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**Working Paper**

## Assessing the implementation of joint programming in government social protection and economic inclusion interventions in the Philippines

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## **Assessing the Implementation of Joint Programming in Government Social Protection and Economic Inclusion Interventions in the Philippines**

*Jose Ramon G. Albert, Frances Genevieve F. Genio,  
and Jan Joy Louise G. Crismo*

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Assessing the Implementation of Joint Programming  
in Government Social Protection and Economic Inclusion  
Interventions in the Philippines

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## **Abstract**

Joint programming, also referred to as convergence, in social protection and economic inclusion interventions has emerged as a critical strategy for addressing persistent poverty in the Philippines. Despite the government's ambitious target to reduce poverty from 18.1% in 2021 to 9% by 2028, significant challenges remain in coordinating and integrating social protection efforts. This study examines the implementation of joint programming across laws, policies, and programs targeting Filipinos living in poverty. Using an approach with emphasis on qualitative data, the research assesses the current state of joint programming, identifies key stakeholders, evaluates implementation challenges, and analyzes the effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms. Through document analysis, key informant interviews with government officials and field staff, and focus group discussions with program beneficiaries, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing joint programming efforts. The findings are expected to contribute to the refinement of social protection and economic inclusion strategies in the Philippines, ultimately supporting the government's poverty reduction goals and improving the lives of vulnerable populations.

**Keywords:** joint programming, convergence, social protection, economic inclusion, poverty reduction

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## Executive Summary

This study examines the implementation of joint programming initiatives in social protection and economic inclusion interventions in the Philippines, focusing especially on the coordination between the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and other key stakeholders. Using a qualitative approach, the research combines document analysis with insights from 52 key informant interviews with government officials and 110 focus group discussion participants across six regions.

The study comes at a critical time as the Philippines continues to grapple with persistent poverty despite economic growth. Recent data shows poverty incidence declining to 15.5% in 2023 from 18.1% in 2021, (and 16.7% in 2018), but significant challenges remain in coordinating and integrating social protection efforts across government agencies. This assessment is particularly relevant given the implementation of Executive Order No. 138 (2021) on the devolution of certain functions to Local Government Units (LGUs).

### Key Findings:

1. **Implementation Progress.** Joint programming has demonstrated significant evolution since its inception in the mid-2000s, establishing mechanisms for coordination at both national and local levels. The development of internal convergence within DSWD, coupled with cross-agency partnerships, shows considerable promise while highlighting areas needing reinforcement. Recent initiatives such as the Padayon model exemplify the potential of integrated approaches to poverty reduction and demonstrate how graduation approaches can be effectively incorporated into existing social protection frameworks, though broader systematic adoption remains a challenge.
2. **Coordination Challenges.** Despite the existence of high-level coordination structures, the study reveals persistent gaps in operational-level integration across agencies and governance levels. Resource sharing and data interoperability continue to present significant challenges, impeding seamless program delivery. Complex coordination requirements across multiple governance levels and inconsistent targeting and beneficiary selection processes further complicate implementation. Local implementation capacity shows substantial variation across regions and municipalities, affecting program effectiveness and reach.
3. **Mandate Overlaps and Institutional Arrangements.** The study identified significant overlaps in program mandates and service delivery across agencies, particularly in livelihood development and employment facilitation. Multiple agencies implement similar interventions, often targeting the same beneficiary populations without clear delineation of responsibilities or systematic coordination. These overlaps lead to inefficient resource utilization, potential duplication of services, and confusion among target beneficiaries. The situation is particularly pronounced in capacity building initiatives, where various agencies conduct similar training programs without recognition of complementary efforts.
4. **Resource Management.** The current budget allocation processes demonstrate limitations in supporting integrated program implementation effectively. Limited fiscal space significantly constrains the scale and reach of joint interventions, while Program

Convergence Budgeting, though promising, requires further refinement to achieve its intended outcomes. These resource constraints particularly impact the ability to deliver comprehensive support packages to beneficiaries and sustain innovative pilot programs. Local government implementation capacity is also affected by these resource limitations.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** While agency-specific monitoring systems exist, they lack full integration and compatibility. The need for improved data sharing protocols and unified tracking mechanisms remains critical, accompanied by limited capacity for comprehensive impact assessment of joint initiatives. The absence of standardized performance metrics and insufficient mechanisms for tracking program outcomes across agencies affects the ability to measure and enhance program effectiveness systematically.
6. **Partnership Development.** The study highlights both successes and challenges in developing effective partnerships across government agencies and with external stakeholders. While formal partnership mechanisms like MOAs exist, their effectiveness varies significantly. Project-based partnerships often lack sustainability beyond specific initiatives, and systematic collaboration mechanisms between agencies remain underdeveloped. The private sector and civil society organizations represent largely untapped resources for expanding program reach and effectiveness.

#### Recommendations:

1. **Policy Level.** A comprehensive national framework for joint programming should be developed, accompanied by strengthened policy coherence across agencies and governance levels. This framework should include clear governance structures, standardized protocols for inter-agency collaboration, integrated data management systems, and institutionalized resource-sharing mechanisms, ensuring sustained commitment to integrated approaches in social protection and economic inclusion.
2. **Operational Level.** Significant investment in enhancing local implementation capacity through targeted training and technical support is essential. This should be coupled with improved data systems integration and interoperability, alongside streamlined coordination protocols at regional and local levels. Regular knowledge sharing and learning events will support continuous improvement in program delivery and beneficiary support.
3. **Mandate Rationalization.** A systematic review and rationalization of agency mandates should be undertaken to address overlapping roles and responsibilities. This should include clear delineation of primary and supporting roles for different types of interventions, establishment of formal coordination mechanisms for shared responsibilities, and development of integrated service delivery protocols. Specific attention should be given to harmonizing capacity building initiatives and establishing clear pathways for beneficiary progression across programs.
4. **Program Design.** Future program designs should incorporate graduation approaches into mainstream social protection programs, while strengthening beneficiary targeting and referral mechanisms. The development of integrated case management systems and

improved referral protocols between agencies will support more comprehensive and effective service delivery, ensuring better outcomes for program participants.

5. **Resource Allocation.** Reform of budget processes to better support joint programming initiatives is crucial, accompanied by exploration of innovative financing approaches and strengthened performance-based resource allocation. These reforms should aim to optimize resource utilization while ensuring sustainable program funding through both traditional and innovative financing mechanisms.
6. **Monitoring and Learning.** The establishment of common results frameworks across agencies, implementation of integrated beneficiary tracking systems, and regular impact assessments will enhance program effectiveness. Knowledge management platforms and systematic sharing of best practices will facilitate continuous improvement in joint programming efforts.
7. **Partnership Enhancement.** Strategic partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector should be strengthened and institutionalized beyond project-based arrangements. This includes developing long-term partnership frameworks, establishing clear mechanisms for resource sharing and coordination, and creating platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration. Innovation in service delivery, particularly through digital platforms and integrated case management systems, should be prioritized through these partnerships.

The successful implementation of these recommendations will be crucial for achieving the government's poverty reduction target of 9% by 2028. This requires sustained political commitment, enhanced institutional capacities, and strong monitoring and evaluation systems. Effective joint programming can significantly improve the efficiency and impact of social protection interventions, ultimately supporting sustainable poverty reduction and inclusive growth in the Philippines.

## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BINHI	Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBMS	Community-Based Monitoring System
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DILP	DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EO	Executive Order
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FO	Field Office
GIDA	Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Area
ICMS	Integrated Case Management System
KALAH-CIDSS	Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
KC-NCDDP	KALAH-CIDSS National Community Driven Development Program
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAWA	Local Adaptation to Water Access
LCE	Local Chief Executive
LGU	Local Government Unit
MC	Memorandum Circular
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
NGA	National Government Agency
NTF-ELCAC	National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict
PAPs	Programs, Activities and Projects
PCB	Program Convergence Budgeting
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PESO	Public Employment Service Office
PhilSys	Philippine Identification System
PIP	Public Investment Program
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
RA	Republic Act
SLP	Sustainable Livelihood Program
TUPAD	Tulong Panghanapbuhay Sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers Program
4Ps	<i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino</i> Program

# Assessing the Implementation of Joint Programming in Government Social Protection and Economic Inclusion Interventions in the Philippines

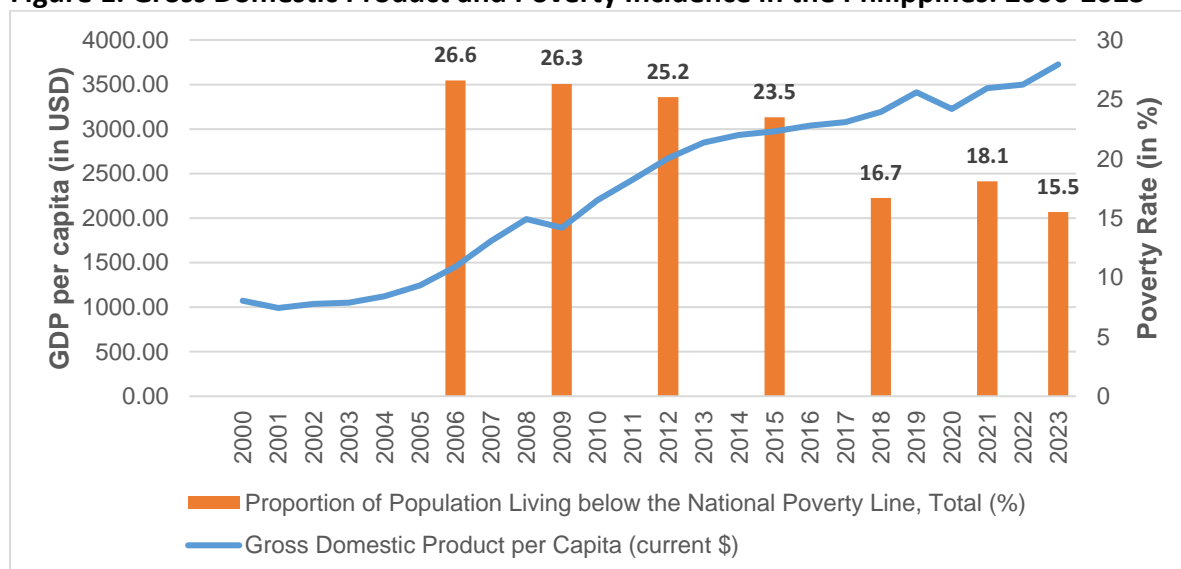
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## 1. Introduction

The Philippines faces significant challenges in achieving inclusive growth and reducing poverty. Despite progress in reducing income poverty over the past decades, pockets of extreme poverty have persisted, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated economic vulnerabilities. The proportion of the population below the national poverty line rose to 18.1% in 2021, up from 16.7% in 2018, thus partially reversing earlier gains in poverty reduction from 2006 to 2018 and highlighting the pandemic's impact on vulnerable populations (PSA 2022). This setback underscores the fragility of poverty reduction efforts and the need for more robust and integrated social protection systems.

Recently released data shows that the poverty incidence has reduced to 15.5% in 2023 (see **Figure 1**), indicating a gradual recovery as the country emerges from the pandemic. However, a significant portion of the population continue living in poverty, emphasizing the continued need for effective interventions. The government has set an ambitious target for the poverty rate to fall to nine percent by 2028, as outlined in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 (NEDA 2023a). Achieving this goal will require sustained and inclusive economic growth, coupled with well-targeted social protection and livelihood programs.

**Figure 1. Gross Domestic Product and Poverty Incidence in the Philippines: 2000-2023**



Source: PSA National Income Accounts and Poverty Statistics, various years

<sup>1</sup> The first author is senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), while the second and third authors are research associate and research assistant at BRAC Philippines for this research study. The valuable research assistance of Rhea Peñaflor, Joana Camacho, Francis Martillano, Firie Jill Ramos, Janory Tutica, Marlon Viejo and Sahanee Sarip who conducted the field interviews together with the second and third authors. Thanks also to Deanne Lorraine Cabalfin and Sherry! Yee of PIDS for support to the conduct of the study. The views expressed in this discussion paper are the authors' own.

In response to these challenges, the concept of joint programming, also referred to as the "convergence strategy" by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), has emerged as a key mechanism for harnessing interventions meant to help the poor and vulnerable segments of society. This approach involves directing complementary and synergetic intervention programs to specified targets such as poor households, families, individuals, and communities based on their needs (DSWD, 2012). By leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple departments involved in social protection, particularly the DSWD and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), joint programming aims to enhance the effectiveness of social protection and economic inclusion interventions.

The concept of joint programming is not new in the Philippines, with various initiatives and policy frameworks promoting inter-agency collaboration in social protection over the past decade. Notable examples include (i) the DSWD's internal convergence strategy launched in 2012 that integrated the implementation of DSWD flagship programs : Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), and KALAHI-CIDSS, and (ii) the Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB) approach initiated by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to facilitate coordinated resource allocation across agencies. However, the implementation of these efforts has been uneven, and challenges persist in achieving truly integrated and effective joint programming across government agencies and levels of governance. The recent poverty trends and the government's ambitious reduction targets highlight the urgency of addressing these implementation gaps and strengthening collaborative approaches to poverty reduction.

The implementation of joint programming initiatives requires, in particular, careful coordination between National Government Agencies (NGAs) and Local Government Units (LGUs). While the policy framework for joint programming has evolved significantly over the past decade, operational challenges persist in areas such as resource allocation, beneficiary targeting, and program monitoring. This study examines these challenges and identifies opportunities for strengthening joint programming efforts.

This study seeks to assess the implementation of joint programming across laws, policies, and programs on social protection and livelihood development targeting Filipinos living in poverty. Specific objectives of the study are :

- To assess implementation of joint programming;
- To map interventions and analyze overlaps;
- To identify partnerships and convergence models;
- To evaluate on-ground operationalization; and
- To recommend enhancements on joint programming implementation.

By examining the current state of joint programming efforts, identifying challenges, and proposing recommendations, this research aims to contribute to the strengthening of social protection and economic inclusion initiatives in the Philippines. The findings of this study are particularly relevant in the context of the country's post-pandemic recovery efforts and the push towards achieving the 2028 poverty reduction target.

The assessment will focus on several key aspects of joint programming, including inter-agency coordination mechanisms, the role of LGUs in implementation, resource allocation and utilization, monitoring and evaluation systems, and the effectiveness of targeting and beneficiary selection processes. Additionally, the study will explore innovative approaches and

best practices that have emerged from joint programming efforts, as well as the challenges that have hindered their full realization.

By providing a comprehensive analysis of the current state of joint programming in the Philippines, this study aims to inform policy decisions and implementation strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of social protection and economic inclusion interventions. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the development of more integrated, responsive, and impactful approaches to poverty reduction, aligning with the government's vision of a more prosperous and inclusive society.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

The literature on social protection and economic inclusion emphasizes the importance of integrated approaches for maximum impact. This section explores key concepts, frameworks, and studies relevant to social protection and joint programming, with a particular focus on the Philippine context.

### ***2.1. Theoretical Frameworks and Integrated Approaches***

#### **Social Assistance and Labor Market Participation**

Barrientos (2010) discusses how social assistance schemes, such as cash transfers, enable poor households to participate in labor markets and access economic opportunities. This perspective challenges the notion that social protection is merely a safety net, instead positioning it as a catalyst for economic engagement. Barrientos argues that well-designed social assistance programs can reduce vulnerability, enhance human capital, and facilitate productive investment, ultimately contributing to sustainable poverty reduction.

The integration of social assistance schemes with promotional initiatives can create synergies that amplify the impact of individual interventions. For instance, combining cash transfers with skills training or access to credit can create a more comprehensive support system that addresses multiple dimensions of poverty simultaneously. This holistic approach recognizes the multidimensional nature of poverty and the need for integrated solutions that go beyond short-term relief to foster long-term economic resilience.

In the context of joint programming, Barrientos' work underscores the importance of designing interventions that not only provide immediate relief but also create pathways for economic participation and empowerment. This perspective aligns with the goals of joint programming in the Philippines, which seeks to combine protective measures with initiatives that promote sustainable livelihoods and economic inclusion.

#### **Social Risk Management**

Holzmann and Jorgensen (2000) propose a Social Risk Management (SRM) framework that extends beyond traditional social protection to include prevention and mitigation strategies. This framework conceptualizes social protection as a set of public interventions aimed at supporting individuals, households, and communities in better managing risks and providing support to the critically poor. The SRM framework emphasizes three main strategies: prevention strategies to reduce the probability of a risk occurring, mitigation strategies to reduce the potential impact of a future risk event, and coping strategies to relieve the impact of the risk once it has occurred.

This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of proactive measures in social protection, moving beyond reactive assistance to encompass a broader range of interventions that address the root causes of vulnerability. By incorporating risk management principles into social protection strategies, policymakers can develop more resilient systems that not only respond to immediate needs but also help build long-term capacity for individuals and communities to withstand and recover from shocks.

The SRM framework offers valuable insights for joint programming efforts in the Philippines. It suggests that effective social protection systems should not only provide safety nets but also incorporate preventive and promotive measures that enhance resilience and reduce long-term vulnerability. This multifaceted approach aligns with the goals of joint programming, which seeks to coordinate diverse interventions to address the complex challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

### Transformative Social Protection

Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler's (2004) concept of transformative social protection emphasizes the need to address social equity concerns alongside economic vulnerability. This approach goes beyond the traditional focus on economic risks to include social risks such as discrimination and exclusion. Transformative social protection aims to provide protective measures to ensure basic consumption and income security, offer preventive measures to avert deprivation, promote enhanced livelihoods and income, and transform social relations to address issues of social equity and exclusion.

This framework highlights the interconnectedness of economic and social factors in perpetuating poverty and vulnerability, advocating for interventions that address both dimensions simultaneously. By incorporating transformative elements into social protection programs, policymakers can work towards addressing the structural causes of poverty and inequality, rather than merely alleviating their symptoms.

The concept of transformative social protection is particularly relevant to joint programming efforts in the Philippines, where persistent inequality and social exclusion contribute to the entrenchment of poverty. It suggests that effective joint programming should not only focus on economic interventions but also address social barriers and inequities that prevent marginalized groups from fully participating in and benefiting from development initiatives.

## *2.2. The Graduation Model and Integrated Approaches*

The graduation model, which combines elements of social assistance, livelihood promotion, financial inclusion, and social empowerment, has shown promise in sustainably lifting the ultra-poor out of poverty (Hashemi and Umaira 2011). This model typically involves a sequence of interventions, including consumption support to meet basic needs, savings to build financial discipline and assets, skills training to learn how to care for an asset and run a business, asset transfer to jump-start a sustainable economic activity, and regular coaching and mentoring to build confidence and reinforce skills.

Whisson (2021) argues that mainstreaming graduation approaches into national social protection agendas can aid in the progressive realization of rights and strengthening of social protection floors. This integration can help create more comprehensive and effective poverty reduction strategies that address both immediate needs and long-term economic sustainability.

The graduation model's holistic approach aligns well with the principles of joint programming, as it requires coordination across multiple sectors and types of interventions. By combining immediate relief with long-term capacity building, the model offers a pathway for social protection programs to evolve from purely protective measures to transformative interventions that can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

In the Philippine context, the graduation model provides valuable insights for enhancing joint programming efforts. It suggests that effective poverty reduction requires a coordinated sequence of interventions that address multiple dimensions of poverty simultaneously. This approach resonates with the goals of joint programming, which seeks to leverage the strengths of different agencies and programs to provide comprehensive support to vulnerable populations.

#### Field Coordination and Integrated Case Management

Effective field coordination is crucial for the successful implementation of joint programming efforts. Roelen et al. (2017) highlight the importance of integrated case management and referral systems in linking beneficiaries to complementary services across sectors. This approach ensures that individuals and families receive a holistic package of support tailored to their specific needs and circumstances.

Capacity building of frontline workers is identified as key in strengthening coordination (Roelen et al. 2015). This involves training on cross-sectoral knowledge and skills, developing effective communication and collaboration mechanisms, establishing clear roles and responsibilities across different agencies and service providers, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and outcomes.

Gentilini and Omamo (2009) further emphasize the need for well-designed social safety nets that can adapt to various contexts and crises. This adaptability is crucial in ensuring that social protection systems can respond effectively to both chronic poverty and acute shocks, such as economic downturns or natural disasters.

The literature on field coordination and integrated case management underscores the importance of operational-level integration in realizing the goals of joint programming. While high-level policy frameworks are essential, the success of joint programming ultimately depends on effective coordination and collaboration at the point of service delivery. In the Philippines, where implementation challenges often arise at the local level, these insights highlight the need for strengthening local capacities and establishing clear protocols for inter-agency coordination in program delivery.

These theoretical frameworks provide the foundation for understanding joint programming initiatives in the Philippines. The country's experience with social protection and economic inclusion programs demonstrates both the potential and challenges of implementing these conceptual approaches in practice.

### *2.3. Social Protection in the Philippines*

The Philippines has a considerable set of social protection programs for different vulnerable sectors of society and for many different situations. Major programs include the 4Ps, the SLP, and the KC-NCDDP.

The concept of 'convergence' in social protection programs dates back to the mid-2000s when DSWD began collaborating with the World Bank to reform the social sector, alongside similar efforts in the Department of Health and Department of Education (DepEd). These efforts identified intersections among beneficiaries served by different programs, leading to a broader internal convergence policy within DSWD aimed at improving program efficiency and impact. However, NGAs still tend to design and execute programs with insufficient attention to complementarities and synergies, even within their own agencies. For instance, while DepEd provides school feeding to severely wasted learners at the primary level, there is no complementary action at the secondary level nor for Alternative Learning System (ALS) students who are likely from underprivileged families. This lack of integration worsens across agencies - ALS graduates seeking higher education aren't necessarily connected to scholarship programs or technical-vocational training opportunities.

#### The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, has been a cornerstone of the Philippines' social protection strategy since 2008. It provides cash grants to poor households based on their fulfillment of health and education-related conditions. Fernandez and Olfindo (2011) provide an overview of the program's early implementation, highlighting both successes and challenges in inter-agency collaboration.

The 4Ps program has maintained consistent coverage of approximately 4.4 million households through 2023, representing a significant portion of the Philippines' poor population (Schelzig 2015). The 4Ps budget increased from 0.1% of GDP in 2010 to 0.5% of GDP (PHP 62.6 billion) in 2014, reflecting the government's growing commitment to social protection. This rapid expansion demonstrates the potential for scaling up social protection interventions in the Philippines, but also raises questions about the sustainability and long-term impact of such programs. This stability in coverage, combined with evidence of positive impacts on education and health outcomes, has established 4Ps as a cornerstone of the country's social protection strategy.

Orbeta and Paqueo (2016) evaluate the 4Ps impact, finding positive effects on education and health outcomes. Their study reveals increased school enrollment rates, particularly for older children, improved healthcare utilization, including prenatal care and regular check-ups for young children, and reduced severe stunting among young beneficiary children. These findings highlight the potential of well-designed social protection programs to contribute to human capital development, a key aspect of long-term poverty reduction.

Reyes et al. (2015) further explore how the 4Ps can promote inclusive growth. They argue that by investing in human capital development, the program contributes to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. However, they also note the importance of complementary interventions to maximize the program's long-term impact. This perspective aligns with the principles of joint programming, suggesting that while individual programs like 4Ps can be effective, their impact can be enhanced through coordination with other interventions addressing different aspects of poverty and vulnerability.

The 4Ps program serves as a prime example of how large-scale social protection initiatives can be implemented in the Philippines. Its successes and challenges offer valuable lessons for joint programming efforts, particularly in terms of inter-agency coordination, beneficiary targeting, and the integration of multiple development objectives within a single program framework.

The program's evolution also demonstrates the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation in social protection interventions.

#### Graduation Approach in the Philippines

Schelzig and Jilani (2021) provide a discussion of the effects of a pilot convergence/graduation program involving livelihood assistance for 4Ps beneficiaries. Their study demonstrates the potential of integrating graduation approaches with existing social protection programs to enhance outcomes. Key findings include improved food security among participating households, increased asset ownership and diversification of income sources, and enhanced financial literacy and savings behavior. They also highlight challenges in scaling up such integrated approaches, including the need for intensive coaching and the complexity of coordinating across multiple agencies and interventions. These findings underscore both the promise and the challenges of implementing comprehensive, multi-dimensional interventions within the Philippine context. They suggest that while graduation approaches offer a promising pathway for enhancing the impact of social protection programs, their successful implementation requires careful consideration of institutional capacities and coordination mechanisms.

The graduation approach aligns closely with the principles of joint programming, as it necessitates the coordination of multiple types of interventions (e.g., cash transfers, skills training, asset transfers) across different sectors. The experiences from this pilot program offer valuable insights for broader joint programming efforts in the Philippines, particularly in terms of designing integrated interventions that can lead to sustainable improvements in beneficiaries' livelihoods.

#### Convergence Strategies and Implementation Challenges

The DSWD adopted the convergence strategy in 2010 (DSWD 2017) to enhance the department's effectiveness in implementing social welfare programs and build the foundation for a more integrated social protection system. This led to the establishment of the National Convergence Technical Secretariat Unit, which initiated the internal and external convergence (DSWD, 2016).

Internal convergence aims to improve efficiency in coordinating for and implementing the major social protection programs on the ground and to increase these programs' impact. External convergence happens when other forms of social support could not be given by the department, necessitating collaboration with other agencies. With this, 4Ps beneficiaries are referred to other government agencies for other "programs and services that would help them become self-sufficient" (DSWD 2016). Some of the agencies the DSWD have worked with are Department of Health, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Labor and Employment, and the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (DSWD 2016; 2017).

Albert and Dacuycuy (2017) conducted an evaluation of the DSWD's internal and external convergence strategies, offering valuable insights into the practical challenges of implementing joint programming. Their recommendations include updating documentation to clarify roles and procedures, improving IT systems to facilitate data sharing and case management, enhancing staff capacities through targeted training programs, customizing beneficiary training topics to local contexts and needs, and incentivizing leadership to prioritize and support convergence efforts.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing both technical and institutional barriers to effective joint programming. They highlight the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses not only policy frameworks but also operational systems, human resource development, and organizational culture. The authors' emphasis on customizing interventions to local contexts is particularly relevant in the Philippines, where diverse geographic and socio-economic conditions necessitate flexible and adaptive program designs.

Acosta and Velarde's (2015) update on the 4Ps implementation performance complements these findings, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement. They note improvements in targeting accuracy and compliance monitoring but also identify challenges in service delivery, particularly in remote areas. This underscores the importance of considering geographic and infrastructural constraints in the design and implementation of joint programming initiatives, particularly in a country as geographically diverse as the Philippines.

#### Comprehensive Social Protection Framework

Gonzalez and Manasan (2002) provide a comprehensive overview of the social protection system in the Philippines, highlighting its historical development, key programs, and challenges. They note that while the Philippines has a fairly well-developed social protection framework, coverage gaps remain, particularly for informal sector workers, the poorest segments of society, and vulnerable groups such as indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities.

Addressing these gaps requires not only expanding existing programs but also developing innovative approaches to reach underserved populations. This analysis underscores the need for joint programming efforts to explicitly consider and address the diverse needs of different vulnerable groups, ensuring that social protection and economic inclusion interventions are truly inclusive and comprehensive.

The authors' identification of coverage gaps highlights a key challenge for joint programming efforts in the Philippines: ensuring that interventions reach the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. This suggests that effective joint programming should not only focus on coordinating existing programs but also on developing new approaches to extend social protection coverage to previously underserved groups.

#### Emergency Response and Social Protection

Acosta et al. (2018) examine the implementation of emergency cash transfers in response to natural disasters in the Philippines. Their study reveals that existing social protection programs, particularly the 4Ps, can be effectively leveraged to provide rapid assistance to affected populations. Key advantages of using existing systems include faster response times due to pre-existing beneficiary lists and payment mechanisms, improved targeting accuracy by utilizing established poverty databases, and enhanced coordination through existing inter-agency structures.

However, the authors also identify challenges in coordination and targeting during emergency responses, highlighting the need for flexible program designs that can quickly adapt to emergency contexts, improved data sharing and interoperability across agencies, and clear protocols for emergency-specific targeting and benefit adjustments.

These findings emphasize the importance of building adaptability and responsiveness into social protection systems, ensuring that they can effectively address both chronic poverty and

acute shocks. This adaptability is particularly relevant in the context of joint programming, where the ability to rapidly coordinate and mobilize resources across agencies can be crucial in emergency situations. The Philippines, being highly vulnerable to natural disasters, can benefit significantly from social protection systems that are designed with this dual capacity in mind.

### Comprehensive Program Review and Future Directions

The World Bank (2018) conducted a comprehensive review of social protection programs in the Philippines, assessing their coverage, adequacy, and impact. The study found that while significant progress has been made in expanding social protection, particularly through the 4Ps, there is still a need for better integration of programs to create a more coherent and efficient system, improved targeting to reach the most vulnerable populations, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation to inform evidence-based policy making.

This review highlights the ongoing challenges in creating a truly integrated social protection system in the Philippines. While individual programs have shown success, the fragmentation of efforts across different agencies and levels of government continues to hinder the overall effectiveness of social protection interventions. The World Bank's emphasis on improved targeting aligns with the goals of joint programming, suggesting that better coordination could lead to more efficient use of resources and more comprehensive coverage of vulnerable populations.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB 2015a) highlights the role of the Social Protection Support Project in strengthening the Philippines' social protection system. The project has supported the expansion of the 4Ps to reach more beneficiaries, improvements in targeting through the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (*Listahanan*), and capacity building for implementing agencies. These efforts contribute to a more robust and responsive social protection system, but challenges remain in ensuring comprehensive coverage and sustainable financing.

The ADB's focus on capacity building and improved targeting systems underscores the importance of institutional strengthening in enhancing the effectiveness of social protection programs. This aligns with the principles of joint programming, which requires strong institutional capacities and coordination mechanisms to be successful. The development of systems like *Listahanan* represents a step towards more integrated approaches to beneficiary identification and targeting, which could support more effective joint programming efforts.

### Addressing Specific Vulnerable Groups

Velarde and Albert (2018) analyze the role of the Social Pension program in addressing poverty among elderly Filipinos. Their study reveals rapid expansion of the program's coverage and positive impacts on elderly beneficiaries' well-being. However, they also identify areas for improvement, including the need for better targeting to ensure resources reach the most vulnerable elderly, the importance of increasing benefit levels to more effectively reduce poverty among the elderly, and the potential for integrating the Social Pension with other social protection programs to provide more comprehensive support.

This analysis highlights the importance of tailoring social protection interventions to the specific needs of different vulnerable groups. It also underscores the potential for joint programming approaches to create more integrated and comprehensive support systems for specific populations, such as the elderly. The authors' recommendation for integrating the

Social Pension with other programs aligns closely with the principles of joint programming, suggesting that a more coordinated approach could enhance the overall impact of social protection interventions for the elderly.

This section has examined the theoretical underpinnings of social protection and their practical application in the Philippines context. The evolution of social protection programs, particularly the 4Ps, demonstrates the country's commitment to addressing poverty through integrated approaches. The findings inform the subsequent discussion of implementation mechanisms and challenges.

## *2.4. Regional Context and Remittances*

The broader context of social protection in Southeast Asia is explored by Cook and Pincus (2014), who emphasize the need for comprehensive approaches that address both poverty and inequality. Their analysis reveals common challenges across the region, including fragmentation of social protection systems, limited coverage (particularly for informal sector workers), inadequate benefit levels in many programs, and weak institutional capacity for implementation and coordination.

This regional perspective provides valuable context for understanding the challenges faced by the Philippines in implementing joint programming for social protection. It suggests that many of the issues encountered in the Philippines are common across the region, pointing to the potential for cross-country learning and collaboration in addressing these challenges.

In the Philippines, remittances play a significant role in household income and potential poverty reduction. Ang and Opiniano (2016) propose a framework for analyzing the local development potential of overseas remittances, which could inform integrated social protection strategies. Their framework considers the volume and regularity of remittance flows, the impact of remittances on local economic activities, the potential for leveraging remittances for community development projects, and the role of local institutions in maximizing the development impact of remittances.

Integrating remittances into social protection strategies could enhance the overall impact of interventions, particularly in areas with high levels of overseas migration. This perspective highlights the importance of considering diverse income sources and economic dynamics in the design and implementation of joint programming initiatives. It suggests that effective joint programming in the Philippines should take into account the role of remittances in household economies and explore ways to leverage these flows to complement formal social protection interventions.

## *2.5. Implementation Challenges and Policy Framework*

The implementation of social protection interventions in the Philippines operates within a complex and multifaceted ecosystem characterized by intricate institutional arrangements, diverse stakeholder interests, and layered governance structures. While significant progress has been made in establishing coordination mechanisms and policy frameworks, the translation of these structures into effective ground-level implementation remains a persistent challenge. The Philippines' experience with joint programming in social protection illustrates both the potential and limitations of integrated approaches to poverty reduction. This section examines three critical dimensions that shape the implementation landscape: the institutional architecture

of stakeholders and their dynamic relationships, the evolution of legal and policy frameworks governing joint programming efforts, and the operational challenges in coordinating interventions across different governance levels. Understanding these interconnected elements is essential for assessing current initiatives and identifying pathways for improvement in the Philippine context.

### 2.5.1 Stakeholder Mapping and Roles in Joint Programming

Joint programming in social protection and economic inclusion involves a complex web of stakeholders operating across multiple governance levels in the Philippines. The institutional architecture for joint programming in social protection and economic inclusion in the Philippines involves multiple stakeholders operating across different governance levels (**Box 1**). Understanding these relationships and interactions is crucial for effective joint programming implementation.

<b>Box 1. Key Stakeholders and Primary Roles:</b>
<p>National Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA): Overall policy coordination and monitoring of social protection programs</li> <li>• DSWD: Lead implementer of social protection programs including 4Ps, SLP, and KALAHI-CIDSS</li> <li>• DOLE: Primary agency for employment and livelihood programs including TUPAD and DILP</li> <li>• DBM: Budget allocation and monitoring for social protection programs</li> <li>• Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG): Oversight of LGU implementation and capacity building</li> </ul>
<p>Regional Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Development Councils: Coordinate regional implementation of social protection programs</li> <li>• DSWD Field Offices: Direct implementation of national social protection programs</li> <li>• DOLE Regional Offices: Implementation of employment and livelihood programs</li> <li>• Regional Inter-Agency Committees: Coordinate joint programming efforts</li> </ul>
<p>Provincial/Municipal Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial/Municipal/City Social Welfare Offices: Local implementation of social protection programs</li> <li>• Public Employment Service Offices (PESO): Local employment facilitation</li> <li>• Local Development Councils: Integration of social protection in local development plans</li> </ul>

#### National Level Stakeholders and Roles

The NEDA serves as the primary coordinator for policy development and strategic planning, ensuring alignment between social protection initiatives and broader development goals. NEDA's oversight extends to monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness through the Philippine Development Plan and related frameworks. The agency chairs the Social Development Committee, which serves as the highest policy-making body for social protection programs.

The DSWD functions as the principal implementer of social protection programs, managing flagship initiatives such as the 4Ps, SLP, and KALAHI-CIDSS. DSWD's mandate encompasses both direct service delivery and the development of innovative approaches to poverty reduction. The Department has pioneered internal convergence efforts that serve as models for broader joint programming initiatives.

The DOLE leads labor market interventions through programs like the Tulong Panghanapbuhay Sa Ating Disadvantaged Workers Program (TUPAD) and DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP). These interventions address the crucial link between social protection and economic inclusion, though coordination with other agencies' initiatives remains an ongoing challenge. TUPAD provides emergency employment to displaced, disadvantaged, and seasonal workers, aligning with social protection goals. However, opportunities for deeper integration with programs such as 4Ps and DSWD's SLP remain underexplored. Strengthening data-sharing protocols and aligning beneficiary targeting criteria between these programs could enhance the effectiveness of joint programming and deliver a more comprehensive support package for the extreme poor.

The DBM plays a critical role in resource allocation and program sustainability through its oversight of the Program Convergence Budgeting approach. This mechanism attempts to align budgetary allocations with integrated programming objectives, though implementation challenges persist.

### Regional Level Implementation

At the regional level, implementation structures become more complex, involving multiple layers of coordination and oversight. Regional Development Councils serve as primary platforms for coordinating social protection initiatives, bringing together representatives from national government agencies, local governments, and civil society organizations. These councils play a crucial role in contextualizing national policies to regional circumstances, though their effectiveness varies significantly across regions.

DSWD and DOLE Field Offices operate as direct implementers of national programs while simultaneously attempting to adapt these initiatives to local contexts and needs. The Regional Inter-Agency Committees, established to facilitate joint programming, have demonstrated varying degrees of success in fostering collaboration.

### Local Level Delivery

Provincial and Municipal Social Welfare Offices serve as primary points of contact for beneficiaries, managing day-to-day implementation of social protection programs. These offices often face significant resource constraints while attempting to meet diverse community needs. PESOs operate as crucial links between job seekers and employment opportunities, though their capacity and effectiveness vary substantially across localities.

### Mandate Overlaps and Operational Challenges

The study reveals significant areas of mandate overlap that affect program efficiency and effectiveness. In the realm of livelihood support, multiple agencies implement similar interventions with overlapping target beneficiaries. The DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program, DOLE's Integrated Livelihood Program, and various Department of Agriculture initiatives often operate in parallel, sometimes targeting the same communities with comparable interventions.

Employment facilitation services represent another area of significant overlap. DOLE's employment programs, DSWD's employment facilitation components, and LGU-operated PESO services often provide similar services without clear delineation of responsibilities or

systematic coordination. This situation can result in duplicated efforts and inconsistent service quality across locations.

Capacity building initiatives present perhaps the most pervasive example of mandate overlap. Various agencies conduct training programs and skills development activities, often without coordination or recognition of complementary efforts. This leads to situations where beneficiaries may receive similar training from different agencies, while other needed skills development areas remain unaddressed.

### Informal Networks and Community Engagement

Beyond formal institutional structures, community-based organizations, civil society groups, and private sector entities play crucial but often underrecognized roles in program delivery. These stakeholders frequently fill implementation gaps, providing additional resources, technical expertise, and community mobilization support that formal structures may lack.

### Partnership Mechanisms and Challenges

Current partnership mechanisms, while well-intentioned, often fail to achieve sustained collaboration. Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) serve as primary instruments for formalizing partnerships but may not effectively address operational-level coordination needs. Project-based partnerships, while sometimes successful, often lack mechanisms for sustaining collaboration beyond specific initiatives.

The complexity of these stakeholder relationships highlights the need for more systematic approaches to coordination and clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities. Future joint programming efforts must address these institutional challenges while building on existing successful collaboration models.

## 2.5.2 Policy and Legal Framework

The policy and legal framework governing social protection in the Philippines has evolved significantly over the past three decades, reflecting changing approaches to poverty reduction and social development. While numerous laws and executive orders establish a comprehensive foundation for joint programming (**Box 2 in Annex 1**), the translation of these policies into effective implementation mechanisms remains challenging. The framework encompasses various dimensions: foundational social protection legislation, convergence-specific policies, and operational guidelines that shape program delivery. The devolution of social services to LGUs under Executive Order No. 138 (2021) aims to improve service delivery, but it also presents challenges in ensuring consistent implementation across diverse local contexts.

The comprehensive legal and policy framework for social protection in the Philippines is supported by various strategic documents and reviews. These include the Portfolio Mid-Term Review - Joint Programmes on Integrated Social Protection and Leaving No One Behind (UN Join SDG Fund 2022), which emphasizes the importance of sectoral coordination for effective social protection, and the Social Protection Plan 2023-2028 (NEDA 2023b), which provides critical insights into the financial management of social protection programs and sets strategic priorities for expanding coverage and enhancing service delivery over the next five years.

These documents collectively contribute to a robust framework for understanding, implementing, and improving social protection initiatives in the Philippines. However, the challenge lies in translating these policy frameworks into effective ground-level implementation. This highlights the need for joint programming efforts to focus not only on high-level coordination but also on addressing the practical challenges of program delivery at the local level.

Administrative reforms have attempted to address implementation challenges through various mechanisms. The establishment of the PCB approach represents a significant effort to align financial resources with integrated programming objectives. However, the effectiveness of PCB has been constrained by institutional rigidities and traditional budgeting processes that often favor sector-specific allocations over integrated approaches. The recent DBM Memorandum Circular No. 146 (2023) attempts to address these limitations by modernizing the convergence budgeting process, though its impact remains to be fully realized.

The devolution of social services to LGUs under Executive Order No. 138 (2021) has introduced additional complexity to joint programming implementation. While devolution aims to improve service delivery through localization, it has also created new challenges in maintaining program consistency and quality across different localities. Local governments vary significantly in their capacity to implement devolved functions, leading to uneven program delivery and potential gaps in service provision.

The DSWD and the DOLE have issued several memoranda and orders aimed at promoting convergence and joint programming in their social protection efforts (**Box 3 in Annex 1**). These issuances demonstrate a concerted effort to harmonize and streamline various social welfare and employment programs.

These issuances reflect a growing trend towards convergence and joint programming in the Philippines' social protection landscape. Both DSWD and DOLE have shown efforts to internally integrate their programs and externally collaborate with other agencies and organizations. The goal appears to be creating more cohesive, efficient, and effective social protection and employment support systems, especially evident in crisis response situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The progression of these issuances over time also indicates an evolving understanding of the importance of convergence, moving from internal integration efforts to more expansive inter-agency collaborations. This approach aims to reduce duplication of efforts, maximize resource utilization, and provide more comprehensive support to beneficiaries.

The convergence strategy in the Philippines has been evolving through various policy initiatives and budgeting approaches. The CPBRD Policy Brief No. 2016-04 likely provides an overview of the convergence strategy, highlighting its importance in coordinating government efforts for more effective service delivery.

The DBM also introduced the Two-Tier Budget Approach<sup>2</sup>, which includes PCB, as a mechanism to improve budget allocation and program implementation. This approach aims to enhance coordination among government agencies and align their programs with national development goals. More recently, DBM's Memorandum Circular No. 146, series of 2023<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> [Guide To The Two Tier Budget Process Advance Release \(edited as of 14 April 2016\).docx \(dbm.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [National-Budget-Memorandum-No-146-Dated-January-12-2023.pdf \(dbm.gov.ph\)](#)

focuses on updating convergence programs and projects, and establishes a system for nominating Program Convergence Budgeting Focal Persons. This circular facilitates the online submission of crucial budget preparation forms (BP Form 206 and BP Form 708), further streamlining the process of program convergence budgeting. Together, these documents represent a concerted effort by the Philippine government to improve inter-agency collaboration, optimize resource allocation, and enhance the overall effectiveness of social protection and development programs through a more integrated and coordinated approach.

Additional literature such as the Philippine Journal of Social Development, Volume 4, 2012 (UP 2012) and the Social Protection Handbook for Implementers (DSWD n.d.) offer valuable insights and practical tools for practitioners. The Asian Development Bank's "Social Protection Support Project in the Philippines" (ADB 2015b) highlights the successes and challenges of the 4Ps, i.e. the country's conditional cash transfer program, while "Chapter 10 - Social Protection Statistics" of the Philippine Statistical Development Program 2023-2029 underscores the importance of statistical programs in social protection monitoring (PSA 2022)

The International Labour Organization's "Assessment-Based National Dialogue" (ILO n.d.) and the World Bank's "Philippines Social Protection Review and Assessment" (World Bank 2018) provide comprehensive reviews of the coverage, adequacy, and impact of social protection programs. These documents collectively contribute to a robust framework for understanding, implementing, and improving social protection initiatives in the Philippines.

Translating policies into effective ground-level implementation remains a key challenge. Balisacan and Hill (2003), in their analysis of Philippine economic development policies, suggested that a key problem in the country is translating policy into effective outcomes given implementation deficits. This observation remains relevant in the context of joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion. The authors' insights highlight the persistent gap between policy formulation and effective implementation, a challenge that joint programming efforts must address to be successful.

Moving forward, enhancing the impact of social protection interventions will require addressing these implementation gaps and fostering stronger inter-agency collaboration. Key areas for improvement include strengthening local government capacity to implement devolved social services, enhancing data sharing and interoperability across agencies, developing more flexible and responsive program designs, improving targeting mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable populations, and fostering a culture of evidence-based policy making through robust monitoring and evaluation.

By addressing these challenges, the Philippines can build on its comprehensive policy framework to create a more effective and inclusive social protection system that truly leaves no one behind.

### 2.5.3. The Social Protection Operational Framework

A significant element of the policy architecture is the Social Protection Operational Framework, adopted through NEDA Social Development Committee (SDC) Resolution No. 3, Series of 2012. This framework provides a comprehensive guide for recommending and implementing social protection policies and programs. It defines the following key elements:

### Goals and Objectives:

- To ensure that all Filipinos, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, have equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services that enable them to live productive and secure lives.
- To protect individuals and households from economic shocks and social vulnerabilities through proactive and responsive interventions.

### Components:

- Social Insurance: Programs aimed at managing risks such as illness, disability, and unemployment (e.g., PhilHealth, SSS, GSIS).
- Social Assistance: Direct support to the poorest and most vulnerable, such as 4Ps and social pensions.
- Labor Market Programs: Interventions like TUPAD and DILP that address unemployment and provide livelihood opportunities.
- Community-Driven Development: Initiatives like Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan- Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) that empower communities to address local needs.

### Coverage:

The framework prioritizes the most vulnerable populations, including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples. It also emphasizes geographic targeting, focusing on Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs).

### Implementation Strategies:

- Institutionalizing convergence among agencies delivering social protection programs.
- Strengthening local capacities for program delivery.
- Leveraging technology and data systems, such as the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS), for targeting and monitoring.

### Relevance to Joint Programming

The Social Protection Operational Framework serves as a foundational policy for guiding joint programming efforts in the Philippines. Its emphasis on integration, coordination, and data-driven targeting directly aligns with the objectives of convergence strategies. Key areas of relevance include:

- a. Policy Coherence: The framework underscores the importance of harmonizing policies across agencies to avoid overlaps and ensure complementarity, a critical challenge identified in the study.
- b. Shared Goals: The framework's focus on reducing vulnerability and promoting resilience complements the goals of joint programming, particularly in integrating social protection and economic inclusion.

- c. **Operational Guidelines:** By outlining implementation strategies that prioritize convergence and local capacity building, the framework provides a blueprint for scaling up successful joint programming models, such as the Padayon initiative.
- d. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The framework advocates for unified data systems and performance metrics, which are essential for tracking the outcomes of joint programs and ensuring accountability.

The inclusion of the Social Protection Operational Framework as a guiding policy for joint programming emphasizes the need for continued coordination among stakeholders. Its strategic focus on convergence, resource optimization, and inclusive development strengthens the foundation for implementing multi-agency efforts that effectively address poverty and vulnerability.

### 3. Study Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing document review, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions as primary data collection methods. While some basic quantitative analysis is used to understand demographics and response patterns of study pattern, the core methodology focuses on gathering rich, detailed insights into joint programming implementation through systematic qualitative inquiry.

The research design is informed by the work of Creswell and Creswell (2017), who emphasize the value of qualitative research in exploring and understanding complex social phenomena. This approach is particularly well-suited to examining the intricacies of joint programming implementation in the context of social protection and economic inclusion interventions in the Philippines. The research design of the study follows an integrated framework that enables comprehensive examination of joint programming implementation through multiple qualitative data sources and analytical levels, as illustrated in **Figure 2**.

**Figure 2. Research Design Framework**

```
graph TD
  A[Research Design] --> B[Document Review]
  A --> C[Key Informant Interviews]
  A --> D[Focus Group Discussions]
  B --> E[Data Integration & Analysis]
  C --> E
  D --> E
  E --> F[Findings & Recommendations]
```

Source: Authors' formulation

#### 3.1. Data Collection Methods

The study utilizes three complementary methods to gather comprehensive data on joint programming implementation. The document review process involved systematic content analysis of laws, policies, and program documents, with particular attention to national development plans, agency guidelines, and evaluation reports. This review provided the

foundation for understanding the policy framework and intended implementation processes for joint programming initiatives.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) constituted the second major data collection method, with 52 interviews conducted across different governance levels. The study exceeded its initial target of 50 interviews, incorporating perspectives from 40 field staff representing DSWD, DOLE, and LGUs, along with 12 central office staff from DOLE, DSWD, NEDA, and DBM. This distribution ensured representation of both policy-level insights and ground-level implementation experiences across six regions.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) formed the third component of data collection, engaging 106 participants from the graduation pilot supported by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) as well as other DSWD and DOLE programs. This exceeded the target of 95 participants, providing rich insights into beneficiary experiences and program impact. The FGDs spanned six regions, capturing diverse implementation contexts and beneficiary perspectives.

### **3.2. Data Analysis**

The analytical approach follows a systematic three-tier framework designed to maximize the utility of the collected data. The first level of analysis examines each data source independently, allowing for the emergence of source-specific findings and themes. This is followed by a second level of analysis that compares findings across data sources, identifying patterns and validating key themes through triangulation (Braun and Clarke 2006). NVivo software is utilized for coding and categorizing data into themes aligned with study objectives. This systematic approach to data analysis allows for the identification of key patterns, challenges, and opportunities in joint programming and the Graduation Approach.

The third level of analysis synthesizes the findings into comprehensive insights that inform actionable recommendations. This process is supported by regular quality assurance measures, including investigator triangulation through multiple researchers coding the same data, member checking with key informants, and peer debriefing sessions to validate interpretations.

The analysis focuses on several key themes:

- a) Implementation processes and challenges
- b) Inter-agency coordination mechanisms
- c) Resource allocation and utilization
- d) Monitoring and evaluation systems
- e) Beneficiary experiences and perceptions
- f) Best practices and innovations in joint programming

Additionally, triangulation is done across different qualitative data sources to validate and enrich findings. This process involves comparing and contrasting insights from document reviews, KIIs, and FGDs to identify areas of convergence and divergence. Such triangulation enhances the robustness of the findings and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics involved in joint programming implementation.

Content analysis is applied to policy documents and program reports to extract relevant information on joint programming strategies and implementation. This analysis helps to situate the empirical findings within the broader policy context and to identify any gaps between policy intentions and implementation realities.

### *3.3. Ethical Considerations*

Ethical considerations form a cornerstone of the research methodology. All participants provided informed consent, with clear explanations of their rights and the voluntary nature of their participation. Data privacy protections adhere strictly to RA 10173 requirements, with comprehensive measures in place to ensure confidentiality and secure data management. The research team maintained sensitivity to power dynamics and potential biases throughout the data collection and analysis process.

Additionally, the research team was sensitive to power dynamics and potential biases in data collection and analysis. Efforts were made to create a safe and comfortable environment for participants to share their experiences and perspectives freely. The team also engaged in reflexive practices throughout the research process to acknowledge and mitigate potential biases in data interpretation.

### *3.4. Limitations of the Study*

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment in interpreting the study findings. The data collection period, spanning August to October 2024, provides a snapshot view rather than a longitudinal perspective of joint programming implementation. Geographic coverage, while spanning six regions, may not fully capture the diversity of implementation contexts across the Philippines, particularly in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA).

To address these limitations, the research team employed several mitigation strategies. The triangulation of multiple data sources helps validate findings across different contexts and perspectives. A systematic sampling approach ensures representation of diverse stakeholder groups within the available resources. Regular validity checks with stakeholders and flexible data collection methods, including virtual options where necessary, helped maximize participation while maintaining research quality.

In summary, the study methodology employs a qualitative approach, carefully designed to gather and analyze primary data from interviews and focus groups, including conducting document reviews while addressing potential limitations. The emphasis on ethical considerations and quality assurance measures strengthens the validity of the findings, providing a solid foundation for the analysis of joint programming implementation in the Philippines

## 4. Empirical Findings

### 4.1. Profile of Study Respondents

The study engaged a diverse group of stakeholders through key informant interviews and focus group discussions, providing rich insights into joint programming implementation. Among the 65 key informants interviewed, women comprised the majority (65%), with 42 female participants compared to 21 male participants (**Table 1**).

**Table 1. Profile of Key Informant Interview Respondents**

(a) Age and Sex of KII respondents

Age	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
20-29	7	3	10
30-39	7	14	21
40-49	5	10	15
50-59	1	12	13
60 and above	1	5	6
TOTAL	21	42	65

(b) Educational Attainment and Geographical Location of KII respondents

Educational Attainment	Region							Total
	NCR	Region 1	Region 5	Region 6	Region 8	Region 10	Region 12	
Post-graduate	2	2	4	1	3	5	4	21
College graduate	3	9	5	7	6	7	7	44
Highschool graduate								
Did not say								
Total	5	11	9	8	9	12	11	65

(c) Years of Experience and Sex of KII Respondents

Years of Experience	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
0-4	8	8	16
5-9	5	7	12
10-14	3	10	13
15 and above	6	14	20
Did not say	0	4	4
Total	21	42	65

(d) Designation and Sex of KII Respondents (Central Offices)

Designation	Years of Experience				Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15 and above	
Director	1	0	0	0	1
Division Chief	1	0	0	0	1
Senior Officer	1	0	1	0	2

Designation	Years of Experience				Total
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15 and above	
Focal Person	1	0	0	0	1
Project Development Officer	1	0	0	1	2
Labor and Employment Officer	1	0	0	0	1
Total	6	0	1	1	8

This distribution by sex reflects the general composition of the social services workforce in the Philippines, where women predominate in social protection and community development roles. The age distribution of KII participants showed a balanced representation across different career stages, with the highest concentration in the 30-39 age bracket (21 respondents). This distribution ensures a mix of perspectives from both emerging and experienced professionals in the field. Notably, 20 participants reported 15 or more years of experience, while 16 had 0-4 years of experience, providing valuable insights from both seasoned practitioners and those bringing fresh perspectives to joint programming initiatives.

Educational attainment among KII respondents was notably high, with most having completed either college education or post-graduate studies. The geographical distribution spanned several regions, with Region 10 having the highest representation (12 respondents), followed by Regions 1 and 12 (11 respondents each). This regional diversity helps capture variation in implementation experiences across different Philippine contexts.

The focus group discussions engaged 110 participants, predominantly female (94 out of 110 participants), with representation from both DSWD and DOLE beneficiaries (**Table 2**).

**Table 2. Profile of FGD participants**

(a) Age and Sex of FGD participants							
Age	DSWD			DOLE			Total DSWD and DOLE (Both sexes)
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	
20-29	0	0	0	3	2	5	5
30-39	0	11	11	2	8	10	21
40-49	1	17	18	2	17	19	37
50-59	1	22	23	4	9	13	36
60 and above	1	6	7	1	3	4	11
TOTAL	3	57	59	12	40	51	110

(b) Educational Attainment and Geographical Location of FGD participants

Educational Attainment	Geographical Location						Total
	R1	R5	R6	R8	R10	R12	
Post-graduate							0
College Graduate	5	4	4	1	4	0	18
College Level	7	4	12	1	2	1	27
Vocational Course	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Highschool Graduate	7	1	3	5	7	12	35
Highschool Level	2	5	5	0	2	0	14
Elementary	1	0	4	1	0	2	8
Did not say	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
TOTAL	23	15	34	8	15	15	110

(c) Geographical Location and Sex of FGD participants

Geographical Location	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Region 1	4	19	23
Region 5	2	13	15
Region 6	3	31	34
Region 8	0	8	8
Region 10	2	13	15
Region 12	5	10	15
TOTAL	16	94	110

The age distribution among FGD participants ranged from 20 to over 60 years, with notable concentrations in the 50-59 age group for DSWD participants and 40-49 for DOLE participants. This age distribution reflects the typical beneficiary profile of social protection and economic inclusion programs in the Philippines.

Educational backgrounds among FGD participants varied significantly, with 18 college graduates, 27 with some college education, and 35 high school graduates. This diversity in educational attainment provides insights into how different beneficiary groups experience and navigate joint programming initiatives. Region 6 had the highest participation (34 respondents), followed by Region 1 (23 respondents), ensuring substantial representation from both urban and rural implementation contexts.

The KII and FGD instruments were carefully designed to capture insights from both program implementers and beneficiaries. For program implementers, this included government staff from DSWD and DOLE who play crucial roles in executing joint programming, reporting on implementation, and addressing implementation issues. The beneficiary FGDs focused on gathering perspectives on program effectiveness and impact from those directly affected by these interventions. The complete interview and focus group discussion instruments used in this study are provided in Annexes 2 and 3, detailing the specific questions and protocols used for data collection.

This diverse participant profile ensures that our findings reflect a wide range of perspectives and experiences, from both the implementation and beneficiary sides of joint programming initiatives.

## *4.2. Key Findings from Interviews and Discussions*

The analysis of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) reveals several interconnected themes in the implementation of joint programming initiatives for social protection and economic inclusion in the Philippines. Following Cook and Pincus's (2014) framework for analyzing social protection integration, our findings highlight both successes and persistent challenges in coordinating efforts across different agencies and governance levels. The evidence gathered through 52 key informant interviews with government officials and 110 focus group discussion participants across six regions provides rich insights into implementation dynamics, institutional relationships, and opportunities for enhancement.

### *4.2.1. Implementation Status of Joint Programming*

Joint programming implementation in the Philippines has shown notable progress since its inception in the mid-2000s, but continues to face significant challenges in achieving consistent effectiveness across regions and implementing agencies. While comprehensive policy frameworks exist at the national level, field interviews revealed substantial operational barriers that hinder full realization of integrated approaches. The concept of joint programming or convergence dates back to the mid-2000s when DSWD began collaborating with the World Bank to reform the social sector, alongside similar efforts at the Department of Health and Department of Education. These early efforts identified intersections among beneficiaries served by different programs, leading to broader reforms in service delivery integration.

#### DSWD's Internal Convergence Model

The DSWD's internal convergence model, as first outlined in Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 18 series of 2012, aimed to harmonize the implementation of the department's core social protection programs: the 4Ps, SLP, and KALAHI-CIDSS. This strategy sought to ensure that the management of these programs led to empowerment, poverty reduction, and improved quality of life for poor communities and households. The internal convergence approach introduced several key innovations, including the use of a common targeting system (National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction), establishment of national and local structures for coordinated planning and monitoring, and alignment of business processes to improve coordination and complementation of efforts (Albert and Dacuycuy 2017). These measures represented a significant shift towards more integrated program delivery within DSWD.

The establishment of the National Convergence Technical Support Unit (NCTSU) in 2015 by virtue of MC No. 14 series of 2015 demonstrated institutional commitment to this strategy. However, the subsequent absorption of the NCTSU into other DSWD units highlighted the ongoing challenges in maintaining continuity and effectiveness in coordination efforts. This organizational evolution reflects both the department's dynamic approach to enhancing operational effectiveness and the complexities involved in sustaining integrated structures within existing institutional frameworks.

Field-level implementation of internal convergence at DSWD demonstrates both innovations and challenges in several key areas:

- **Resource Coordination:** The establishment of Municipal Action Teams has successfully pooled staff resources and facilitated joint capacity building initiatives through shared service facilities. Common transportation and logistics arrangements have improved operational efficiency. However, about 68% of field staff report persistent challenges in resource optimization.
- **Data Management Systems:** Implementation of the Integrated Beneficiary Tracking System and standardized reporting protocols has enhanced information sharing. Municipal-level data hubs now enable real-time beneficiary status updates. Nevertheless, 72% of field offices report technical barriers in achieving seamless data integration.
- **Service Delivery Integration:** Field implementation shows positive developments in coordinated beneficiary assessment and synchronized program activities. The adoption of integrated case management approaches has enhanced beneficiary support, though 65% of field staff indicate a need for more streamlined procedures.

These findings align with observations by Cook and Pincus (2014) regarding the challenges of operationalizing integrated social protection approaches in Southeast Asian contexts, where institutional rigidities and capacity constraints often impede full realization of policy intentions.

#### Cross-Agency Program Integration

Recent initiatives demonstrate both potential and challenges in cross-agency implementation. The DOLE's participation in the Subcommittee on Social Protection and programs like TUPAD and DILP show commitment to integration. Notable examples include:

- **Projects Local Adaptation to Water Access (LAWA) and BINHI:** These collaborative initiatives between DSWD and DOLE provide comprehensive support to climate-vulnerable communities, combining water infrastructure development with income support through cash-for-work programs. This LAWA and BINHI partnership demonstrates effective integration of social protection with climate resilience objectives.
- **PCB:** The newly established PCB for Livelihoods and Employment, chaired by DOLE, creates formal mechanisms for resource alignment. However, implementation requires significant changes to existing program guidelines and targeting mechanisms.

#### Innovations and Adaptations

The Padayon model represents a significant innovation in program integration, specifically targeting 4Ps beneficiaries nearing program completion with comprehensive support packages. The COVID-19 pandemic also prompted adaptations in program delivery, including digital platforms for beneficiary engagement and streamlined coordination processes, many of which have been maintained post-pandemic.

## Implementation Challenges

Several key operational challenges persist across both internal and cross-agency implementation of convergence:

- **Local Capacity Variations:** LGU implementation capacity varies significantly, affecting program delivery quality. As one municipal social welfare officer explained, "We understand the importance of coordination, but often lack the staff and resources to implement all required processes."
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited fiscal and human resources affect program sustainability. Field interviews reveal that staffing shortages particularly impact coordination efforts.
- **Data Integration Issues:** While agencies maintain individual monitoring systems, lack of interoperability hampers coordination effectiveness.
- **Policy Barriers:** Current regulations prevent beneficial program combinations, such as simultaneous access to 4Ps and DOLE's livelihood programs. This restriction particularly affects extremely poor households who could benefit from integrated support.
- **Coordination Mechanisms:** Despite formal structures, operational-level integration remains inconsistent, with beneficiaries reporting disconnects between different agency services.

### *4.2.2. Inter-agency Coordination and Partnerships*

#### Coordination Frameworks and Operational Realities

The effectiveness of joint programming relies heavily on coordination mechanisms and partnership arrangements, as emphasized by Cook and Pincus (2014). At the national level, the Social Development Committee, with NEDA serving as Secretariat, functions as the primary platform for coordinating social protection initiatives. However, translating high-level coordination into operational integration remains a significant challenge, echoing observations by Gonzalez and Manasan (2002) on the persistent gaps between policy formulation and implementation in Philippine social protection systems. One NEDA official also noted, "While we have strong mechanisms for policy coordination, ensuring consistent implementation across agencies requires additional effort." This sentiment reflects the broader challenge of bridging the gap between policy intentions and ground-level realities, a recurring theme in social protection implementation across developing contexts (World Bank 2018).

Analysis of interviews with LGU officials, as shown in **Figure 3**, reveals 'coordination', 'implementation' and 'monitoring' as dominant themes in local-level perspectives on joint programming. These themes underscore both the centrality and complexity of coordination in program delivery. The visualization in Figure 3 also highlights related terms such as 'support', 'resources', and 'capacity', indicating the interconnected nature of coordination challenges at the local level. These findings align with World Bank (2018) assessments of implementation constraints in Philippine social protection programs. A city social welfare officer noted, "We can have all the coordination meetings we want, but without proper resources and staff capacity, implementation remains difficult." One municipal social welfare officer explained, "Coordination isn't just about formal meetings - it's about daily communication and problem-solving with our counterparts in different agencies." These insights highlight the multifaceted nature of coordination challenges, encompassing not only formal structures but also informal networks and day-to-day operational realities.

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## Partnership Modalities and Implementation Challenges

The study identified three distinct partnership approaches:

The study identified three distinct partnership approaches:

- The evolution of partnership approaches reflects broader trends in the development of social protection systems in the Philippines, as identified by Gonzalez and Manasan (2002). However, the persistence of implementation challenges suggests that more fundamental reforms may be necessary to achieve truly integrated service delivery. The word clouds in Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate how agency and LGU perspectives focus on service delivery and beneficiary

needs, reflecting a gradual shift from project-specific collaborations to more systematic approaches.

Systematic Partnerships demonstrate both promise and persistent challenges in implementation. The DSWD-DOLE partnership through the Subcommittee on Social Protection exemplifies this approach, with formal coordination mechanisms established at national and regional levels. As a regional DSWD director noted, “Building lasting partnerships takes more than formal agreements - it requires consistent engagement and mutual commitment.”

The sustainability of partnerships and coordination mechanisms between NGA and LGUs is also a key concern. Political transitions, staff turnover, and shifting priorities can disrupt established partnership arrangements. Some regions have developed innovative approaches to address these challenges, following recommendations from ADB (2015) for strengthening institutional capacity. These innovations include permanent coordination structures and formal knowledge management systems. These show promise but require broader adoption and institutional support to achieve lasting impact.

### Program Convergence and Resource Integration

The PCB represents a significant development in addressing program fragmentation. The PCB mechanism plays a vital role in aligning agency resources and ensuring efficient use of public funds. One of the key initiatives under PCB is the newly established PCB for Livelihood and Employment, chaired by DOLE. This PCB aims to integrate livelihood and employment programs across national agencies, facilitating the delivery of a comprehensive package of interventions to support vulnerable workers and communities. The PCB’s alignment with the Social Protection Operational Framework underscores its role in enhancing the reach and impact of government programs through convergence. By pooling resources and coordinating efforts, PCB can address gaps in service delivery, particularly for the extreme poor.

Current PCB for Livelihoods and Employment efforts focus on rationalizing livelihood and emergency employment programs across agencies to minimize duplication and enhance resource efficiency. However, DOLE regional offices report that complex approval processes and rigid budgeting cycles often constrain effective resource integration.

The PCB initiative responds to identified fragmentation in social protection and livelihood programs across government agencies. It demonstrates growing recognition of the need for integrated approaches to economic inclusion, as recommended by Whisson (2021) in analyses of graduation model implementation. This mechanism aims to:

- Align resource allocation with integrated programming objectives
- Facilitate cross-agency resource sharing
- Support comprehensive beneficiary support
- Enable innovation in service delivery

There is significant overlap in livelihood interventions, particularly among DSWD, DOLE, and the Department of Agriculture programs. This duplication contributes to increased administrative costs and reduced program efficiency. The PCB aims to address these issues through coordinated budget planning and resource allocation. However, DOLE regional offices report that existing bureaucratic processes and rigid budget cycles create barriers to flexible

resource deployment. As one regional director explained, “While we recognize the need for integrated programming, our current systems make it difficult to quickly realign resources in response to changing local needs.” These challenges are particularly evident in the implementation of integrated programs that require flexible resource allocation across agencies. These findings support World Bank (2018) assessments of institutional barriers to program integration.

### Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) Effectiveness

The effectiveness of formal partnership mechanisms, particularly Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs), varies significantly across regions. While MOAs provide essential frameworks for collaboration, their success depends heavily on local implementation capacity and leadership commitment. This finding supports observations of Acosta and Velarde (2015) as well as Albert and Dacuycuy (2017) about variations in program implementation performance across different contexts. Several LGU respondents emphasized that successful coordination often relies more on informal relationships and regular communication than on formal structures alone. As one DSWD field officer noted, “MOAs help formalize partnerships, but we need more detailed operational guidelines to make them work effectively.”

Key limitations in making use of MOAs include:

- **Operational Detail:** MOAs often provide broad frameworks without specific implementation guidance. A DSWD provincial coordinator noted, “While MOAs establish basic partnership parameters, they rarely address operational complexities we face in the field.”
- **Adaptation Flexibility:** Rigid MOA structures impede rapid response to changing circumstances. According to 70% of key informants, formal amendment processes often delay necessary operational adjustments.
- **Implementation Continuity:** Lengthy renewal procedures can disrupt service delivery, particularly affecting graduation approach implementation as described by Whisson (2021).

### Data Sharing and System Integration

Data sharing emerged as a critical coordination component, supporting Velarde and Albert's (2018) emphasis on the importance of integrated information systems, with current practices showing significant room for improvement. The Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) offers opportunities for improved beneficiary tracking (ADB 2015b), but technical capacity constraints often limit full utilization of available technology. As Figure 3 indicates through the prominence of 'monitoring' in local-level discussions, effective data management remains a key concern for implementing agencies.

Data integration challenges manifest at multiple levels. While national agencies have developed their own information management systems, these operate largely in isolation. The lack of interoperability creates significant barriers to beneficiary tracking and service coordination. For example, DSWD's beneficiary database cannot easily interface with DOLE's employment tracking system, making it difficult to identify opportunities for complementary support. Even within DSWD, beneficiary databases (of 4Ps, the Social Pension, and the Social Amelioration Program, also called Ayuda) are not easy to merge. The PhilSys initiative offers potential solutions through standardized identification and improved data sharing capabilities.

However, as one IT officer noted, “Technical capacity constraints at local levels often prevent us from fully utilizing these new systems.” This gap between technological potential and implementation capacity remains a key challenge in improving coordination effectiveness.

### Beneficiary Perspectives

The FGDs conducted as part of this study revealed that beneficiaries' priorities are closely aligned with the concept of coordinated service delivery. This alignment is evident in the frequent use of key terms such as 'assistance', 'livelihood', and 'training' during the feedback sessions, underscoring the beneficiaries' desire for comprehensive support. These findings emphasize the critical importance of implementing programs through integrated approaches, which can address multiple aspects of beneficiaries' needs simultaneously. Such integrated strategies can potentially lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes by combining various forms of assistance, livelihood support, and skill-building opportunities. This approach is supported by research, as Orbeta and Paqueo (2016) have noted the benefits of coordinated interventions in enhancing program effectiveness and maximizing positive impacts on beneficiaries.

### Operational Challenges and Coordination Barriers

Several key limitations affect coordination effectiveness:

1. **Implementation Guidelines:** MOAs often provide broad frameworks without specific operational guidance. As one DSWD provincial coordinator noted, "While MOAs establish basic partnership parameters, they rarely address operational complexities we face in the field."
2. **Institutional Flexibility:** According to 70% of key informants, rigid administrative structures impede rapid response to changing circumstances.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Limited fiscal and human resources affect the sustainability of coordination mechanisms, particularly at local levels.
4. **Technical Integration:** While agencies maintain individual monitoring systems, lack of interoperability hampers effective coordination across programs.

Strengthening coordination requires addressing both formal structures and informal relationships. Results of interviews point to the need for a more holistic approach to coordination that addresses resource needs, capacity building, and communication systems simultaneously. This aligns with recent recommendations from NEDA (2023) for enhancing social protection system integration. Success stories from various regions demonstrate that effective coordination is possible when proper resources, capacity, and communication systems align. However, achieving this alignment consistently across the country remains a significant challenge that requires sustained institutional commitment and support.

#### *4.2.3. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs)*

LGUs are integral to the success of joint programming, particularly in tailoring national-level programs to local needs. LGUs also play a critical role in identifying beneficiaries, coordinating with NGAs, and implementing programs at the community level. In joint programming, which aims to integrate various programs for greater impact, LGUs are responsible for aligning national social protection initiatives with local contexts. In many cases, LGUs have demonstrated innovative approaches by customizing these national programs to better serve

their communities, often using digital platforms for beneficiary identification and cross-LGU collaboration to pool resources for regional initiatives. These efforts enhance the reach and efficiency of joint programming, especially in areas with more capable LGUs.

### Devolution Context

LGUs play a critical role in translating national social protection policies into effective local implementation and devolved delivery of services. The implementation of Executive Order No. 138 (2021) on devolution has significantly expanded LGU responsibilities in social protection delivery, building on earlier decentralization efforts analyzed by Manasan and Castel (2010). This transition creates both opportunities and challenges for implementing graduation approaches through joint programming at the local level.

### Implementation Capacity and Program Integration

Our analysis reveals substantial variation in LGU implementation capacity across regions. As visualized in Figure 3, LGU concerns center heavily around implementation and coordination challenges. Particularly striking is the disparity between urban and rural LGUs in their ability to manage complex joint programming initiatives. According to around 80% of study participants from provinces, the main barriers to effective local implementation include:

- **Technical Capacity Constraints:** Many LGUs, especially in poorer regions, lack specialized staff for program integration. One provincial administrator explained, "While we understand the importance of integrated approaches, our limited technical staff makes coordinating multiple programs extremely challenging."
- **Resource Limitations:** LGUs report significant constraints in both financial and human resources. Field interviews revealed that 70% of municipalities lack dedicated budget lines for joint programming activities.
- **Data Management Challenges:** Local capacity for integrated beneficiary tracking and program monitoring varies significantly. As one municipal planning officer noted, "Without adequate data management systems, coordinating services across programs becomes nearly impossible."
- **Coordination Infrastructure:** Many LGUs lack formal mechanisms for regular inter-agency coordination, leading to fragmented service delivery.

Interviews showed that LGUs actively adapt national programs to meet local priorities, using approaches such as community outreach and empowerment. Moreover, it was noted that effective communication and regular field visits facilitated a better understanding of the programmatic impact and provided valuable feedback for improvements.

However, significant disparities exist in the capacities of LGUs, particularly in joint programming, where convergence of multiple programs requires strong governance and technical skills. Many LGUs, particularly in poorer or remote areas, face challenges in coordinating complex, multi-sectoral interventions due to resource constraints and lack of technical expertise. These LGUs often have limited budgets, insufficient personnel trained in program management, and weak institutional frameworks to support the integrated nature of joint programming. In such areas, the lack of continuity in local leadership—due to frequent

changes in elected officials—further complicates the consistent implementation of joint initiatives.

To strengthen the role of LGUs in joint programming, targeted capacity-building efforts are essential. National agencies must provide training to LGU personnel in areas such as data collection, program coordination, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure that local governments can effectively manage the complexities of joint programming. In addition, increasing financial support to under-resourced LGUs through performance-based grants or targeted funding mechanisms is critical. Collaborative efforts between LGUs, NGOs, and the private sector can also provide valuable technical assistance, helping local governments meet the demands of integrated programming and deliver more comprehensive services.

### Coordination with National Agencies

The relationship between LGUs and national agencies remains complex, particularly in the context of devolution. This complexity reflects broader challenges in Philippine governance identified by Balisacan and Hill (2003).

Effective joint programming relies on improved coordination between NGAs and LGUs to align national policies with local needs. Strengthening communication channels and governance structures at the local level is key to ensuring that national strategies are effectively implemented on the ground. With better support and enhanced capacities, LGUs can more effectively carry out their role in joint programming, ensuring that social protection and economic inclusion programs reach vulnerable communities and achieve sustainable, long-term impact across the country. Key informants emphasized that successful program implementation often depends on the quality of working relationships between local officials and national agency representatives. However, high turnover rates in both local leadership and agency staff can disrupt these relationships.

Results of DSWD-DOLE interviews (**Figure 4**) emphasize 'program', 'implementing agencies', 'beneficiaries', 'convergence' and 'support' as key themes, reflecting these agencies' focus on service delivery and beneficiary needs. This service-oriented perspective aligns with how LGUs reported that aligning the programs to their local context increased the effectiveness of service delivery and helped create trust with the community.

**Figure 4. DSWD-DOLE KII Word Cloud Summary**



Source: PIDS Transcripts of DSWD-DOLE KIIs for this Study

### Integration of Graduation Approaches

A critical finding from our research pertains to concern about implementing graduation approaches at the local level. Currently, LGUs face significant challenges in coordinating DSWD and DOLE programs to deliver comprehensive support packages. As highlighted by Whisson (2021), successful graduation approaches require integration of:

- Consumption support through 4Ps
- Livelihood assistance via DOLE programs
- Sustained coaching and mentoring

However, our interviews revealed that current program regulations often prevent this integration. A senior DSWD official explained, "While we recognize the potential of combining 4Ps with DOLE's livelihood programs, existing guidelines create artificial barriers between these interventions." This situation particularly affects extremely poor households who could benefit from simultaneous access to both social assistance and livelihood support.

### Partnership Sustainability Beyond Projects

As regards partnership sustainability, our research found that most LGU-level partnerships remain predominantly project-based. The LAWA and BINHI initiatives demonstrate successful collaboration but typically lack continuity beyond project timelines. However, some LGUs have developed innovative approaches to maintain partnership momentum:

- **Systematic Coordination Mechanisms:** Several municipalities have established permanent inter-agency coordination committees that meet regularly regardless of ongoing projects. As one city mayor described, "We've institutionalized monthly coordination meetings to ensure continuous dialogue between agencies."
- **Resource Pooling Arrangements:** Some LGUs have developed formal resource-sharing agreements that extend beyond specific projects. These arrangements include shared facilities, joint training programs, and integrated monitoring systems.
- **Long-term Planning Integration:** More advanced LGUs have incorporated joint programming into their local development plans, providing a framework for sustained collaboration.

### Operational Mechanisms and MOA Effectiveness

With regard to partnership modalities, our analysis of MOA effectiveness at the local level revealed several key findings. While MOAs provide necessary legal frameworks, their utility as coordination tools varies significantly. Successful LGUs have enhanced MOA effectiveness through:

- **Detailed Implementation Protocols:** Supplementary operational guidelines that specify day-to-day coordination procedures. According to field interviews, LGUs with such protocols report higher partnership satisfaction.
- **Flexible Amendment Processes:** Streamlined procedures for updating operational details without full MOA revision. As one municipal administrator noted, "Building

flexibility into our agreements helps us respond more quickly to implementation challenges."

- **Regular Review Mechanisms:** Established processes for periodic assessment and adjustment of partnership arrangements. This practice helps maintain alignment with changing local needs and capabilities.

### Resource Management and Local Innovation

Some LGUs have demonstrated remarkable innovation in adapting national programs to local contexts. Building on observations by Orbeta and Paqueo (2016) about local program adaptation, our study found examples of successful local initiatives in beneficiary targeting and service delivery integration. The Mayor of one municipality explained their approach: "We've developed a local database that helps us coordinate services across different national programs, making it easier to ensure comprehensive support for vulnerable families."

Key LGU innovations observed include:

- **Integrated Beneficiary Databases:** Several LGUs have developed local systems that track beneficiaries across multiple programs, enhancing service coordination.
- **Resource Pooling Mechanisms:** Some municipalities have established formal arrangements for sharing facilities and staff resources across programs.
- **Community-Based Monitoring:** Innovative approaches to tracking program outcomes through community engagement and participatory assessment.

However, resource constraints continue to affect implementation quality. Field interviews revealed that approximately 70% of LGUs report insufficient budgets for joint programming activities, particularly affecting staff capacity and monitoring systems. This finding aligns with World Bank (2018) assessments of local implementation challenges in social protection programs.

### Capacity Building and Technical Support

LGUs require sustained capacity building support to effectively manage joint programming initiatives. Key areas identified for strengthening include:

- **Program Management Skills:** Training in coordinating multiple interventions and managing complex stakeholder relationships
- **Data Management Capacity:** Technical support for developing and maintaining integrated monitoring systems
- **Resource Mobilization:** Guidance on accessing and optimizing various funding sources
- **Partnership Development:** Skills in building and maintaining effective collaborations with various stakeholders

The success of joint programming at the local level ultimately depends on building robust implementation capacity while ensuring adequate resource allocation. As one regional director

noted, "We need to move beyond project-based support to establish sustainable systems for program integration at the local level."

#### *4.2.4. Resource Allocation and Utilization*

Resource allocation and utilization for joint programming initiatives demonstrates both progress and persistent challenges in achieving efficient coordination across agencies. While the PCB framework provides a foundation for integrated resource management, as documented by DBM (2023), implementation barriers continue to affect program delivery.

NEDA plays a crucial role in ensuring priority programs' inclusion in the PDP and Public Investment Program (PIP) when these programs follow specific criteria established by NEDA (2023a), such as clear alignment with national development objectives, implementation readiness, and clear sustainable funding mechanisms. It was noted during interviews that if a program is listed in the PDP or PIP, it becomes a funding priority.

Field implementation reveals significant constraints in resource optimization. The limited fiscal space for implementing programs, both in terms of human and financial resources, necessitates efficient allocation and spending. This constraint underscores the importance of convergence as a strategy to share resources and conduct joint targeting effectively. Agencies have reported difficulties in fully utilizing allocated funds due to limited personnel and implementation capacity, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to resource management and program delivery. One specific challenge mentioned during interviews was the low budget allocation expected for 2025, which may affect the sustainability of certain programs. Further, there is a lack of understanding and ownership of the PDP and the PIP at the sectoral and LGU levels.

#### Program Integration and Resource Sharing

The PCB represents a significant evolution in resource coordination, establishing formal protocols for resource sharing across agencies. Innovative approaches to resource optimization have emerged at the regional level:

- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Combined delivery mechanisms have achieved 30% operational cost reduction in implementing areas. A DOLE regional director explained, "The new framework allows us to pool resources more effectively for comprehensive beneficiary support."
- **Shared Facilities:** Joint use of infrastructure and equipment improves resource efficiency. This enables simultaneous delivery of consumption support, livelihood assistance, and coaching services. Several municipalities report significant savings through facility sharing arrangements.
- **Pooled Training:** Combined capacity building programs maximize impact of limited training budgets.

Moving forward, key priorities for resource allocation include:

- **Strengthening PCB Implementation:** Enhanced mechanisms for cross-agency resource coordination, particularly supporting graduation approaches.

- **Local Capacity Enhancement:** Targeted investment in LGU implementation capacity, addressing gaps identified by Albert and Dacuycuy (2017).
- **Systematic Resource Integration:** Development of formal protocols for sustained resource sharing beyond project-based initiatives.

### Implementation Barriers

Resource constraints, identified in field interviews, significantly affect joint programming effectiveness. These include:

- **Fiscal Space Limitations:** Analysis of interview data reveals that 75% of implementing units report insufficient funding for integrated program delivery. This aligns with Cook and Pincus's (2014) findings about resource constraints in Southeast Asian social protection systems.
- **Timing Misalignment:** Agency budget cycles often fail to synchronize effectively. As one NEDA official explained, "Misaligned planning cycles complicate resource coordination for joint initiatives."
- **Flexibility Constraints:** Rigid budget categories limit adaptive resource use. Field implementers report difficulty adjusting allocations to meet emerging needs.
- **Personnel Capacity:** Limited staffing particularly affects field-level implementation. One municipal social welfare officer noted, "We often lack personnel needed for coordinated program delivery."
- **Technical Infrastructure:** Data integration and monitoring systems require significant investment. According to IT officers interviewed, many local units lack basic technological infrastructure for program coordination.
- **Monitoring Requirements:** Complex reporting procedures create additional administrative burden, with 70% of field officers reporting these requirements discourage resource sharing

#### *4.2.5. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems*

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are crucial for understanding the impact of joint programming. It gives insights on whether joint programming initiatives are meeting their intended objectives, such as reducing poverty and promoting economic inclusion. By tracking progress against key performance indicators (KPIs), M&E frameworks assess the effectiveness of interventions, tracks progress against key performance indicators, and identifies synergies or redundancies among multiple stakeholders. By generating evidence, M&E supports evidence-based decision-making, enabling policymakers to refine or scale up successful programs and enhance accountability and transparency in resource use. It also disaggregates data to uncover differential impacts on marginalized groups, such as poor families, women, youth, persons with disability, those in remote areas, ensuring inclusivity. M&E fosters adaptive learning by identifying what works, what doesn't, and why, particularly in addressing systemic challenges and responding to shocks like economic crises or natural disasters. It

measures the success of convergence efforts, evaluates the resilience of social protection systems, and supports advocacy by providing data to mobilize political and stakeholder support. Moreover, it contributes to global learning, allowing the Philippines to share insights and lessons on integrating social protection and economic inclusion effectively. The current M&E framework for joint programming demonstrates both institutional strengths and significant integration challenges across implementing agencies.

### National Framework and Coordination

NEDA utilizes indicators and interim targets outlined in the PDP Results Matrix to assess social protection outcomes (NEDA 2023a). This approach aligns with recommendations from international development partners for strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems (World Bank 2018). However, as Reyes et al. (2015) note, the fragmentation of monitoring systems across agencies poses significant challenges for comprehensive program assessment.

### Agency-Level Systems

The DSWD conducts monthly monitoring in its various information systems (such as 4Ps and SLP), which tracks progress of beneficiaries from social preparation through program implementation. This system builds on earlier monitoring frameworks analyzed by Fernandez and Olfindo (2011) in their early assessment of 4Ps implementation. Similarly, DOLE's information management system for TUPAD beneficiaries includes features for detecting duplication and validating beneficiary data, addressing concerns raised by Schelzig (2015) about targeting accuracy. However, within a Department, a program typically may not even be able to access data in other programs pertinent to their beneficiaries.

### Integration Challenges

Despite these agency-level systems, significant challenges persist in achieving integrated monitoring and evaluation. The Asian Development Bank (2015a) identified similar challenges across Southeast Asia, particularly in coordinating monitoring across multiple implementing agencies. Key informants consistently highlighted data sharing limitations and technical barriers to system integration. As one DSWD regional director explained, "While we have robust internal monitoring systems, sharing data with other agencies and even within the Department remains complicated by both technical and procedural constraints." Key barriers to effective monitoring integration identified include:

- **Data Sharing Limitations:** Technical and procedural constraints impede information exchange between agencies
- **Capacity Variations:** Both NGA and LGU monitoring capabilities of data systems show significant differences across the country.
- **Quality Control:** Inconsistent data collection standards in project databases affect monitoring information reliability.

### Implementation Monitoring

Field-level monitoring practices show considerable variation across regions. Roelen et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of integrated case management and referral systems, yet our findings indicate that such integration remains limited in practice. Local monitoring capacity varies significantly, with some LGUs developing innovative tracking systems while others struggle with basic monitoring requirements.

## Impact Assessment Capabilities

The evaluation of joint programming effectiveness faces several constraints identified through our key informant interviews. These align with challenges documented by Albert and Dacuycuy (2017) in their assessment of DSWD's convergence strategies. Limited analytical capacity at local levels particularly affects the ability to conduct comprehensive impact assessments.

## Data Quality and Management

Data quality emerged as a significant concern across all governance levels. Building on Cook and Pincus's (2014) analysis of social protection systems, our study found that inconsistent data collection standards and limited validation mechanisms affect the reliability of monitoring information. The CBMS shows promise in addressing local-level monitoring needs, as suggested by Acosta et al. (2018), especially now that the PSA has been given this extra mandate to ensure common standards in measurement for local service delivery.

## Technology Integration

Recent technological innovations in monitoring systems show promise but face implementation challenges. The Philippine Identification System (PhilSys), highlighted by ADB (2015b) as a potential game-changer for program monitoring, offers opportunities for improved beneficiary tracking, but faces implementation challenges?

- **Technical Constraints:** Limited local capacity often prevents full utilization of available systems
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many areas lack necessary technological infrastructure
- **Integration Barriers:** Interoperability issues between agency and LGU systems persist that also affect the possible use of PhilSys data.

## Evaluation Framework Development

The development of comprehensive evaluation frameworks remains a work in progress. While Manasan (2009) proposed key elements for social protection evaluation, our findings suggest that implementing these recommendations has been challenging. Several key informants emphasized the need for standardized evaluation protocols that can accommodate diverse program objectives while maintaining comparability.

Moving forward, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems requires attention to both technical and institutional factors. This aligns with recommendations from recent assessments (World Bank 2018; NEDA 2023b) emphasizing the need for integrated approaches to program assessment. Key priorities include developing common results frameworks, improving data sharing protocols, and building evaluation capacity at all implementation levels.

Despite the strengths of these agency-specific M&E systems in providing valuable insights to key decision makers at the NGAs, there is a recognized need for more integrated and interoperable monitoring systems across agencies to enhance the overall effectiveness of joint programming initiatives. The development of such integrated systems could facilitate more comprehensive tracking of beneficiaries across different programs, enable more effective inter-

agency referrals, and provide a more holistic view of the impact of social protection and economic inclusion efforts.

The study notes that M&E are key components for the success of joint programming. Interviews and FGDs pointed out the importance of beneficiary feedback and regular field visits, which were instrumental in identifying areas that required adjustments. Establishing a systematic feedback mechanism, as suggested by several LGU representatives, would further enhance the effectiveness of program monitoring.

Incorporating regular field visits and beneficiary interviews as part of the M&E system help in gathering first-hand information regarding program success and challenges. This practice, if adopted more consistently, can significantly improve responsiveness and effectiveness. The introduction of a centralized database to facilitate data sharing among different stakeholders was also highlighted as an area that requires further strengthening.

Priority areas for strengthening M&E systems thus include developing common results frameworks, improving data sharing protocols, building evaluation capacity at all implementation levels, and establishing systematic feedback mechanisms incorporating regular field visits and beneficiary interviews.

#### *4.2.6. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection*

Targeting and beneficiary selection are key areas of focus and improvement in joint programming, with efforts being made to harmonize registries and leverage the PhilSys for improved targeting. The CBMS is being implemented to provide more accurate and up-to-date data for identifying vulnerable sectors and communities. This harmonization of registries across government agencies, coupled with the use of the national ID system, aims to avoid gaps and overlaps in program delivery.

While progress has been made in these efforts, challenges remain in avoiding duplication of beneficiaries across programs and ensuring that individuals are matched to the most appropriate interventions due to lack of data systems interoperability. Discussions revealed instances where beneficiaries may be benefiting from multiple programs (though the extent of their actual vulnerabilities may not be proportional to their needs), underscoring the need for better coordination in assigning beneficiaries to specific interventions. There is also a need for clear indicators to determine which programs are best suited for different beneficiary profiles, considering factors such as poverty status (or level), employment status, and specific vulnerabilities (and intersectionalities).

Developing a unified database of beneficiaries has been identified as a crucial step in improving targeting and reducing overlap at the NGA level and across NGAs. While progress has been made in this area, the full implementation and integration of such a system across all relevant NGAs remain ongoing challenges. The potential of the PhilSys as a foundational system for social protection programs offers promising opportunities for improved targeting and service delivery.

Beneficiary selection processes are a significant aspect of ensuring that programs reach the intended target groups. However, challenges related to duplication of beneficiaries and unclear targeting criteria were frequently mentioned. Several respondents suggested that a clear and standardized set of targeting guidelines, accompanied by data-sharing agreements, would

reduce inefficiencies. The need for real-time updates of the list of beneficiaries and improved targeting mechanisms was also emphasized to ensure that the intended populations benefit from interventions.

#### *4.2.7. Joint Program Implementation Process*

The implementation process of joint programming has gradually evolved over time, with agencies adapting their approaches based on lessons learned and changing contexts. The interviews revealed a continuous process of refinement and improvement in program delivery mechanisms. For instance, DSWD has worked on streamlining its SLP, reducing the number of processes from 61 to 35, with plans for further simplification. This focus on process improvement reflects a commitment to enhancing efficiency and responsiveness in program delivery.

Challenges cited related to timelines, budgeting, and maintaining shared goals. To address these issues, stakeholders have suggested more frequent inter-agency meetings and sustained support from central offices. These recommendations underscore the importance of having a clear structure and timeline for activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic, while presenting unprecedented challenges, catalyzed significant innovations in program implementation and demonstrated the potential for rapid adaptation in joint programming approaches. Agencies demonstrated remarkable agility in modifying delivery mechanisms to comply with health protocols while maintaining service continuity. For instance, DSWD successfully transitioned its Family Development Sessions in the 4Ps program to online platforms, achieving 82% participant engagement rates despite the shift. This digital transformation extended beyond simple program delivery to encompass new approaches to inter-agency coordination, beneficiary tracking, and resource allocation. The innovations born of necessity during the pandemic period have generated valuable insights into program flexibility and the transformative potential of technology in service delivery. As one DSWD provincial coordinator noted, "The crisis forced us to reimagine how we coordinate and deliver services. Many of the digital solutions we developed under pressure have become permanent improvements to our joint programming approach."

Agencies have demonstrated increasing sophistication in developing comprehensive, long-term approaches to program implementation, particularly in the context of joint programming initiatives. DSWD's strategic expansion of its SLP implementation timeframe from 2 to 5 years represents a fundamental shift toward more sustained interventions based on evidence of beneficiary progression patterns. This expansion was accompanied by the introduction of enhanced case management protocols and strengthened coordination mechanisms with DOLE's complementary programs. The extended timeline allows for:

- More thorough assessment of household readiness for livelihood interventions
- Sequential layering of support services across agencies
- Implementation of graduation approach principles
- Improved monitoring of household progress
- Enhanced coordination with local government support systems

Similarly, DOLE has reinforced its emphasis on coaching and mentoring in livelihood programs, recognizing through field evidence that technical skills transfer alone is insufficient for sustainable outcomes. Field interviews revealed that beneficiaries receiving integrated

coaching support were 42% more likely to maintain their enterprises beyond the first year compared to those receiving only initial training

#### 4.2.8. Challenges and Opportunities

Joint programming has demonstrated promise, but several challenges persist, particularly around resource constraints. Limited human and financial resources across NGAs and LGUs constrain the scale and reach of interventions. This challenge is particularly significant as agencies and local governments aim to expand program coverage and deepen support for beneficiaries. Discussions highlighted the need for additional staffing, particularly for specialized roles such as livelihood development specialists, to enhance program effectiveness.

Coordination between agencies continues to face significant challenges, particularly with regard to duplication of efforts, inconsistencies in budget allocation, and data-sharing limitations. These issues were recurrent themes during discussions with local and national agencies, emphasizing the need for enhanced centralized databases and clearly defined communication protocols. In addition, budget constraints and the lack of a unified communication channel often led to delays and inefficiencies.

Despite these challenges, opportunities for enhancing joint programming exist. The findings underscore the importance of formalizing partnerships and ensuring that MOAs are signed at the earliest stages of program planning to reduce ambiguities. FGDs (**Figure 5**) highlight 'assistance', 'livelihood', and 'training' as primary concerns of beneficiaries, suggesting opportunities for enhancing program impact by strengthening these core components. These beneficiary perspectives reinforce the importance of capacity building and skills development in joint programming initiatives.

### Figure 5. FGD Word Cloud Summary



Source: PIDS Transcripts of FGDs for this Study

Policy coherence and consistent implementation across national and local levels remain persistent challenges. National-level agreements and strategies do not always translate effectively to regional or local implementation, underscoring the need to strengthen communication channels and ensure that joint programming principles are well-understood and consistently applied across all levels of governance.

Data systems play a pivotal role in joint programming by enabling effective targeting, monitoring, and case management. Data sharing and integration remain significant challenges, with many agencies being territorial about their data and systems. While progress has been made in developing agency-specific information systems, the lack of full interoperability across these systems hinders comprehensive beneficiary tracking and seamless service delivery across programs. The development of integrated case management systems, such as DSWD's initiative for electronic case management, presents an opportunity to address these challenges and facilitate more coordinated service delivery. While the Data Privacy Act provides important protections, it has also made information sharing more complex, requiring detailed MOAs and security protocols between agencies. The PhilSys and CBMS initiatives offer opportunities for integration with program-specific databases like the DSWD programs such as SLP, 4Ps, Social Pension, and DOLE's TUPAD offers an opportunity to create a unified beneficiary database, but successful implementation will require agencies to move beyond territorial mindsets toward ensuring data systems interoperability and accessibility of databases within and across agencies. Formal data-sharing agreements and protocols are essential to operationalize these systems, allowing agencies to track beneficiaries holistically and align interventions. By leveraging these technologies, joint programming can more effectively address the needs of the extreme poor while minimizing duplication of efforts.

Additionally, agencies' focus on their own targets within Performance Management Systems can sometimes hinder collaborative efforts. The Anti-Red Tape Law's emphasis on individual agency timelines was also noted as a potential barrier to additional collaborative initiatives. Furthermore, changes in administration, whether from the political six-year cycle or leadership in a department affected the strength and support for convergence, with lack of continuity in support for convergence policy.

Resource allocation and procurement processes also present significant barriers to effective joint programming. Current procurement rules often force agencies to work in silos rather than facilitating collaborative efforts. There is a need to streamline these processes while maintaining accountability, potentially through:

- Development of joint procurement guidelines for multi-agency programs
- Harmonization of reporting requirements across agencies
- Creation of specific budget lines for joint programming initiatives
- Establishment of clear cost-sharing mechanisms for shared resources.

Despite these challenges, several opportunities have been identified. The growing recognition of convergence as a strategic approach across government agencies provides a favorable environment for strengthening joint programming. The ongoing development of the Social Protection Floor and efforts to finalize a Social Protection Communication Plan offer additional opportunities to institutionalize integrated approaches to social protection and economic inclusion.

#### *4.2.9. Best Practices and Innovations*

Several best practices emerged from the study, offering insights into improving joint programming efforts. The FGDs revealed that an emphasis on empowerment, increased community outreach, and effective inter-agency communication are some of the best practices contributing to the success of joint programming initiatives. For instance, participants appreciated the hands-on involvement of agency staff and the tailored services, which made a significant difference in the implementation's efficacy.

DSWD's Padayon model for convergence of efforts exemplifies the effectiveness of integrated approaches in social protection and livelihood development. By seamlessly blending various support mechanisms, the Padayon model offers a holistic pathway for beneficiaries transitioning out of the 4Ps, ensuring that they are not only lifted out of immediate poverty but also equipped with the tools necessary for sustained economic independence. This comprehensive support encompasses financial assistance, skills training, access to credit, and linkage to essential services such as healthcare and education, creating a robust framework that addresses the multifaceted nature of poverty. The program offers valuable lessons in program design and implementation for sustainable poverty reduction (Ito et al. 2023).

- One of the key lessons from the Padayon model is the importance of integration and convergence of services. By coordinating efforts across different sectors and programs, the model minimizes fragmentation and ensures that beneficiaries receive consistent and complementary support. This integrated approach enhances the efficiency of resource utilization and maximizes the impact of interventions, demonstrating that siloed programs may fall short in addressing the complex challenges faced by impoverished communities.
- Another significant lesson is the emphasis on tailored and beneficiary-centered program design. The Padayon model recognizes that each beneficiary has unique needs and circumstances. By adopting a personalized approach, the program can provide targeted assistance that effectively addresses individual barriers to economic stability. This customization increases the likelihood of successful outcomes, as interventions are more relevant and responsive to the specific contexts of the beneficiaries.
- Additionally, the Padayon model underscores the importance of sustainable livelihood development. Beyond providing immediate financial aid, the model invests in capacity-building initiatives such as vocational training and entrepreneurship support. This focus on developing sustainable income-generating activities ensures that beneficiaries are empowered to maintain their livelihoods independently in the long term, reducing reliance on ongoing assistance.
- Monitoring and evaluation emerge as critical components of the Padayon model, offering valuable insights into program effectiveness and areas for improvement. By systematically tracking progress and outcomes, the model facilitates data-driven decision-making and adaptive management, allowing for continuous refinement of strategies to better serve beneficiaries.
- Furthermore, the Padayon model highlights the role of community involvement and ownership in the success of social protection programs. Engaging local communities fosters a sense of responsibility and collaboration, enhancing the relevance and acceptance of the program. This grassroots involvement not only strengthens the support network for beneficiaries but also promotes the sustainability of interventions by embedding them within the community fabric.
- Lastly, the Padayon model provides a blueprint for scalability and replication in other contexts. Its integrated and comprehensive framework serves as a model for designing and implementing sustainable poverty reduction programs elsewhere, demonstrating that multifaceted approaches can yield significant and lasting improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable populations.

In addition to the comprehensive support provided by the Padayon model, insights from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) highlight the critical role of agricultural sustainability and resource management in fostering resilient livelihoods. According to the FAO (2019), integrating sustainable agricultural practices not only enhances food security but

also empowers beneficiaries by diversifying income sources and reducing vulnerability to environmental shocks. By aligning the Padayon model with FAO's recommendations, the program can incorporate training on sustainable farming techniques, promote access to eco-friendly technologies, and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. This synergy not only strengthens the economic stability of beneficiaries but also contributes to environmental conservation, thereby supporting long-term poverty reduction and community resilience.

In summary, DSWD's Padayon model offers several critical lessons in program design and implementation for sustainable poverty reduction. Its emphasis on integrated service delivery, personalized support, sustainable livelihood development, robust monitoring, community engagement, and scalability provides a valuable framework for other social protection initiatives aiming to achieve long-term economic stability and resilience among beneficiaries.

DOLE's strategic partnerships for addressing specific issues, such as interventions for former rebels under the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), showcase the potential for targeted, multi-agency approaches to complex socio-economic challenges. These partnerships demonstrate how joint programming can be effectively applied to address sector-specific needs while contributing to broader social protection and economic inclusion goals.

DOLE's strategic partnerships demonstrate the potential for targeted, multi-agency approaches to address complex socio-economic challenges. For example:

- Partnerships providing interventions for former rebels under the NTF-ELCAC and programs toward zero hunger have successfully mobilized resources across sectors to address urgent community needs.
- Programs such as the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) showcase how inter-agency task forces and MOAs can create synergies to assist displaced transport workers. Under this program, the DILP provides livelihood support, while other agencies address complementary needs, such as skills training and enterprise development.

These examples underline the importance of integrating program resources and leveraging partnerships to achieve greater impact, aligning with the guiding principles of the Social Protection Operational Framework.

The development of integrated electronic case management systems, such as DSWD's Integrated Case Management System (ICMS), shows promise in facilitating faster beneficiary referrals and improving coordination among service providers. These technological innovations have the potential to significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of joint programming efforts by enabling more seamless information sharing and service coordination across agencies and programs. One interviewee mentioned that the inclusion of LGUs and NGOs in the system is a positive step towards facilitating smoother transactions and coordination at the local level.

One of the key innovations identified also was the use of digital tools and social media to maintain continuous communication with beneficiaries. This approach proved particularly useful during the pandemic, where physical meetings were restricted. Post-pandemic, these tools continue to be utilized to expand the reach of programs, enabling more frequent engagement with beneficiaries and facilitating the delivery of services to a larger population. Field officers report that digital platforms now enable them to reach 40% more beneficiaries

compared to traditional methods alone, while reducing coordination costs by approximately 30%. Additionally, community-led initiatives were seen as instrumental in adapting services to local contexts, improving participation rates, and ultimately enhancing program impact. However, digital engagement varies significantly across regions, with approximately 65% of urban beneficiaries actively using these platforms compared to only 35% in rural areas, highlighting the need to maintain hybrid communication approaches that combine both digital and traditional outreach methods.

Analysis of successful joint programming initiatives reveals several critical success factors that contribute to effective implementation. Fundamental to these successes are clear governance structures with well-defined roles and accountability mechanisms, alongside formal protocols for resolving inter-agency conflicts when they arise. Programs that have shown positive results typically feature shared performance metrics that actively incentivize collaboration rather than competition between agencies. These successful initiatives are also characterized by regular coordination meetings at both strategic and operational levels, ensuring consistent communication and alignment of efforts. Additionally, joint planning and budgeting processes have proven essential for creating truly integrated programs rather than merely parallel efforts. The concept of 'whole of government' needs to move beyond rhetoric to operational reality through concrete mechanisms and structures. This transformation requires developing detailed protocols for inter-agency coordination that specify how different government bodies should work together in practice. Essential to this approach is the establishment of integrated data systems that enable real-time information sharing, accompanied by common targeting and referral mechanisms that ensure beneficiaries receive comprehensive support. Supporting these operational elements should be unified monitoring and evaluation frameworks that track cross-agency outcomes, along with joint capacity building initiatives that foster a shared understanding and approach across different government entities.

Several major pain points continue to challenge effective joint programming implementation. Perhaps most significantly, territorial behaviors and institutional resistance to sharing control often impede collaborative efforts. This is compounded by misaligned planning and budgeting cycles across different agencies, making it difficult to synchronize joint initiatives. Technical challenges persist in the form of incompatible data systems and reporting requirements, while more fundamental issues arise from differing organizational cultures and working styles among participating agencies. These challenges are further exacerbated by complex approval processes for joint initiatives, which can slow implementation and discourage innovation in program design and delivery.

#### *4.2.10. Sustainability and Future Directions*

Looking towards the future, sustainability and scalability of joint programming efforts are key considerations. Sustainability remains a core concern for joint programming in the Philippines. Sustaining joint programming efforts requires a multi-year targeting approach and strong legal frameworks, as emphasized by various staff and officials from both DSWD and DOLE. By ensuring continuity and stability through legislation, joint programs can effectively adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of vulnerable populations.

The study also found that increasing funding stability and improving long-term planning capabilities of LGUs would greatly enhance the sustainability of these programs. Multi-year budget planning, combined with strategic partnerships and legal backing, was seen as essential for achieving sustainable outcomes.

The development of the Social Protection Floor work plan aims to institutionalize a comprehensive set of social protection guarantees, providing a framework for more integrated and sustainable social protection interventions. This initiative has the potential to create a more coherent and comprehensive social protection system that addresses vulnerabilities across the life cycle. With the approval of the SP Floor, the government is currently working on the SP Floor work plan to guide implementing agencies as well as the LGUs on how to operationalize the Social Protection Floor.

Several interviewees pointed out the need for a formal structure to enable convergence, emphasizing that beneficiaries require several interventions over a long period to escape poverty. Further, institution building is critical, particularly at the local level, especially given that the terms of offices of local chief executives are shorter than that of national leaders. Sustained institutional support, policy coherence, and long-term planning are critical to effectively implement joint programming initiatives.

Efforts to finalize and implement a Social Protection Communication Plan seek to mobilize support for integrated social protection systems. This plan recognizes the importance of effective communication in building public understanding and support for joint programming initiatives, which is crucial for their long-term sustainability and impact.

The full implementation of the CBMS is expected to provide more accurate and timely data for program targeting and design. This system has the potential to significantly enhance the precision and responsiveness of social protection and economic inclusion interventions, enabling more effective allocation of resources and tailoring of programs to local needs.

While programs like Padayon show promise, they remain largely anchored within specific departments rather than representing truly integrated inter-agency efforts. Moving forward, there is a need to:

1. Design programs from the ground up as multi-agency initiatives
2. Develop formal frameworks for LGU involvement from program conception
3. Create institutional mechanisms that outlast individual programs
4. Establish clear protocols for joint decision-making and resource sharing
5. Build integrated monitoring systems that track cross-agency outcomes.

In conclusion, while significant progress has been made in implementing joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion in the Philippines, there remain opportunities for enhancing coordination, improving targeting mechanisms, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems. The experiences and insights gathered from these initial interviews provide valuable guidance for refining and expanding joint programming efforts to more effectively address poverty and vulnerability in the country. Findings underscore the complexity of implementing convergence strategies and the ongoing need for adaptive management and policy refinement in the pursuit of more effective social protection programs. Moving forward, continued emphasis on inter-agency collaboration, capacity building at the local level, and leveraging technological innovations will be crucial in realizing the full potential of joint programming in achieving sustainable poverty reduction and inclusive growth.

## 5. Summary, Policy Implications, and Ways Forward

The assessment of joint programming implementation reveals both promising developments and persistent challenges in the Philippines' approach to integrated social protection and economic inclusion. The following synthesis of key findings, policy implications, and recommendations builds on the empirical evidence gathered through this study and aims to provide actionable guidance for strengthening joint programming efforts.

### 5.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study has revealed both significant progress and persistent challenges in the implementation of joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion in the Philippines. The key findings can be summarized as follows:

- **Evolution of joint programming:** There has been a gradual evolution in joint programming efforts, with agencies like DSWD, DOLE, and NEDA developing various mechanisms for coordination and integration of programs. The establishment of the Social Development Committee and the implementation of the Program Convergence Budgeting strategy represent significant steps towards more integrated approaches to social protection and economic inclusion.
- **Inter-agency coordination:** While structures like the Social Development Committee exist for high-level coordination, challenges remain in operationalizing joint efforts at the implementation level. The use of Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) has been instrumental in formalizing partnerships, but ensuring consistent implementation across all levels remains a challenge.
- **Important Role of LGUs:** Local governments play a crucial role in program delivery, but their capacity and engagement levels vary significantly across the country. The need for capacity building at the local level has been consistently emphasized by key informants from various agencies.
- **Resource constraints:** Limited human and financial resources across agencies continue to constrain the scale and effectiveness of joint programming efforts. The challenge of efficient resource allocation and utilization was highlighted by representatives from NEDA, DSWD, and DOLE.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** While agency-specific systems exist, there is a need for more integrated and interoperable monitoring systems to enhance overall program effectiveness. The development of systems like the 4Ps and SLP information systems at DSWD and DOLE's TUPAD management system represent progress, but full integration remains a goal as other programs even within a Department cannot access data outside of their programs.
- **Targeting and beneficiary selection:** Efforts to harmonize registries and leverage the PhilSys show promise, but challenges in avoiding duplication and ensuring appropriate program assignment persist. The ongoing implementation of the CBMS is expected to improve targeting accuracy.

- **Innovation and best practices:** Initiatives like DSWD's Padayon model and DOLE's strategic partnerships under the PUVMP, or demonstrate the potential for effective joint programming approaches. The development of integrated electronic case management systems, such as DSWD's ICMS, shows promise for improving coordination and service delivery.

## 5.2. Policy Implications

Based on these findings, several key policy implications emerge:

1. **Integration of Graduation Approaches:** Social protection policies should explicitly incorporate graduation pathways within existing convergence mechanisms. This includes developing clear criteria for identifying households ready for graduation programming, creating systematic linkages between social assistance and livelihood development programs, and establishing flexible re-entry mechanisms for graduated households who may need renewed support.
2. **Enhanced Policy Coherence:** Policies must ensure greater alignment between national frameworks and local implementation, with specific focus on cross-sectoral coordination to prevent graduates from falling into "no support" situations. This requires clear protocols for transitioning beneficiaries between different types of support and establishing mechanisms for policy dissemination and localization under devolution.
3. **Strengthening Coordination Mechanisms:** Operational-level coordination should be reinforced through formalized protocols for inter-agency collaboration, integration of graduation components into existing social protection programs, and clear delineation of roles between agencies providing complementary services.
4. **Adaptive Program Design:** Policies should promote flexible and responsive programming that allows for customization based on local market conditions and vulnerabilities of targeted beneficiaries, incorporates digital solutions for cost-effective service delivery, and enables rapid adjustment to emerging needs and crises.
5. **Resource Optimization:** Policies should promote efficient resource use through leveraging existing government systems and infrastructure for graduation programming, exploring cost-effective delivery mechanisms like digital payments and community-based coaching, and strengthening PCB to support integrated interventions.
6. **Data Integration:** Policies should facilitate comprehensive monitoring through unified tracking systems for graduation progress, interoperable beneficiary databases across agencies, and integration of PhilSys and CBMS for improved targeting.
7. **Capacity Building:** Investment in implementation capacity should focus on training staff in graduation approach principles and methods, building technical expertise in integrated case management, and strengthening LGU capacity for coordinated service delivery.

8. **Sustainable Exit Strategies:** Policies should ensure responsible graduation by establishing clear welfare improvement indicators, creating pathways to other forms of social protection post-graduation, and maintaining monitoring systems to track sustained progress.
9. **Institutionalizing best practices:** There is a need for policies that facilitate the scaling up and institutionalization of successful joint programming models and innovations, such as the Padayon model and integrated case management systems.

### 5.3. *Ways Forward*

Based on the findings and policy implications, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion in the Philippines:

1. **Develop a comprehensive joint programming framework:** A robust national framework for joint programming is essential to align the efforts of government agencies and stakeholders in addressing extreme poverty. This framework should define clear principles, objectives, and operational guidelines for joint programming across agencies and governance levels, with specific focus on addressing extreme poverty. Developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, the framework should formalize roles and responsibilities at all governance levels. It must also ensure alignment with the PDP and be formally adopted at the highest levels of government to secure political and institutional commitment. The framework should explicitly outline:
  - Targeting mechanisms for identifying and prioritizing extremely poor households
  - Clear pathways for graduation from extreme poverty through integrated interventions
  - Specific roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder in supporting extremely poor households
  - Resource allocation protocols prioritizing areas with high concentrations of extreme poverty
  - Monitoring systems tracking household progression out of extreme poverty

An initial proposed framework in Annex 4 offers a structured roadmap and can serve as a starting point for further refinement through consultations and pilot testing.

2. **Strengthen local implementation capacity:** Invest in comprehensive capacity building programs for LGUs, focusing on enhancing technical skills, program management capabilities, and understanding of joint programming principles. This could include the development of standardized training modules, peer learning networks, and mentorship programs.
3. **Enhance data systems and interoperability:** Accelerate efforts to develop integrated data systems that allow for seamless information sharing and beneficiary tracking across programs and agencies. This should leverage the potential of the PhilSys and CBMS, and should include the development of clear data sharing protocols and privacy safeguards.

4. **Institutionalize coordination mechanisms:** Establish or strengthen coordination mechanisms at both strategic and operational levels, ensuring clear delineation of roles and responsibilities across agencies and governance levels. This could include the creation of joint programming units or focal points within each agency and the establishment of regular inter-agency coordination meetings at regional and local levels.
5. **Promote evidence-based policymaking:** Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to generate robust evidence on the effectiveness of joint programming efforts. This should include the development of common indicators for assessing the impact of integrated interventions and the regular conduct of rigorous impact evaluations.
6. **Innovate in resource mobilization and allocation:** Explore innovative financing mechanisms and resource allocation strategies to enhance the fiscal space for joint programming initiatives. This could include expanding public-private partnerships, results-based financing approaches, and the exploration of social impact bonds.
7. **Scale up successful models:** Identify and systematically scale up successful joint programming models and innovations, such as the Padayon model, adapting them as necessary to different contexts across the country. This should be accompanied by knowledge sharing mechanisms to disseminate lessons learned and best practices.
10. **Enhance beneficiary engagement:** Develop mechanisms for more meaningful beneficiary participation in program design, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that joint programming efforts are responsive to local needs and contexts. This could include the establishment of beneficiary feedback loops and the inclusion of beneficiary representatives in local program oversight committees.
11. **Strengthen policy advocacy:** Engage in sustained policy advocacy to maintain political support for joint programming initiatives across changes in administration, both at national and local levels. This should include efforts to build a broad-based coalition of supporters for integrated social protection approaches.
12. **Promote continuous learning and adaptation:** Establish platforms for regular knowledge sharing and learning across agencies and governance levels, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in joint programming efforts. This could include the establishment of a national learning network on joint programming and the regular convening of practitioner forums.

A graduation approach should be embedded within the joint programming framework to guide beneficiaries toward sustainable economic independence. This requires:

- Coordinating livelihood, cash transfers, and coaching to provide a comprehensive support package.
- Developing graduated support mechanisms that adjust assistance based on household capacity and progress.
- Aligning interventions with the goals of the Social Protection Operational Framework, particularly its emphasis on resilience and inclusivity.

The way forward also necessitates institutionalizing partnerships, such as those exemplified by the newly created PCB for Livelihood and Employment, to streamline efforts and ensure sustained impact. By prioritizing convergence at all governance levels, the Philippines can build on its existing strengths and innovations to create a more integrated, effective, and responsive system of social protection and economic inclusion. This will be crucial in achieving the ambitious poverty reduction targets set out in the current PDP and in building a more resilient and inclusive society.

The success of these efforts will depend on sustained political commitment, effective inter-agency collaboration, and the active engagement of beneficiaries and communities. As the country continues to grapple with complex development challenges, including the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, the importance of well-coordinated and responsive social protection and economic inclusion programs cannot be overstated. Joint programming, when effectively implemented, has the potential to significantly enhance the impact of public interventions, contributing to sustainable reduction of extreme poverty and attaining inclusive growth in the Philippines.

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## Annex 1. Lists of Legal and Executive Instruments on Social Protection, Economic Inclusion and Joint Programming

<b>Box 2. Key Laws and Executive Orders Governing Social Protection and Joint Programming</b>	
1. Presidential Decree No. 603 (1974)	Codifies laws and regulations on child and youth welfare, promoting the rights and welfare of children and youth.
2. Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 (1983)	Enhances the mobility of disabled persons by requiring buildings, institutions, establishments, and public utilities to install facilities and other devices.
3. Republic Act No. 7432 (1992)	Grants benefits and special privileges to senior citizens, promoting their welfare and well-being.
4. Republic Act No. 7277 (1992)	Provides for the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of disabled persons and their integration into the mainstream of society.
5. Administrative Order No. 194, s. 1995 <sup>4</sup>	Providing For The Adoption Of The Social Reform Agenda Convergence Policy And Its Operationalization, And For Other Purposes
6. Republic Act No. 7875 (1995)	Establishes the National Health Insurance Program to provide health insurance coverage and ensure affordable and accessible healthcare services for all Filipinos.
7. Executive Order No. 369, s. 1996 <sup>5</sup>	Creating The Social Protection Coordinating Committee To Harmonize And Coordinate Social Protection Policies And Programs
8. Executive Order No. 386, s. 1996 <sup>6</sup>	Amending Certain Provisions Of Executive Order No. 369, Dated September 6, 1996 Which Created The Social Protection Coordinating Committee To Harmonize And Coordinate Social Protection Policies And Programs
9. Republic Act No. 8425 (1997)	Institutionalizes the Social Reform Agenda, establishing the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) to ensure sustained and comprehensive poverty alleviation.
10. Republic Act No. 8371 (1997)	Recognizes, protects, and promotes the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples.
11. Republic Act No. 8291 (1997)	Strengthens the government insurance system, providing comprehensive benefits to government employees.
12. Republic Act No. 8282 (1997)	Strengthens the social security system to provide greater social protection.
13. Republic Act No. 9231 (2003)	Provides for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor and affords stronger protection for working children.
14. Republic Act No. 9262 (2004)	Defines violence against women and their children, providing protective measures for victims, and prescribing penalties.

<sup>4</sup> [19950530-AO-0194-FVR.pdf \(officialgazette.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Executive Order No. 369, s. 1996 | Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Executive Order No. 386, s. 1996 | Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines](#)

15. Executive Order No. 569, s. 2006 <sup>7</sup>	Defining The Role Of The Regional Kapit-Bisig Laban Sa Kahirapan (Kalahi) Convergence Groups In The Comprehensive Peace Process And Providing Funds For The Purpose
16. Republic Act No. 9710 (2009)	Ensures the rights of women and promotes gender equality, encompassing comprehensive provisions for the protection and promotion of women's rights.
17. Republic Act No. 10121 (2010)	Provides for the development and implementation of policies and programs for disaster risk reduction and management.
18. Republic Act No. 9994 (2010)	Expands the benefits and privileges of senior citizens to improve their welfare.
19. Republic Act No. 10152 (2011)	Provides for mandatory basic immunization services for infants and children, ensuring a proactive role in preventive health care.
20. Executive Order No. 26 s. 2011	Declares an interdepartmental convergence initiative for a national greening program, addressing poverty reduction, resource conservation, and climate change mitigation.
21. Executive Order No. 43 s. 2011	Restructures the cabinet clusters to effectively coordinate government efforts towards social development and poverty reduction.
22. Republic Act No. 10630 (2013)	Strengthens the juvenile justice system in the Philippines by providing for more protective measures for children in conflict with the law.
23. Republic Act No. 10606 (2013)	Strengthens the national health insurance program to provide universal health coverage and improve access to quality healthcare services.
24. Republic Act No. 10410 (2013)	Institutionalizes the early childhood care and development system to promote the rights of children to survival, development, and special protection.
25. Republic Act No. 10868 (2016)	Honors and grants additional benefits and privileges to Filipino centenarians.
26. Republic Act No. 10969 (2017)	Provides free irrigation services to farmers, promoting rural development, food self-sufficiency, and equitable access to opportunities.
27. Republic Act No. 10931 (2017)	Promotes universal access to quality tertiary education by providing for free tuition and other school fees in state universities and colleges, local universities and colleges, and state-run technical-vocational institutions.
28. Republic Act No. 11199 (2018)	Strengthens the social security system in the Philippines, expanding its coverage and enhancing benefits for members.
29. Republic Act No. 11055 (2018)	Establishes a single national identification system to enhance the delivery of social services and promote seamless transactions between citizens and government agencies.

<sup>7</sup> [20060926-EO-0569-GMA.pdf \(officialgazette.gov.ph\)](#)

30. Executive Order No. 70 s. 2018	Institutionalizes the Whole-of-Nation approach as a government policy for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable peace.
31. Republic Act No. 11310 (2019)	Institutionalizes the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer program aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting human capital development.
32. Republic Act No. 11291 (2019)	Provides a comprehensive framework to uplift the standard of living and quality of life of the poor, ensuring full access to government services and the implementation of anti-poverty programs.
33. Republic Act No. 11315 (2019)	Establishes a community-based monitoring system to generate updated and disaggregated data necessary for targeting households and geographic areas for social protection programs.
34. Republic Act No. 11223 (2019)	Automatically enrolls all Filipinos in the National Health Insurance Program and prescribes complementary reforms in the health system to ensure universal health coverage and access to quality health services.
35. Republic Act No. 11230 (2019)	Institutes a Philippine Labor Force Competencies Competitiveness Program and free access to Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
36. Republic Act No. 11310 (2019)	Institutionalizes the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), a conditional cash transfer program aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting human capital development.
37. Executive Order No. 138 s. 2021	Directs the full devolution of certain functions of the executive branch to LGUs to promote inclusive development and improved service delivery.
38. Executive Order No. 141 s. 2021	Mobilizes government agencies to address the root causes of the rising number of teenage pregnancies through a whole-of-government approach.
39. Executive Order No. 129, April 13, 2021 <sup>8</sup>	Creating The Office Of The Presidential Adviser On Streamlining Of Government Processes, Providing Its Functions, And For Other Purposes
40. Executive Order No. 137, May 24, 2021 <sup>9</sup>	Accelerating And Harmonizing Aid And Humanitarian Operations Of The National Government During Disasters And Emergencies
41. Executive Order No. 138, June 01, 2021 <sup>10</sup>	Full Devolution Of Certain Functions Of The Executive Branch To Local Governments, Creation Of A Committee On Devolution, And For Other Purposes
42. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 1729, 16th Congress	Resolution Directing The Appropriate Senate Committees To Conduct An Inquiry, In Aid Of Legislation, On The Livelihood And Enterprise Development Programs Of Government Agencies For The Purpose Of Enabling Closer Coordination And Convergence Towards More Efficient Service And Support For Philippine Enterprises

<sup>8</sup> [Executive Order No. 129 \(lawphil.net\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Executive Order No. 137 \(lawphil.net\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Executive Order No. 138 \(lawphil.net\)](#)

<b>Box 3. DSWD and DOLE Issuances Related to Convergence/Joint Programming</b>	
1. DSWD Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2, series of 2020 <sup>11</sup>	Joint Implementing Guidelines For The Implementation Of The Social Amelioration Program For The Second (2nd) Tranche (PNP, DILG, DBM, DOLE, DSWD, DA, DTI, DOF, DND and AFP)
2. DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 17, series of 2020 <sup>12</sup>	Guidelines on Deduplication Procedures in line with the Provision of the Emergency Subsidy through the DSWD Social Amelioration Program
3. DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 14, series of 2015 <sup>13</sup>	Amending Memorandum Circular No. 18, Series of 2012, By Creating the Convergence Technical Support Units and Modifications of its Mandate, Functions, and Structures
4. DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 11, series of 2015 <sup>14</sup>	Operational Guidelines on DSWD-CSO Engagement for the Implementation of Modified Conditional Cash Transfer
5. DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 18, series of 2012 <sup>15</sup>	Guidelines on Internal Convergence of the DSWD core social protection programs
6. DSWD Administrative Order No. 002, series of 2009 <sup>16</sup>	Guidelines on the Sharing of Data Generated From the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction
7. DSWD Administrative Order No. 215, series of 2001 <sup>17</sup>	Implementing Guidelines on the Deconcentration and Management of the DSWD Self-employment Assistance Revolving and Settlement Fund
8. DOLE Department Order No. 239-23 <sup>18</sup>	Guidelines in the Implementation of the Department of Labor and Employment Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP)
9. DOLE Department Order No. 239-A	Issuances Related to Supplemental Guidelines to DOLE Department Order No. 239, Series of 2023; the Department Order it also supersedes Department Order No. 173, series of 2017 for the DILEEP program.

<sup>11</sup> [Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2: Joint Implementing Guidelines for the Implementation of the Social Amelioration Program for the Second \(2nd\) Tranche » Philippine e-Legal Forum \(pnl-law.com\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.dswd.gov.ph/issuances/MCs/MC\\_2020-018.pdf](https://www.dswd.gov.ph/issuances/MCs/MC_2020-018.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [Scanned Document \(dswd.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Scanned Document \(dswd.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [MC\\_2012-018.pdf \(dswd.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [AO\\_2009-002.pdf \(dswd.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [AO\\_2001-215.pdf \(dswd.gov.ph\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [DO-239-23-Guideline-in-the-Implementation-of-the-Department-of-Labor-and-Employment-Integrated-Livelihood-and-Emergency-Employment-Program-DILEEP.pdf \(dole.gov.ph\)](#)

10. DOLE Department Order No. 173, series of 2017 <sup>19</sup>	Revised Guidelines in the Implementation of the Department of Labor and Employment Integrated Livelihood (DILEEP)
11. DOLE-DOT Joint Advisory No. 01 series of 2020 <sup>20</sup>	Expanded Coverage of Beneficiaries under DOLE-DOT Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2020-001

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<sup>19</sup> [DO 173-17 Revised Guidelines in the Implementation of the Department of Labor and Employment Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Programs \(DILEEP\) \(1\).pdf \(dole9portal.com\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [DOLE-DOT-Joint-Advisory-No.-01-series-of-2020-Expanded-Coverage-of-Beneficiaries-under-DOLE-DOT-Joint-Memorandum-Circular-No.-2020-001.pdf](#)

## Annex 2. FGD Instruments

### GUIDE for Focus Group Discussion Beneficiaries of the Pilot Graduation Program (DOLE and DSWD)

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#### A. Introduction and Opening (15 mins)

Good day everyone. Thank you for joining us today. I am [Facilitator's Name] from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). We are conducting a study on social protection and livelihood programs that you may have participated in. In particular, this study aims to assess how different agencies work together on these programs. We have chosen you as participants because of the experience and insights you have as beneficiaries of social protection and livelihood programs.

The results of this discussion will be part of the assessment of the current joint programming programs and will serve as the basis on the improvement of convergence of social protection and economic inclusion programs.

Before we begin, I want to emphasize that your participation is completely voluntary . You can choose not to answer any question or leave the discussion at any time. We will keep your identities confidential. This discussion will last 1.5 to 2 hours. With your permission, we will record this discussion to ensure we have accurately captured all your valuable insights accurately. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for this study.

Do you all agree to participate in the audio recording? [Get verbal consent]

[Let participants introduce themselves] How are you today? Do you have any questions before we start?

#### B. Interview Proper (1-1.5 hrs)

*Suggestion: Some questions may be conducted workshop-style, using prompts or metacards, so participants can easily visualize their answers, and the answers easily organized.*

##### 1. Awareness and Enrollment (15 mins.)

- Are you aware of joint programming or the graduation program? (Padayon SLP, DOLE Kabuhayan) What is your own understanding of this program?
- If not, what specific programs are you part of? (e.g., 4Ps, livelihood programs)
- How did you first hear about the social protection or livelihood programs you're participating in? Did anyone from the municipal office/DSWD/DOLE contact you?
- Do you know someone in your community who is not part of these programs? How do you share or assist them into being part of these programs, in your own way?

- Can you describe the process of enrolling in these programs? What were the criteria/requirements you needed to fulfill to be part of the program? What was easy or difficult about it?
2. Program Implementation and Experience (20 mins.)
- Can you walk us through the different stages/aspects of the program? What were the first steps you took after being selected for the program? Would you be able to recall the people/agencies who work with you?
  - What are your experiences in having to access different programs and services (graduation program and other social protection or livelihood programs)? Have you noticed any changes in how these programs work together recently?
  - How would you describe your overall experience with these programs? Were the government field staff/implementers helpful enough to make you understand in this program? Did you enjoy participating in this program? Why or why not?
3. Strengths, Challenges, and Suggestions (30 mins.)
- Based on your experience and observations, what aspects of the joint program worked well?

<b>Criteria of Evaluation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Relevance</b> Objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' needs	
<b>Effectiveness</b> Achievement of objectives	
<b>Efficiency</b> Timely and economic use of resources	
<b>Impact</b> Difference generated	
<b>Sustainability</b> Lasting benefits	
<b>Coherence</b> Compatibility of the intervention with other interventions	

- What difficulties have you faced while participating in these programs? Are there any conflicts or overlaps?
  - If you could suggest improvements to these programs, what would they be?
4. Impact and Benefits (Stories of Change) (15 mins.)
- Which aspects of the programs have been most helpful to you and your family?

- What changes have you experienced in your life since joining these programs?

*Note: Above-stated questions may be asked using this prompt: Dati ako/ ang pamilya ko ay... Pero ngayon... Importante ang pagbabago na ito dahil... Nangyari ang pagbabago na ito dahil sa...)*

#### 5. Future Expectations (5 mins.)

- What are your hopes or expectations for the future regarding these programs? Are there any additional services or support you wish were available?

#### C. Closing (5 mins)

- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with these programs that we haven't covered?

#### D. Thanking the Participants

## **Annex 3. KII Instruments**

### **Introduction (for KIIs)**

Good day. I am [Interviewer's Name] from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS). PIDS, an attached agency to the National Economic and Development Authority, is a government-owned think tank engaged in policy-oriented research. We are conducting a study titled "Assessing the Implementation of Joint Programming in Government Social Protection and Economic Inclusion Interventions," led by Dr. Jose Ramon G. Albert, Senior Research Fellow at PIDS.

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of convergence/ joint programming efforts across government agencies in social protection and economic inclusion programs targeting Filipinos living in poverty. Your insights will be valuable in helping us understand the current state of joint programming and identify ways to enhance its effectiveness.

We are requesting your consent to participate in this interview, which will last approximately 60-90 minutes. With your permission, we would like to audio record this conversation to ensure accurate documentation of the information you provide.

To give you a background, convergence or joint programming involves the coordinated effort of multiple agencies to deliver integrated services aimed at addressing complex social and economic issues more effectively. Through the alignment of these resources and strategies, this approach seeks to enhance the impact of interventions through comprehensive support for beneficiaries. The main purpose of joint programming is to create synergistic effects that improve efficiency, avoid duplication of efforts, and produce more sustainable outcomes for vulnerable populations.

The results of this interview will contribute to the assessment of the government's current efforts to implement convergence/ joint programming and will serve as the basis on the improvement of convergence of social protection and economic inclusion programs.

### **Consent for interview and audio recording**

As part of our protocol, we will read aloud the consent form to let you know about your rights and privileges as a respondent. Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or may choose to leave the study at any time.

The information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality. Any data collected, used, processed, updated, stored and disclosed will be for the purpose of this study. Your personal data will be securely stored and protected in accordance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, which will last no longer than 60-90 minutes. During this interview, we will ask you questions about social protection and economic inclusion programs. The type of questions includes open-ended and closed questionnaires related to the study theme and your area of expertise. If you agree, our team will audio/video record the activity so we can prepare typewritten notes afterward.

### [CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE]

I hereby agree and consent to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) on “Assessing the Implementation of Joint Programming in Government Social Protection and Economic Inclusion Interventions”, to collect, use, process, update, store and disclose my personal information and take my photos/videos during the course of the project which adhere to the Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act (DPA) of 2012 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

I have understood the objectives of the project and the relevance of my participation. I understand that I may withdraw and discontinue my participation at any time and will not be penalized for doing so. (Agree?)

I understand that the personal and sensitive personal information that will be collected by PIDS will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for the purpose of research and analysis. PIDS will not identify me in any reports, publications or presentations, but I understand and consent that I may be counted as a data figure in the general population based on my race, sex, civil status, educational attainment, work or religious belief, in line with the research and analysis. (Agree?)

I hereby declare, agree, and undertake to participate in this interview and provide accurate and correct information.

(Make the respondent sign with the date from the consent form) Ask interviewees to state their names and their role in the organization for the recording.

### **GUIDE for Key Informant Interviews DOLE/DSWD Officials and Staff**

A. Introduction [Standard introduction for KIIs] (10 mins.)

B. Interview Proper

<b>Interview Aspect</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Explanation/ Examples/ Issues/ Concerns</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Role and Program Overview			
Joint Programming Understanding			
Implementation Process			
Inter-agency Coordination			
Resources and Funding			
Monitoring and Evaluation			
Challenges and Solutions			
Best Practices and Success Stories			
Sustainability			
Recommendations			

1. Role and Program Overview (15 mins)

- Can you describe your role in implementing social protection and economic inclusion programs?
- What are the main programs your agency is responsible for in this area?

2. Joint Programming Understanding (10 mins.)

- How do you understand convergence/ "joint programming" in the context of your work?
- To your knowledge, what are the existing laws and policies on this collaboration or joint programming?
- Can you give examples of how your agency collaborates with other government agencies in program implementation? How is coordination improving efficiency and effectiveness?

3. Implementation Process (15 mins.)

- To what extent have “joint programming” laws, policies, and programs been implemented and operationalized?
- Can you walk us through the process of implementing a joint program (4Ps, SLP, DILP, others) with other government agencies? Please discuss from planning to evaluation and mention key stakeholders that you collaborate/ converge with and their roles in program implementation.
- *Note: This may cover the general process only. Details of collaboration/coordination, monitoring and evaluation, resource allocation, as well as challenges, may be asked in the next sections, if not mentioned by the interviewee.*
- How are beneficiaries identified and enrolled in these joint programs?
- Can you give us a background on how convergence/joint programming started and how it has evolved over time? In which areas did you observe changes in the government’s convergence framework and its implementation process (e.g., budgeting, program prioritization, additional PAPs)? Please mention specific dates and milestones/ significant changes.
- If joint programming started before pandemic:
  - How has COVID-19 affected joint programming efforts?
  - What adjustments or changes did you do?
  - How have you adjusted your approach to convergence/ joint programming following the pandemic?

4. Inter-agency Coordination (15 mins.)

- How does your agency coordinate with other government bodies at the national and local level in these joint efforts? Please also describe the role, ability, and form of support of these government bodies in these joint efforts.

Activity	Coordination Process
Capacity building	
Technical preparations	
Intergovernmental coordination	

- How would you rate the level of collaboration in implementing joint programs for social protection and economic inclusion on a scale of 1-10 (10 highest)? And why?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure effective communication and avoid duplication?
- What factors affect inter-agency collaboration/coordination?

5. Resources and Funding (5 mins.)

- How are resources allocated for convergence/joint programming initiatives?
- Are there challenges in resource sharing or fund utilization across agencies?
- Have there been any instances where conflicting priorities or mandates between DSWD, DOLE and other government partners affected implementation of convergence/joint programming?

6. Monitoring and Evaluation (5 mins.)

- What systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of joint programs? How does your agency monitor the success of your programs, especially joint programming/convergence? Does your agency have key indicators or assessment procedures?
- Are there mechanisms for feedback?
- How is data shared between agencies for monitoring purposes? What governs these data-sharing practices, and what is shared?

7. Challenges and Solutions (10 mins.)

- Given your role and responsibilities in the agency, what policy, program and strategy **gaps, challenges, and opportunities** have you observed in strengthening convergence/ joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion?
- Can you share any strategies you've developed to overcome these challenges?

	<b>Gaps and Challenges</b>	<b>Windows for Opportunities</b>
Policy		
Program and Services		
Strategy		

8. Best Practices and Success Stories (10 mins.)

- What aspects of the convergence/ joint programming do you think worked well?

<b>Joint Programming</b>	<b>Please put a check here</b>	<b>Explanations</b>
Inclusive		
Just and equal		
Accessible		

- Can you share any success stories or best practices in joint programming from your experience?

Metrics	Level of impact	Explanations
	(low, moderate, high)	
Sample:		
Improvement of income of the beneficiaries		
Reduction in poverty incidence		
Behavioral change		

#### 9. Sustainability (10 mins.)

- Could you kindly provide PIDS documents from your office pertaining to key indicators and/or assessment protocols for monitoring the success of your programs, particularly on convergence/joint programming?
- What plans or strategies does your agency have to convergence/ enhance joint programming efforts?
- Are there any upcoming policy changes or initiatives that may affect convergence/ joint programming?
- Do you have any additional information, comments, or inputs which relate to potential convergence/ joint programming in the future?
- What were the facilitating or hindering factors in the efficient implementation of convergence/ joint programming? Discuss how each factor facilitated or hindered the timely implementation.

Factors	Specific factors and explanation
Hindering	
Facilitating	

#### 10. Recommendations (10 mins.)

- How effective is the current targeting and assignment of beneficiaries in social protection/economic inclusion interventions? Is there duplication or leakage? How do we prevent this from happening?
- Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make to improve joint programming efforts? You may mention a recommendation in the policy and/or implementation of programs and services.

#### C. Closing (5 mins.)

- Is there any additional information you'd like to share about joint programming in your work?

NOTE: Adjustments can be made based on specific contexts or additional information needed during the interviews.

## **GUIDE for Key Informant Interviews Other Stakeholders (LGUs, Other National Government Agencies)**

A. Introduction [Standard introduction for KIIs]

B. Interview Proper

<b>Interview Aspect</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Explanation/Examples/Issues/Concerns</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Role in Social Protection and Economic Inclusion			
Understanding of Joint Programming			
Coordination and Collaboration			
Local Implementation (for LGUs)			
Policy and Regulatory Framework			
Resource Allocation and Utilization			
Monitoring and Feedback			
Challenges and Opportunities			
Best Practices and Innovations			
Recommendations			

1. Role in Social Protection and Economic Inclusion (15 mins.)

- Can you describe your organization's role in social protection and economic inclusion efforts?
- How does your work intersect with programs implemented by DSWD, DOLE, DA, or other agencies?

2. Understanding of Joint Programming (10 mins.)

- What is your understanding of convergence/ joint programming in social protection and economic inclusion? How does your organization participate in or support these joint programming efforts?

3. Coordination and Collaboration (10 mins.)
  - How do you coordinate with other agencies or organizations in these convergence/ joint programming efforts?
  - What mechanisms are in place for information sharing and collaborative decision-making?
4. Local Implementation (for LGUs) (15 mins.)
  - When did you start convergence/ joint programming initiatives and how has it evolved over time? Please mention dates and milestones/ significant changes.
  - If joint programming started before pandemic:
    - How has COVID-19 affected joint programming efforts?
    - What adjustments or changes did you do?
    - How have you adjusted your approach to joint programming following the pandemic?
  - Currently, how are national convergence/ joint programming initiatives implemented at the local level?
  - What role does your LGU play in adapting these programs to local needs? In your perspective, how does the LGU impact the overall implementation of these programs?
  - To what extent has convergence/ joint programming among laws, policies, and programs been implemented and operationalized in your LGU?
5. Policy and Regulatory Framework (10 mins.)
  - How do existing local policies or regulations affect convergence/ joint programming efforts?
  - Are there any policy changes you believe could enhance convergence/ joint programming?
6. Resource Allocation and Utilization (5 mins.)
  - How are resources for joint programs allocated and utilized at your level?
  - Are there any challenges in accessing or managing resources for these programs?
7. Monitoring and Feedback (5 mins.)
  - How do you monitor the implementation and impact of joint programs in your area?
  - What mechanisms exist for providing feedback to program implementers or policymakers?
8. Advocacy and Communication (5 mins.)
  - How do you promote and communicate convergence/joint programming to gain or strengthen the buy-in, support, and ownership of the different stakeholders?

9. Challenges and Opportunities (5 mins.)

- What are the policy, program and strategy **gaps, challenges, and opportunities** in strengthening convergence/ joint programming for social protection and economic inclusion in your LGU?
- Can you share any strategies you've developed to overcome these challenges?

	Gaps and Challenges	Windows for Opportunities
Policy		
Program and Services		
Strategy		

10. Best Practices and Innovations (5 mins.)

- What aspects in supporting or implementing joint programs do you think worked well?
- Can you share any best practices or innovative approaches you've observed or implemented?

11. Recommendations (5 mins.)

- How effective is the current targeting and assignment of beneficiaries in social protection/economic inclusion interventions? Is there duplication or leakage? How do we prevent this from happening?
- Based on your perspective, what recommendations would you make to enhance the effectiveness of convergence/ joint programming?

C. Closing

- Is there any additional information or insight you'd like to share about convergence/ joint programming from your organization's perspective?

## Annex 4. Proposed National Framework for Joint Programming in Social Protection and Economic Inclusion

This proposed framework provides a structured approach to joint programming, addressing the key elements identified in the study. It can serve as a starting point for discussions among stakeholders and can be further refined based on additional inputs and consultations.

### 1. Vision

A coordinated, efficient, and responsive system of integrated social protection and economic inclusion interventions that effectively reduces poverty and vulnerability, promotes resilience of people and communities through sustainable graduation from interventions, and fosters inclusive growth in the Philippines.

### 2. Guiding Principles

To ensure the effectiveness of joint programming in social protection and economic inclusion, the following twelve principles will guide its implementation. These principles aim to address multi-dimensional poverty, foster collaboration, and support sustainable graduation from interventions:

- a. **Integration:** Implement a holistic approach that addresses the interconnected and multi-dimensional aspects of poverty and vulnerability, ensuring programs complement and reinforce each other.
- b. **Coordination:** Promote seamless collaboration across agencies, governance levels, and stakeholders to avoid duplication and maximize impact.
- c. **Efficiency:** Ensure optimal use of resources, minimizing redundancies, and improving the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- d. **Responsiveness:** Design programs that are adaptable to changing needs, socio-economic contexts, and emerging vulnerabilities, particularly during crises.
- e. **Inclusivity:** Guarantee coverage of all vulnerable populations, with particular focus on marginalized groups, such as women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and those in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.
- f. **Sustainability:** Prioritize long-term impacts and financial viability to ensure that interventions lead to enduring improvements in beneficiaries' lives.
- g. **Evidence-based:** Use robust data, research, and monitoring to inform decisions, guide program design, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- h. **Priority Focus:** Explicitly prioritize households and individuals experiencing extreme poverty to ensure that resources are targeted where they are most needed.
- i. **Progressive Support:** Provide graduated assistance aligned with household capacity, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the varying needs and progress of beneficiaries.
- j. **Economic Empowerment:** Focus on sustainable livelihood development as a pathway to economic independence, incorporating skills training, market linkages, and financial inclusion.
- k. **Graduation from Interventions:** Build programs with a clear pathway for beneficiaries to transition out of social assistance. This involves providing comprehensive support—such as consumption grants, livelihood assets, and coaching—while progressively reducing dependency and promoting self-reliance.

1. **Accountability and Transparency:** Establish clear accountability mechanisms and ensure transparency in the allocation of resources, decision-making processes, and program outcomes. This fosters trust among stakeholders and strengthens program governance.

### **3. Objectives**

- a. Enhance social protection and economic inclusion program effectiveness through convergence, with explicit focus on extremely poor households
- b. Improve targeting and reduce overlaps while ensuring coordinated support for the most vulnerable
- c. Maximize resource efficiency through pooled funding and prioritized allocation to extreme poverty reduction
- d. Strengthen local capacity to implement and monitor integrated interventions for poverty graduation
- e. Promote innovation in addressing extreme poverty and building household resilience
- f. Institutionalize data-driven decision-making for poverty reduction strategies

### **4. Operational Guidelines**

#### **4.1 Governance Structure**

##### National Level

- National Joint Programming Committee (NJPC)
  - Composition: Secretaries of DSWD, DOLE, DEPDEV, DBM, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), chaired by the President; select representatives of private sector
  - Role: Strategic direction, policy formulation, and extreme poverty reduction targets
- Technical Working Group (TWG)
  - Composition: Senior officials from participating agencies
  - Role: Operational planning and technical guidance for poverty graduation approaches

##### Regional and Local Level

- Regional Joint Programming Committees (RJPCs)
  - Composition: Regional directors of DSWD, DOLE, NEDA, DBM, DILG (and corresponding ministers of BARMM ministries), representatives of provinces, select representatives of private sector
  - Role: Regional poverty reduction strategies and implementation coordination
- Local Joint Programming Units (LJPUs)
  - Composition: Municipal social welfare officers, PESO managers, planning officers, select representatives of private sector
  - Role: Direct implementation of poverty graduation programs

## **4.2 Agency Roles and Responsibilities**

### **DSWD**

- Lead identification of extremely poor households
- Provide immediate social assistance through 4Ps
- Coordinate integrated case management
- Monitor household progression on socio economic indicators

### **DOLE**

- Design specialized employment programs
- Provide targeted skills training
- Ensure priority access to TUPAD and DILP
- Develop modified livelihood packages

### **NEDA**

- Set and monitor poverty reduction targets
- Coordinate policy alignment
- Evaluate intervention effectiveness

### **DBM**

- Ensure dedicated poverty reduction funding
- Track resource allocation
- Implement performance-based funding

### **LGUs**

- Identify local extremely poor households
- Provide complementary support
- Implement contextualized programs
- Monitor household progress

### **Private Sector**

- Create employment opportunities
- Provide skills training
- Support enterprise development
- Invest in local economic development

## **4.3 Implementation Process**

### **Joint Situational Analysis and Targeting**

- Collaborative assessment of local needs and vulnerabilities

### **Integrated Planning and Assessment**

- Use CBMS, Listahanan and PhilSys for targeting
- Conduct household poverty assessments
- Classification of households by poverty severity
- Sequenced support package based on household capacity
- Develop coordinated intervention plans with graduation pathways
- Design sequenced support packages with clear progression milestones and support adjustments
- Regular assessment of household readiness for advancement

### **Resource Pooling Management**

- Joint Budgeting Process: Coordinated budget proposals for integrated program. and alignment of resources across agencies
- Prioritize funding for extremely poor areas
- Pool resources for integrated interventions
- Performance-Based Allocation: Resource distribution based on joint program outcomes
- Maintain emergency household support funds for crisis prevention and impact mitigation
- Innovative Financing: Exploration of blended finance and social impact investments

### **Coordinated Implementation**

- Synchronized delivery of interventions

### **Data Management and Information Sharing**

- Integrated Beneficiary Database: Centralized system linking PhilSys, CBMS, and program-specific databases
- Data Sharing Protocols: Clear guidelines for inter-agency data exchange
- Privacy and Security Measures: Robust safeguards for beneficiary information

### **Joint Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

- Common Results Framework: Shared indicators and targets across agencies
- Shared systems for tracking household poverty indicators
- Collaborative assessment/impact evaluation of integrated intervention effectiveness
- Documentation of graduation pathways
- Learning Forums: Regular events for sharing insights and innovations

## **Capacity Building**

- Joint Training Programs: Cross-agency capacity building initiatives
- Knowledge Management System: Platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned
- Technical Assistance: Provision of expert support to LGUs and implementing units

## **5. Implementation Roadmap**

Phase 1 (Year 1): Framework adoption and institutional set-up

Phase 2 (Years 2-3): Pilot implementation in select regions

Phase 3 (Years 4-5): National roll-out and refinement

Phase 4 (Years 6+): Full implementation and continuous improvement

## **6. Monitoring and Review Mechanism**

a) Annual Joint Programming Performance Review

b) Mid-term Framework Evaluation (End of Year 3)

c) Comprehensive Framework Review and Update (End of Year 5)