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Seeking greater coherence between agriculture and social protection in the Philippines

Policy brief

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Executive summary

This policy brief identifies a number of opportunities to systematically promote and link the policies and programmes of agriculture and social protection sectors in the Philippines to improve their effectiveness and overall efficiency. This coherence can be achieved by adapting, combining or coordinating at policy, programme and implementation levels.

The main challenges to achieving coherence between agriculture and social protection can be found in institutional barriers, resource constraints and gaps in capacity. To address these challenges, this paper proposes a series of short-, medium- and long-term actions at policy, programme and implementation levels, to:

1. Harmonize existing planning processes and review coordination mechanisms between social protection and agriculture interventions at national, regional level and local (LGU) levels so as to promote a more effective way to work. Consider the introduction of a new dedicated coordination mechanism;
2. Identify common processes within existing programmes to target poor farmers and fisherfolk who would benefit from a carefully sequenced and integrated set of programmatic interventions to protect their household income and promote their livelihoods. Introduce joint social protection–agriculture one-stop-shops for poor farmers and fisherfolk to discuss their access to both sectors' programme resources;
3. Agree on multiple pathways to achieve increased production for poor, smallholder farmers and fisherfolk through tailored and appropriate support that links existing cash transfers to the protection and production of poor, smallholder farmers and fisherfolk households;
4. Introduce a learning agenda that can empirically measure impacts of sector-specific programming as well as coherent programmes;
5. Combine the various sector-specific registries to further strengthen the principles of government for universal, transparent and equitable programming;
6. Review evidence-based possibilities to invest in new and appropriately tailored interventions that reach poor farmers and fisherfolk. ■



What is coherence?

Coherence is the systematic promotion of policies and programmes across sectors.

Coherence between social protection and agriculture is defined as the systematic promotion of complementary and consistent policies and programmes across sectors that, when combined, are able to combat rural poverty and food insecurity in a more effective and synergetic manner (FAO, 2016). A coherent approach to developing small family farms could, for example, combine policy interventions to boost food production and ensure increased access to markets, insurance or social transfers at the same time, to assist the poor in managing risks and earning income.

Improved coherence between sectors leads to new and improved impacts on households.

There is strong global evidence (including from countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America) that shows that the impact on rural poverty and food security is maximized if social protection policies and programmes are coherent with agriculture, natural resource management, and food security and nutrition interventions and are developed with

adequate enabling environment (FAO, 2017). Specifically, global evidence demonstrates an increase in resilience to shocks and improvement in food security and nutrition when social protection and agricultural interventions are systematically combined, which also plays an important role in breaking inter-generational cycles of poverty.

Coherence across sectors improves the efficiency of development resources.

Government and development partners can create financial support for coherence by identifying the role of agriculture and social protection within cross-sectoral investment plans. These frameworks – which are key to turning policy statements into action – allow different sectors to agree jointly on investment

priorities and key features, and to facilitate the alignment of donor financing behind national priorities.

Coherence is a means to an end – not an end in itself. Poverty reduction and food security are usually considered the ultimate outcomes for programmes in the agriculture and social protection sectors (Slater *et al.*, 2016a). Coherence is a way to accelerate progress towards achieving this outcome. Coherence is as much about ensuring that potentially conflicting interactions between policies and programmes are avoided or minimized as it is about actively exploiting complementarities and synergies between agriculture and social protection schemes (Gavrilovic *et al.*, 2015, draft). ■



"Global evidence demonstrates an increase in resilience to shocks and improvement in food security and nutrition when social protection and agricultural interventions are systematically combined."

How can coherence be achieved?

In practice, coherence requires policies and programmes from different sectors to adapt, combine or coordinate with each other.

Although coherence may evolve as the result of fortunate chance, systematically developing coherence requires deliberate coordinated

action between various stakeholders (Slater *et al.*, 2016b). Proactive, systematized coordination through formal structures will tangibly support coherence, ensuring there are clear rules on who does what.

Coherence in practice

In line with FAO's framework for analysis and action, there are three approaches to coherence between social protection and agriculture:

a. Adapt - Agriculture programmes can be designed to reach small farmers and incorporate social protection into their designs. On the other hand, social protection interventions can be designed to respond to agricultural livelihoods of beneficiaries.

b. Combine - Agricultural and social protection can be combined into one programme so that targeted households participate in both agricultural and social protection interventions. It is imperative that there is a clear and shared vision across different components of the programme regarding how interventions can transition households across different welfare thresholds and interventions

c. Coordinate - Synergies between agriculture and social protection interventions can be established even when these interventions are not delivered in the same locations or targeted to the same beneficiaries. Alignment can also involve coordinating a continuum of agricultural and social protection interventions to expand coverage (FAO, 2016).

Removing existing policy and programme barriers to coherence is a critical first step.

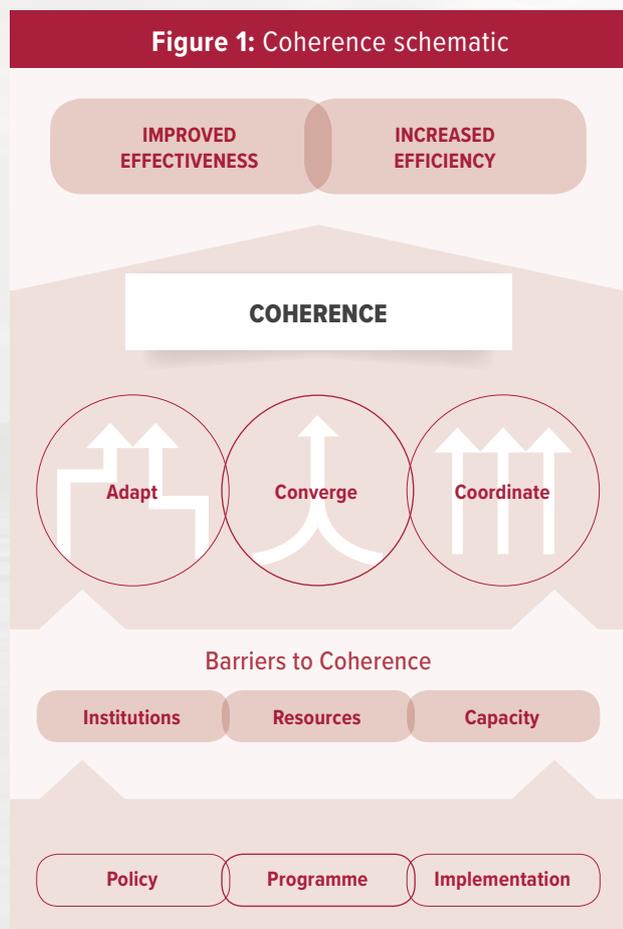
Global experience indicates there are three overlapping barriers to effective joint action across sectors:¹ institutional baggage, resource constraints and capacity gaps. Clarifying

and respecting sector views, mandates and technical approaches will contribute to coherence and improved ways of working across government. Improving multi-sector planning processes in order to use resources more efficiently will further support coherence.

¹ <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/124817/filename/124818.pdf>

Identifying and addressing capacity constraints within and between sectors – especially with regard to generating necessary information – will provide a stable platform for coherence to emerge. **Figure 1** identifies the barriers to convergence at policy, programme and implementation levels, and how to address those barriers.

Figure 1: Coherence schematic



PHILIPPINES
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Coherence requires political leadership and management commitment. Political commitment can be mobilized by generating and disseminating evidence of the added value of the coherence between agriculture and social protection, building coalitions of support, identifying policy champions and windows of opportunity, and leveraging regional and global commitments (FAO, 2016). At the programme level, strong management and leadership in both sectors is needed to incentivize teams to work together across sectors and monitor the day-to-day delivery of services and activities that may be outside of traditional sector-specific roles and responsibilities.

Coherence requires dedicated resources, skills and time. While it is always expected that government sectors work together harmoniously to achieve synergies and so-called multiplier effects, it is typical for this expectation to be implicit in a government's strategy or its day-to-day ways of working. However, given the various incentive structures for sector-specific results and the inevitable strain on every sector's resources, experience suggests that there needs to be an explicit strategy to achieve coherence. Coherence requires coordinated efforts across different government agencies; however, government agencies are not typically organized to allow for easy cross-sectoral collaboration (Slater *et al.*, 2016).

Current social protection and agriculture sector work in the Philippines

Approximately one-quarter of the population in the Philippines lives below the national poverty threshold. Poverty incidence among Filipinos² in the first semester of 2015 was estimated at 26.3 percent. Subsistence incidence³ shows that 12.1 percent of Filipinos⁴ (in total, some 12 million people) are not able to meet their basic food needs and are considered food poor.⁵

At least 34 percent of farmers and fisherfolk in the Philippines, or approximately four million, live below the national poverty threshold. The agriculture sector employs 11.3 million people (accounting for 29.2 percent of all workers) and contributed at least 10 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite this, poor, smallholder farmer and fisherfolk households have missed out on development opportunities. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2015) indicates that farmers and fisherfolk have consistently been reported as the poorest among the basic sectors from 2006 to 2015.⁶

In addition, approximately 5.6 million farmers and fisherfolk in the Philippines⁷ hover just above the national poverty threshold, cycling in and out of poverty.

Between 2003 and 2009, 44 percent of the population was poor at least once – and of that 44 percent, two out of three households moved in and out of poverty.⁸

Many poor and vulnerable farmer and fisher households receive support through existing social protection programmes. The conditional cash transfer programme or the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides support to approximately 4.3 million households, some of which are farmers and fisherfolk who have school-age children in the household. A complementary programme, the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), which focuses on building capacities for micro-enterprise development and employment facilitation, is available to poor, marginalized and vulnerable farmers and fisherfolk. Approximately 80 percent of SLP beneficiaries

² Poverty incidence among Filipinos is the proportion of people below the poverty line to the total population.

³ The proportion of families/individuals with per capita income less than the per capita food threshold to the total number of families/individuals.

⁴ https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/ird/pressrelease/Press%20Release_poverty.pdf

⁵ In the Philippines, the food poverty threshold is the minimum income required to meet basic food needs and satisfy the nutritional requirements set by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) to ensure that one remains economically and socially productive.

⁶ <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases/data>

⁷ <http://psa.gov.ph/content/2015-annual-survey-philippine-business-and-industry-agriculture-forestry-and-fishing>

⁸ World Bank. 2014. *Country Partnership Strategy for the Republic of the Philippines for the Period FY2015-2018*. p. 4

have also been 4Ps beneficiaries. There are other programmes, including the Philippine Crop Insurance programme, that also provide forms of social protection to poor and vulnerable farmers, as well as better-off farmers.

Some poor and vulnerable farmers and fisherfolk, however, are unable to access support through social protection programmes. The average age of a farm operator is 48-55 years old, an issue that the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017–2022 has identified as a major challenge for the sector. To qualify for support from the 4Ps, households should have either a pregnant member and/or children aged 0-18 years old. As a result, there are a number of poor farmers and fisherfolk that are unable to benefit from the existing social cash transfer programme because they do not have young children or a pregnant member. There is also unintended exclusion of some poor farmers and fisherfolk from the SLP. While the SLP has reached 1.3 million farmers and fisherfolk between 2011 and 2016, they are only able to access SLP benefits if they are committed to engage in micro-enterprise or formal employment. For

poor farmers and fisherfolk who cannot make this commitment, accessing social protection support remains a challenge.

Under the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017–2022, the objective of the agricultural sector is to increase the number of and access to economic opportunities for farmers and fisherfolk. The government aims to achieve this by improving the productivity of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector, to continuously build the capacity of farmers and fisherfolk (and other stakeholders), and facilitate access to product markets, new technology and financing services. The Department of Agriculture (DA) is expected to support and empower the farming and fishing communities and the private sector to produce sufficient, accessible and affordable food for every Filipino and a decent income for all. It is the primary concern of the DA to improve farm income and generate work opportunities for farmers, fishermen and other rural workers. The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) actualizes equitable land distribution, ownership, agricultural productivity and



AKLAN PROVINCE
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tenure security for, of and with the tillers of the land towards the improvement of their quality of life.

Many poor farmers and fisherfolk have access to programmes that promote agricultural productivity. For the most part, the government's strategy and programmes focus on increasing productivity, notably through improved irrigation, mechanization, extension services, etc. Furthermore, there is a recognition that value chains, technology and innovative financing products are necessary, complementary components and approaches to traditional agricultural interventions. The DA and DAR have traditionally adopted a range of policies and programmes that would increase agricultural productivity (crops, livestock, fishing and forestry) and food security within the context of rural development. The DA launched its Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) programme in 2016, which identifies the poor farmers and fisherfolk in the 30 poorest provinces and provides them with targeted input and technical assistance for at least a three-year period. The SAAD covered 10 provinces in the first year, an additional 10 in the second year, and another 10 in the third year. The targeted beneficiaries in the SAAD are individual farmers from poor households or groups listed in the updated Registry System for Basic Sector in Agriculture (RSBSA), the DA's database; the farmers' registry held by municipal agriculture officers; 4Ps beneficiaries; indigenous people's groups; or members of accredited farmer organizations and cooperatives.

Poor farmers and fisherfolk face particular constraints to improving productivity and increasing yields that may not be addressed through existing national agriculture programmes. In addition to challenges in accessing regular and predictable cash transfers through social protection programmes, poor farmers must also manage the seasonal nature of farming and fisheries, as well as the precariousness of jobs in the sector, and underemployment. While various micro-financing projects targeted at poor and smallholder farmers and fisherfolk do exist,⁹ there are challenges with the current model. Critically, these include the limited access to and availability of appropriate credit and finance products (for example, 39 percent of farmers and fisherfolk were unable to access formal credit in 2016) and the tailored advisory support services to increase production, facilitation into (seasonal) labour markets, access to financial literacy, etc. While the time-bound, location-specific SAAD programme aims to address these constraints, it is modest in scale and scope.

Support for poor farmers and fisherfolk needs to go beyond productivity; they need specific, tailored interventions to support them and lift them out of poverty. Poor farmers and fisherfolk have been left behind with the underemployment problem prevalent in the agriculture sector. This is due to a number of factors, including seasonality of work (for one-fifth of agricultural workers); part-time work engagement (two-thirds do not work full time, affecting the poor); and the low productivity

⁹ These include the Production Loan Easy Access (PLEA) facility, the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Assistance Program, and the Program for Unified Lending to Agriculture (PUNLA).

and low wages in agriculture (ILO, 2015). Poor farmers and fisherfolk require access to a range of interventions beyond the agriculture sector in order to increase productivity.

Under the PDP, the objective of the social protection sector in the Philippines is to achieve greater socio-economic resilience through universal and transformative social protection. The government aims to achieve this by mitigating the risks faced by vulnerable groups, managing economic risks and natural hazards, addressing political risks, and institutionalizing a social protection floor. While the language of the PDP speaks to universality, there are references to some specific target groups – yet there is no explicit mention of poor and smallholder farmers and fisherfolk in the relevant section (chapter 8) of the PDP.

The social protection sector has a range of programmes that focus on the protection of, and prevention of a loss of, households' income and access to services. The DSWD leads the formulation, implementation and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programmes for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged. The most recognized of the programmes in the Philippines is the 4Ps, which provides cash transfers to poor households with children on the (soft) condition that the children access basic health and education services. There are a number of other programmes that also aim to protect the

poorest households from consumption deficits, including the Supplementary Feeding Program, the discount for senior citizens on basic goods, various cash- and food-for-work schemes, unconditional cash transfers during emergencies, etc. There are also programmes that aim to prevent a loss in income, through insurance mechanisms, including the Social Security System, the Government Service Insurance System, etc.

The social protection sector also has programmes that focus on building community resilience and access to labour markets. In addition to the social welfare, insurance and social safety net programmes,



SAMAR SEA
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there are a number of programmes focused on the promotion of household economies and community development. These include the DSWD's National Community-Driven Development Program called Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS); the SLP; the Department of Labor and Employment's Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP); and labour market information systems work, among others. The focus of these programmes is to integrate households (including farmers, generally) into formal markets and to build resilience in the community.



However, the needs of poor farmers and fisherfolk to promote their livelihoods are not systematically addressed by the current portfolio of social protection programmes.

Given that the formal market only absorbs 62 percent of the workforce,¹⁰ it is the poor farmers and fisherfolk that are traditionally underserved through active labour market government programmes. Attempts have been made, and continue to be made, to resolve this, especially through investments and subsidies in agriculture and the Weather Index-based Crop Insurance. Despite the heavy subsidy of this product, farmers are still expected to pay on average 39 percent of the premium, which equates to around 3 percent of the poverty threshold. For poor farmers, this is simply too high to encourage them to enrol in the programme. In addition, and curiously, the subsidy remains the same regardless of whether the farm is in a low-, medium- or high-risk area. Other responses to address the barriers for poor farmers and fisherfolk, such as appropriate finance, tailored advisory services, etc., are not yet systematically addressed or programmed.

In essence, a significant number of poor farmers and fisherfolk are unable to access tailored interventions that can support them and lift them out of poverty. Apart from the national crop insurance programmes – which have limited reach among poor farmers and fisherfolk – there is a gap in support for poor farmers and fisherfolk. The gap could be filled by programmes aiming to protect income

¹⁰ International Labour Organization's Employment Trends in Philippines, 2016



SAMAR ISLAND
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through agriculture or fisheries; prevent a deterioration in agriculture- or fisheries-based income; promote household economy through technical services that are appropriate for agriculture or fisheries; and build confidence in access and management of financial services. By ensuring that farmers and fisherfolk have access to these programmes, the government will facilitate the sustainable inclusion of farmers and fisherfolk into traditional, productive, and eventually formal, markets.

Poor farmers and fisherfolk are disproportionately impacted by natural hazards and climate change, resulting in elevated social protection and agricultural support needs. The World Risk Report of 2016¹¹ ranked the Philippines as the third most “at-risk” country in the world. The weak performance of the crop sub-sector

is attributed to its vulnerability to extreme weather events (e.g. drought and typhoons), infestation of coconut scale insect, and limited adoption of high-yield varieties. Similar to crops, the fisheries sector is heavily impacted by extreme weather events. This, coupled with degraded resources, has detrimentally affected the growth of the fisheries sector (Festejo-Abeleda, 2017). According to DA assessments from 2011 to 2015, the production losses and damage to infrastructure amounted to PHP 163.6 billion in agriculture. Poor and vulnerable farmers and fisherfolk are often the most exposed to naturally occurring hazards and have the least capacity to cope with the effects. Their incomes are more dependent on weather, their housing and assets are less protected, and they have lower access to savings and borrowing.

¹¹ United Nations University-Institute for Environment and Human Security and Bennis Unsickling Hilt, 2016

Progress and challenges

The Government of the Philippines has made efforts to build coherence within social protection and agriculture sector strategies. Despite being initially designed separately, the DSWD subsequently combined two different programmes – the 4Ps and SLP – into a cohesive strategy to integrate the programming input that would work together to help poor households, as well as to provide efficient delivery through a government system. The beneficiaries of these programmes must appear on the list of poor households generated by the *Listahanan*, also known as the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction. Simply by targeting beneficiary households from the same registry, the government was able to focus its attention on vulnerable households who could then benefit from a variety of complementary interventions. Based on this positive experience, the government issued a memorandum circular recommending the use of *Listahanan* by other government agencies for programme targeting. However, with weak incentives and poor communication and accountability structures, some agencies are not aware of the memorandum circular and are not using the *Listahanan*.

The Government of the Philippines has also made progress in achieving coherence between the social protection and agriculture sector programmes. The DA's SAAD is an example of a freestanding agriculture programme that coordinates and consults with

DSWD regional offices in an effort to harmonize the targeting criteria. By directly targeting 4Ps beneficiaries at the local level, the SAAD allows marginalized farmers and fisherfolk to receive both economic and productive-oriented benefits. Another interesting example of programming for coherence is the Partnership against Hunger and Poverty (PAHP), which links a school feeding programme to a public procurement strategy to benefit agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

However, challenges in coherence between the social protection and agriculture sectors remain at the policy level. Strategic and programmatic coordination between the two sectors is of paramount importance in achieving coherence. The inter-agency Subcommittee on Social Protection is already in place at the national level and is considered an ideal platform for multi-sectoral collaboration. However, there is no adequate regular or consistent representation of key technical agricultural policymakers, either from the DA or DAR, in the sub-committee. An inter-agency coordination mechanism on social protection at the sub-national/regional level is lacking. As a result, the level of coherence between national agriculture, food security and nutrition, and social protection frameworks and plans are unlikely to be monitored at the regional level. Adequate investments in impact evaluations and the gathering of empirical evidence regarding the benefits of coherence between social protection and agriculture

have not yet been made. A consistent focus on impact evaluations and research would strengthen the evidence for national decision-makers to justify difficult resource allocations and maximize efficiencies of state resources.

There are outstanding challenges in coherence between social protection and agriculture sector programmes. At the national level, programme data are not systematically or regularly shared between the different programme information systems that help managers make decisions about who is entitled to support and who receives support. This creates challenges for cross-sectoral programming and alignment. The lack of data-sharing leads to some individuals or households being incorrectly or inequitably included or excluded in multiple programmes. Sharing data more systematically and consistently would enable the sectors to identify those farmers and fisherfolk who need support but who may not be receiving any or enough, and to identify those farmers and fisherfolk who are receiving support from multiple programmes, which results in

programmes having insufficient resources for everyone in need to be reached. Similarly, sharing data more systematically would enable farmer and fisherfolk to receive more tailored support, transitioning out of one programme and into another as their needs change over time.

There are also challenges observed in the implementation of social protection and agriculture sector programmes. For example, the identification, eligibility and enrolment (i.e. targeting) mechanisms between social protection and agriculture programmes are different and unconnected. Whereas the DSWD's 4Ps programme targets qualifying households from the *Listahanan* registry system, the DA's SAAD project identifies beneficiaries and interventions based on a demand-driven process from within priority municipalities, determined by poverty incidence maps, and the RSBSA. The DSWD's 4Ps and other government agencies, such as the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH) and local community-based monitoring system, then provide secondary data for the SAAD. On the other hand, the DAR selects beneficiaries from a list of ARBs who require assistance to increase land productivity. This is all in spite of Executive Order 867 series 2010, which provides for the adoption of the *Listahanan* as the mechanism for targeting households across national government agencies. There are similar disconnects throughout the implementation chain – including in monitoring and evaluation, complaints and appeals, communications, etc. – which could be addressed with sufficient time.



KORONDAL MINDANAO
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Towards improved coherence for tangible results

Setting an objective for coherence between the agriculture sector and social protection would clarify what is trying to be achieved and why, who will benefit and for how long. This brief proposes two elements of a working objective for coherence:

1. **Address the specific constraints that prohibit poor farmers and fisherfolk from accessing appropriate social protection programmes.** This objective recognizes that the focus of this brief is poor farmers and fisherfolk that are underserved by social protection programmes.
2. **Increase efficiencies in the government's implementation and delivery systems.** This objective recognizes that while progress has been made, serious gains

remain to be realized, notably those that can be achieved through the coherence agenda if the sectors can agree on a common planning process, implement together, leverage each other's technical strengths, and put the needs of poor farmers and fisherfolk at the center of programme design and delivery, always seeking what is in the best interest of these poor, marginalized groups. ■





Opportunities for improving coherence

There are opportunities to improve coherence between the social protection and agriculture sectors. Despite the challenges identified earlier, there remain significant opportunities for the government to either adapt, combine or coordinate existing structures and programmes and/or introduce new structures and programme components to realize the gains that come from coherence. The opportunities present themselves at policy level, programme level and implementation level. Experiences from around the world of how to effect coherence can also be leveraged.



"Anecdotal evidence exists regarding how social protection programmes have supported agricultural investments in the Philippines, but empirical data and evidence are thin."

How have other countries moved towards coherence and what has been the effect?

There is an increasingly large body of experiences from around the world where agriculture and social protection programmes and strategies have worked together to combat hunger and poverty. Similarly, there is a growing body of evidence about the impacts of these approaches. For example:

In **Bangladesh**, the Country Investment Plan identifies the respective roles of agriculture and social protection in achieving a common set of food security objectives and is used by the government and development partners in planning related investments. (FAO 2016). Bangladesh is also integrating cash transfers with the livelihood programmes of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (FAO, 2016).

In **Ethiopia**, the Food Security Programme directly combines productive safety nets with agricultural support delivered to small family farmers as a means of combating chronic food insecurity in rural areas. (Veras *et al.*, 2016)

In **Nicaragua**, an evaluation of the one-year safety net pilot *Atención a Crisis* shows that the combined effects of a productive investment grant and training help to protect beneficiaries against the negative impact of drought shocks. At average levels of shock, households that were eligible for the productive investment grant had, on average, 8 percent higher consumption than control households (Marcours *et al.*, 2012 cited in Veras *et al.*, 2016).

In **Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Somalia**, an integrated approach of “social protection + productive transfers” boosts the livelihoods and productive capacities of vulnerable households through a combination of a flexible combination of cash transfers and productive assets, activities and input, and/or technical training and extension services. The cash transfer component addresses basic household needs while the transfer of productive assets helps initiate a virtuous cycle of income generation and economic empowerment – keys to food security and dietary diversity. Evidence shows that the approach significantly improves households’ income, assets, productivity potential, as well as dietary diversity and food security. It also reduces the frequency of families resorting to negative coping strategies (FAO, 2017). Impact assessments conducted in Burkina Faso one year and two years after the transfers demonstrated a quicker and more cost-effective livelihood recovery for beneficiary households. Over that period, households’ tendency to resort to negative coping strategies was reduced by 72 percent. Many very poor households have doubled the value of the support they received: an increase in income by an average of 50 percent, and an increase in the value of assets possessed by around 80 percent. This translated to a 30 percent increase in households having adequate diet (FAO, 2017).

Policy-level opportunities for coherence

Adapt existing strategic alliances and objectives for greater coherence between the social protection and agriculture sectors.

While championing the coherence agenda between social protection and agriculture is a work in progress, stronger alliances and tactical alignments among the cabinet secretaries of the three relevant institutions (DSWD, DA, DAR) would signal the strategic importance of coherence. Similarly, while it is widely recognized that farmers and fisherfolk have consistently ranked the highest in terms of poverty, there has been a lack of direct references to farmers and fisherfolk in chapters 8 and 11 of the PDP, which has limited this group's exposure and access to social protection interventions. Neither the agriculture nor social protection strategic objectives currently refer to the other – the identification of common objectives and specific contributions, both technical and financial, of each agency to the main policy frameworks would greatly increase the incentives for and likelihood of achieving coherence.

Leverage existing and ongoing policy processes to further coherence.

The regular review of sectoral plans, and the government's flexibility in allowing these plans to evolve, provide strong opportunities for greater coherence. In particular, there are two policy frameworks that are being reviewed that could yield immediate results: the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization

Plan (2018–2023) and the Social Protection Operational Framework (2018–2022), with an accompanying Social Protection Plan. Both processes offer opportunities for articulating and activating the coherence agenda. There are other frameworks and policy processes from other sectors that can be leveraged to further the coherence agenda, including the National Nutrition Council's plan to develop regional action plans.

Combine monitoring, evaluation and learning into one system to enhance coherence and provide the much-needed metrics on impact.

Anecdotal evidence exists regarding how social protection programmes have supported agricultural investments in the Philippines, but empirical data and evidence are thin. This is because impact evaluations of social protection programmes are primarily designed to assess changes in consumption and social behaviour, rather than investments in households' economic productivity, such as in the agriculture or fisheries sector. There is missing evidence on the role of social protection programmes in preventing negative risk-coping strategies that impact agriculture and fisheries, such as selling farm or fishing equipment. Based on the cross-sectoral approach of the PAHP, other programmes such as the 4Ps, SLP and SAAD could benefit from rigorous assessments, strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, and complementary assessments that ensure an exchange of learning. If designed appropriately, the development of impact evaluations of

specific national programmes such as the 4Ps, PAHP and SAAD could become instruments for improved advocacy, including on the benefits of coherence.

Require coordination structures at the regional and local government levels to seek coherence, including through establishing appropriate incentives. Inter-agency coordination at the provincial and municipal levels must be more deliberate; coordination is currently more of a wish among implementing agencies rather than a mandatory requirement. The coherence agenda needs to be a requirement for inclusion in local development planning processes. With incentives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), local chief executives – with the support of planning development officers – should be encouraged to identify the different ways that design, planning and delivery of programmes in agriculture and

social protection can be brought together. This may include the identification of programmes that complement social protection programmes being rolled out by national agencies.

Review the effectiveness of existing national coordination structures – or introduce a new dedicated coherence coordination mechanism. Coordination structures should be held to the same standard of being monitored against objectively verifiable indicators as other input-based interventions. A review of the effectiveness of existing coordination structures in achieving coherence should be considered. Alternatively, the national government may consider creating a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism where the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) is the lead convenor bringing together government agencies mandated to work on the key thematic areas of social protection, agriculture, and food security and nutrition.



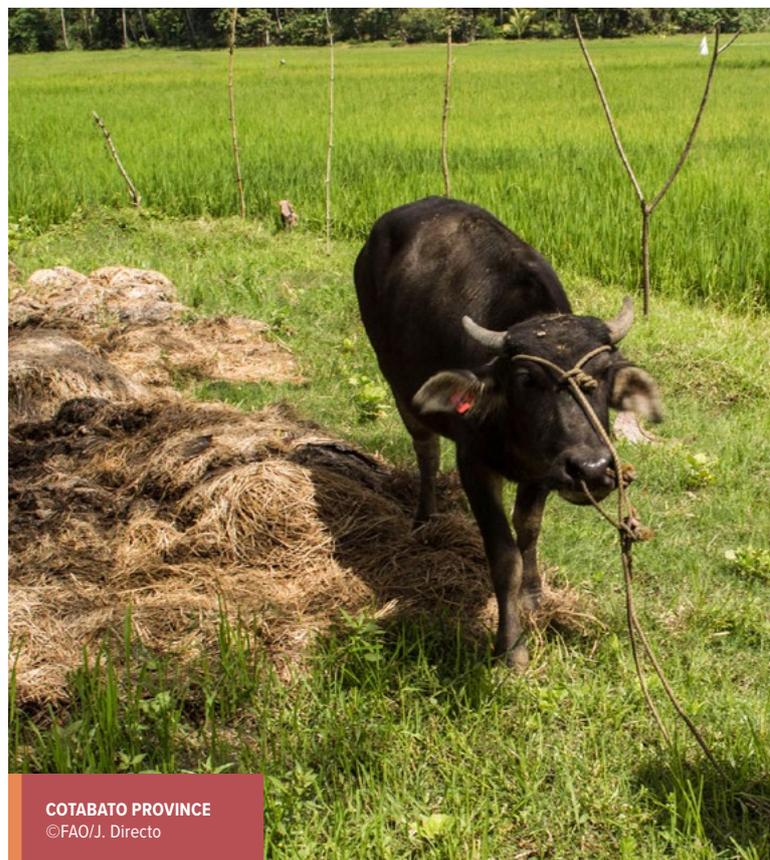
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Programme-level opportunities for coherence

Social protection and agriculture programmes should sequence and integrate activities to provide pathways for poor farmers and fisherfolk to sustainably move out of poverty. While some households will always require some kind of support as a result of life-cycle vulnerabilities (e.g. old age, motherhood and early childhood), others have the potential to improve their livelihoods and escape poverty. Building household-productive assets, strengthening skills and diversifying livelihoods are important interventions that can help achieve such objectives. These interventions are being delivered by different programmes, in different places, to different people and at different times. There is a significant opportunity to agree between the sectors how the same interventions can be sequenced to work together to maximize the chances of improving livelihoods sustainably. The resources being provided to households are likely to have a greater impact if their delivery can be sequenced and integrated by the sectors, and if the sectors can agree why the resources are being provided to the recipients at specific times. Programme input have different effects on households when they are provided at different times – sequencing, therefore, becomes critically important. For example, a poor fishing household receiving in-kind fisheries support before it has received training or has stabilized its household

economy through cash assistance, is unlikely to benefit from any in-kind support. This results in the expected impacts not being realized. Sequencing and integration are critical factors but are not being done.

Social protection and agriculture programmes should adopt a shared targeting process and criteria. Agriculture programmes and social protection programmes could benefit from a coordinated targeting approach. For instance, although the SAAD's first targeting criteria are area-specific (i.e. poorest provinces) the programme can be



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more deliberate in targeting 4Ps beneficiaries in the poor provinces who are engaged in agricultural activities and rely on farming and fishing as identified in *Listahanan*. While social protection programmes are required under Executive Order 867, series 2010 to use the *Listahanan*, other sectors use different registries such as the RSBSA to identify and enrol programme participants. However, harmonizing or even combining these various registries over time would strengthen the original principles of the *Listahanan* (and the RSBSA) as well as the wider principles of government: to establish shared criteria for identifying the poor; to minimize wastage of resources by ensuring that those who need it most benefit; to improve the design of programmes to maximize the benefits of the poor; and to facilitate the sharing of a high-quality database to public and private social protection stakeholders.



Existing agriculture programmes could be strengthened – or new interventions introduced – to combine cash transfers with agriculture sector modalities or activities.

Cash transfers have been shown to increase the use of agricultural inputs, ownership of livestock, and participation in non-farm family enterprises among subsistence and small-scale farmers around the world (FAO, 2014a). The use of cash as a tool in agricultural, productivity-focused programming provides a solid foundation for poor farmers and fisherfolk, empowering them to take calculated risks in increasing productivity – choices that they would not be willing to take without a cash-based safety net. This has multiple benefits for multiple government actors: from an agriculture perspective, productivity is increased, contributing towards the national strategy; from a social protection perspective, there are efficiencies in the cash delivery mechanisms employed by social protection programmes, and the increased productivity leads to fewer households enrolled in assistance-based social protection schemes; from a national economic and planning perspective, there are significant efficiency gains across government systems, and progress towards national strategic objectives is accelerated.

CASH PLUS refers to complementary programming where cash transfers are combined with other modalities or activities. Complementary interventions may be implemented by the same agency/agencies providing cash transfers, or potentially by other agencies working in collaboration. Examples might include provision of training and/or livelihood input, or behavioural change communication programmes.

Implementation-level opportunities for coherence

There are significant opportunities to improve coherence by harmonizing various programme processes, especially planning.

Social protection and agriculture are not linked in the outcomes of the PDP Results Matrix or in the programmes listed in the Project Public Investment Program (PIP). While these documents provide clear and well-defined development goals for policy implementation, there is limited guidance on promoting joint planning or pulling together more than one agency to contribute to achieving shared outcomes. For example,

chapters 8, 10 and 11 mutually reinforce a common goal (to lay down the foundation for inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society and a globally competitive knowledge economy) and an intermediate goal (reducing inequality), but the interventions to meet these development goals run parallel to each other. There is no attempt to bring together the processes that each programme must adopt, or to harmonize the way the interventions are designed or executed. The PDP Results Matrix also designates different national entities for contributing to the



achievement of the outcomes, creating disincentives for stronger coherence as each national entity's performance will be assessed against this designation. Finally, in the PIP, the DSWD, DA and DAR could be required to produce joint investment plans to ensure greater coherence between the social protection and agriculture sectors.

Introducing one-stop-shops for poor farmers and fisherfolk to facilitate discussion with civil servants from both sectors about how to access programme resources would improve coherence in practice. Poor farmers and fisherfolk do not easily have the opportunity to sit down and discuss their options in accessing government programme resources. Sometimes, they are passive recipients of programmes, grateful for what they receive but blind to alternative benefits they could be receiving from other interventions. They may be approached by a DSWD staff member one day, and a DA or DAR staff member on another, or they may not be approached at all. For the LGUs (provinces, municipalities, barangays) to provide a physical place – a one-stop-shop – where beneficiaries can access all the relevant information from across sectors to be able to make informed decisions about their livelihoods could be a very practical and powerful move. Having one place where

advice on DSWD, DA and DAR programmes can be provided to farmers and fisherfolk would dramatically improve coherence. Ensuring DSWD staff are aware of programming options in the DA or DAR, and vice versa, and are trained in different sector benefits, including sequencing and integrating programmes to maximize benefits, would be a major step for beneficiaries to understand their rights and options.

Capacity development of national government agents is required to move forward the social protection and agriculture coherence agenda. A critical step towards coherence conceptually and operationally is to improve the capacity of civil servants. Technical support and capacity development to help them understand and operationalize the coherence agenda are required at the national, subnational/regional and LGU levels. Familiarizing staff with the range of government programmes and empowering them to advise farmers and fisherfolk about these programmes could be one entry point. One step further is to train field-level staff on both social protection and agriculture concepts and technical issues. This would enable the civil servants to provide advice from both sectors and to identify how farmers and fishers could maximize their potential. ■

Recommendations

There have been noteworthy efforts to increase convergence within the DSWD, and between the DSWD and other departments, specifically the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), DOH, DepEd, DA and DAR, as well as between LGUs and sub-regional units.

There was progress in the targeting of poor households and priority municipalities for special programmes by national government agencies, and in the development of regional poverty strategies focusing on rural development initiatives by LGUs. It would be opportune to review these existing initiatives and programmes where close coordination and convergence have been expected, in order to document good practices and identify how to enhance the areas of targeting, delivery of services, monitoring and evaluation. These initiatives and programmes include the *Tatsulo* (within the DSWD), the 4Ps (with the DSWD, DOH and DepEd), the National Convergence

Initiative (between the DAR, DA and DENR), and the PAHP (with the DAR, DA, and DSWD).

With the additional gains that could be made from pursuing a coherence agenda, a simple framework over the short- to medium-term could be adopted. This should include the prioritization of various low-cost, low-risk, high-reward opportunities identified below. As evidence of the added value and impacts of coherence accumulate, and experts in LGUs gain more experience, the government could then start considering new interventions involving multiple – but manageable – sectors.



"With the additional gains that could be made from pursuing a coherence agenda, a simple framework over the short- to medium- term could be adopted."

Short term

Increase efficiencies and effectiveness of existing initiatives to achieve more with the same resources.

- >> **Plan, coordinate:** Harmonize existing planning processes and review coordination mechanisms between social protection and agriculture interventions at national, regional and LGU levels so they can more effectively work together. Consider the introduction of a new dedicated coherence coordination mechanism.
- >> **Target, implement:** Identify common processes within existing programmes to target poor farmers and fisherfolk who would benefit from a carefully sequenced and integrated set of programmatic



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interventions to protect their household income and promote their livelihoods. Introduce joint social protection–agriculture one-stop shops for poor farmers and fisherfolk to discuss their access to both sectors' programme resources.

- >> **Design, tailor:** Agree on multiple pathways to increased production for poor, smallholder farmers and fisherfolk through tailored, appropriate support that links existing cash transfers with the protection and production of poor, smallholder farmers and fisherfolk households.

Medium term

Build the evidence base.

- >> **Learn, document:** Introduce a learning agenda that can empirically measure impacts of sector-specific programming as well as coherent programmes.
- >> **Review, harmonize:** Combine the various sector-specific registries to strengthen the principles of government for universal, transparent and equitable programming.

Long term

Adopt new tools and programmes to achieve innovative integration.

- >> **Redesign:** Based on learning, review evidence-based possibilities to invest in new, appropriately tailored interventions that reach poor farmers and fisherfolk.
- >> **Innovate:** Introduce new interventions such as cash+ schemes for poor farmers and fisherfolk that have the potential to transform the local economy through improved productivity and multiplier effects from cash. ■

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