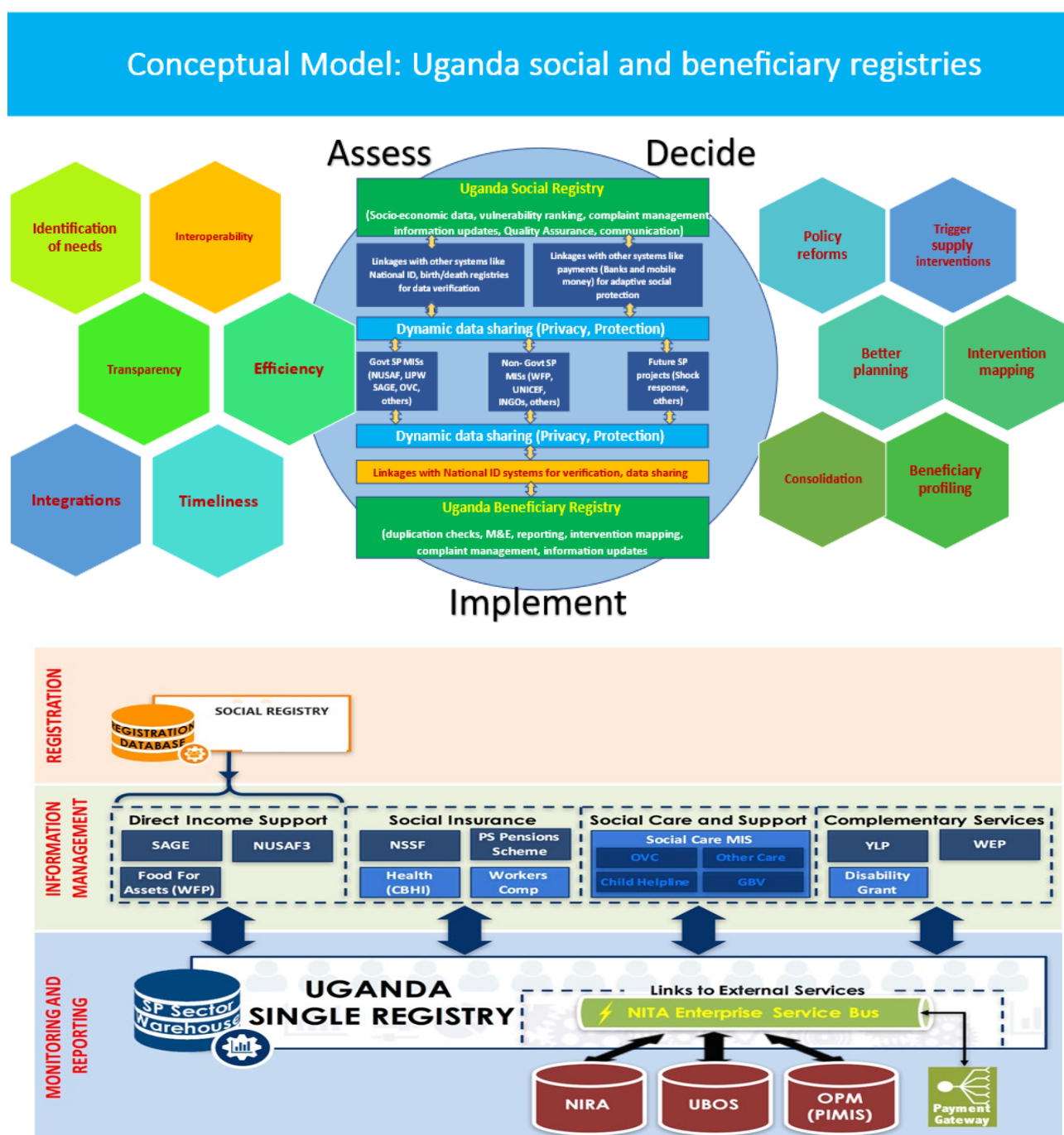
7. To enhance visibility for social protection, there is need to ensure that targeting for beneficiaries is based on scientific means.
8. Social Registries should not be static. Households are dynamic in nature and sometimes their characteristic change from time to time. It is therefore important for Social Registries to be dynamic to enable routine re-certification of beneficiaries.
9. To ensure a National Registration system is effective, there is need to develop and rollout incentives to encourage birth and death registration.
10. In the delivery of social protection, because beneficiaries experience different vulnerabilities across the lifecycle, it is logically okay and effective for beneficiaries to benefit from multiple social protection at the same time
11. To enable success of the Social Registry and accuracy of the data collected, the population must appreciate and buy-into the reasons why the registry is being used.
12. In the delivery of social protection, there is need for constant feedback to all stakeholders including beneficiaries.
13. Use of technology is good but is not immune to manipulation such as cyber-crimes. There is therefore need for vigilance and adequate mitigation measures.
14. Sustainability of social protection requires total Government commitment and supplementary funding from Development Partners.
15. To have a fully functional Social Registry in place is a journey that calls for phased interactive design (design-test-learn-expand)-*Therefore, let's start somewhere now and learn as we go.*

## 5. The PROPOSED NATIONAL SOCIAL REGISTRY FOR UGANDA

Currently, Uganda does not have a National Social Registry for Social Protection. What is however in place is a National Single registry, which is a unified portal consolidating essential information on beneficiaries' beneficiaries of social protection programmes. The NSR hosts data on 2,646,434 social protection beneficiaries and 4,412,877 applicants from 10 programmes of SAGE, NUSAF3, DRDIP, NSSF, OVC MIS, SAUTI 116 national GBV/VAC helpline, YLP, UWEP, JUAKALI, and Disability grant. Other programmes in the onboarding process include the Public Service Pension Scheme, GROW Project, KCCA Girls Empowering Girls (GEG) Programme, and the Karamoja Social Registry (KSR).

To develop a National Social Registry, the National Single Registry will be reconfigured to include a Social Registry and the name changed to National Social Registry as indicated below;

### Conceptual Model of Uganda's National Social Registry for Social Protection



## 5.1.Key benefits of a social registry for Uganda

1. Improved targeting, coverage, integration, and operations of social protection and wealth creation programs in Uganda
2. Provision of up-to-date information to enable timely decision-making especially during shock-response.
3. Reduce inclusion and exclusion errors among beneficiaries of social protection programmes.
4. Provide data to measure changes in households' characteristics/circumstances.
5. Ability to link multiple administrative databases (such as bank statements, tax records, land records to verify and validate the information in the registry

## 5.2.Recommendations and next steps

S/N	Activity	Lead Agency	Timeframe (initial 6 months)					
			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1.	Finalize compilation of learning visit report	MGLSD						
2.	Organize experience sharing workshop for senior managers from the MDAs from Pakistan and Kenya Missions	MGLSD/WFP						
3.	Presentation of the findings from the learning visit to the Meeting of Permanent Secretaries	Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet						
4.	Enhance visibility of the Social Registry in the NDPIV by adopting as one of the game-changer interventions for sustainable wealth creation the NDP IV.	NPA						
5.	Expand the membership of the Steering Committee for the Single/Social Registry to bring on board National Planning Authority and other relevant critical actors	MGLSD						
6.	Organize quarterly meetings of the Steering Committee for the Social Registry	MGLSD						
7.	Identify/agree on data needs/ socio economic indicators/ variables to be collected	MGLSD/NPA/UBOS						
8.	Finalize development of the data collection and management process including the role of key government agencies in quality assurance	MGLSD/NPA/UBOS						
9.	Develop its algorithms and	World Bank, MoICT,						

S/N	Activity	Lead Agency	Timeframe (initial 6 months)					
			Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	PMTs	MGLSD, UBOS						
10.	Social Registry Systems Development	MGLSD, MoICT						
11.	Conduct a data policy gap analysis; to strengthen data protection legal and policy framework for the social registry	MoCIT						

# Annex 1: List of Participants

S.NO	Name of mission members	Designation	Institution
1.	Lucy Nakyobe Mbonye	Head PS/Secretary to Cabinet (Head of delegation)	Public Service
2.	Mr. Aggrey David Kibenge	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development
3.	Mr. Moses Bekabye	Technical Advisor, Economic Affairs	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
4.	Mr. Dunstan Balaba	Permanent Secretary	Office of the Prime Minister
5.	Dr. Diana Atwine	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Health
6.	Dr. Kedrace Turyagyenda	Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Education
7.	Dr. Joseph Muvawala	The Executive Director	National Planning Authority
8.	Mr. James Ebitu	Director Social Protection	Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development
9.	Mr. Michael Otero	Assistant Commissioner E-services	Ministry of Information Communication and Technology
10.	Sharifah Buzeki	Commissioner- HRM	Ministry of Local Government
11.			
12.	Musiimenta Boaz	Principal Policy Analyst	Office of the Prime Minister
13.	Nanyanzi Grace	MIS Manager	National Identification and Registration Authority
14.	Mr. Paul Onapa	Deputy Head ESP	Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development
15.	Mr. Emmanuel Yeka	Head IT	Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development
	<b>Development Partners</b>		
16.	Mr. Marcus Prior	Deputy Country Director	WFP
17.	Mr. Brian Kiswii	Head of Social Protection & SF (OiC)	WFP
18.	Christabel Sefa	Sr. SP Specialist/NUSAF4 TTL	World Bank
19.	Naseer Uddin Khan	MIS Specialist	World Bank
20.	Tawanda Chinembiri	Social Policy Manager	UNICEF
21.	Mwenya Kapasa	Social Protection Specialist	ILO



# Annex 2: AGENDA

## High level Study Visit to Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan by Delegation of Government of Uganda (Islamabad, Pakistan: October 21<sup>st</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> 2024)

Timeline	Activity Description	Facilitation
<b>Day 1 (Arrival at Islamabad)</b>		<b>Tuesday, 22 – 010 - 2024</b>
0000 - 0000	Arrival at Islamabad Airport	DCD/ CO Admin
00:00 -00:00	Arrival at Hotel/Guest House	CO Admin
17:00 -18:30	Debrief. Head of Learning Visit BISP/WFP, WB Pakistan	Marriot Hotel
<b>Day 2 (Islamabad)</b>		<b>Wednesday, 23 – 10 - 2024</b>
09:00 - 09:30	Travel from hotel to BISP Headquarters/WFP Office	All members of mission, CO Admin
09:30 - 10:00	Courtesy call on the Minister and/ or Mr. Amer Ali Ahmed, Secretary BISP	BISP HQ
10:00- 10:10	Remarks by the Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet/Leader of delegation-Uganda	BISP HQ
10:10 - 11:00	Presentation by the delegation of Government of Uganda for senior management of BISP	Aggrey David Kibenge, PS- MGLSD
11:00 - 11:30	Tea/Coffee break	BISP HQ
11:30 - 13:00	Presentation on: The National Social Protection System of Pakistan Evolution of BISP as Pakistan's flagship safety net program	BISP HQ
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch hosted by Secretary BISP	Conference Room, Ground Floor, BISP
14:00 - 16:00	Presentation on Pakistan's National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) Phase-I: Establishment of NSER (2010-11) Phase-II: Update of NSER (2016-20) Phase-III: Dynamic NSER for Adaptive Social Protection (2022- ongoing)	Mr. Naveed Akbar Director General (NSER/CCT)
16:00 - 17:00	Presentation on Beneficiary Payment System	Mr. Faisal Aslam Director (Payment)
17:00 - 17:30	Departure from BISP for hotel	CO/ADMIN

<b>Day 3 (Islamabad/Murree)</b>		<b>Thursday, 24 – 10 - 2024</b>
09:30 -10:00	Departure from hotel for NADRA	CO Admin
10:00 -11:30	Presentation on Role of NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) in Social Protection System of Pakistan Working tea/coffee will be served)	NADRA HQ Sector G-5/2 Islamabad
11:30 - 13:00	Departure from NADRA for field visit (nearest center) travel time	Murree
13:00- 16:00	FC visit inclusive working lunch	TBC ( Lunch)
16:00 - 17:30	Travel back from Murree to hotel	CO Admin/BISP
<b>Day 4 (Islamabad)</b>		<b>Friday, 25 – 10 - 2024</b>
10:15 – 10:45	Departure from hotel for BISP HQ	CO Admin/BISP
10.45- 11.00	Remarks by Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet on Lessons from the Mission	Head of Public Service and Secretary-Uganda
11:00- 12:30	Wrap-up meeting with Secretary BISP and team	Mr. Rashid Imtiaz, Director (Intl Cooperation), BISP
12:30- 19:00	Departure from BISP for hotel or sightseeing and shopping by delegates	CO Admin/BISP
23:00 - 23:30	Departure from hotel for Islamabad airport ( <i>Qatar Airways</i> )	CO Admin/BISP
<b>Day 5 (Islamabad)</b>		<b>Saturday, 26 – 10 - 2024</b>
05:00 - 05:30	Departure from hotel for Islamabad airport ( <i>Emirates</i> )	CO Admin/BISP

# Annex 3: PICTORIAL







**MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

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