Policy Brief (Draft)

Working title: Dynamic inclusion in Social Registries in social protection programme

Global approaches and practices

October 2021

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Submitted to: PRU/ UNDP Programme Unit Islamabad, Pakistan

1.Introduction

An increasing number of developing countries are adopting social protection programmes in recent decades 1. These social protection programme offers a range of monetary benefits and services targeted at the needlest sections of the population. While monetary benefits are channelled through cash transfer programme other programmes offer specialized services such as meeting the specific needs of children, elderly and the disabled. Most of these programmes cater to different social groups and tend to work in silos, but they share common phases along the delivery chain of social assistance. The most commonly shared phase involves the process of determining potentially eligibility of the programme beneficiaries through outreach, intake, registration, assessment of their needs and conditions². This commonly shared phase along the delivery chains is accomplished through what is generally referred to as social registries defined as information systems that support outreach, intake, registration, and determination of potential eligibility for one or more social programs³. Conceptually, social registries can be conceived of as social policy tools offering gateway for potential inclusion into governmental social protection programme as well serving, operationally and functionally, as information systems⁴. As regards social registry's inclusionary role, social registries enrol new applicants into programme through a wave of registration after a specified period or through continuous, on-demand registration. The registration or census style sweep type of social registry is called static or fixed list registry where registration is opened after a specified period, usually 4-5 year. Without a system of continuous updating of information held on existing beneficiaries, these static or fixed list become less responsive to shocks such as pandemic or disaster. The covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the inadequacies of the static social register.

On the other hand, social registry incorporating on-demand and continuing registration element is called dynamic registry. Dynamic social registries also have the potential to serve as dynamic gateways for inclusion of the poorest and vulnerable whereby access to registration is kept open usually though on-demand application or continuous updating. The dynamic social registries also fulfil the purpose of realizing universal social protection and human right agenda enshrined in the UN human right principles and sustainable development goals to which the UN members have signed up to. Dynamic inclusion into social registries also conform to the universal social protection vision which encapsulates that 'where anyone who needs social protection can access it any time'.

Despite the availability of dynamic inclusion option, many developing countries are still pursuing static form of social registries. The static social registry works via waves of end masse data collection after 4-5years and in between registration remains closed. Benazir Income Support Programe's (BISP) National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) offer example of static social registry whereby the registry was created via en masses registration through sweep style census in 2011. Such registries require updating in line

¹ Economic inclusion report 2020 world bank

² Lindert, K., Karippacheril, T.G., Caillava, I.R & Chavez, K.N., Sourcebook on the foundations of social protection delivery systems, World Bank Group, Washington,

³ Leite, P, et al., (2017), Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington DC

⁴ Ibid

with the dynamic nature of poverty and vulnerability of the registered population to remain current and evolving.

In terms of operations and functions, social registries also act as integrated information systems⁵. Information, therefore, forms the core input and output of social registries⁶. Social registries' input includes all type of information ranging from socio-economic status and housing to assets. The chief output of these registries is information transformed into data in the shape of standardised formats, indices and aggregates that allow for assessment of needs against programme eligibility criteria. Social registries associated information systems also intermediate between citizens, programs, and institutions.

Globally, different countries have adopted different types of social registries in line with national social protection specificities, fiscal space and governmental policies.

2 .Social registries: Global landscape

In recent decades the global world has witnessed proliferation of social assistance proggramme. In terms of coverage social protection programme can be universal when the entire population is eligible for enrolment or they can be geographically targeted when the entire population of a specified area can access the programme. At the other end social protection also be categorical responding to the exclusive needs of persons with certain characterizes such as age, disability or gender.

Despite gradual institutionalization, social protection systems still remain fragmented, However, trend towards integration of the various phases of the social assistance delivery chain is growing⁷. One phase along the delivery chain involving intake, registration, assessment of needs and conditions and eligibility of potential applicants has received increasing attention in literature in recent years. As shown in figure 1, Social registries perform the functions of intake, registration and assessment of the applicant's needs and their socio-economic conditions. Social registries have been defined as information systems that support outreach, intake, registration, and determination of potential eligibility for one or more social programs⁸. They have both a social policy role as inclusion systems, and an operational and functional role as information systems. system, social registries offer a "gateway" for individual and families for potential inclusion into social programme based on their needs and conditions. As inclusion system, social registries have evolved in their inclusionary and coverage functions over time. As such coverage of social registries differs across countries. In some countries such as Pakistan and Chile, social registries cover a large chunk of the population. In other countries such as Montenegro, Indonesia and Turkey coverage extend to one third or one half of the population. As information systems, social registries support registration and determination of potential eligibility for social programs. Looked at another way social registries also perform the upstream function of determining the targeting and eligibility

⁵ Valentine , B , (2017) , Integrating Data and information Management for social protection , Department of Trade and foreign affairs , Australia

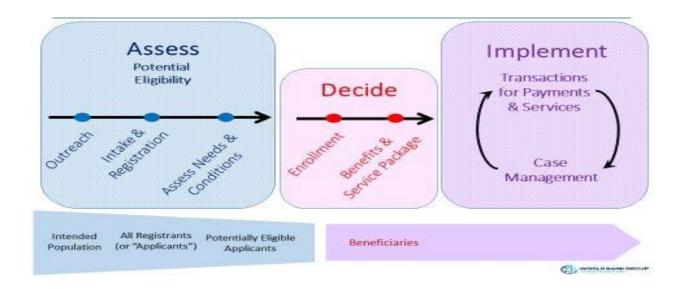
⁶, P, et al., (2017), Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington DC

⁷ Valentine , B , Madumitha , H (2020), On demand and up to date ? Dynamic inclusion and data updating for social assistance , GIZ ,

⁸ Leite, P, et al, (2017), Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington DC

criterion and the downstream functions of administering benefits and integrating information systems⁹.

Figure 1: Social Registries Support Determination of Potential Eligibility within the Delivery Chain for Social Programs (blue shaded areas)



– Social Registries Support Determination of Potential Eligibility within the Delivery Chain for Social Programs (blue shaded areas) .

Source: Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington DC

One authoritative study found different typologies of social registries in 20 countries it examined¹⁰. The key differentiating feature of social registries is whether the primary method for intake and registration is via end masse registration whereby census style registration sweep is employed to registral all or most citizen or whether intake and registration is on demand, open and continuing. Many systems use a mix of on demand and end masse methods. In the study conducted of the 20 countries, there was an even split between the countries using on-demand and en masse registration with Pakistan falling into en masse registration category while Chile, Columbia and China are categorised as dynamic registries. The key drawback of fixed registries is that schedule sweeps are spaced 4-5years, these deadlines are often not met due to financial and logistical problems¹¹. In between the two sweeps set apart 4-5 years (with the exception of two years in Costa Rica, Colonia, Indonesia and Mexico), there is usually there is no system in place to capture the changing dynamics of the registered households in terms of change of circumstance, death divorce or other life cycle events. Since vulnerability

⁹ Leite, P, et al, (2017), Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington DC

 $^{^{11}}$ Valentine , B , Madumitha , H (2020), On demand and up to date ? Dynamic inclusion and data updating for social assistance , GIZ

and poverty are dynamic in nature, census-style based social registries relying on a static snapshot of data are unlikely to meet the changing needs of household. Static registries also run the risk of errors of exclusion and inclusion with the passage of time as the snapshot of collected at a particular point in time becomes outdated¹². Thus, social registries with the principle of dynamic inclusion built into them increase their responsiveness, targeting and inclusiveness of people in needs and dynamically responding life cycle events such as job loss, disability and pandemic or disaster¹³.

Table 1: documents the main differences between on-demand and census-sweep approaches, including the main advantages and disadvantages

Categories	On demand registration	En masse (census sweep) intake and registration
Key features	People driven – applicants go to permanent offices to register Time table flexible anybody any time can go in and register	Driven by state administration id the state goes door to door in en masse registration drive Conducted every 5- years with and remains open for a limited period
Delivery capacity and financing arragnements	 Requires permanent and extensive staff for public interface Requires continuous administrative budget 	 Temporarily (for short periods) requires large numbers of mobile teams, vehicles, other inputs for mass registration waves Requires large and lumpy administrative budget for registration waves
Relative advantages	 Dynamic, ongoing entry and easy to update More democratic nationally - everyone has the right to be inter- viewed at any time Lower total costs due to self-reporting builds and maintains administrative structures 	 Offers better chance of reaching the poorest and other vulnerable groups, If conducted frequently, a high chance of capturing positive changes to households House check and home visits ensure no misreporting of assets etc occurs

 12 Lindert , K , et al (2018) , Rapid social registry assessment , Malawi's Unified Benficiary Registry , World Bank Group, Washington .

 $^{^{13}}$ Valentine , B , Madumitha , H (2020), On demand and up to date ? Dynamic inclusion and data updating for social assistance , GIZ

Relative disadvantages	 Poor may not participate because they lack information, fear stigma and face other barriers to access due to illiteracy, distance, disability Costs can be higher if social workers must verify (via home visits) information provided Can be a slow illiteracy, distance queues and bureaucracy Requires large network of trained staff at local level Unlikely for people to report positive changes to household conditions 	 Periodic surveys can lead to static/inflexible registries Members of eligible households may not be home or respond when the survey is conducted Costly in areas where households are very dispersed Re-registration very costly and often postponed beyond recommended 2 years
Countries when these twin approaches are being adopted	 Azerbaijan VEMTAS; Brazil Cadastro Unico Chile RSH in SIIS; China's Dibao Registry Colombia SISBEN on demand window* Georgia TSA Registry; Macedonia CBMIS Mauritius SRM; Mexico SIFODE (via user programs); Turkey ISAS 	 Colombia SISBEN ;Dominican Republic SIUBEN Pakistan NSER;Philippines LISTAHANAN Djibouti RSU;Indonesia UDB Mali RSU ;Senegal RNU Sierra Leone SPRINT;Yemen SWF Registry

SOUTCE: On demand and up to date? Dynamic inclusion and data updating for social assistance, GIZ

3. Dynamic social registries: Global Approaches and Practices

Dynamic or on -demand approaches to intake, registration and assessment coupled with continuous and periodic updating of data have historically been accorded less than due attention in literature. However, there is a growing body of literature available now based on the experiences of many countries who have rolled out on demand approaches from the very beginning of social protection programme. Available literature on on-demand registration or dynamic registration identifies the following main approaches.

3.1)Periodic' Active' outreach

This approach has been adopted by countries lacking fiscal and administrative capacity to put in place permanent on-demand registration structures. In these countries periodic

outreach is intermittently employed to proactively encourage new intake and registration and updating of information. This approach, while not exactly conforming to text book definition of on-demand registration, nonetheless ensures that systems are at least partially dynamic. Active outreach is managed through temporary adequately staffed rotating desks set up at designated locations coupled with home visits, giving new applicants opportunity to register themselves at the designated desk within a stipulated time period. The areas of low uptake and high vulnerability are usually prioritised. The periodicity associated with this approach varies widely. In most cases communities are targeted based on their level of remoteness and vulnerability¹⁴. In some countries periodic outreach is oriented towards micro areas that are more vulnerable to shocks and stressors

Period Active outreach approach is best suited for countries where permanent local offices do not exist or distances to thinly spread offices are long and arduous. Temporary 'rotating desks', less costly than permanent offices, can overcome these challenges. This approach can be a strong complement to on demand registration in areas where there is sizable pocket of hard-to-reach areas and groups.

In Zambia, the Social Cash Transfer Scheme used a mechanism whereby potentially eligible households are encouraged to visit designated points at specific times and locations to formally register into the programme. The registration process is followed by a community meeting to ensure that no household is left behind. Also, the registration process is preceded by a series of outreach activities by community volunteers

Mexico's Sistema de Focalization de Desarrollo (SIFODE) social registry prioritizes frequent registration in areas with a high 'social gap' index, a high degree of marginalization and/or indigenous populations.

Brazil employs innovative strategies for 'Busca Ativa' (active search) whereby especially vulnerable groups (e.g., indigenous people, river-commu¬ nities in the Amazon, street children, etc.) are prioritiesed for inclusion into social registry each via active outreach periodically.

3.2 CONTINUOUS ON-DEMAND REGISTRATION

Continuous on-demand registration works through the following routes

3.2.1 Permanent local offices of the programme

This approach is adopted by countries which boast of permanent local offices of cash transfer programme. These offices provide continuous, on-demand registration for cash transfer and social protection program. Though these arrangements have been given different names in different settings ranging from one-stop shops, single window services

 $^{^{14}}$ Valentine , B , Madumitha , H (2020), On demand and up to date ? Dynamic inclusion and data updating for social assistance , GIZ

or citizen service centre they share a systematic and unified approach to outreach, registration and data updating which is either user-triggered or office staff-triggered¹⁵.

These permanent offices can offer different level of coordination and integration through one of the following arrangements

'Single door' or 'one-stop-shop' approach draws together different agencies under one roof

'Single window' approach seeks to empower one institution to deliver services on behalf of different service providers

'Single broker' approach involves addition of a coordination layer (a broker) to ease the user experience

Interactions with staff at permanent local offices can take the following two routes:

User-triggered registration is the one where users travel to the permanent office to get registered

Staff-triggered registration is the one where local staff stationed in permanent offices, well versed in the knowledge of the communities they serve, trigger registration via via scheduled appointments

Continuous and 'on-demand 'registration is usually available through permanent local offices of the programme which are available throughout the year. Where these offices are available, permanent local staff use the opportunity of every contact with programme beneficiaries to update their information. For example, Mexico's Prospera programme uses the first payment period of the year to ask beneficiaries if there had been any changes to the currently held information via a unique updating form. South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) staff use the opportunity of any contact with beneficiaries (in person or on the phone) to ask routine updating questions.

3.2.2 Deconcentrated local welfare offices

One popular approach to outreach, intake and registration is to operate a network of deconcentrated local welfare offices run by a central welfare ministry. These offices offer round the year opportunity for beneficiary-led registration as well as data updating. Most of the former USSR states offer example of this approach. Mauritius and South African also run a version of this arrangement. Though these deconcentrated offices have the advantage of building up permanent administrative capacity and sectoral knowledge and expertise for social protection schemes, yet low confidence and discriminatory attitude of the permanent staff toward certain ethnic groups such as Adivasis in

¹⁵ Lindert, K., Karippacheril, T.G., Caillava, I.R & Chavez, K.N., Sourcebook on the foundations of social protection delivery systems, World Bank Group, Washington,

Bangladesh and Roma in Moldova can undermine the inclusivity purpose of on-demand registration approach¹⁶

In Georgia, the Social Services Agency (SSA) run local and regional welfare offices which offer on-demand registration services. The application is followed by a home visit by a social welfare officer.

In Mauritius applicants can register with the Social Registry through 34 local offices of the Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity. On-demand registration services are provided for all programmes, irrespective of whether they are administered by the Ministry.

In South Africa, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) operates 389 permanent local of faces and 1,163 'service points' (mobile or fixed infrastructure, where registration, enrolment and updating services are rendered on a rotating basis according to a schedule throughout the country

3.2.3 Municipal Offices

This approach involves registration and updates for social assistance programme including cash transfer via trained staff within local municipal offices. This approach works best in countries where local government offices and devolved systems of government are solidly in place and central government only creates a common framework and provides training. Many Latin American countries have adopted this approach and rolled it out at scale.

While this approach to dynamic inclusion has the advantage of municipal offices being more accessible and widespread than a handful of district welfare offices thinly spread, it has the disadvantage of loosening central control over the registration process. For example, the Kyrgyzstan Republic has recently decided to roll back municipal-led by transferring responsibility back to district offices to enhance control and coordination.

Brazil's 5,570 municipalities are at the front and centre in the management of the Cadastro Onico social registry. The municipalities collect and update data using a combination of agents: (a) fixed service stations called Centres de Referencia de Assistencia Social (Social Assistance Reference Centres); (b) home visits to families; and (c) mobile service stations, including registration task forces. The municipalities carry out a broad set of activities, including identification of low-income areas, registration, data collection, data updating, verification, training, and outreach. They provide the

¹⁶ Hossain, N., Extreme *poor Adivasis and the problem of accessing social safety nets*, Stimulating Household Improvements Resulting in Economic Empowerment (SHIRRE) Working Paper No. 4, Dhaka, 2011.

team and equipment, whereas the federal agent provides the software, data bank and broader digital infrastructure. The Ministry of Social Development provides regulation, training, and interoperability between Cadastro Unico and other government databases, monitoring financing to local governments and payments to the federal payment agent. By law, registered information must be updated (recertified) every 24 months (from the date of last interview) or whenever there is a change in the family's composition, address or socioeconomic conditions. Every year, Cadastro Onico manages some 14.4 million updates and/or new entries, equivalent to 25% of the national population.

In Mogolia . one stop shops deliver civil registration, social protection, employment services at provincial and district levels. One stop shops houses officer from different organisations under one roof.

In Colombia, the System of Identification of Social Program Beneficiaries (SISBEN) social registry produces a household vulnerability index, based on data from a census sweep conducted every three years. The country's 1,100 municipalities are responsible for the management of SISBEN in their territories. Specifically, they are responsible for processing new applications and updating existing beneficiaries' dataon a rolling basis. Citizens can travel to municipal centres to register request a home visit.

3.2.4 Digital Window

As administrative systems surrounding intake and registration system are complex to navigate for vulnerable and less educated applicants, advances in technology offer the potential for enhanced uptake and dynamic inclusion through streamlining and integration data registration and data updating information systems. Advanced countries are way ahead in this s by making on-line applications process simple and accessible through open and e-government systems. Many countries in the developing world are increasingly adopting digital window route for intake. registration and data updating purposes. However, it important to point out that digital windows complement other systems of registration already in place.

Digital window also offers the advantage of wider accessibility and privacy for applicants in countries where internet connections are widely available. One of the major limitations of digital windows is that they are not applicable to settings where internet penetration is low. Digital windows are further hampered by higher levels of illiteracy, exclusionary practices and low uptake. For example, in Chile, 68 percent of applicants preferred to update their information through local offices despite the availability of the digital window option. Moreover, some countries are also hobbled by legislation which does not allow digital windows option to be made available within the given legislative framework. South African makes registration mandatory through SASS system in the

presence of an official and there is no legislative provision within existing legislation for digital window solution to be activated

In Azerbaijan, an electronic application accepts application continuously online as part of the broader Transparency agenda. The new system is completely paperless, as the system collects data from 21 different entities, including the Ministry of Taxes, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Agriculture. Applicants can access the VEMTAS either on personal communication devices, through special e-government info kiosks, or at post offices. Applicants are informed via SMS of the success of their application within 15 days. The system is not fully electronic; however, intermittent verification is completed through a home visit by the social agent

3.2.5 INTEGRATION OF EXISTING DATABASES

Existing administrative databases offer opportunities for either supporting or triggering continuous registration beside ensuring data updates. This data exchange can occur either through interoperability whereby data exchange between different databases is continuous or through ad-hoc data sharing arrangement via email or USB. However, true integration of data can be achieved through a unique national identity number which is becoming quite ubiquitous. Below, we discuss three variants on this approach.

3.2.6 CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS AND ID

A well-oiled civil registration or up-to-date national identification system can act as a platform for registration in the case of lifecycle-linked social transfers (such as child grants or old age social pensions). The advantage of this approach lies in designing proactive benefit systems, i.e., systems that automatically initiate registration and subsequent enrolment, without expecting citizens to proactively apply. However, there are few instances of countries adopting this approach with the execution of Magnolia. While this approach has the advantages of lowering data collection cost and ensuring high quality data as well updates, majority of the developing countries lack robust CRVS systems which undermines the wider applicability of this approach.

There are many ways in which data integration of CRVS and ID data bases leads to triggering, informing registration and triggering programme exit as well

Mongolia implemented a universal child benefit programme called the Universal Child Money Programme between 2012-2016. ALL children were automatically enlisted into the programme as soon as they were registered at the Civil Registration Department. The integrated data system ensured that payments were automatically discontinued

once children reached 18 years of age. This enrolment drive led to nearly 100% of children aged 0-17 years receiving this benefit in 2015.

In **Turkey** and **Chile**, CRVS and ID data are used to a lesser extent by extracting beneficiary information held in these databases to support the registration process. In fact, the ID is used as a unique identifier to integrate several other databases, drastically reducing the information needs at the time of registration

Brazil's Balsa Familia cross-verifies beneficiaries against the national death registry. Similarly, in **South Africa**, death registrations maintained within the Home Affairs population database are cross-checked with the SASSA Legacy Information Management System (SOCPEN) data three times a month, to remove recipients who have passed away.

4.Benazir Income Support programme (now renamed Ehsass) and National Socio-Economic Registry

Pakistan's flagship social protection programme BISP was rolled out as a premier social safety net program by the government of Pakistan in July 2008 with a view to supplementing the income of the poorest of the poor¹⁷. It is the largest and most systematic unconditional cash transfer programme geared exclusively toward women. Its long-term objectives now cover meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of extreme and chronic poverty eradication and empowerment of women. In 2010, BISP organized a nationwide survey to identify eligible households. The survey applied a proxy means test that determined the welfare status of household on a scale of 0-100. The database resulting from survey, titled National Economic Social Registry covers more than 27 million households, which represents 87 percent of households in the country 18. In terms of coverage, NSER has near universal coverage 19. NSER came about through end mass registration census style sweep and as such falls into classification of census style static registries²⁰. NSER has served to improve targeting and is being used by other social protection programmes. Like all static social registry, NSER represented a static snapshot of the data collected in 2010 and does not reflect the current socio-economic status of the household surveyed back in 2010. In

 $^{^{17}}$ Pakistan National Social Protection Programme for Results , Technical Assessment , World bank , 2017

¹⁸ Lindert , K , et al (2018) , Rapid social registry assessment , Malawi's Unified Beneficiary Registry , World Bank Group, Washington

¹⁹ Leite, P, et al, (2017), Social Registries for social assistance, World Bank Group, Washington

²⁰ Pakistan National Social Protection Programme for Results , Technical Assessment , World bank , 2017

2015, the BISP Board approved an update of the NSER ²¹. Since then, a new updated and refreshed NSER has been underway and expected to be completed in 2021²². After a thorough evaluation of different registration options, BISP has settled on a combination of the door-to-door (D2D) approach used for the original NSER registration and an on-demand or self-registration approach consisting of temporary centers. The desk approach currently being employed does not exactly conform to the specificities of on-demand registration as it is administratively driven, and is time limited as opposed to classical on-demand registration which is open throughout the year at designated offices and any body can register any time ²³. Going forward, many options are being mulled over as how to make the NSER more dynamic and cost effective.

4.1 NSER and journey towards dynamic social registry – Key policy considerations and recommendations

This policy paper pulls together global practices and approaches to social registries in general and dynamic social registries in particular. NSER figures prominently in global social protection literature as one of the largest data bases covering 87 percent of the population. Due to its uniqueness and comprehensiveness, NSER has been tapped into by other social safety nets programme. The NSER update is underway combining both census style sweep and desk registration process operating in tandem. In contrast to the previous NSER static social register approach, the new NSER update approach seeks to remain dynamic in coverage in the coming years and decades. In terms of the way forward. dynamic registries are the trends of the future as static social registries are expensive and costly to administer in countries with scare resources beside running the risk of becoming outdated. With the aiming of keeping data current, more and more countries are incorporating some elements of on-demand or dynamic inclusion into the social registries to make data updating process a continuing process in line with the changing vulnerability and poverty profiles of households. Going forward, NSER can adopt a mix of approaches from a menu of periodic outreach, digital windows and integration of gradually evolving different administrative data bases and expanding the use of permanent Ehsaan offices as platforms for on-demand registration and dataupdating. The adoption of one or a combination of number of options will, of course, depend upon policy framework, political priorities and fiscal space. More importantly, for these different approaches to work harmoniously and productive of the desired policy goals, there is a need for solid policy and legislative framework to be in place. This would require putting in place policies and resources governing digitisation of different government data base systems and making sharing and, integration of, data across government department mandatory and statutory. The Data Sharing Act, being

²¹ Ibid

²² Enhancing Economic Empowerment through digital cash transfer, 2018, Karandaz

²³ Lindert, K., Karippacheril, T.G., Caillava, I.R & Chavez, K.N., Sourcebook on the foundations of social protection delivery systems, World Bank Group, Washington,

hammered out currently, is a step in the right direction²⁴. This has gained added significance in view of the Ehsass programme's wider and long-term ambition of brining all operations under one ministry and all programme under one roof through single window operation²⁵. BISP has already made use of existing administrative data bases to weed out beneficiaries who are no longer eligible for Kefala programme support. Besides considering a menu of options in relations to dynamic inclusion offered by global practices and evidence base, integration of different data bases is a key step towards making the updated NSER more dynamic. A continuing and closer review of different global models in relation to dynamic inclusion would be highly desirable in the coming years.

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²⁴ Interview with NSER cell team

²⁵ Post covid ehsass strategy 2019, Govt of Pakistan