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Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection

Synthesis of seven country case studies

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Preface

Although the last decade has seen a rapid rise in our understanding of the potential synergies between agriculture and social protection policies and programmes, knowing how to achieve them still lags far behind. Many synergies emerge under particular market conditions, while others relate to policy and programme design and implementation. We know little about the necessary and appropriate level of coherence between agriculture and social protection policies and programmes and less still about how to maximize the synergies between agricultural and social protection policies, especially in low-income countries where financial and human resources to support such policies are limited.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) commissioned seven country cases studies to deepen the understanding of the role of coherence and how to achieve it in practice. The case studies were conducted in three regions Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia), Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America (Mexico and Peru). The studies examined the extent to which coherence is achieved in policies, programme design and implementation and identified specific experiences that might form the basis for advisory and guidance materials on enhancing synergies between agriculture and social protection.

The case studies are as follows:

Espinoza, A. & Wiggins, S. 2016. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Peru case study*. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Gordillo, G., Sanchez Ruy, S. & Mendez, O. 2016. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Mexico case study*. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Harman, L. 2016a. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Ghana case study*. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Harman, L. 2016b. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Zambia case study*, by L. Harmon. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Scott, L. & Rahman, M. 2016. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Bangladesh case study* (draft). PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Slater, R. & Nyukuri, E. 2016. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Kenya case study*. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Ulrichs, M. & Mphale, M. 2016. *Strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection: Lesotho case study*. PtoP report. Rome, FAO.

Abbreviations

BMI	Body mass indices
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
CFPR	Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (Bangladesh)
CLP	Chars Livelihoods Programme (Bangladesh)
CNCH	<i>Cruzada Nacional Contra el Hambre</i> <i>National Crusade against Hunger (Mexico)</i>
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	UK Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FISP	Farmer Input Supply Programme (Zambia)
FONCODES	<i>Fondo de Cooperación para el Desarrollo/</i> Development Cooperation Fund (Peru)
FRA	Food Reserve Agency (Zambia)
FSP	Food Security Programme (Ethiopia)
HABP	Household Asset Building Programme (Ethiopia)
IFAD	The International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programmes
LEAP	Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (Ghana)
LIC	Low income country
LMIC	Lower middle income country
MESW	Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (Ghana)
MIDIS	Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social Ministry for Development and Social Inclusion (Peru)
MOPA	Ministry of Public Administration (Bangladesh)
NGOs	Non-government organizations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme (Ghana)
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy (Bangladesh)
PPPT	Protect-Prevent-Promote-Transform
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)
PtoP	Protection to Production
SAGARPA	<i>Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural,</i> <i>Pesca y Alimentación</i> Secretariat for Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishing and Food (Mexico)
TUP	Targeted ultra poor programme
UMIC	Upper middle income country
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer (Bangladesh)
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development (Bangladesh)

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Executive Summary

Agriculture and social protection can complement and support each other in reducing hunger and poverty. On the one hand, agricultural interventions can promote growth in smallholder productivity by addressing structural constraints that limit the access of poor households to land and water resources, inputs, financial services, advisory services and markets. On the other, social protection can provide liquidity and certainty for poor smallholders, allowing them to invest in agriculture, reallocate their labour to on-farm activities, invest in human capital development (e.g. education, health), increase participation in social networks (which constitute an important source of informal risk management) and better manage risks, thereby allowing them to engage in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities.

Coherence between agricultural development and social protection can be achieved by incorporating social protection objectives, such as risk reduction, in agricultural development and vice versa and by linking activities in the two sectors to create complementarities between programmes.

Through the Protection to Production (PtoP) project, led by FAO and UNICEF, considerable evidence points to the productive and economic impacts of social protection and its contribution to sustainable poverty reduction and economic growth in Africa. However, less is known on how to strengthen the links to agricultural development, including the opportunities for doing so and the challenges to be overcome.

This study was commissioned to help fill this gap in knowledge. It addresses two main questions:

- What are the current experiences of efforts to achieve coherence between agricultural and social protection policies and programmes, especially in low-income countries (LICs) in Africa?;
- What lessons and insights do these experiences hold for achieving more and better coordination between the two sectors?.

Case studies were carried out in seven countries across Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Zambia), Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America (Mexico, Peru). The studies examined programme concepts and methods, coordination and outcomes. In most countries, two programmes from the agricultural sector and two from the social protection sector were observed. Findings from the case studies have contributed to developing guidance material (<http://bit.ly/1Lo9obI>) on how to strengthen coherence between agriculture and social protection and will also inform relevant country-level policy dialogue.

Limited coordination between agriculture and social protection

The general observation arising from the seven country studies was that the agricultural and social protection programmes we observed worked in relative isolation with limited coordination between them. The coordination that did occur was limited to information sharing, which only occasionally appeared to influence programme design or implementation. More coordination was seen at district than at central levels, since field staff from different agencies were likely to meet more often and share information.

In most cases the lack of coordination can be explained by one or more related factors, as follows:

- Staff in agriculture and social protection have *different knowledge and perspectives*. Agricultural staff tend to see social protection as simply a welfare payment with few productive benefits. Social protection staff tend to focus on the social dimensions of their work, such as health and education, often lack the technical expertise to provide livelihoods support, and farming in particular.
- Despite shared aims of reducing poverty and the fact that they often operate alongside each other in poor communities, agricultural and social protection programmes often work with *different clients*. Agriculture has a broad set of clients, and although most agricultural programmes are designed to reach relatively poor, small-scale family farms, they tend to work with wealthier smallholders since these are most likely to have the time, resources and skills to participate effectively. These households are the least likely to be clients for social protection, which has a narrower set of clients.
- *Limited budgets and staff* in low-income and lower-middle-income countries mean that only some of the target populations can be covered by agricultural and social protection programmes. That increases the pressure on agricultural staff to work with better-endowed smallholders. Limited resources also means that some programme benefits are rationed. As a consequence, even though complementarities can bring important benefits, local preferences for equity often results in households being limited to only one programme. Limited staff means that the time available for coordination and seeking greater coherence among programmes is minimal.
- Most agricultural development and social protection agencies have hierarchical organizations, with well-defined systems and procedures in which all individuals are assigned a specific role or roles – known as ‘*role cultures*’.¹ While well suited to technical operations, such organizations are not necessarily able to easily coordinate with other agencies, nor do their staff have incentives to do so. Coordination is further impeded by the relatively different nature of the two sectors’ programmes. Some social protection programmes, such as cash transfers, have specific objectives and activities largely under the control of the implementing agency, where planning can be more precise. Most agricultural programmes are more complicated, operating in complex environments in which key factors, such as farmer behaviour, are beyond the programme’s control, requiring greater flexibility.
- Some agricultural programmes can be *politicized* since there is a much wider client base. As a consequence, benefits such as fertilizer subsidies can be directed towards less vulnerable and wealthier households, especially in the absence of transparent targeting. When this happens, coordination with other sectors becomes a low priority. The same can apply to social protection, but this was less common in the seven countries we studied.

¹ The term comes from organization studies, where Handy (1993), following earlier work by Harrison, identified four different archetypal cultures of management: role, power, matrix and personal. Role culture is common in most large, formal organizations be they government or private enterprise. Professional specialisation gives role cultures formidable advantages in standardising work with economy and delivering high quality goods and services, although it can make them unwieldy and slow to react to changing circumstances.

Qualifying the general story

Although some patterns emerge from the studies, there are exceptions and variations, some of which correspond to particular administrative arrangements – four of which are examined below.

Patterns of *decentralization* differ considerably across the seven countries, most having some deconcentration of administration and five having a measure of political devolution. Decentralization in itself does not necessarily improve the coordination of programmes. Centralized systems have the advantage that rules, systems and procedures can be applied consistently throughout a country, which may be particularly important for social protection since it is based on rights and entitlements. On the other hand, decentralized systems provide the flexibility to adapt programmes to local conditions; this can be important not only for agriculture, but also for social protection, which seeks to tackle specific vulnerabilities that are associated with local livelihoods.

Deconcentration of administration appears to allow some coordination between agriculture and social protection, particularly where district-level coordination meetings allow knowledge sharing between sectors. With some devolution of powers, useful adjustments of programmes to local conditions can be made.

Examples of full devolution – where subnational governments have both the power and the capacity to administer effectively, with a local elected assembly that makes by-laws, approves decisions and otherwise oversees the actions of the sub-national government – barely exist in the seven countries; in some cases this is because devolution has been too recent. Hence it is not possible to assess the effect of devolution on agriculture and social protection programmes in the countries under study.

When devolution involves decision-making and funding for agriculture and social protection at different levels, coordination is more difficult. Yet it often makes sense to devolve agricultural programmes owing to their local specificity, but to centralize social protection, such as cash transfers, when strict rules bring efficiency and integrity.

Decentralization is about developing the capacity to work effectively at lower levels of government, while being accountable to local citizens. Such changes are challenging: it is unrealistic to expect the first steps in a decentralization process – new laws, rules, organizational structures – to make a difference in themselves.

Development partners can contribute to greater coherence between agriculture and social protection by funding innovative programmes and providing resources to enable more local coordination. They can also help to facilitate useful local adjustments to programmes – such as paying cash according to schedules that suit nomads, and providing traders with cash so that they can stock more food when local production fails but when, thanks to cash transfers, locals have the cash to buy in food. However, some donor-funded proof of concept initiatives require ongoing funds and capacity beyond what LIC governments possess, making it hard for governments alone to scale up and sustain them.

National strategies could provide a formal framework for ensuring cross-sector coherence. In practice, however, major cross-cutting strategies rarely address multi-sector issues such as poverty, hunger and vulnerability. Where they do occur, the effectiveness of these strategies

depends less on their form than on their function: when additional funds, extra staff and high-level political support are invested in them, they have a greater chance of success.

The dominant form of programme coordination is centrally integrated planning, with subsequent allocation of tasks and responsibilities to specialized agencies – as would be expected in role cultures. An alternative model is an integrated programme that delivers services across sectors – known as layering – to clients of social protection, yet is implemented by a single agency, usually a social protection agency. Such programmes aim to assist social protection clients to develop their productive capacities and livelihood activities so they can earn more, exit poverty and become less vulnerable. They provide multiple services across sectors, not necessarily confined to the implementing agency's experience. Several of these programmes focus on geographical areas of high poverty and vulnerability, or are otherwise limited in scale, covering only a subset of the potential target group. In part, that is because some of these are viewed as pilot programmes.

The experience of *layering programmes* in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mexico and Peru indicate that they are coherent in concept and design. When implemented by social protection agencies, as most are, they broaden agency focus on the relief of poverty to include improved livelihoods. However, it is not clear how much better they perform than single intervention programmes since evidence of their impact is limited. It is too soon to tell how the programmes in Mexico and Peru are working. In Bangladesh, the results are mixed: there have been some gains in livelihoods and a reduced exposure to risks, but stunting rates are still high (though this might be because good nutrition depends on many different factors, including diets, feeding practices and access to sanitation).

In Ethiopia, beneficiaries with access to both the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP, a cash transfer and public works programme) and the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP, which provides access to credit, inputs and agricultural extension) had greater improvements in food security, better agricultural technologies and participation in non-farm business enterprises than beneficiaries of either PSNP alone or PSNP with higher benefit levels (Gilligan *et al.* 2009 cited in Tirivayi *et al.* 2013). Likewise, a recent impact evaluation by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) *Linking the Food Security to Social Protection Pilot (LFSSP)* in Lesotho found positive effects from combining the Child Grants Programme (CGP) and home gardening support provided by the LFSSP. An additional year of CGP in combination with the LFSSP achieved many food security outcomes that two years of receiving the CGP alone did not (Dewbre *et al.*, 2015).

Perhaps the main drawback to these programmes is their cost. In Mexico and Peru, layering programmes cost between US\$333 and US\$1 000 per client each year. In countries where millions of people live in deep poverty, taking such programmes to scale would cost billions, making them too costly for LIC. They may be more affordable for highly urbanized upper-middle-income countries, where the share of the population that is rural and extremely poor is low while public budgets are relatively large.

Where public budgets are inadequate, there are strong arguments for focusing on ensuring that social protection programme design considers the realities of people's livelihoods on the ground – as we found in the case of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya, where the programme was designed to allow mobile pastoralists in the north of the country to access cash at places and times convenient for them.

Routes to coherence

The studies make it clear that there are three routes to coherence in the seven countries (Table 4.1). One is to implement agricultural development and social protection as separate programmes but try to align the programmes with each other. That may involve ensuring that the aims and activities of one sector also serve the other. Policies that affect the two sectors may need to be adjusted to avoid conflict

A second route is to combine the objectives of each sector through a cross-cutting strategy focused on reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability. The strategy needs sufficient political support, a technical secretariat and adequate funds to allow coordination. Implementation of the component actions remains a responsibility of sector agencies.

The third and most ambitious route is to integrate both the aims and means in a single programme. Implementation may take place through a special project in an existing agency or through a specially created agency.

These three routes to coherence involve escalating efforts – and costs. It is thus not surprising that most of the programmes observed in the seven countries remained at the level of aligning sector actions. Whether it is worth pursuing more ambitious approaches remains a question, since a comparison of additional costs and benefits cannot be done on the basis of the evidence in these studies. The more pertinent calculation, however, is the political priority afforded to reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability: where these are strong priorities, major cross-cutting initiatives and integrated approaches are more likely to occur.

Opportunities for better practice

The prime concerns about coherence in the seven countries were not driven by fears of working at cross-purposes or policy contradictions. The agriculture and social protection programmes in these countries did not get in each other's way, they just tended to work in isolation. Hence the challenge is to improve coherence rather than to correct incoherence.

It is easier to point to the costs of incoherence, since they are visible, rather than to show the gains from enhanced coherence, which are hard to see since it is difficult to disentangle effects that arise from the interaction of two components, than from the two components themselves. Selecting priorities for improved practice is thus a matter of judgment rather than a calculation based on evidence. That said, this report identifies five factors that hinder the coordination that can improve coherence. In each case, something can be done to mitigate the obstacles.

Knowledge and perspectives: Moving beyond blinkered thinking. Limited views about livelihoods, clients and appropriate programmes among staff in both agricultural development and social protection agencies can lead to missed opportunities for more effective action. Knowledge not only informs, but inspires as well. Ideas about social protection developed since the 1990s have inspired action in the field to a remarkable extent.

A deeper appreciation of the range of livelihoods of social protection clients is needed to transcend the typical focus on semi-subsistence farming, which excludes other activities, especially working for wages. Some theories of change held by social protection staff border on over-simplification, especially regarding graduation from social safety nets.

For their part, agriculture policy-makers and field staff need to comprehend the full range of social protection actions and their implications for production. They need to understand that

the divisions between productive activity and safety nets to reduce risks are hard and fast: some agricultural programmes provide safety nets, while some social protection programmes support agriculture. Rather than treat agricultural and social protection programmes as always distinct, it makes sense to look at broader objectives such as poverty reduction or food and nutrition security, and then ask how agriculture and social protection can achieve them together. Agricultural agencies also need to consider how to broaden their coverage beyond the better-endowed farmers in the village. This point is discussed in greater detail below.

Knowledge is not only a matter of disseminating information, but also of generating new insights. Promising innovations need to be tried and evaluated. Since that may be risky for LIC, development partners have a role in funding trials and evaluations.

Different clients. Agricultural staff tend to be drawn to work with the most advantaged of smallholders. While better-endowed small-scale family farms are often best placed to benefit from agricultural programmes, that is not to say that working with less well-placed smallholders – those most likely to be clients of social protection – will be ineffective. Changing this tendency is partly a matter of knowledge and vision, although admittedly in some cases it may also reflect political priorities. From a practical perspective, the challenge is to counter the notion that working with less well-endowed farmers will be unproductive. Agricultural staff need to see how interventions suited to the characteristics of less-advantaged farmers can make a significant difference to their livelihoods, even if the farmer does not achieve optimal yields².

Limited budgets and staff. The obstacle of limited resources may be difficult to overcome in some countries, although development partners can provide supplemental funding. There is the danger, however, that donors will fund costly interventions that cannot be replicated at scale by governments or domestic NGOs.

Typically, scarce funds means providing services to social protection clients in sequences rather than through layering. When that is the case, it helps if there are information systems to track when people leave one programme and become eligible to access the next service in the sequence: for example, when a child reaches an age at which a conditional cash transfer is no longer payable. Making household registries available to all agencies is one way to help keep track of such information.

Organization of administration. Chronic poverty, hunger and vulnerability have multiple causes. Hence responses need to be multi-sectoral, raising questions of how to divide up tasks among sectors while ensuring that they are part of a single strategy. As argued above, the choice of route to coherence depends in large part on the political priority given to reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability, as well as the resources available.

Even when political priorities and resources mean, as is the case in many low-income countries, that alignment is the best available option, examples from the seven countries suggest that useful refinements can be made. Some of these refinements (e.g. transfer size commensurate for ensuing productive impacts, timing of interventions so that these are compatible with agricultural cycles) will occur during programme design. Others will require coordination and adjustments at district and field levels. Hence staff at these levels need to have the time, some small additional budget, the information and training and, above all, the

² There are models that can serve as sources of inspiration, such as the One Acre Fund in East Africa

freedom to make such adjustments. Decentralization, at least in theory, can help, although, as discussed, making decentralization effective in practice is challenging.

Political factors. Last but not least of the obstacles to coordination and coherence are political factors. The country studies did not probe these factors: understanding political choices is challenging at the best of times, let alone in quick studies. Moreover, influencing political choices is beyond the remit and competence of most actors. Understanding the reasons for local political choices, however, is not.³ With better understanding, it may be possible to work more in line with domestic politics and to design programmes accordingly. This entails recognizing how and why different choices are made at the local level and identifying the incentives that drive policy-makers and political actors, especially when these are not aligned with the aims and objectives of social protection and agricultural programmes. Such an analysis, however, is beyond the scope of the current studies.

³ This point is well appreciated by some development partners who, following the era of conditionality in the 1980s, have since the 1990s tried to come to terms with domestic politics by commissioning studies of political economy and the formulation of frameworks to understand political choice. Advances in understanding policy choices for agricultural and rural development have been notable in the last ten or so years (see, for example, Poulton, 2014 and Booth, 2014).

1. Introduction

1.1. Why coherence between agricultural development and social protection matters

The concept of social protection has broadened over time. In the past, social protection was largely seen as providing safety nets⁴ to protect people against destitution, particularly when confronted by sudden shocks. The World Bank's *Social Risk Management* framework expanded the idea of social protection to allow more risks to be taken when investing in and innovating potentially higher return activities (Holzmann, Sherburne-Benz and Tesliuc, 2003). Subsequently, a wider range of functions have been recognized, as in the *Protect-Prevent-Promote-Transform (PPPT)* scheme, where social protection may relieve deprivation (Protective), avert deprivation (Preventative), enhance and stabilize incomes and capabilities (Promotive) and tackle social inequity and exclusion (Transformative) (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).

At the same time, thinking about agricultural and rural development has been increasingly concerned with reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience in addition to its original objectives of reducing poverty and raising incomes. With this important convergence of interests, it is increasingly apparent that agricultural development and social protection may complement one another in important ways. Most clearly it implies a shared clientele of smallholders with low incomes and vulnerability to shocks. But there are also functional complementarities, including the following (Tirivayi *et al.*, 2013; Mathers and Slater, 2014 ; Asfaw *et al.*, 2012; Covarrubias *et al.*, 2012; Dorward *et al.*, 2006; Farrington *et al.*, 2004; Miller *et al.*, 2011):

- Public employment programmes and cash transfers may alleviate the typically chronic lack of access to formal insurance and credit in rural areas and thereby allow greater investment in agriculture. Similarly, transfers in kind may include farm inputs that raise production.
- When shocks occur, vulnerable people with social protection are less likely to sell off their productive assets such as livestock, tools, land or to undertake coping strategies that are either hazardous, such as informal mining and sex work, or which undermine future prospects such as taking children out of school.
- When the assets of poor households are protected and built up, the risks of innovation and investment decrease thereby further encouraging investment in agriculture and other productive activities.
- Social protection can raise human capital (which increases labour productivity and employability) through cash transfers that allow better nutrition and by enabling greater household investment in health and education. Moreover, contrary to fears that cash transfers might dissuade people from seeking work, evidence suggests that social protection can actually encourage participation in labour markets through increased human capital and cash transfers that can allow people to migrate.

⁴ Social protection embraces employment conditions and benefits, the provision of social services and social safety nets. These last consist of non-contributory benefits for people who are either poor and vulnerable or who have suffered from a shock that would otherwise plunge them into poverty. This paper focuses on such safety nets.

- Beyond the impact of social protection on individual households, multipliers may be generated across the wider economy when households spend cash transfers, or when food for school feeding or food aid is procured locally.

Not all interactions will be positive. If food aid is obtained on a sufficient scale from beyond the local economy, it may depress farm prices to the detriment of surplus producers (Farrington *et al.*, 2004).

As noted above, some people fear that cash transfers could deter people from working, although it is likely that any work relinquished would be very poorly paid jobs. The evidence overwhelmingly shows that cash transfers and other social protection interventions stimulate economic activity and production (Tirivayi *et al.*, 2013). At the same time, agriculture can protect farm households by promoting growth in smallholder productivity, generating higher incomes and allowing them to save and build assets that leave them less vulnerable to shocks.

Despite the clear potential for agricultural and social protection to complement one another, in practice coordination between the two has been limited (Slater *et al.*, 2014). Not only does this suggest the loss of potential synergies, also it also makes it more likely that shocks at household or community levels could reverse any agricultural progress and push households back into poverty.

Through the From Protection to Production (PtoP) project, led by FAO and UNICEF, evidence is emerging about the impacts of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa on agriculture, labour and the rural economy. While the evidence has grown, understanding *how* the links between agriculture and social protection can be built into policy and programming remains a gap. Filling this gap requires more knowledge of the efforts already underway to strengthen coherence between the two sectors and insights on why more is not being done. Such a review could contribute the design and implementation of better policies and programmes in future.

1.2. Coherence and related concepts

For the purpose of this study, *coherence* is defined as consistency between policies and investment programmes for agricultural development and social protection that ensures that complementarities and synergies between the two areas are realized and that the two sets of activities do not work at cross purposes.⁵ Coherence is an intermediate outcome that should contribute to improved *performance* of public programmes. In this case coherence between agriculture and social protection is a means to combating poverty and hunger.

Coherence may be achieved through several *routes*, as follows:

- Policies and programmes in either sector may be designed in such a way that they contribute to the objectives of the other. Agricultural development activities might, for example, seek to reduce the risks faced by vulnerable farmers by promoting the propagation of drought-resistant crops, irrigation or more effective protection against pests and diseases. Social protection activities, for their part, might be designed with the livelihoods of farmers in mind, for example, by suspending public works programmes

⁵ The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines coherence as ‘logical, clear interconnection or relation; consistency; congruity of substance or tenor; or general effect’.

at times of peak activity in the fields or allowing cash transfers to be claimed by nomadic herders at times and places that correspond to their seasonal movements,

- Agricultural development and social protection activities may be aligned for complementarity and to avoid conflicts, at either national or programme levels.
 - At the national level, this may mean finding ways to harmonize policies that might otherwise work at cross-purposes. For example, from an agricultural perspective, higher food prices encourage production and agricultural development, while from the standpoint of social protection, lower food prices are desirable. Alignment might thus look to balance these aims or to seek policies that realize one sector's objective without jeopardizing that of the other sector or to offer compensation for those who may lose from prioritizing the objective of one sector over the other.
 - Complementarities may be reflected in the design of programmes, as for example, where agricultural programmes work with farmers to supply the needs of a school-feeding programme.
- Agricultural and social protection activities may be combined either in programmes implemented by a single agency or operated by agencies in different sectors that are coordinated through a secretariat under a common strategy. Combined activities may include simultaneous sets of agricultural and social protection activities that complement one another – a layered approach – or sequential activities whereby participation in one set of activities then allows households to participate in a subsequent programmes. The sequence often begins with social protection and graduates to agriculture and other productive activities.

The *means* of coherence lie in the *planning* and *coordination* of policies and programmes. Some of the approaches described above can be planned in advance, while others may require coordination during implementation. The level of coordination lies along a spectrum from sharing information between agencies and programmes to shared planning of activities to joint implementation. Various mechanisms can be used in coordination,⁶ with two particularly relevant in this case: coordination through direct supervision, where managers give instructions to operators as needed and coordination by field agents who adjust operations through daily face-to-face contact. These mechanisms correspond to the location of coordination, whether central or at field level. Coordination by shared ideals or norms may also occur, if less frequently than the other types, when the staff of implementing agencies are particularly enthusiastic about their agency's objectives and approach. This is most commonly seen in non-governmental organizations but can arise in public administrations when strong leadership stimulates staff commitment.

⁶ These two come from a family of six mechanisms for coordination identified by Henry Mintzberg (1980). The other four, less relevant to this study comprise: standardisation of work processes, according to designed systems; standardisation of outputs, again following designed systems; standardisation of skills, as applies when operators are professionals trained to use standard techniques; and standardisation of norms where shared ideals allows operators to coordinate.

1.3. Aims and methods

This study addresses two questions:

- What are the current experiences of achieving coherence between agricultural and social protection policies and programmes, especially in low-income countries in Africa?
- What lessons and insights do these experiences hold for achieving more and better coordination between both sectors?

To answer these questions, country studies were carried out in Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia), Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America (Mexico, Peru). The studies shared concepts and methods based around a framework linking *policies and programmes* in agriculture and social protection, from their *coordination* at the central and field levels, to their *outcomes* and programme *performance*.

Methods. In each case, the study began by reviewing key documents around country development strategies, agricultural and social protection policies and programmes and relevant research. Two substantial programmes, two each from agriculture and social protection (see Table 1.1), with activities in the same regions or districts were selected, based on the assumption that interaction between the programmes might be expected.

The studies were conducted over three weeks. During the first week, interviews took place in capital cities with government officials, especially in ministries of agriculture and of social welfare, social development, labour and social affairs; development partners and donor agencies; civil society; and research organizations. This was followed by a second week at the district and community level, in areas where both sets of programmes could be observed. In practice, that usually meant visiting an area with relatively high levels of poverty and vulnerability. Focus group discussions and interviews were held with programme staff and beneficiaries and other community members (Annex A lists the topics covered in these interviews). The third week was reserved for write up and conclusions. In most cases, the country study concluded with a national validation workshop in which preliminary findings were presented and discussed.

Limitations. With three weeks to carry out each country study, and only two weeks in country, the studies had to be selective about the programmes observed and the field sites visited. Most of the social protection programmes that were examined were cash transfers; other common forms of social protection, such as employment programmes, were rarely reviewed. Hence, the observations reported below are particular to programmes and sites: they cannot be taken to represent everything that might be taking place in a country. Although issues of coherence apply to policies as well as to programmes, the country studies were primarily looking at programmes, so that policy concerns are less well covered. Finally, with limited time, not every question or aspect of coherence, such as the effects of decentralization, could be addressed in depth in each country.

Table 1.1 Country studies

Country	Study date	Key programmes		Area visited	Report authors
		Agriculture	Social Protection		
Bangladesh	May 2015	<i>Chars</i> Livelihoods Programme and Food Security for the Ultra Poor (a)		Bogra District	Scott and Rahman
Ghana	April 2015	Several	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty	Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem District, Central Region	Harman with Marfo and Haleegoah
Kenya	May 2015	Several	Hunger Safety Net Programme	Turkana County	Slater with Nyukuri
Lesotho	May 2015	FAO Linking Food Security to Social Protection Programme	Child Grants Programme	Leribe District	Ulrichs and Mphale
Mexico	April-August 2015	Procampo ProAgro	Prospera Conditional Cash Transfers	Sierra Negra, Puebla State	Gordillo de Anda
Peru	May 2015	Aliados I and II Agrorural	Juntos Conditional Cash Transfers Haku Wiñay	Andahuaylas Province, Apurimac Region	Espinoza and Wiggins
Zambia	May 2015	Farmer Input Support Programme and Food Security Pack	Social Cash Transfer Programme	Monze District	Harman with Kalinda

Note (a) The Bangladesh study focused specifically on non-governmental projects and programmes that combined agriculture and social protection in a single approach.

1.4. Country contexts

The countries (and districts) selected for study allowed for specific and comparable insights about the coherence between agriculture and social protection under a range of circumstances, including where coherence was expected to be more or less well developed. That having been said, each country has its own characteristics, as described below.

Africa

- In *Ghana*, social protection has only recently been introduced in rural areas, hence it was expected that and coordination with agriculture would be fledgling.
- *Kenya* presented opportunities to study pastoralism rather than cropping and thereby gains insights about different types of agricultural livelihoods. A major effort is under way to put into place a national approach to social protection, capturing a range of policies under a single umbrella. Recent decentralization has seen the devolution of agriculture policies and programmes to counties.
- In *Lesotho*, social protection increasingly focuses on age-cohort targeted (lifecycle approach) programmes such as pensions and child grants. Key agricultural programmes include input subsidies.
- *Zambia* offered the chance to assess the integration of agriculture and social protection in a sequence whereby households who received social protection graduate to receiving food security packs and, subsequently, agricultural subsidies.

Asia

- *Bangladesh* has several programmes that link agriculture and social protection, as well as other social and livelihood interventions, in ambitious integrated initiatives to alleviate deep poverty. Many of these are led by non-governmental organizations, some with significant funding from donors.

Latin America

- *Mexico* is an upper middle-income country with a conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme that began in the mid-1990s and now reaches almost all rural households living in poverty. The programme has become a model and inspiration for other CCTs in Latin America. It offers a prime example of a cash transfer programme that is coherent with programmes for smallholder agricultural development.
- In *Peru*, deep poverty persists in the rural highlands, despite being a fast-growing upper middle-income country. Large-scale social protection in rural areas was limited before the 2000s, but now a conditional cash transfer programme, *Juntos*, has been rolled out at scale as have a number of agricultural and rural development programmes. Peru provided an unusual case where the social protection ministry (MIDIS) was also running some agricultural projects.

1.5. Roadmap: The rest of this report

This report consolidates the findings from the seven country reports and considers their implications, focusing on lessons most likely to apply to low-income (LIC) and lower-middle income (LMIC) countries in Africa. It seeks to contribute to the development of guidance materials on strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection to combat poverty and hunger in Africa and to inform policy dialogue.

Following this introduction, the report consists of three chapters. Chapter Two lays out a general story observed across the seven countries. Chapter Three assesses whether certain administrative arrangements, such as decentralized governance, affect coordination and coherence. The last chapter summarizes the findings and their implications and posits ways to alleviate some of the factors that lead to insufficient coordination.

2. The general story: not much coordination between agriculture and social protection

2.1. Programmes operate largely in isolation

In the seven countries studied, programmes for agricultural development and social protection mostly operate independently of one another. Interactions between agriculture and social protection policies, programmes and staff are limited, both centrally and in the field. This isolation applies despite clear common interests. Agricultural and social protection policies and programmes share similar goals – to reduce poverty and hunger – and serve similar clients. Social protection clients tend to live in rural areas because that is where most very poor people live and their major source of incomes is farming and closely-linked activities, such as processing, transport and trading.

Formal mechanisms exist to enable coordination across governments. Indeed, ministries often have coordination units with this responsibility. In practice, however, most coordination consists of sharing information, with little evidence of joint planning or implementation of activities. Moreover, the information sharing does not seem to be of much consequence: the institutional structure for sharing exists, but the application – making full use of the information in concrete ways – is often lacking.

Lesotho provides a good example. Here, the study concluded that the systems and architecture for coordination were clear and in place but the purpose of coordination was not readily apparent. Several thematic inter-ministerial committees exist to coordinate actors working on social protection, nutrition, disaster management and child protection. But these mechanisms currently serve mainly as a platform for reporting (often separate, isolated) actions, with little further coordination of activities.

In *Kenya*, despite clear overlaps in the policy objectives of agriculture and social protection agencies, few linkages can be seen in practice. A plethora of working groups and secretariats, each with their own strategies, frameworks and policies, promotes information sharing but little more. In some instances, there is an allocation of joint tasks and activities, such as under the various pillars of the *Ending Drought Emergencies* framework, which receives substantive financial and human resource support from donors and UN agencies, but further joint planning and implementation are rare. Where more substantial coordination does occur, it tends to be driven by donors, UN agencies and NGOs. In part this is because they provide the resources needed for overcoming human and financial constraints to institutional coordination.

While several mechanisms exist in *Ghana* for participatory planning and implementation at the national, district and local levels, they often seem to be more of a formality without clear incentives or capacities to deal with issues of cross-sector collaboration between agriculture and social protection.

The key safety net in *Mexico*, *Prospera's* conditional cash transfer programme, operates in almost complete isolation from agricultural development programmes. The social protection focus is on poverty relief – the programme started with the intention of alleviating distress caused by an economic downturn – while agricultural programmes focus either on large commercial growers or smallholders with potential, rather than on poor farmers.

Coordination is slightly more common at district levels than in capital cities. Here, information is regularly shared (as are, on occasion, resources), even if rather informally. For example, field staff may share transport to visit their clients or they may take advantage of public meetings convened by another agency to contact them. Most of the time, however, programmes run by different (and sometimes the same) agencies do not work together in the field. A prime example comes from *Peru* where social protection (*Juntos*) and the development of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas (*Haku Wiñay*) are run by the same ministry but operate independently of one another.

2.2. Explaining the lack of coordination

There are a number of factors to explain the lack of coordination between agricultural development and social protection: knowledge and perspectives; different clients; limited budgets; organizational culture and bureaucratic imperatives; and political factors.

Knowledge and perspectives

Social protection is a relative newcomer to most countries. Indeed, in several cases, the ministry responsible for social protection has only been established within the last ten years. The concepts of social protection in these new agencies are often clear and inspirational. They draw on the many studies of social protection that have mushroomed in the new millennium; studies that inspire, making strong cases for their preferred approaches.

In many countries, donors have been instrumental in funding innovative approaches to social protection and have popularized recent thinking around social protection. In sub-Saharan Africa, the norm is for very strong donor involvement in both programme selection and financing, but there are exceptions. For example, Lesotho's social pension programme was instituted despite objections from the IMF and received no financial support from other donors (Barrientos, 2009; Pelham, 2007). In Latin America, the leadership of Peru's Ministry for Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS), established in 2011, is imbued with purpose and highly motivated to eradicate poverty in the country. MIDIS is mostly funded from national budgets and is staffed almost entirely by nationals .

Few ministries with responsibility for production sectors such as agriculture, however, appreciate the full potential of social protection to support their aims. Indeed, many see social protection as providing charitable handouts to the unfortunate, but with little economic potential and hence little to do with their own programmes.

On the social protection side, knowledge about agriculture and links with social protection are undermined by weak understanding of what makes farmers more productive. Theories of change about how households move from dependence on external support (such as social assistance) to more independent and productive livelihoods are often simplistic. For example, graduation from social protection is commonly seen as taking place through own-account employment rather than working for wages, as McCord and Slater (2015), argue:

The major question arising from this review is the extent to which the current scale and coverage of programmes, and their predominant focus on supporting self- or own-account employment, are enough to tackle the dominant barriers to sustainable employment. Current social protection experience and practice remains focused on tackling supply-side constraints (often by attempting to turn the recipients of social

transfers into entrepreneurs) and far less attention is paid to the demand side, which would entail a rather more ambitious agenda of job creation, and the quality of work created.

Ultimately, from a sustainable employment perspective, the preoccupations of most social protection expenditures – with their focus on creating entrepreneurs (own-account workers) rather than addressing challenges relating to the availability and quality of employment – appear rather out of kilter with the nature of much poverty in developing countries, and especially the challenge of underemployment, and the alarmingly high and largely unrecognized scale of working poverty (p. 142).

Too often it is assumed that the only thing required to turn poor, vulnerable rural smallholders – and they usually are smallholders, rather than agricultural wage labourers, pastoralists or fisher folk – into independent, commercial farmers is to provide them with business training and help them to accumulate more assets, usually chickens or goats as seen in northern Kenya. The theories of change offered by such programmes see technical solutions to market access and financial inclusion challenges, rarely picking up on underlying structural inequalities, including access to land, patronage and rents, limited investment in rural public goods, and so on.

Mexico provides an example of a strict divide between agriculture and social protection. The agriculture secretariat (*Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación* - SAGARPA) has prioritized increased production and productivity for decades, seeking first and foremost to work with commercial growers who operate at medium and large scales, often with irrigation. The liberalization of economic policy in Mexico, which started in 1982, has only strengthened that priority. Accordingly, the bulk of SAGARPA's budget provides both private and public goods for medium- and large-scale commercial farmers, with much less offered to the majority of farmers who operate family farms of less than five hectares. Meanwhile, when conditional cash transfers were introduced in the 1990s under the social protection programme now known as Prospera, they were seen as temporary relief from the economic crises of that decade, rather than as a continuing defence against deep poverty. It was hoped that once these crises had been resolved, private activity in markets would allow low-income households to work their way out of poverty. Hence agricultural and social protection programmes were not seen having the potential to be linked. Geography has reinforced the separation: the commercial farmers are concentrated in the north and northwest of Mexico, while small-scale farmers in poverty tend to concentrate in the centre and south of the country.

The different perspectives of staff in agriculture agencies and those who work in social protection determine the actors with whom they tend to coordinate. For example, the ministries responsible for social protection in most of the countries studied were more likely to coordinate with ministries of health, education, women and children rather than with agriculture.

For example in Ghana, as part of an attempt to achieve a more integrated and effective approach to social protection, beneficiaries of the *Livelihoods Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)* programme are entitled to free health insurance through the *National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)*. While there have been attempts to link LEAP to complementary livelihood services, such as agricultural extension and microcredit, making links to health and education through, for example, providing free school uniforms to children in beneficiary

households, seems to arouse more interest. In Kenya, where social protection programmes target households with a labour constraint and three out of the four flagship programmes seek to address lifecycle vulnerabilities, the sector favours links to health and education (and sometimes to gender / youth ministries or community development) rather than to agriculture.

In Bangladesh, many district staff involved in agriculture believe that social protection beneficiaries cannot benefit from their programmes. Marginal farmers are thought to lack the knowledge and resources they need to adopt agricultural innovations, while women, the elderly and the disabled are thought to be incapable of undertaking intensive agriculture (though evidence shows that cash transfers allow the physically impaired to hire labour). For instance, even though the livestock office in Bogra runs a programme for female-headed households that makes interest-free loans available to buy goats and sheep, the district-level officers believed that the beneficiaries of the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) – a social safety net programme for very poor women – would not be capable of participating.

Agricultural ministries, for their part, tend to see allies in agencies dealing with trade, commerce, agro processing, natural resources, lands and environment as well as in private sector firms and associations. Social protection is rarely a priority for them.

Different clients

The policy priorities of agriculture and social protection ministries often differ despite the fact that, in principle, both have productive as well as social objectives. Agriculture agencies usually seek to promote commercial farming as well as to support smallholder farmers with low incomes (some of whom may also receive social protection) in order to increase food production and incomes. Social protection policies on the other hand aim to support households that cannot meet their basic needs (often using labour constraints or high dependency ratios as targeting criteria), as well as to promote household livelihoods.

In practice, however, the actions of the two ministries are rarely evenly balanced between social support and productive stimulus. Agriculture programmes, even in the poorest countries under study, focus their efforts on small family farmers they regard as viable, capable and productive. Social protection programmes, in contrast, overwhelmingly provide support to households that are labour constrained, notwithstanding the fact that labour constraints or high dependency ratios are not always good ways to identify the most vulnerable people (Ellis, 2008). In southern and eastern Africa particularly, this focus has been a response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the need to support orphans and vulnerable children and the elderly people who look after them. Working age people in Africa are far less likely to get access to cash transfers than are the elderly and the young (McCord and Slater, 2015).

For example, agriculture and social protection programmes in Lesotho cater to different types of beneficiaries. While agricultural programmes mainly focus on farmers with greater commercial potential and access to assets, social protection delivers social assistance to the poorest, resource-constrained households. Social assistance beneficiaries are people that are considered to be labour-constrained, despite their productive potential as wage labourers or farmers working their own or communal lands. The difference in target beneficiaries contributes to the general perception of policymakers that agriculture and social protection have different mandates although, as noted above, that is not really the case.

In Zambia, the policy objectives of the ministries responsible for agriculture and social protection overlap as well, most notably around food and nutrition security, employment and income generation and strengthening livelihoods. Agricultural policy has three key aims: food security (at national and household levels), increasing the contribution of agriculture to GDP; and equitable, inclusive and sustainable development (MoAL, 2013). In practice, however, most of the agriculture budget goes to programmes designed to raise food production by either smallholders with larger than average land holding or by large-scale commercial farmers.

Mexico's agricultural policy, as noted above, shows a similar interest in working with commercial farms and relatively well-endowed small farmers, rather than with more marginal smallholdings. Similarly, in Bangladesh, agricultural policies are driven by the political imperative to increase food production and thus tend to focus on capable and well-endowed farmers rather than on the marginal smallholders and landless rural households that constitute many of the beneficiaries of social protection programmes.

With the attention of agricultural and social protection agencies largely focused on different groups of beneficiaries, it is not surprising to see little coordination between them. Lack of coordination, however, does not automatically mean a lack of coherence. In fact, when ministries of agriculture and social protection have clearly delineated target groups, this can potentially achieve coherence if each agency covers a discrete set of clients and avoids overlapping efforts. Where this coherence does happen for the cases studied, however, it is unclear whether it is by accident or by design.

Limited budgets

With the exceptions of Mexico and Peru, public budgets, staff and other resources for social protection and agricultural development are limited. In most developing countries, governments face great challenges but lack the resources to address them fully.⁷ Scarce resources have three consequences: restricted targeting, rationing of programme benefits and inadequate time for coordination.

Limited budgets imply *restricted targeting*. Agricultural programmes that aim to reduce poverty and hunger tend to either target districts that are considered to be poor or a broad category of farmers, such as smallholders. Within the district or the target group, however, the selection of individual farmers tends to be based on their ability to produce rather than on need. Programmes need to show results so they tend to work with smallholders who already have adequate land, labour, working capital, education and social contacts. Not only are these farmers considered more likely to achieve programme aims, they are more likely to be informed about the programme, to have the time to participate and to be organized in groups, or even leading them.⁸ As a result, most agricultural programmes tend not to work with the subjects of social protection.

⁷ Indeed, the poorer the country, the greater the needs; a conundrum that Devereux has described as the 'Catch-22 of social protection' (Devereux, 2000; Devereux *et al*, 2005), where needs are the greatest in the places where resources are scarcest and the capacity of the state to deliver is weak.

⁸ Agricultural programmes that aim to work with poorer farmers often operate with groups of farmers, either existing groups or those formed specifically for the programme. However, groups need leaders and most natural leaders are the better-off farmers, who have the time, resources and social contacts they need to lead groups. At worst, these farmers act as gatekeepers and cream off programme resources. At best, they can be genuinely caring and altruistic to their poorer neighbours.

Rationing. Social protection programmes, even if they rarely find a perfect way to target their clients, tend nevertheless to be relatively successful at defining, identifying and working with their target populations. Often, however, the number of people that are eligible for support is so large that the programme cannot possibly reach them all. One response is to ration or dilute programme benefits.

For example, in Ethiopia, households in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) receive only half of their originally intended allocation so that more households can participate. This type of redistribution may be engineered by programme staff or by the Development Agent (DA, employed by the Ministry of Agriculture) and local food security committee, which may be under pressure from local leaders and the wider community. There have been programme directives not to cut allocations but these have often been ignored (Sharp *et al.*, 2006). The result is to further undermine coherence between agriculture and social protection because the support that households receive is not enough for them to invest in productive assets.

In Lesotho, in 2012, cash and in-kind transfers currently only reached an estimated 3-4 percent of poor farmers (Garcia and Moore, 2012). Programmes to target the poor on the basis of their engagement in agriculture, either as farmers or seasonal workers, are also lacking. This group particularly benefit from links between agricultural and social protection programmes since it is economically active, yet has limited access to inputs, markets and training.

At the community level in Bangladesh, limited government resources results in local officials trying to spread benefits across the target population, avoiding any layering of government programmes when a household might qualify for more than one programme.

Another response is to restrict targeting, leaving many households out of the programme and reducing the aggregate impact on livelihoods.

Reviewing the impacts of social protection on employment (including own-account agriculture), McCord and Slater (2015) stress the need for greater coverage and meaningful transfer levels:

A critical mass of resources is required in a local economy for a sustained period to stimulate rural development and improved employment. Such effects have been found in some programmes – for example, with the Progresa programme in Mexico (Barrientos and Sabates-Wheeler, 2006) – but where coverage and transfer value are low, the impact is unlikely to be significant (p. 141).

Limited budgets also restrict the number of staff in the different agencies and thus affect the **time available for coordination**. Meetings may be made a formal requirement but further interaction with other agencies takes time that often cannot be spared.

Scarcity of resources, such as staff and funds, is especially limiting in difficult circumstances, such as on the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya. There has been little progress after decades of programming in Turkana, indicating the difficulties of delivering poverty reduction and improved livelihoods in areas where poverty is widespread, population densities are low, physical infrastructure is weak, clients are remote and insecurity regularly threatens poor people.

Organizational culture and bureaucratic imperatives

Most government agencies are staffed by people with expertise in a specific sector. In organizational studies, these are known as role cultures or bureaucracies⁹: they are specialized by function and department, hierarchical and highly formalized in their systems and procedures (Handy, 1993). Coordination within and beyond the agency may be formally mandated but the staff are more likely to be motivated to develop narrow technical and professional competencies that can be applied to the core business of the agency, rather than to collaborate with other agencies. Hence it is not surprising that much of the coordination observed in the country studies took place inside individual ministries.

In Mexico, the study found obstacles to coordination across sectors arising from the typical way that public agencies function. Three recurring patterns were observed: public agencies at the central level separate the administration of poverty from actions to increase agricultural production; at local levels, officials accept this separation and reproduce it in their daily activities; and the beneficiaries accept what is on offer from centrally-designed programmes over which they have little influence.

Differences in the nature of agricultural and social protection programmes can also impede coordination.¹⁰ Social protection programmes, especially cash transfers, can be relatively straightforward to deliver, with most of the operating environment under the control of the agency. The need to provide regular and reliable benefits to clients tends to focus attention on running systems on schedule and as efficiently and economically as possible. Agricultural programmes, on the other hand, are often more intricate, aiming for partial improvements in complex systems where success depends on many factors, both human and natural, over which agency staff have little or no control. Agricultural programmes usually cannot insist on tight systems: on the contrary, plans have to be kept flexible to cope with the many contingencies that affect farmers. When tasks vary significantly due to the nature of the challenges faced in different locations served by the programme, it makes it harder to coordinate them.¹¹

Furthermore, the behaviour of farmers is critical in agriculture, yet it is beyond programme control. This may lead agricultural field staff to work first and foremost with farmers who have the assets and capacity to participate in programmes, rather than with the neediest people. This tendency reinforces the restricted targeting described in the previous section and means that many agricultural development programmes work with clients that are different than those of social protection.

The isolation of the cash transfer programme, *Juntos*, from agriculture programmes in highland Peru stems from differences in the nature of the programmes. *Juntos* is relatively

⁹ Bureaucracy has become a pejorative word, but the original (Weberian) technical sense is meant here: an organization that is formal and professional.

¹⁰ The differing challenges of rural development programmes in terms of planning and management have long been noted. The World Development Report for 1983 (World Bank, 1983) distinguished between physical and human development projects; others (for example, Brinkerhoff and Ingle, 1989; Chambers, 1993; Rondinelli, 1993) have drawn attention to the distinction between projects where the planning can be done by blueprint, as opposed to those where a learning process is more appropriate.

¹¹ The differences are matters of degree rather than absolute: some agricultural programmes, such as seed distribution, can be planned with some precision, while some forms of social protection, such as public works, may need adjustment to variable local circumstances.

straightforward, involving tried and tested methods under programme control. It is also well funded and is able to reach the great majority of its target population. The agricultural programmes, in contrast, carry out more diverse activities in complex natural and human systems with much of what matters for success – above all, the performance of the clients – beyond programme control. Moreover, these programmes have limited budgets and are not able to reach more than a minority of their target population of poor and vulnerable rural households. As a result, they face a tension between their mission of assisting poor and vulnerable households and their very understandable interest in working with producers who have the capacities and assets to participate successfully. In the end, they often end up working mainly with wealthier small-scale producers in low-income communities. These differences between social protection and agriculture has affected the graduation scheme for Juntos clients, *Haku Wiñay*. Despite the fact that both Juntos and Haku Wiñay are run by MIDIS, the two programmes operate virtually independently of one another.

Cross-sector coordination can be further impeded programmes proliferate in a particular sector – as occurred in Bangladesh for social protection and in Mexico for rural development programmes. Faced with such fragmentation of efforts, most agencies see coordinating within the sector as more of a priority than bridging across to other sectors.

Political factors

In some political systems, ministerial appointments are given as rewards for political support. A ministry can be a personal fiefdom or a vehicle to advance the interests of a minister's political party (Poulton, 2014; van der Walle, 2007). Under such circumstances, coordination with other agencies becomes a distraction or even a threat to the independence of the agency or its leader. Staff are rarely encouraged to cooperate with other ministries and departments, or rewarded for doing so. On the contrary, they are more likely to be expected to protect the power, autonomy and territorial mandate of their own ministry.

Apart from the internal politics of some ministries, political economy considerations may influence the design and targeting of programmes run by ministries of agriculture, which have a client base that includes poor smallholders as well as more influential elites.¹² Given the importance of rewarding politically favoured clients in some systems, their agriculture ministries and technical staff have little reason to coordinate with social protection programmes.

In Zambia, for example, three quarters of the budget allocated to agriculture goes to providing fertilizer subsidies under the *Farmer Input Supply Programme (FISP)*, which disproportionately favours better-off farmers. Another substantial tranche goes to the *Food Reserve Agency (FRA)* whose activities benefit commercial farmers and a smallholder elite. The remaining budget for essential agricultural investments, including research and extension, irrigation and livestock and veterinary services is thus minimal. Other flagship agricultural programmes in the seven countries under study financed private interests – through subsidies on farm inputs, and credit – rather than public goods such as research and extension and rural infrastructure.

¹² For more on agriculture and patronage, see for example Berhanu and Poulton, 2014; Chinsinga and Poulton, 2014; Poulton, 2014; and Poulton and Kanyinga, 2014.

Although social protection can be politically important, it does not offer the same opportunities for patronage and distribution of rents as does agriculture. This is because many social protection programmes, particularly in Africa, target vulnerabilities associated with childhood, maternity and old age. The target groups do not usually align (unlike in the agriculture sector) with politically important blocs that define voter interest (Poulton and Kanyinga, 2012). In addition, these target groups and their benefits tend to be well-defined, with very little scope for discriminating in favour of political supporters at the national level. Two exceptions to this may arise at subnational levels: patronage may occur when local targeting picks only those people that support a particular party or where programmes are geographically targeted to areas where voters support the ruling party.

While the factors described above provide most of the reason for the limited coordination observed in the seven country studies, there are two additional possible explanations. One is *timing*. The timing of policy development and revisions often makes it difficult for links between agriculture and social protection to be reflected in the policies of both sectors. In the countries studied, with the possible exception of Peru,¹³ agricultural policies were conceived before social protection policies (see Table 2.1) and so could not take account of the latter. Even where links to social protection are strongly encouraged, as for example in Lesotho's National Food Security Policy (2005), programme design and implementation rarely actively promote them.

There will probably always be different cycles of policy development and revision in the two sectors, so that one sector will always lag behind the other in terms of cross-sector coherence. This suggests that, rather than to overemphasize policy alignment, it might sense to focus on alignment or coherence within programmes, such as is done in Kenya's HSNP.

¹³ Although the latest agricultural strategy dates from late 2014, the strategy is based largely on ideas about agricultural development that came well before Peru developed a large, integral family of social protection policies from the early 2000s onwards.

Table 2.1 Timing of agriculture and social protection policies in case study countries

Country	Agriculture policy	Social protection policy
Bangladesh	National Agriculture Policy (2010); National Livestock Policy (2007); National Fisheries Policy (1998); National Food Policy (2007)	National Social Protection Strategy (2011), revised to National Social Security Strategy (2015)
Peru	<i>Lineamientos de Política Agraria</i> (2014)	<i>Incluir para Crecer</i> , (2007)
Kenya	Agriculture Sector Development Strategy (2009)	National Social Protection Policy (2011).
Ghana	Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (2011)	Ghana National Social Protection Strategy (draft 2012)
Lesotho	National Food Security Policy (2005), which superseded the 2003 policy	National Social Protection Strategy (2014)
Zambia	National Agricultural Policy (2004) (currently under revision)	National Social Protection Policy (2014)

The other factor, as seen in Bangladesh, is the ***proliferation of social protection programmes***. The extraordinary number of such programmes falling under different public agencies – the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) recognizes no less than 145 social safety nets being implemented by 23 line ministries or divisions – and NGOs not only makes for fragmented social protection, but also means that, as discussed above, coordination is primarily focused on trying to harmonize efforts. While the number of state-run social protection programmes in Malawi and Kenya is far fewer than in Bangladesh, ongoing coordination efforts are largely focused on harmonizing these programmes and improving coordination within the sector.

Most of the factors limiting coordination between agriculture and social protection tend to reinforce each other. It is thus not surprising that most agencies and their staff tend to focus on their own programmes, rather than seeking to collaborate with others.

3. Qualifying the general story

The general story identifies repeated patterns, but exceptions and variations to these patterns do occur. Some of these variations arise as the result of particular administrative arrangements. Four are examined here: decentralization; the role of development partners; national strategies; and layered programmes. These variations can have a strong bearing on prospects for coherence. This is particularly the case for the layered programmes that explicitly try to link agricultural development and social protection, often devoting considerable resources to doing so. Since these variations were not necessarily the initial focus of the country studies, the analysis is limited. To examine in detail the effect of decentralization, for example, would require a major study in itself. Even so, enough evidence was seen to provide some insights, albeit somewhat provisional and qualified.

3.1. Decentralization

Prospects for decentralization

Does decentralization help promote the coordination and coherence of agricultural and social protection programmes? To answer this, we set out some principles and objectives of decentralization, followed by observations of decentralization in practice.

Decentralization may take various forms, but a common distinction is between the *deconcentration* of administration where central agencies establish administrative structures at regional, district and field levels and *devolution*, where lower levels of government have powers and funds to plan and implement programmes.

Deconcentrated administration is largely a functional convenience: key decisions are taken centrally where budgets are held. Local staff may have some limited freedom to adjust programmes to local conditions, as for example when it comes to setting up infrastructure or selecting clients. The central government often has an agency – the Office of the President or similar – charged with the coordination of central programmes in the field. Local consultation meetings are convened periodically by the responsible ministry with the local heads of central agencies, local leaders, NGOs and possibly some donors, such forums largely exchange information and report progress, with limited powers to take decisions.

The devolution of decision-making, with funding to back local decisions or the power to raise and spend funds locally, leads to more profound decentralization and usually requires democratic autonomous structures at the local level. Local authorities need the capacity to take decisions and implement their programmes.

When substantial devolution of rural budgets to regional, district and local governments takes place, two major questions arise. First, what are the political priorities of decentralized government, and how far do they align with those of the central government? Second, what capacity and competence exist to plan and deliver programmes and services at the lower tiers of government?

Politics in regions and districts.¹⁴ Policy choices made at regional and district levels may differ from those made centrally. Although not always the case, subnational governments tend to favour investments that produce tangible outcomes in the short term – public works, for example – over those that produce less concrete results in the longer run, which may be the case with programmes to reduce hunger and poverty. Political choices at subnational levels may also be more likely to hand out favours to supporters, with less attention paid to stimulating growth through investments in infrastructure or education and skills. Moreover, decentralization tends to see a fairly rapid transfer of executive functions to subnational bodies, while the counterpart legislative functions of democratic decision-making and oversight may take time to develop.¹⁵ In the meantime, effective control over executive decisions may be weak so that local leaders and officials may direct public spending to their political supporters, family, friends or themselves without fear of the consequences. Much depends on context: these dangers are less pronounced in countries whose citizens are well informed, educated, organized and experienced in making political choices. But that is not always the case, especially in the rural areas of low-income countries¹⁶ (Manor 1999, Eaton *et al.* 2010).

Local administrative capacity and competence. In most developing countries, talented people with political interests tend to seek jobs in central rather than local governments. The latter typically has few staff and even fewer with other than rudimentary skills. A lack of staff restricts the range of activities, with much of the local budget spent close to the administrative centre, while a lack of skills leads to a focus on tasks that can readily be reduced to routine actions. It may also lead to services being contracted out to private firms that have greater capacity – although even then it is likely that local contractors will not have the capacity to offer services more complicated than road maintenance or refuse collection.

If this suggests gloomy prospects for decentralization, these outcomes are not inevitable. Local leadership may be visionary and honest. Sufficient funds may be made available or raised locally to recruit staff with the ability to do whatever jobs are needed. Moreover, when local government appears narrow-minded and short-handed, it may be because it has been granted limited powers, restricted to mundane and routine functions and given inadequate budget.

Should we expect decentralization to help agricultural development or social protection? Agricultural development should benefit from decentralized action since most programmes need tailoring to local circumstances. Even when most of the agriculture budget is spent by the central government, the bulk of ministry staff are likely to be located close to the field and will have the scope to adapt programmes to local conditions.

¹⁴ Most countries have at least three tiers of government: central, regional and district. In some cases, there may be a level between regional and district as well. The names of subnational units vary: regions may be termed as states, provinces, departments; districts may be counties, municipalities, etc. In addition, districts are commonly divided into subunits such as locations, wards, parishes, cantons, but rarely do such units have more than minimal decision powers.

¹⁵ Which is not to say that executive functions do not take time to develop as well: building capacity to plan and implement local policies and investments can be extremely time consuming. Nevertheless, while capacity is being built, budgets may have been devolved and spent; so that executive functioning tends to precede.

¹⁶ Moreover, conditions vary within countries. Bolivia's decentralization from 1995 onwards is an object lesson in how differently decentralization can play out across a country (Whitehead & Gray Molina 2004).

When social protection involves transfers in cash or kind, the requirement for transparent, honest delivery to the target group make central governments wary of devolving such programmes to local levels. The concern is that local governments may not respect targeting criteria and select beneficiaries based on other considerations or they may change the benefits or siphon off funds for their own gain or to spend on other programmes.

Should we expect more local coordination of agricultural and social protection programmes with decentralization? Decentralization may stimulate more coordination between programmes because the opportunities for aligning field activities, exploiting potential synergies and avoiding negative interactions should be clearer at the field level. By devolving decision-making, decentralization makes it easier for local officials to make adjustments. For example, programmes from the agricultural and social protection sectors may be fine-tuned so they operate in the same locations and at the same times. In this way, transport, offices, consultation fora and so on can be shared rather than duplicated.

It is less clear that decentralization helps to promote more coordination in strategy and planning. Indeed, it could detract, since the ability to conceptualize effective and inspiring theories of change could be more limited locally than at the central level.

Decentralization in practice in the seven countries

Are these expectations borne out by evidence from the seven countries under study? In every case, the administration of agricultural development and social protection is deconcentrated (see Annex B). Deconcentration may allow for some, albeit modest, coordination that contributes to coherence at the district level. For example, in Peru and Lesotho, more coordination among agencies can be seen locally than is found at headquarters. In Lesotho, informal collaboration at the district has led the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to provide training in farming skills and techniques to the beneficiaries of social assistance programmes. In the absence, however, of human and financial resources – resources that are only likely to come with devolution – there are few opportunities to enhance these links further.

In five of the countries some devolution has taken place (see Annex B). In practice, some of this been recent– in Ghana and Kenya, for example, devolution is so recent that practice lags behind its aims and formal status. In other cases, such as Mexico and Zambia, longstanding practices of centralized administration with dominant executives mean that devolution has not led to effective administration at lower levels.

As noted above, devolution in Kenya is relatively new. In the two years since the establishment of new county administrations with decision-making and resource allocation powers not much has been achieved to improve the coordination of agricultural and social protection programmes. Moreover, while responsibility for agriculture policies and programmes has devolved to the county, the administration of social protection policies and programmes remains at the national level, which complicates coordination. This is exacerbated when, despite the national mandate for social protection, county governments decide to implement additional cash transfer programmes.

In Peru, devolution has meant that most of the rural development budget is spent by regional, provincial and municipal governments. Most spending is directed to physical infrastructure, education and health. Education and health services coordinate quite closely with the cash transfer programme, Juntos, since the aim of the programme is to promote fuller use of schools

and health centres. Such close coordination, however, does not extend from Juntos – or any of the other social protection programmes – to agricultural development because such links do not readily align with decentralized priorities. Moreover, most of the social protection budget, above all the budget for Juntos cash transfers, is held centrally and implemented by the ministry through its field offices.

The longest experience of devolved administration in the seven countries is that of Mexico with its federal constitution. Despite this experience, and the extra measures taken to devolve administration in the late 1990s, the central government still has considerable control over both agriculture and social protection spending. One consequence of decentralization in Mexico has been a proliferation of public programmes at field levels, making it less easy to coordinate public action.

Ethiopian experience is also pertinent. Despite a federal structure of regional states, in practice, decision-making and resource allocation are heavily centralized. Local staff in agriculture or social protection programmes have little flexibility to adapt these programmes to local circumstances (Abegaz, 2015).

Bangladesh is the most centralized of the seven countries; indeed it has been described by the World Bank as ‘one of the most centralized large countries in the world.’ Centralization in this case may make it easier for the layered programmes funded by donors or carried out by larger NGOs to be designed and implemented since the planning and direction of all programmes is concentrated in Dhaka.

In summary, five conclusions can be drawn from this review.

First, decentralization in itself does not necessarily improve the coordination of programmes. Centralized systems have the advantage that rules, systems and procedures can be applied consistently throughout a country, which may be particularly important for social protection programmes based on rights and entitlements. By contrast, decentralized systems provide the flexibility to adapt programmes to local conditions; this is important not only for agriculture, but also for social protection seeking to tackle specific, particular vulnerabilities that arise from local livelihoods – such as those facing pastoralists in northern Kenya – rather than lifecycle vulnerabilities that arise with infancy, disability or old age.

Second, deconcentration appears to allow some coordination between the agriculture and social protection sectors, particularly when regular district level coordination meetings take place and allow knowledge sharing between sectors. For example, in Ghana, agriculture and social protection staff at the district level found common cause in the promotion of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. With some devolution of powers, useful adjustments of programmes to local conditions can be made.

Third, examples of full devolution – where subnational governments have both the powers and capacity to administer effectively, with legislative oversight of executive actions – barely exist in the seven countries. In some cases this is because devolution has been too recent. Hence it is not possible to assess its effect on agriculture and social protection programmes.

Fourth, where devolution involves decision-making and fund-holding for agriculture and social protection at different levels, coordination is much more difficult. Nevertheless, for the reasons explained above, it often makes sense to devolve agricultural programmes but to administer social protection centrally.

Fifth, decentralization is only partly a matter of changing constitutions and the structure of administrations. Importantly, it is also about developing capacity at lower levels of government to work effectively, while being accountable to local citizens. Such changes are challenging: to judge from Mexico's still incomplete experience, it can take decades to realize the ambitions of decentralization. It is thus unrealistic to expect the first steps in decentralization – new laws, rules, and organizational structures – to make much of a difference in and of themselves.

3.2. Development partner actions and influences

Can development partners make a difference to coordination and coherence? In the seven countries studied, two potential contributions stand out. First, donors can fund innovative social protection and agricultural development programmes that use layered and integrated approaches (see Section 3.4). Examples include the several cash transfer programmes piloted in Africa in recent years, the farmer-to-farmer learning and local resource allocation committees promoted in highland Peru starting in the late 1980s and the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP) in Bangladesh. These programmes have yielded influential lessons.

There are dangers as well if donors fund programmes at high cost and using procedures that cannot be matched nor up-scaled by domestic governments. History has several examples of this danger, notably the Integrated Rural Development Programmes of the 1970s (Howell 1988). Development partners may also promote ideas that are not congruent with domestic political settlements,¹⁷ as arguably they have done for social protection in Africa where it is seen as a family and local community matter, rather than a duty of the state. Having said that, there does seem to be growing acceptance of publically provided social protection, with African governments increasing their financial, human resource and administrative and commitments such programmes.

The other contribution is that donors can facilitate coordination across sectors by funding more staff, meetings and communications. This needs to be supported by planning that builds in the time necessary for coordination – and for putting into practice any changes that result from such interactions. The value of additional space for adaptation can be seen in the way that Kenya's Hunger Safety Nets Programme (HSNP) – where a long and collaborative design process and pilot stage allowed testing and evaluation of programme features – allows beneficiaries to collect transfers when and where they like and is therefore consistent with their semi-nomadic pastoralist lifestyles.

Development partners have most often succeeded in improving programmes and the coordination between them when they have been engaged with implementation as well as in planning and allocating funds. A good example of this comes from Oxfam's work in northern Kenya. As a result of discussions in the field, Oxfam staff realized that cash transfers distributed after a drought and likely to be spent on food (with limited opportunity for a local production response) needed to be complemented by funds to enable traders to bring in additional food and thereby dampen the inflationary effects induced by increased demand. Similarly, the fact that innovations in agricultural development in the highlands of *Peru* were sustained and refined in a succession of programmes funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and subsequently adopted in government programmes,

¹⁷ A common understanding, usually between elites, about how power should be organized and exercised.

including Haku Wiñay, owes much to IFAD having a country manager who actively supported the implementation of several generations of programmes.

3.3. National strategies

All countries have strategies and plans at national and sectoral levels. These set out government goals and the tasks to achieve them and allocate the tasks to different agencies based on their professional competences.

Sometimes strategies address problems with multiple causes, where the appropriate response involves actions from across sectors. Not all such efforts get the support and resources they need, but some have strong political backing as well as significant additional funds and staff. For example, Brazil's Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) initiative, which started in 2003 as a presidential flagship, is an outstanding example.

In the seven countries under study, three major cross-cutting initiatives could be identified.¹⁸ Peru's Crecer strategy, 2007–2011, aimed to promote human and social capital development in vulnerable groups, improve incomes and fight child malnutrition. The strategy brought together six ministries and agencies of central, regional and local governments, NGOs and development partners under the umbrella of an inter-ministerial commission with a technical secretariat. At the time of writing an impact evaluation of the programme is not available and it is therefore hard to assess the effectiveness of the programme but between 2008 and 2012 stunting of under-fives fell from 28 to 18 percent (World Development Indicators, reporting demographic and health surveys – consulted in July 2015).

The recent (2013) National Crusade Against Hunger in Mexico sought to promote social inclusion and welfare by reducing hunger and malnutrition, and increasing incomes for rural people. Similar to Crecer, the Crusade brought together programmes from 16 ministries and public agencies, with structures to link federal, state and municipal governments, an inter-ministerial commission and a technical secretariat. Results remain to be seen, although the Mexico study noted that the initiative might not have substantially affected the way that agencies implement the programmes under their care.

In Bangladesh, the 2011 Country Investment Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Agriculture brings together 12 different programmes from different sectors, including agriculture and social protection. The initiative has a budget of over US\$10 billion of which US\$8 billion has already been mobilized,

If there is a lesson to be learned from the experiences of cross-cutting national strategies on poverty, hunger and vulnerability, it is probably that the form that sectoral cooperation takes is less important than the additional funds, staff and high-level political support needed to support it.

¹⁸ Lesser initiatives are quite common. Most governments have cross-cutting strategies for the reduction of hunger, poverty and vulnerability. But often they exist on paper, without the authority and resources to make a substantial difference to existing sector efforts.

3.4. Layered programmes

Most of the agricultural development and social protection programmes observed in the country studies are designed and implemented by the relevant agencies, with coordination by means of planning across the public sector at national level, reinforced by various inter-agency committees at various levels of government. That has advantages but, as observed above, it means that programmes largely work apart from one another.

The alternative is to integrate actions to relieve poverty and vulnerability in a single agency and programme, known as ‘layered programmes’ because they provide several services to clients simultaneously. We give this approach significant attention because it is relatively easy to measure the outcome with the result that there is more evidence. Examples were seen in three of the studied countries, Bangladesh, Mexico and Peru, to which may be added Ethiopia’s Food Security Programme (comprising linked components of the Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) and Household Asset Building Programme (HABP)), a prominent, much-reviewed and large-scale example.

These programmes share several features. They all aim to assist clients of social protection to develop their productive capacity and livelihood activities so they can earn more – and exit poverty – and become less vulnerable. They provide multiple services across sectors, not necessarily confined to the implementing agency’s experience. The programmes for the most part focus on areas of high poverty and vulnerability. Some are limited in scale, covering only a subset of the potential target group, largely because they have high costs per beneficiary or are run by NGOs who can only manage small caseloads. The examples from Bangladesh and Ethiopia are large programmes, covering more than eight million beneficiaries in the case of Ethiopia. BRAC saw more than 1.4 million beneficiaries ‘graduate’ from its Targeted Ultra Poor Programme (TUP) between 2002 and 2014.

Layered programmes exist for several reasons. Agencies dealing with food security and extreme poverty, many of which were created in the last 20 to 30 years, began their mission by administering social safety nets. Recognizing that the conditions they were addressing were the result of chronic poverty and vulnerability, those agencies developed their thinking to address the root causes – thereby widening their goals from protection to prevention, promotion and transformation (as in the PPPT framework). Serving the broader needs of social protection clients through integrated in-house programmes implicitly recognizes that other agencies that might be expected to support this clientele are unlikely to do so – in the case of agriculture for the reasons set out in the previous chapter. Keeping programmes in house ensures that all components respond to agency priorities and theories of change; it also saves on coordination costs. The trade-off, however, is that programmes may suffer from insufficient technical support since social protection agencies may not have all of the required skills to implement livelihood programmes.

In low-income countries or countries where the poor are not seen as a political priority, there is an additional motivation for adopting layering approaches. Showing that households can move out of social protection programmes into independently sustained livelihoods will help overcome the fear that beneficiaries will become too dependent on transfers and be an unsustainable burden on government resources.

Bangladesh. Of all of the countries we studied, Bangladesh has the most experience with layered programmes in social protection. There are two reasons for this. First, costly layered programmes they have been possible in Bangladesh because NGOs and donor agencies have

been prepared to fund them. Second, thinking on social protection has developed a strong focus on empowerment rather than on solely meeting basic needs. Practical experience has contributed to this thinking. Tackling seasonal vulnerability to hunger, particularly as caused by annual flooding during the monsoon and Himalayan meltwater, has resulted in programmes that focus both on maintaining consumption during these periods and helping households to mitigate or avoid the negative impacts of seasonal shocks by building their assets and resilience. For example, *the Chars Livelihoods Programme (CLP)*, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the aid department of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), tackles extreme poverty in the ‘lagging region’ of the Jamuna Chars of north-west Bangladesh. These are riverine islands formed from silt deposits, which are highly vulnerable to annual floods. Homesteads and fields are frequently submerged, with households fleeing with their livestock to the mainland, and sometimes the islands wash away entirely. The CLP provides lump-sum transfers to poor households to help them purchase productive assets, such as calves to rear for milk or sale. The CLP also protects beneficiaries from seasonal flooding by constructing raised plinths above the highest known local flood level and promotes homestead gardening for year-round consumption. In addition, the programme also provides eligible households with a regular monthly stipend for a defined period to support the development of new livelihood activities as well as to minimize distress sales of newly-transferred assets.

Other programmes have their routes in rather different processes. The microcredit revolution in Bangladesh has increasingly sought ways to reach the poorest households. Social protection often links to microcredit, where regular food or cash stipends meet consumption needs so that households can invest their credit in production. For example, BRAC’s *Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR)* programme provides small stipends of food and cash alongside access to microcredit and wider financial inclusion activities including savings, banking and financial literacy. (Holmes *et al.* 2013)

Both of these programmes demonstrate what is achievable. The layered programmes appear to have sustained impacts in Bangladesh. The CLP estimates that 85 percent of its beneficiaries have graduated within three months of the end of programme involvement, with the graduation rate, after allowing for some who slip back into poverty, remaining at 66 percent between 4.5 and 7 years after CLP support ended (Kenward *et al.*, 2015). Improvements in lives and livelihoods also remain for the majority of beneficiaries four years after receiving support under the CFPR (Hashemi and de Montesquiou, 2011).

Evidence on nutrition, however, is less positive. Although mothers who have passed through the CLP programme had higher Body Mass Indices and weights than new entrants, close to 40 percent were underweight (BMI < 18.5), and over 47 percent were anaemic. Moreover, the nutrition of under-fives was little improved with more than half of them stunted (Mascie-Taylor, 2010).

The main drawbacks of the programmes in Bangladesh are their cost, complexity and the capacities required to implement them. It is not clear that they can be replicated widely at public cost or that enough staff would be available for larger-scale efforts. BRAC will soon begin to pilot and test new combinations of layers to assess what a more scalable CFPR might look like.

Mexico started a pilot layered programme in 2015, called *Territorios Productivos* (Productive Territories). This aims to link clients of the *Prospera* conditional cash transfers

to as many as 57 existing public programmes designed to stimulate and support production. The programmes are offered by ten agencies of the national, state and municipal governments, however studies suggest that many of these programmes do not serve the poorest households, in part because little is known about the programmes, including how to access them (Fox, 2010; Scott, 2009). Territorios Productivos will work with groups of households to help them take advantage of the services and support to which they are entitled. The programme, however, has grander ambitions: to overcome the fragmentation of public agricultural and rural development projects and, above all, to surmount the stark separation of social protection and agricultural programmes in the Mexican countryside.

The pilot began with 400 municipalities in five states belonging to the *Cruzada Nacional Contra el Hambre* (CNCH, the National Crusade Against Hunger). The target population includes households enrolled in Prospera. The programme was expected to reach 10 000 people in 2015, expanding to reach 360 000 by 2018. Prospera, part of the *Secretaría de Desarrollo Social* (Sedesol, the Secretariat for Social Development), implements the programme in close cooperation with the *Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público* (Finance Ministry).

Peru began a pilot programme, *Haku Wiñay* (Quechua for ‘Let’s grow together’) in 2012 to help clients of the *Juntos* conditional cash transfers improve their food production, health, incomes and financial management. Haku Wiñay is implemented by *Foncodes* (National Fund for Compensation and Social Development), a special fund for community development, which lies within the social protection ministry, MIDIS. Haku Wiñay consists of four packages: technical assistance and training in food crops and livestock; guidance on improved housing and domestic hygiene; a challenge fund providing grants to small groups for productive investments, with local committees judging submissions; and training on financial management and services. Most of the training is provided by local specialists from farming households, a form of farmer-to-farmer capacity development.

The programme aims to cover all the clients of *Juntos* and other poor households in the operating locations. Haku Wiñay targets the poorest districts in the highlands of Peru and conducts participatory diagnoses to identify suitable activities. Although the intention is to cover all households with *Juntos* clients, limited budgets meant that coverage was incomplete in the district visited for the country study. The programme operated in nine districts of the central and southern Sierra during its first three years so the experience is still small-scale compared to the much larger coverage of *Juntos* (in 2014 Haku Wiñay covered 157 000 clients; *Juntos* served 840 000). Evaluations of Haku Wiñay were carried out in 2015. Early indications suggest some positive outcomes, but the full story remains to be seen.

Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) started in 2005 as a joint commitment by government and donor agencies to get Ethiopia off the ‘merry-go-round’ of emergency appeals and find an appropriate solution to regular, predictable, seasonal hunger. In most years, the programme supports 7–8 million people. It has a very strong graduation agenda –aiming for all beneficiaries to graduate from the programme within three years – which is driven by concerns about dependency on the PSNP.

Around 80 percent of participating households are required to provide labour to local public works activities, such as terracing, soil and water conservation, road construction and maintenance and the construction of school buildings and health posts. The other 20 percent of beneficiaries are labour constrained and receive ‘direct support,’ i.e. benefits without public

works requirements. These investments in community assets are meant to increase productivity, enhance human capital and provide better access to marketing opportunities, thereby enhancing household livelihoods. But they also have a strong impact on coherence. The PSNP is a very large programme: in some woredas (districts) where coverage is high, the PSNP budget can equal the total woreda budget – including all salaries and capital costs for education, health, policy and all other woreda functions. With up to 20 percent of the PSNP budget used to support public works, many woreda sector offices seek to use PSNP budget and public works labour to augment and support their own infrastructure investments. As a result, the sector offices are strongly involved in developing PSNP public works plans. This combination of sector specialists and local beneficiaries working to identify public works priorities enhances coherence between development investments and the PSNP.

PSNP is one of three components of *Ethiopia's Food Security Programme (FSP)* and households receiving PSNP benefits also get preferential access to another component: the *Household Asset Building Programme (HABP)*¹⁹. This programme provides credit to support increases in agricultural productivity, training and extension and access to market information for farmers. The theory of change for the HABP and the PSNP is similar to that of many layered programmes: if the PSNP can maintain or smooth basic consumption, poor households will be better able to make use of credit for productive investments. The jury is still out on whether the HABP and PSNP together can overcome the constraints to increasing productivity. The HABP lags behind the PSNP in terms of coverage, while the PSNP does not always deliver transfers regularly and predictably enough to fulfil its consumption- smoothing objective (see Berhane *et al.* 2013, World Bank, 2015, Coll-Black, 2015).

The experience of Ethiopia Food Security Programme's supports two conclusions. First, layering is possible in government-run (albeit heavily donor supported) programmes in low-income countries, but the resources provided to any individual farmer or household will be low and the extent of graduation proportionately reduced. Second, it is critical to get the basics of the programme right. Too often, transfers are delivered too late or in amounts that are not sufficient to smooth consumption. The budget of the PSNP in some woredas cannot cover everyone that needs support. In some cases, officials have responded by dividing a household's benefits among more than one family to ensure that 'everyone gets something.' This significantly reduces the prospects for graduation. Tackling these challenges – i.e. getting the basics of the programme right – needs to happen at the outset in order for households to make the most of layering with the HABP.

In summary, what can be learned from layered programmes? On the positive side, they are coherent in concept and design. When implemented by social protection agencies, as most are, they broaden agency perspectives to include improved livelihoods. It is, however, not clear to what extent they perform better than single intervention programmes. The evidence of impact is limited. It is too soon to know how well they are working in Mexico and Peru. In Bangladesh, the evidence is mixed: some gains have been seen in livelihoods and in reduced exposure to risks, but few or no gains have occurred in nutrition. In both Ethiopia and Bangladesh, layered programmes reduced seasonal hunger and vulnerability, by providing a safety net during the hungry months. In Ethiopia, however, household assets and livelihoods show limited improvement.

¹⁹ The third component is called "Complementary Community Investment".

Perhaps the greatest drawback to these programmes is their cost. Mexico's Territorios Productivos is expected to cost around US\$1 000 a year per client; while in Peru, Haku Wiñay costs US\$1 000 per household for the cycle of services delivered over three years. In countries where people living in deep poverty are counted in the millions, such programmes would thus cost billions of dollars to take to scale. In addition, they require intensive engagement of staff with beneficiaries, which may not be possible where administrative capacity is low.

Layering programmes also bring questions of equity and fairness into sharp focus. Communities in low-income countries can be averse to concentrating limited external resources on a few households, however deserving those households may be (Ellis, 2008). This view is mirrored, albeit for different reasons, by government officials, who are reluctant (usually because of fears about dependency and cost effectiveness) to provide individuals with support from more than one source at any given time. The view is particularly strong with regard to social assistance in Zambia, Kenya and Ghana. In Kenya, for instance, there is some agreement that households should only participate in one of the four flagship safety net programmes. However, that agreement dissipates when agriculture programmes are brought into the equation because, despite the aversion to double-dipping, there is also a recognition that social protection alone will not lift households out of poverty and into independent and sustainable livelihoods and that other complementary interventions are required.

The layered programmes share some features of the integrated rural development programmes (IRDP) that were favoured in the 1970s (Howell 1988). They tend to have limited coverage of the potential clients. This is partly because some of them are seen as trials, but also because they are costly for each client served. It remains to be seen whether they are effective enough to win the political support to justify the cost of national coverage – which proved a problem for most IRDPs and explains in part why most fell out of favour in the 1980s. Ethiopia is the only country where a layered programme is the government's flagship social protection programme, although even then donors provide the lion's share of funding. Dependence on heavy funding from donors can be seen in the CLP in Bangladesh as well.

That having been said, for upper-middle-income countries that are largely urbanized, the share of the population that is rural and extremely poor is low, while public budgets are relatively large. In such cases, layered programmes at scale may be affordable and politically supported – as long as they are effective.

4. Conclusions and discussion

4.1. Key findings

The general conclusion of the country studies was that agricultural and social protection programmes worked in relative isolation with little coordination between them. Where it existed, coordination was limited to information sharing, which rarely appeared to influence programme design or implementation. More coordination was seen at the district than at the central level, since the local staff of different agencies were likely to meet more often and to share information.

There are five possible reasons for the lack of coordination between the agricultural and social protection sectors: the different perspectives of staff in the two sectors; different clients for the two sectors; limited budgets and administrative capacity; organizational culture and bureaucratic imperatives; and political factors. Although the general pattern is clear, there can be exceptions and variations arising from particular administrative arrangements. Four of these arrangements – and their implications for intersectoral coordination – were examined in the study.

Decentralization facilitates some degree of coordination between the two sectors, particularly when district level coordination meetings allow knowledge sharing. With some devolution of powers, programmes can be usefully adjusted to local conditions. Coordination is much more difficult when devolution results in decision-making and fund-holding for agriculture and social protection taking place at different levels. Nevertheless, it often makes sense to devolve agricultural programmes, but to centralize social protection.

Decentralization is only partly a matter of changing constitutions and the administrative structures. Importantly, it is also about developing the capacity of lower levels of government to assume leadership and technical and management responsibilities in order to work more effectively while being accountable to local citizens. Such changes are challenging: it is unrealistic to expect the first steps in decentralization – new laws, rules, organizational structures – to make much of a difference in and of themselves, at least not in the short term.

Development partners can contribute to more coherence between agriculture and social protection by funding innovative programmes and providing resources to enable more local coordination. When donors involve themselves in implementation they can help facilitate useful adjustments to programmes that improve coherence. However, some donor-funded proof-of-concept initiatives require funds and capacity beyond that the reach of low-income country governments, making it hard for them to scale up and sustain the programmes down the line.

National strategies can provide a formal framework for cross-sector coherence. However, this does not always translate into effective local programme coordination. The studies revealed only a few examples of major cross-cutting strategies devised to address multi-sector issues such as poverty, hunger and vulnerability. The effectiveness of such strategies depends less on their form than on the availability of sufficient funding, staff and high-level political support.

The most common type of coordination took place during programme planning, with the subsequent allocation of tasks and responsibilities to specialized agencies. An alternative approach could be to establish **integrated or layered programmes**, which deliver a range of

services to clients of social protection, yet are implemented by a single agency, usually a social protection agency. These programmes aim to assist beneficiaries to develop their productive capacities and livelihood activities so they earn more, exiting poverty and becoming less vulnerable. The services provided by layered programmes are not necessarily confined to those within the implementing agency's experience.

The experience of layered programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mexico and Peru indicate that they are coherent in concept and design. When implemented by social protection agencies, as most are, they broaden agency perspectives to include improved livelihoods as well as poverty relief among their objectives.

It is not yet clear whether such programmes perform better than single- intervention programmes. Perhaps the main drawback to these programmes is their cost. In Mexico and Peru, for example, they cost between US\$333 and US\$1 000 per client each year. For countries where millions of people live in deep poverty, layered programmes would cost billions of dollars to take to scale, making them far too costly. They would be more affordable in upper-middle-income countries that are largely urbanized, however, with a relatively small number of rural poor and relatively large public budgets.

Where public budgets cannot stretch to cover layered programmes, there are strong arguments for ensuring that the design of social protection programmes reflects the realities of people's livelihoods – as we found in the case of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya, which was designed to allow mobile pastoralists in the north of the country to access cash at places and times that are convenient for them.

4.2. Discussion and implications

Archetypal routes to coherence

The seven country studies identified three routes to coherence. (see Table 4.1). The first is to carry out agricultural development and social protection through separate programmes, making an effort to align the programmes with each other to the degree possible. This may require ensuring that the aims of one sector also serve the other and looking for actions whose outcomes serve both sectors. Policies that affect the two sectors may also need to be adjusted to ensure consistency.

A second route is to combine the objectives of agricultural development and social protection through a cross-cutting strategy on reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability. The strategy needs adequate political support, a technical secretariat and funds to enable close coordination. Implementation of the strategy would remain with the relevant sector agency.

The third and most ambitious approach is to create integrated programmes that combine both aims and means. Implementation may take place through an existing or specially created agency.

Table 4.1 Three routes to better coherence between agricultural development and social protection

Route	Align sector policies and programmes	Bring programmes together in cross-cutting strategies	Bring programmes together in integrated programmes
Approach	<p>Include the objectives of the other sector. For example, agricultural programmes could include risk reduction objectives and offer services to less-endowed smallholders.</p> <p>Look for complementary actions where outcomes from one programme amplify outcomes in the other sector.</p> <p>Ensure policy coherence; be aware of trade-offs, possible adjustment and compensation measures.</p>	<p>Combine agricultural development and social protection through a single strategy that integrates objectives, with close coordination of activities.</p>	<p>Combine agricultural development and social protection in integrated programmes implemented by a single agency. Objectives and activities involve both sectors.</p>
Implementing agency	Sector agencies	Sector agencies	<p>Sector agencies, including sector units within sectors agencies</p> <p>Special agencies created just for the programme</p>
Mechanism to achieve coherence	Mainly through programme design, complemented by coordination during implementation	<p>Mainly through programme design, complemented by coordination during implementation</p> <p>Close coordination through technical units dedicated to cross-sector objectives, with sufficient authority and capacity to collaborate. Supports and monitors activities by sector agencies</p>	Mainly through programme design
Coordination fora	Cross-sector working groups and committees	<p>Technical coordinating unit</p> <p>High-level political forum, e.g. cabinet group</p> <p>Participatory fora to engage with civil society and private sector</p>	(May not be needed since activities are integrated)

These three routes to coherence involve escalating efforts and costs. It is thus not surprising then, that most of what we observed in the seven countries remained at the level of programme alignment – the cheapest option. Whether it is worth pursuing more ambitious approaches remains a question, since a comparison of additional costs and benefits cannot be done on the basis of the evidence found in these studies. The more pertinent calculation, however, is the political priority afforded to reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability: where these are strong priorities, major cross-cutting initiatives and integrated approaches are more likely to occur.

Opportunities for better practice

A lack of coherence between agricultural and social protection programmes did not mean that agencies were working at cross-purposes or operating according to inconsistent policies in the seven countries under study. Such concerns prompted the development of Policy Coherence for Development (OECD 2009).²⁰ On the contrary: the agriculture and social protection programmes did not work against one another, they just tended to work on their own. Hence the challenge in those countries is to improve coherence rather than to correct incoherence. It is easier to point to the costs of incoherence, since they are visible; rather than to show the gains from enhanced coherence, for which interaction can be difficult to see independently of the results of the separate programmes. Selecting priorities for improved practice is thus a matter of judgment rather than a calculation based on evidence. That being said, this report identifies five factors that can hinder the coordination that improve coherence. In each case, there are steps that can be taken to mitigate the obstacles.

Knowledge and perspectives: Moving beyond blinkered thinking. Rigid views about livelihoods, clients and appropriate programmes among staff in both agricultural development and social protection agencies can lead to missed opportunities for more effective action. Knowledge not only informs, but inspires as well. Ideas about social protection have developed rapidly since the 1990s, inspiring action in the field.

Both agricultural and social protection actors need to cultivate a deeper understanding of the range of livelihoods options pursued by their clients to transcend the typical focus on semi-subsistence farming, which excludes other activities, especially wage labour. Some theories of change held by social protection staff are overly simplified, especially those regarding graduation from social safety nets.

Agricultural policy-makers and field staff for their part need to broaden their vision of social protection from providing assistance to alleviate distress and poverty to actions that could have a profound impact on production. They need to appreciate that the divisions between productive activity and safety nets that reduce risks are not a simple dichotomy: some programmes in agriculture provide safety nets, while some in social protection support agriculture. Rather than treat agricultural and social protection programmes as strictly distinct and try to create artificial links between them, it makes more sense to look at broader objectives such as poverty reduction or food and nutrition security and ask how agriculture and social protection can achieve them together.

²⁰ Policy Coherence for Development – in capital letters – became a prominent issue in development from the 1980s onwards when NGOs began to point out the inconsistencies between EU agricultural and development policies. The European Commission now has institutionalized mechanisms to check for policy coherence.

Knowledge is not only a matter of disseminating information; it is also a means to generate new insights. Promising innovations need to be tried and evaluated. Since that may be risky for LIC governments with limited funds, development partners have a role to play in funding trials and evaluations.

Different clients. Agricultural staff tend to favour working with the most advantaged of smallholders. While better endowed small-scale family farms may be best placed to benefit from agricultural programmes, that does not mean that poorer smallholders – who are most likely to be clients of social protection – will be unproductive. Changing this favouritism is partly a matter of knowledge and vision, although admittedly in some cases it may also reflect political priorities. Practically, the challenge is to counter the conviction that working with less well-endowed farmers will be ineffective.

That may only change when staff see how simple interventions with less-endowed farmers can make a significant difference to their livelihoods, even if they do not necessarily achieve optimal yields. Models exist that can be sources of inspiration. For example, the *One Acre Fund* works with more than 200 000 smallholders – mostly women – in five countries of East Africa, supplying them with improved seed and fertilizer for maize and beans. The programme also guarantees a market for surpluses. The One Acre Fund has been in place since 2006 and has revised its methods repeatedly and expanded as the effectiveness of its methods has been proven.

Limited budgets and staff. In LICs, the lack of adequate financial and human resources may be difficult to overcome, although donors can help to supplement government resources. There is a danger however that they will fund costly interventions that cannot be replicated at scale by governments or domestic NGOs.

Typically in LICs, scarce funds means providing services to social protection clients in sequences rather than in layers. When that happens, it helps if there are systems that can track when people leave one programme and become eligible for the next service in the sequence. Harmonized household registries that are available to all agencies can help to do this.

Organization of administration. Chronic poverty, hunger and vulnerability have multiple causes. Hence responses need to be multi-sectoral, inviting questions of how to divide up tasks while integrating them into an effective strategy. As argued above, the choice of route to coherence depends in large part on the political priority of reducing poverty, hunger and vulnerability, as well as the resources available.

Even when political priorities and a lack of resources mean that alignment is the only available option, examples from the seven countries suggest that useful programme refinements can be made. Some of these will be introduced during the design phase. Others can be brought in during implementation at the field level. Hence staff at this level need to have the time, budget, information, training and, above all, the freedom to make programme adjustments as needed. Decentralization, at least in theory, can help although, as discussed, decentralization is a challenging business.

Political factors. Last but not least in the list of obstacles to coordination and coherence are political factors. The country studies did not probe these factors deeply: understanding political choice is challenging at the best of times, let alone in comparatively short studies. Moreover, influencing political choices is beyond the remit and competence of most agricultural and social protection actors. Understanding what lies behind local political

choices, however, is not.²¹ It entails recognizing how and why different choices are made at the local level and identifying the incentives that policy-makers and political actors respond to, especially when these are not aligned with the aims and objectives of programme staff in either social protection or agriculture. Such an analysis, however, is beyond the scope of the studies.

²¹ This point is well appreciated by some development partners who, following the era of conditionality in the 1980s, have since the 1990s tried to come to terms with domestic politics by commissioning studies of political economy and the formulation of frameworks to understand political choice. Advances in understanding policy choices for agricultural and rural development have been notable in the last ten or so years. See, for example, Poulton, 2014 and Booth, 2014.

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Annex A. Interview topics

	Descriptive data	Normative interpretation
Understanding the policies and programmes for agriculture and social protection		
Background and history	<p>What are the main challenges in the rural areas of the country? What are the levels of poverty, how have they changed over the last 20 years, and what is known about the trends seen?</p> <p>What have been the main public strategies to promote agricultural and rural development and to reduce rural poverty?</p>	<p>How adequate and sufficient have public programmes been as compared to the size of the challenge faced?</p> <p>What has been learned about agricultural development and social protection in the country in the last 20 years or so?</p>
What is the strategy for agricultural development and social protection?	<p>What are the aims, intermediate outcomes and activities of agricultural development and social protection policies and programmes? (Set out the theory of change or narrative summary of the logical framework, together with key assumptions that link the levels).</p>	<p>Is the theory of change coherent? Do the means seem adequate to realize the ends envisaged?</p> <p>Are the assumptions reasonable? Do they assume that other programmes are successful? Do they involve high levels of risk or uncertainty?</p>
What are the political and administrative conditions that apply to the policies and programmes?	<p>How much political support does the programme have? Are there groups opposed to the programme? To what extent are goals and the means to achieve them agreed?</p> <p>What is the implementing agency? How broad are its functions? What technical staff does it have? How decentralized is the agency?</p> <p>How much can leaders and staff at regional and district level adapt programme activities to suit local circumstances?</p>	<p>Does the programme have political backing commensurate with its mission?</p> <p>Does the implementing agency have the capacity to deliver the activities planned?</p>
What is the nature of the task set? Simple and straightforward or complex and innovative?	<p>What are the specific features of the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who: clients, targeting; • Where: geographical area; • What: delivery of services / inputs / payments / knowledge, etc. • How: which agency or agencies is involved? What active collaborations form part of the programme? 	<p>Does the programme deliver tried and tested interventions or are there innovative and novel elements?</p> <p>How complex and simple is the programme? Can it be standardized, or does it require tailoring to local circumstances?</p> <p>How much scope do managers and field staff have to adapt the programme to local circumstances and to emerging insights? How is the programme monitored?</p>

		Is there any scope for re-planning? Are mistakes accepted?
What is the human and physical environment of the programme?	<p>What key factors in the physical and human environment affect implementation and results?</p> <p>To what extent do programme managers have an influence over these factors?</p> <p>How does the programme deal with changes in the environment?</p>	<p>To what extent does the programme depend on elements in the environment not under the control of the agency?</p> <p>How stable are key elements in the environment? What key risks arise from the environment?</p> <p>Do managers and field staff have sufficient scope to react to changes in the environment?</p>
Coordination		
What coordination is seen within and between programmes?	What mechanisms are used to coordinate programmes?	How well do the forms of coordination work? Are they effective?
	Where does coordination occur? At the central, regional, district or village level?	
	How much coordination takes place? Does it occur through sharing of goals, exchange of information, joint planning or close collaboration between field staff?	
	What incentives to coordinate do staff of different agencies have at different levels?	How much scope do district and field staff have to adjust their operations without referring back to headquarters?
		<p>Do the benefits of coordination outweigh the costs? Or vice versa?</p> <p>Are there procedures that produce little, yet cost time and money?</p> <p>Are there cost-effective ways by which the programmes could improve coordination?</p>
Coherence across programmes		
In what ways are the programmes coherent?	Do the programmes share a similar theory of change or set of beliefs about promoting development? Do they share goals?	Are there potential synergies that are not being achieved?
	Do the activities complement or conflict with one another? Or are they largely independent of each other?	If there are conflicts, how might programmes change to eliminate them?

	Do the outcomes of one programme affect the other, either positively in creating synergies, or negatively by diminishing the results of the other programme? Or are the outcomes largely independent of one another?	
Performance		
How well do programmes perform?	Does the programme deliver the outputs expected in the field? Are clients receiving the expected services, benefits, etc. from the programme? What problems have arisen in programme implementation?	Are any problems, delays, setbacks accounted for?
	Are programme outputs contributing to programme goals?	If not, then why?
		What does the programme see as successful?
	What aspects of performance result from coordination with other programmes?	Could performance be improved by more coordination with other programmes?

Annex B. Decentralization in the seven countries in brief

Country	Experiences of decentralization
Bangladesh	<p>Bangladesh is highly centralized in both agriculture and social protection with relatively little control over budget size and resource allocation at the local level.</p> <p>There is some evidence of deconcentration at the district and subdistrict (upazila) levels where there are formal mechanisms for coordination through District Development Coordination Committees and Upazila Coordination Committees. These comprise officers from all departments operating at this level and, in principle, should meet every month to discuss progress and problems and plans for the future. NGOs also have representatives on these committees. The convener of these committees is, in the case of districts, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and, in the case of the upazilas, the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), both of whom are employees of the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA). However, people report that these committees do not meet regularly, in part due to the limited legitimacy of the DC and UNO, who are on the same administrative tier as other committee members as well as the fact that, due to the fast-tracked promotion system of the MOPA, they are often younger than their peers. Other studies have also noted that a lack of mutual trust, informal contacts and cadre distinction hamper the role of the UNO as a coordinator in upazila administration (e.g. Sarker 2011).</p> <p>The examples where greatest coherence is achieved (for example the Chars Livelihoods Programme) are, despite geographical targeting, deconcentrated rather than devolved. They are designed and funded by international organizations, which themselves are rather centralized. Centralization may not always be bad for coherence.</p>
Ghana	<p>The basis for administrative, fiscal and political decentralization was established in Ghana in the 1992 Constitution. Rather less progress on devolution than deconcentration has been made, but some scope exists for districts to raise revenues independently of the central government. Social protection programme coverage includes some geographical targeting but overall policies and programmes in the sector are highly centralized.</p> <p>In Ghana, respondents believed that decentralization will solve problems of coordination, especially through the district coordinating director. This is expected to help avoid repetition and overlaps in programmes and ensure that targeting does not allow clients to ‘double dip.’ Some programmes are decentralized – e.g. school feeding – but this does not appear to help them to reach the poorest households. (MESW 2012, p. 53).</p> <p>In the context of Ghana’s decentralized system, there is also scope at the district level for some discretion over the use of internally generated funds (from local taxation) to layer additional support to beneficiary households on the basis of needs.</p>

Country	Experiences of decentralization
Kenya	<p>An ambitious devolution process began with elections in 2013. It is difficult to overstate the resulting magnitude of institutional change in the country. At the national level, ministries have been renamed, consolidated, restructured and dissolved. Entirely new institutions have emerged at county and sub county level: these include 47 new county governments (comprising a governor, executive and assembly) plus county- level ministries for devolved sectors such as agriculture. At the national level, more than 35 ministries existing before devolution have been reduced to 18. These changes have had an inevitable impact on policies and programmes, with new relationships being established and the lines of alliance being redrawn from national agencies to counties rather than other national agencies. .</p> <p>Devolution is such a fledgling process in Kenya that coordination is confused and ad hoc. Furthermore, while agriculture has been devolved, social protection remains a national mandate. This presents a significant challenge for coordination and coherence. Ministries for agriculture are largely disconnected from the implementing officers of national social protection programmes at the county and sub county levels.</p>
Lesotho	<p>A decentralization policy was launched in 2014, with the Ministry of Social Development (responsible for the Child Grants Programme) being one of a number of ministries where decentralization was prioritized and significant efforts made. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security was already fairly deconcentrated. So far, there is little scope to actively attempt to coordinate or deliver more coherent programming at the district level with minimal involvement of central government: dependence on decisions made at the centre inhibit district offices from adjusting programmes (e.g. to ensure inputs arrive on time) or to allocate budgets to support coordination and collaboration with other sectors. At the district level, no one has been formerly mandated to ensure coordination or coherence of programming.</p> <p>A challenge for incentivising more effective coordination and collaboration in the districts was the lack of autonomy districts have in encouraging horizontal planning, since most ministries still need to report to the centre.</p> <p>The ongoing decentralization means there are two parallel governance structures (one outgoing, one incoming) at district levels. The District Administrator (a position inherited from British colonialism) occupies a holding role until local government takes over but has no financial or political capacity to support coordination. A major challenge is to put in place the necessary structures to move staff from the national to the district level and find qualified candidates staff for local government positions.</p>

Country	Experiences of decentralization
Mexico	<p>Mexico is a federal state with elected authorities at national, state and municipal levels. Until the late 1990s, most of the government was centralized. Subsequently, efforts have been made to increase the powers and the budgets of the states and municipalities.</p> <p>That has not always been accompanied by sufficient development of institutions to allow participation in decentralized control of local executives, so that lower levels of government confer considerable power on elected leaders. In some cases, decentralization has seen the national pattern of top-down decision-making replicated – perhaps even exaggerated – at lower levels.</p> <p>One consequence of decentralization has been a proliferation of programmes in the field coming from agencies in different sectors and three levels of government.</p> <p>While the agriculture budget has been deconcentrated to state governments, the funds come with centrally-determined rules that considerably limit local discretion over the federally-planned agricultural programmes. Less than 10 percent of public agricultural spending is decided at state and municipal levels.</p> <p>The key social protection programme studied, <i>Prospera</i>, is also planned and funded centrally.</p>
Peru	<p>Peru began to devolve government functions to regions (called departments) in 2002. Initially, the authorities in regions, provinces and municipalities had few funds at their disposal. This has changed radically in recent years and by 2012 almost 90 percent of rural development budgets were in the hands of decentralized governments, with half spent at municipal levels.</p> <p>Social protection programmes, however, remain largely in the hands of the central government. For agriculture and other rural production sectors, decentralized governments increasingly have the budgets.</p> <p>Three things were clear from the May 2015 study of the Apurimac region. One was that regional and provincial governments stressed investments in physical infrastructure and the promotion of rural enterprise, rather than the relief of poverty. Another was that the decentralized governments were elected on a different cycle than the national government, with the last local elections taking place in late 2014. After these elections most leaders and senior officials had changed. The new administrations saw their role as different than the previous ones, and hence were, to a considerable degree, starting from scratch. The third observation was that local leaders and their staff were actively engaged with central programmes operating in their districts, with plenty of exchange of knowledge and views across the programmes.</p>
Zambia	<p>Zambia has since 2002, with renewed stress in a 2013 act, had the intention to transfer functions and corresponding budgets of many central agencies to its provinces and districts.</p> <p>In practice, decentralization has been limited in a country where administration is still centralized owing to a history of strong executive power with weak political accountability (Chikulo 2014).</p>

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FAO, together with its partners, is generating evidence on the impacts of coordinated agricultural and social protection interventions and is using this to provide related policy, programming and capacity development support to governments and other actors.

