ISPA
INTER AGENCY
SOCIAL PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS

CODI

CORE DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

SYSTEM

Introduction

These implementation guidelines provide information on how to conduct the assessment of social protection systems using the ISPA CODI tool.[1] The CODI tool is not prescriptive and does not provide a specific implementation plan for the introduction or reform of social protection systems, however, it enables the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing social protection system. CODI is a diagnostic tool that should be applied by a team of professionals with expertise in the subject matter in collaboration with local practitioners and under supervision of the government as input to developing policy options and recommendations. These implementation guidelines provide information on how to implement CODI in a way to get the best results. A standardized and periodic application of the tool can also facilitate tracking progress of social protection systems in a country over time. CODI is not meant to do cross-country comparisons.

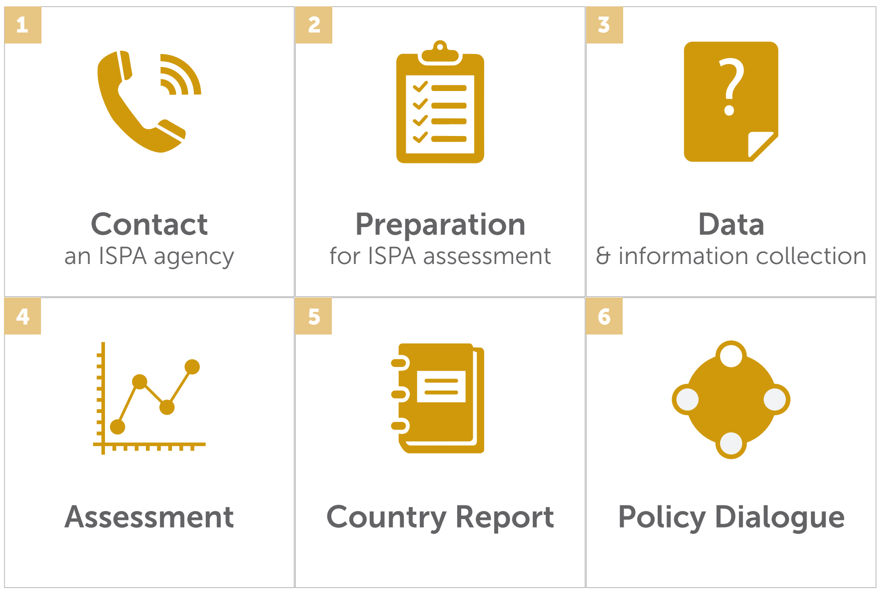
The Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) provides a broad, overall assessment of the policies, programs, and administrative arrangements of the social protection system. CODI has been designed to: (i) map the key elements of a social protection system in a given country, including national objectives, strategies, policies, programs, and schemes; (ii) analyze social protection system performance against national social protection objectives and track progress against a standardized set of performance criteria over time, (iii) serve as an evidence base for country dialogue on how to strengthen a social protection system, taking into account local conditions, and (iv) promote exchange and coordination between national and international partners.

CODI has been jointly developed under the framework of the Inter-agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) CODI, as any other ISPA tool, should be led by the country government and involve related national stakeholders, including relevant government ministries and agencies, social partners and civil society organizations, national social protection practitioners and experts, private sector, as well as international development partners (Annex A). Technical assistance from international development partners could be requested for the implementation of CODI.

These Implementation Guidelines are indicative of the type of activities that should be undertaken to use the ISPA tool in the field and are neither intended to be prescriptive nor restrictive. Countries may adapt these guidelines to fit particular circumstances, depending on their needs and availability of data and resources.

Phases for the Application of the CODI Tool:

The CODI assessment is done with data gathered through both: (i) desk research and (ii) exchange with stakeholders in the field. It is estimated that the full application of CODI can be completed in eight months, although this may vary depending on the complexity and comprehensiveness of the social protection system and the availability of relevant data. Countries may adapt these guidelines to fit particular circumstances.



Different Forms to Apply CODI Tool:

CODI may be implemented in three different forms

1. Self-assessment: Government decides to complete the assessment on its own. In this case the assessment tool is free and publicly available and can be fully country-led without any DP engagement.

2. Demand-driven: Governments may request support of DPs. In this case, a government requests an agency in country, international agencies, development partners (DPs), the UN RC, or the Coordination Team to support or carry out a SP system assessment. ISPA Coordination Team channels the request and helps to coordinate development partners' participation and engagement for an interagency application of CODI.

3. Supply driven: DP agency proposes CODI to Government and engineers the implementation. In this case the application of CODI is encouraged and supported by an agency (with support and technical assistance from the ISPA Coordination Team). Again, the agency initiating this process should invite other agencies to participate in an interagency application of the tool. Even if the idea for the CODI application is initiated by the agency, government interest, endorsement, support and commitment should be assured before carrying out the assessment.

This implementation guidelines apply mainly for demand and supply driven assessments.

a. Inception Meeting

Before starting to implement the assessment and regardless of whether the assessment is supply or demand driven, the government leading agency (agencies) and the development partner (DP) contacted for the assessment must have an in-country Inception Meeting. The main objective of this meeting is to better understand the government needs and interests and to explain the assessment objectives, potential and limitations, the assessment criteria, the ISPA interagency framework, the process and modus operandi of carrying out the assessment, and expected results. This meeting should also be an opportunity to identify the relevant stakeholders to be involved in the process.

It is desirable that this meeting will be between senior level staff from the government agency / Ministry interested in conducting the assessment, as well as Senior DP representatives. It is desirable that the agency that oversees SP systems in the country (i.e. Ministry / Department of Social Development) participates in this inception meeting along with counterparts in the social protection agency / agencies.

When feasible the Inception meeting would be face to face, but there is an alternative to use audio or video conference technologies to speed the process and reduce costs.

b. International Development Partners Coordination

After the inception meeting and once the assessment methodology and process has been fully understood and endorsed by the government, the DP agency that received the government request or has offered to lead the assessment needs to coordinate with other international development agencies that have expressed their interest to participate in the assessment or that have strong presence in the particular country.

This coordination is aimed to: (i) inform DPs about the main objectives and scope of the assessment, (ii) confirm which other agencies will actively participate in the assessment (possibly as part of the Assessment Team), (iii) gather existing information about documents and stakeholders that may be approached during the assessments, (iv) find mechanisms to guarantee DP in-country coordination, and (v) agree among DPs on a common perspective for the orientation meeting regarding the application of the CODI tool. This coordination needs to involve HQs and in-country offices from the different development partners. DP should identify individual focal points to serve as the primary interlocutor for the specific assessment.

c. Establish Assessment Team

Once the agreement is reached between the ISPA agency and the government and all the DPs are informed about the assessment, the Assessment team (AT) needs to be established.

The AT should have professionals with expertise in SP systems, and country context. Also, national focal point(s) need to be nominated by the government to serve as the general counterpart(s) for the application of the ISPA tool in the country. It is expected that the focal point will be SP professional(s) with deep knowledge of the SP system and leverage amongst national stakeholders and should be part of a lead SP agency/ministry.

d. Orientation Meeting

Before the assessment team organizes the field visit, the government focal point has the option to organize an orientation meeting that has the following objectives:

- Present the plan to conduct the assessment, and explain content and process.
- Invite SP stakeholders from national and international agencies to explain the CODI tool, ensuring a common understanding and getting their endorsement and recommendations for its application.
- Discuss and agree on the basic TORs for the assessment, including the nature of the DP support requested and the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.
- Agree on relevant key informants / technical experts who can provide information to complete the CODI Data Collection Framework.
- Agree on the process for drafting and finalization of the country report, including peer review process.
- Agree on the creation and composition of an in-country Steering Committee (SC) that will validate the assessments (see below).
- Set the bases for a future policy dialogue on Social Protection.

Ideally this orientation meeting could take place in the context of an existing structure, i.e. SP task forces or sector groups if they already exist and their composition is considered satisfactory for the purposes of CODI. It is desirable that the orientation meeting has the participation of the Assessment leader, and other members of the assessment team (either in person or by audio / video conference).

If possible, the orientation meeting (as well as the Steering Committee) should gather representatives from:

- Relevant line ministries and agency(ies) in charge of SP issues
- Social partners
- Civil society organization
- Social protection organizations
- Other relevant stakeholders according to the national context (e.g. academics)

CODI In-Country Steering Committee:
Where structures such as SP sector groups exist, these should be built upon as the starting point for establishing the CODI in-country Steering Committee. The participation of the Steering Committee will be required in different steps during the assessment. The main responsibilities for the SC include: i) advise the assessment process, ii) participate in key discussions and exchanges throughout the CODI implementation, iii) guide and provide feedback to the CODI assessment team, and iv) review drafts of final report and produce recommendations to improve it. Ideally the members of the SC will remain the same throughout the CODI implementation to ensure continuity and a fluid process. The CODI SC will be composed by senior level stakeholders including high level government officials from different key ministries, social partners, etc. that can own the results and influence change.

e. Preparation of Stakeholder Consultations - Timing & Logistics

The AT leader and the government focal point(s) define the best dates and length of the stakeholder consultations, ensuring the participation of the most important actors involved in the design and implementation of SP policy and programs. At this stage, the AT should reach individually the technical professionals from the stakeholders (who are responsible for the actual implementation and monitoring of the SP policies and programs) in order to identify available data that can be of use and also to secure their availability and willingness to participate in bilateral meetings during the period identified. It is important to set the agenda of the meetings with sufficient time and ensure the availability of relevant actors both for the initial kick-off meeting and for bilateral meetings. During this step also site visits and focus groups with beneficiaries from the SP programs being assessed should be organized (Annex B).

f. In-country Training on CODI Components & Assessment Criteria

When needed, the country assessment team receives training on how to collect and fill CODI Questionnaires, as well as on how to complete the assessment tables.

g. Pre-population of Data Collection Framework & Desk Review

The CODI Assessment team will conduct a desk review of documentary evidence of: (i) SP definition, national SP legislation and strategies (ii) inventory of all SP programs (including available operational manuals, annual reports, M&E reports, or other available information), (iii) administrative data and qualitative data of schemes and programs, as well as the government budget, (iv) collection of relevant social, economic, demographic, and political information, and (v) exploration of accessibility to ISPA agencies.

This data can be collected from web sources including government websites, the World Bank and other development banks, UN agencies portals, NGO websites, academic sources, and the like. The sources of data and relevant information include qualitative and quantitative government reports, legislation, DP reports, and academic literature, among others. To the extent possible, national data sources should be given priority consideration.

This data/information collection will serve as the main input that will help the AT to prepopulate the CODI Questionnaires (Modules 1-3) and key social, demographic, labor market and economic indicators table. This will help to identify main information gaps and potential key stakeholders that need to be interviewed. Additionally, to pre-populate the Data Collection Framework, the AT should have in mind the Country Report Outline, in order to guarantee the team collects the necessary information.

The information collected in the CODI Questionnaires and through the economic and social indicator tables will be the base for the Country Report and the filling in of the assessment overview tables.

For a basic assessment, a period of time (e.g. 2-3 weeks) should be agreed to meet the national authorities and other relevant stakeholders for the assessment of the Social Protection System. The duration of the period will change according to the complexity of the assessment and availability of stakeholders.

The main objective of this phase is to validate existing information, collect missing qualitative and quantitative information, apply the assessment methodology, and discuss preliminary findings with the government and other relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder Consultation:

h. Pre-Field Mission Meeting

In order to ensure effective stakeholder consultation, the assessment team will organize meetings / VCs to share the revised agenda with the government counterparts / focal points, revisit the objectives of the assessment, finalize the logistical details, share the process of data gathering for the desk review, etc. This VC will confirm if there is "Green Light" to conduct the stakeholder consultations.

i. Initial Kick Off Meeting with Stakeholders

In this meeting the AT, the government leading agency (agencies) and the Steering Committee revisit the objective of the assessment, potential and limitations, the assessment criteria, the interagency framework, the process and modus operandi of carrying out the assessment and expected results. In addition, the agenda for the consultations is shared by the AT with the participants and changes and adjustments are done, according to their suggestions.

j. Bilateral Meetings with Key Informants, Site Validation of Information and Collection of Pending Information

During the stakeholder consultations, the AT will have bilateral meetings (previously organized during Phase 2) with the main agencies involved in the design and implementation of SP policies and programs. Also, there will be individual meetings with members of the Steering Committee, and other relevant stakeholders to the assessment (i.e. research and academic institutions, CSO, persons covered and/or benefiting from SP schemes or programs, etc.). The information obtained during these meetings will be used to complete or validate the pre-filled Questionnaires. It will also enable the team to identify implementation issues, and any other form of discrepancy between the design (and literature) and the operations.

It is important to highlight that in most countries, CODI Questionnaires cannot be completed by meeting only one person from one agency and therefore, different informants should be contacted to get reliable and up to date information. Hence, the CODI Assessment Team must identify, in advance, which institution(s) is (are) the more appropriate and reliable sources of information in a particular area and within these agencies, which departments or units are relevant (i.e. aggregated data on spending, funding and sources of funding may be requested to the Ministry of Finance or Planning, while data on programs delivery mechanisms should be requested to the relevant implementing agencies. Within these agencies, the M&E unit, the unit responsible for financial management, for membership management, for communication, for the delivery or complaints management may each have different and valuable information).

For Modules 2 and 3, the CODI Assessment Team must guarantee that the inventory includes all programs constituting the SP system and that the list of programs selected for detailed analysis represents the most important programs by function, according to criteria jointly defined by the government and DPs (i.e. size, coverage, budget, source of finance, length of implementation, etc.). CODI will focus on collecting program level information and data on all major (at scale) institutionalized national programs.

Given CODI's extensive number of questions, it is desirable that the CODI Assessment Team allocates enough time before and during the agency consultations to finalize data collection.

Knowing that CODI needs information from a range of stakeholders and triangulation of information to strengthen its reliability, the Assessment Team needs to agree on how to resolve or deal with contradictions in the information that is collected. In addition, since it is expected that not all of the information will be readily available, the AT should anticipate follow up meetings during the consultations or remote sessions and follow-up to finalize data collection, especially for the elaboration of the Country Report.[3]

k. Site Visits & Focus Groups with Beneficiaries

The AT needs to conduct site visits, including rural areas, to get a better idea of how people access to SP programs and benefits in practice and get feedback from subnational authorities regarding how the system operates on the ground. During the site visits it is important to reserve time to conduct structured interviews or focus group discussions / interviews with SP program beneficiaries. Methodologies to conduct these discussions with program beneficiary families should be determined in advance and be shared with the local partners. The AT should ensure impartial, independent, honest feedback and therefore, the determination of the more appropriate methods to conduct the focus groups / interviews should respond to technical protocols. Community based and civil society organizations or NGOs may be instrumental to organize beneficiaries' participation and to guarantee that the chosen beneficiaries / non-beneficiaries views and needs are representative for social protection programs under consideration.

l. Completion of Overview of Findings & Interpretation of Findings

Once the Questionnaires are completed and the information required for the country report is collected, and the information has been validated with the Steering Committee the next step consists in the completion of the Overview of Findings. This matrix is organized (from weak to strong, on a scale of 1 to 4) by the 10 Performance Criteria. The Assessment can be done either by the AT or through a series of multi-stakeholder workshops which will build ownership on a more consensual matrix and may make it easier to reach clarification in case of contradictions between different sources[4]. More information can be found in Module 4 of the 'What Matters' Guidance Note and the Overview of Findings.

m. Debriefing of Preliminary Findings to the Government Lead Agency & the Steering Committee

After the assessment table has been completed, the preliminary results will be shared with the management and senior government officials from the government leading agency / agencies and the members of the Steering Committee in a dedicated face-to-face meeting. The objective of this meeting is to confirm the validity of the results and the accurate and objective interpretation of the available information. Based on the initial diagnostic, there needs to be an elaboration of options and recommendations, which should be done as part of a dialogue with relevant stakeholders. The main elements that are planned to be included in the Country Report also will be presented in this meeting.

n. Consultative (multi-day) Workshop

The process would culminate in a multi-day, multi-stakeholder workshop, including government representatives, social partners, CSOs, and others, for review of preliminary results following the Assessment, but prior to the finalization and dissemination of the report. Revision and further consultation will be done as needed (e.g. if there is disagreement controversy on any of the findings).

o. Consolidation of Assessment Findings in Country Report

One of the main deliverables of the AT is the elaboration of a Country Report that will summarize the assessment and will suggest policy options for strengthening SP systems. Findings should be presented in a systematic manner and disseminated widely to serve as a platform for deepening dialogue among diverse key stakeholders on policy actions and improvements. It is important to bear in mind that the report is produced upon government request and submitted to the government. However, the report will be an important source of information for other stakeholders such as DPs, CSOs, workers and employers´ organizations, among others.

p. Inputs from SC & Other Stakeholders for Final Version of the Country Report

A draft full Country Report should be reviewed by government lead agency (agencies) and then endorsed by the SC. Prior to submitting the draft to the government, the content should be agreed among all participating international agencies. The V1 of the Country Report should incorporate the comments, suggestions, and other feedback from the SC and other relevant partners. The Country Report is aimed to contain useful lessons regarding the improvement and development of SP which may be valuable also for other countries. With approval of the country government, the CODI Country Report will be made available online, along with the ISPA tool.

Phase 6 - Policy Dialogue

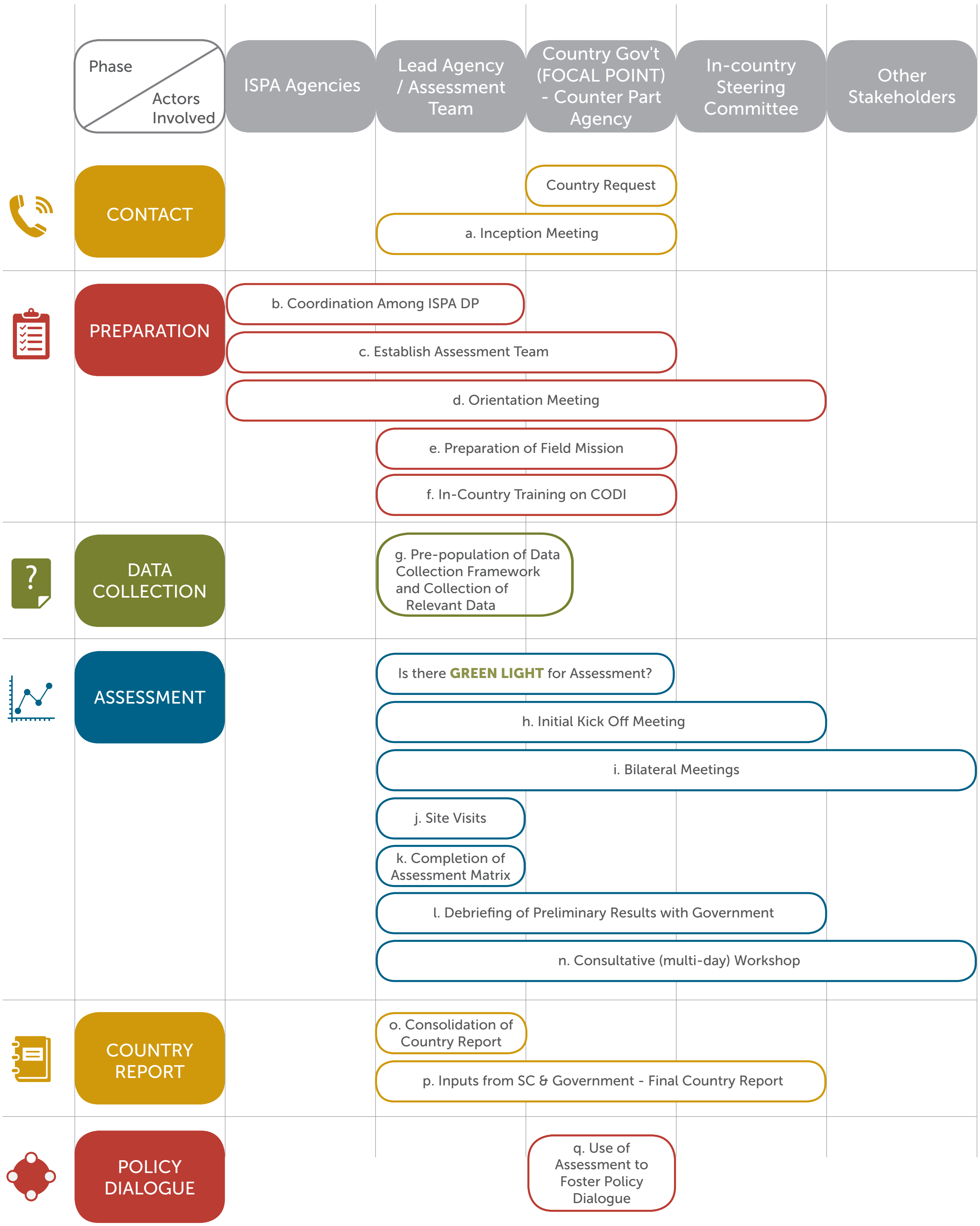
q. Use of the Assessment to Foster Policy Dialogue

It is expected that CODI will inform policy dialogue and ongoing technical assistance. The assessment can also contribute to: i) generate knowledge for analytical sector work, and operations design, ii) provide inputs for the SP M&E systems, iii) be the baseline for future progress tracking, and iv) guide SP system development or initiate reforms.

Useful Tips When Applying CODI:

- When creating your CODI assessment team, try to make it truly interdisciplinary (by SP functions, knowledge of the country, knowledge of CODI tool).
- Make sure that all the members of your Assessment team know CODI and are familiarized with the process and the methodology.
- Before beginning, study the entire What Matters Guidance Note and the Questionnaires thoroughly, adapt them to the country context as needed, and identify as many sources and informants that can provide information that pertain to multiple sections of the Questionnaires.
- Examine other CODI Country Reports to get a sense of the documentary evidence and informants used.
- Identify key partners and obtain high-level approvals up front as soon as possible to smooth the way forward.
- Ask up front how to deal with confidential information.
- Send invitations / meeting request for bilateral meetings sufficiently in advance.
- When selecting the programs to be assessed in depth by CODI, try to get inputs from Ministry of Finance / Planning. Having the general picture always helps.
- Structure "scripts" or "informal questionnaires" for bilateral meetings. Avoid different team members asking random questions.
- Bring information about CODI (objectives, purposes, expected outcomes) to bilateral meetings.
- When done with support from DP, engage government focal point, not only as a facilitator but as a principal actor in the assessment.
- Reach out to the ISPA Coordination Team if you encounter any problems.

CODI Process of Implementation: Steps & Actors Involved



Phase	Step	Responsible	Done?	Dates
1. Contact an ISPA Agency	a. Inception Meeting	ISPA agency & Government leading agency/agencies		
2. Preparation for ISPA Assessment	b. International DP Coordination	ISPA agency + ISPA coordination team		
	c. Creation of Assessment Team	ISPA leading agency + Government		
	d. Orientation Meeting	Government		
	e. Preparation of Field Mission	Assessment Team + Government		
	f. In-country Training on CODI	ISPA agency + ISPA coordination team + Government		
3. Data & Information Collection	g. Pre-population of Data Collection Framework & Desk Research	Assessment Team		
4. Assessment	h. Pre-Field Mission Meeting	Assessment Team + Government		
	i. Initial Kick Off Meeting	Assessment Team + Government		
	j. Bilateral Meetings	Assessment Team		
	k. Site Visits	Assessment Team		
	l. Completion of Overview of Findings & Interpretation of Findings	Assessment Team		
	m. Debriefing of Preliminary Results with Government	Assessment Team + Government		
	n. Consultative (multi-day) Workshop	Assessment Team + Government		
5. Country Report	o. Consolidation of Country Report	Assessment Team		
	p. Inputs from Steering Committee & Government - Final Country Report	Assessment Team + Government		
6. Policy Dialogue	q. Use of Assessment to Foster Policy Dialogue	Government		

Annex A - Principles for Undertaking ISPA Assessments

i. ISPA tools should be led by qualified staff in the subject matter.

ii. ISPA tools should be adapted to national circumstances, objectives & interpretation.

Each SP system operates in a different social, demographic, economic, cultural and political environment and needs to address the resulting specific country context. Careful consideration should be given in each CODI application as to if and how the assessment tool needs to be adapted to the country context. In particular specificities in the design of the existing SP system, policymaking process or administrative system of the country should be considered, as well as the priorities and needs expressed in the country request for CODI application.

iii. The implementation of ISPA tools should be based on broad stakeholder participation to ensure wide ownership.

ISPA tools under the leadership of the relevant SP government institution(s), should involve all relevant stakeholders engaged in SP and poverty reduction efforts: ministry in charge of the specific SP component to be assessed, other relevant ministries and agencies, development partners (DP), social partners, civil society organizations, academia, etc. The tools aim to facilitate improved cooperation not just among national institutions but also between different development partners and the tool application should be interagency, i.e. open to all interested international organizations.

iv. The implementation of ISPA tools should be adequately planned.

The implementation of any ISPA tool needs to be adequately planned, allocating sufficient time, as well as financial and human resources for collecting relevant information and undertaking the assessment. The team appointed to carry out the assessment should have a sound understanding of the main features of the SP issue being evaluated. For CODI this includes the understanding of basic economic, demographic, labor market, and social indicators as well as a general knowledge of the country's legal, political, fiscal, and institutional framework. Information on the level of decentralization of political, administrative and fiscal decisions is key to understand the role of subnational governments in the implementation and performance of SP policies.

In the planning of ISPA tools implementation, the Assessment Team should at least:

- Agree on the Terms of Reference (TORs) (*See Annex B*).
- Ensure adequate timing and resources for the implementation of the task (including both human and monetary resources). Although ISPA tools are meant to provide rapid assessments, depending on the country context, data availability, complexity of the SP system, nature of the national dialogue, and policy processes, the application of each ISPA tool may take different times.

When needed, receive adequate training from the ISPA Coordination Desk in the purpose, content, assessment criteria, and modus operandi of the ISPA tool to be used, prior to the data collection and assessment phases.

v. ISPA tools should be implemented periodically and can be complemented by other specialized ISPA tools.

It is desired that the ISPA assessments are conducted periodically (for example, every three to five years) to allow tracking developments over time. In addition, if the assessment carried out identifies areas of the SP system that may require more detailed analysis and the use of other ISPA specialized tools may be useful to address or further examine weaknesses identified during the ISPA assessment.

Annex B - Terms of Reference for the Assessment

The TORs state the main goals, activities and responsibilities of team members and participant institutions during the implementation of the CODI assessment. In close consultation with the requesting government, the TORs should be prepared by the ISPA agency leading the particular application of the CODI assessment tool (typically the DP agency that received the government request or proposed the assessment to the government). The government-leading agency should agree on its content and scope.

The TORs should include at least:

- **Background**: Brief description of the country´s SP context and status, including the main policies, programs administrative arrangements in place. In particular, it should provide information on the particular motivation to carry out the CODI assessment and any specific government needs or interest in the exercise.
- **Objective**: To prepare an assessment of the SP system (if possible specify the programs) in the given country using the ISPA tool (mention any particular government needs and interests or areas of focus if applicable) as an input to drafting a Country Report that serves as a base for policy dialogue and identification of options.
- **Scope / Coverage**: When possible, the TOR need to be clear about the programs / schemes to be evaluated. Also, the levels of the government to be assessed should be clearly defined: central (national) government, including autonomous agencies, and / or local (sub-national) governments. List of relevant stakeholders that should participate and to which to seek involvement/endorsement.
- **Implementation Arrangements**: This section must describe the CODI assessment implementation arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of the governmental leading agency, DPs, AT, AT leader, and the SC.
- **Financing of the Assessment**: Projected costs involved. The TORs should include who will cover the costs of the assessment (government officials and / or consultants' time, travel, logistics, materials, incidentals). Costs may vary depending on the scope and nature of the assessment, the predicted ease of obtaining information, the extent of travel involved (size and structure of the country), the existence of language barriers, the need for consultants, and whether deeper fieldwork will be required.
- **Process & Timelines** (the process has to be described/summarized): Set targets and milestones with specific tentative dates, etc. while allowing enough flexibility for unforeseeable tasks and delays and provide extra time for filling information gaps.

Endnotes

1. In 2013, the development partners from the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) launched the Inter Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA), which aims to help countries improve their Social Protection System. ISPA provides a framework to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the overall social protection system and of the policies, programs, administrative, and implementation structures in place.
2. ISPA partner agencies and governments include: WB, ILO, EC, UNICEF, UNDP, SIDA, DFID, ODI, OECD, IPC-UNDP, WFP, FAO, Save the Children, Public Services International, Helpage, Governments of Finland, Germany (GIZ), France, among others.
3. In certain contexts, there may be a need for a "step-by-step" or "phased" approach. There is need to nurture country ownership, which usually requires an ongoing process of engagement. An option could be to plan an initial dialogue with the goverment to introduce the tool and conduct initial bilateral meetings to collect data based on pre-filled instrument; leave the Data Collection Framework with government agencies for their completion / validation and having a second phase to conduct the participatory assessment and agree on key findings. The experience also showed that more time should be allotted to undertake the thorough desk review and to contact the counterparts and other stakeholders and organize the agenda. Ultimately, however, the process should be based on a strong, country-led engagement and designed flexibility according to a variety of factors, including the presence or not of a strong technical team in the country to develop and manage such a process.
4. The filling in of the tables will be guided by the instructions that specify which items from the Data Collection Framework inform particular performance criteria.