
Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Trust Fund: Linking humanitarian cash assistance and national social protection systems

Senegal case study

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Executive summary

Background to the research

The Sahel region hosts some of the poorest countries in the world and is facing one of the most complex crises globally. The region struggles with the combined effects of climate change, widespread chronic and seasonal food insecurity, some of the highest rates of malnutrition, recurrent climate-related shocks, conflicts, and forced displacement. The needs of affected populations largely exceed what can be provided by the local community and national and international resources, and this has given rise to a call for innovative and more effective ways of working to address these needs.

Since the 2000s, and with the support of development partners, new social protection policies and programmes have been developed, including: long-term, regular cash transfer programmes for extremely poor households; seasonal cash transfers; long-term labour-intensive public works programmes; school feeding programmes; health fee waivers; and initiatives to set up general health insurance. Humanitarian assistance (which has frequently become a 'routine' response) and nascent national social assistance systems are often present on the ground at the same time, addressing similar needs, and often working through the same organisations. Social assistance and humanitarian assistance are often provided to the same groups of highly vulnerable people – people affected by cyclical and recurrent adverse climate conditions and socioeconomic inequalities; people who are internally displaced by violence or climate-related shocks; and refugees fleeing from armed conflict across international borders.

There is growing commitment by development and humanitarian actors to join forces in providing social assistance and humanitarian cash assistance, especially for particularly vulnerable groups. Commitments also include the strengthening of policy and operational collaboration. A global research agenda is coalescing around the nexus between humanitarian cash transfers and national social protection systems, to support this effort.

The Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Programme (SASPP) aims to help poor and vulnerable households become more resilient to the effects of climate change, and to expand the reach of shock-responsive cash transfer programmes in six Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. It includes a learning agenda to inform political dialogue and to support the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development nexus.

This report focuses on Senegal and is one of six country-level case studies. A synthesis report will distil the lessons from across the six countries. The research is funded through the SASPP Multi-Donor Trust Fund and seeks to contribute to the SASPP by providing operationally relevant and practical analysis and recommendations to enhance the collaboration between programmes and actors in order to address the needs of populations more effectively and efficiently. The focus of the research lies on assessing whether, and if so how, enhanced cooperation between humanitarian and national actors could be achieved. It does this by assessing existing levels of convergence between social safety nets and humanitarian cash assistance at several levels, including the policy and legal

framework, governance structure, programme design and objectives, financing streams, etc., and by looking for practical entry points for further alignment. The six country-level case studies and the synthesis report seek to showcase experiences and lessons learned in the Sahel region, and to provide recommendations for further action.

Studied programmes in Senegal

The Senegal case study focuses on the convergence between social safety nets and humanitarian cash transfers, specifically between the following programmes:

- **Programme National des Bourses de Sécurité Familiale (PNBSF) (National Stipend Programme for Family Security):** This is a social safety net that applies a soft conditionality and that targets households in extreme poverty registered in the Social Registry that are below a certain vulnerability threshold. Both PNBSF and the Social Registry are hosted by the *Délégation Générale à la Protection Sociale et à la Solidarité Nationale* (DGPSN) (General Delegation for Social Protection and National Solidarity). The cost of the transfers is covered by the national budget, while the support costs for the programme and the Social Registry are supported by the World Bank's Social Safety Net Project.
- **A Pilot Project from 2017**, implemented by the DGPSN and funded by the World Bank: This supported 8,000 households with a temporary cash payment to mitigate the impact of a drought. Key tools of the social protection system were used in the project: the Social Registry, the network of decentralised social workers, and the payment system.
- **World Food Programme (WFP) humanitarian cash transfers:** In 2021 93,000 food-insecure people in selected regions are being supported to access adequate and nutritious food during the lean season through these transfers. This programme is funded bilaterally by Canada and France, as well as through pooled funding from WFP's Internal Response Account.
- A seasonal response provided by a network of six non-governmental organisations (NGOs), all members of the Start Network's **African Risk Capacity (ARC) Replica** initiative, which is a replica of the Senegalese Government's participation in the ARC insurance (see Box 1). In 2020, a large insurance pay-out was received and 203,000 people were assisted with a seasonal cash transfer, in addition to some in-kind assistance. The premium for the insurance was funded by the German Government.

Box 1: ARC

ARC is a Specialised Agency of the African Union established to help African governments improve their capacities to better plan, prepare, and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters. Through collaboration and innovative finance, ARC enables countries to strengthen their disaster risk management systems and access rapid and predictable financing when disaster strikes, to protect the food security and livelihoods of their vulnerable populations. See www.africanriskcapacity.org. The ARC Replica programme allows NGOs like the Start Network to work side by side with governments to manage these risks.

In 2020, the Government of Senegal received a pay-out of US\$ 12.5 million to support people affected by drought. The planning for the drought response took some time and when the COVID-19 pandemic started, the Government merged the drought response with the COVID-19 response. However, the decision was taken to provide the assistance in kind as food parcels. Key informants report that the importation of the food took much longer than planned and logistical costs were high.

The Operational Plan for ARC 2022–2023 foresees cash alongside in-kind assistance, but makes a clear supportive statement regarding a preference for cash.

This study focuses on the response to climate-related shocks, and more specifically to the predictable and recurrent impacts of drought on food and nutrition insecurity during the lean season. This response is guided by an annual *Plan National de Riposte à l'Insécurité Alimentaire* (PNR) (National Food Insecurity Response Plan) and aims to provide coordinated food and nutrition assistance to households facing severe food insecurity during the lean season.

Senegal also faces other shocks but these are of a generally smaller size (e.g. floods and fires), for which cash transfers are also provided by the Senegalese Government. While the study does not go into a detailed analysis of alignment levels for the responses to these other shocks, these responses prove that leveraging common targeting, payment, and delivery tools is possible and efficient for rapidly expanding safety nets.

Senegal is a country where a nationally-led, relatively predictable shock-response systems is possible but not yet a reality. Political stability, some fiscal space – at least before the pandemic – a medium-level risk for humanitarian disasters, strong international partnerships, and a capable civil society are all favourable conditions for piloting alternative models for disaster response, breaking away from the annual cycle of externally-funded short-term action towards a model based on existing social protection tools and piloting alternative funding models, such as insurance-based financing.

Key findings

Senegal has a relatively mature social protection system and humanitarian programmes converge with that system in a number of effective ways. The policy debate on further harmonising the two systems is very developed and clear efforts have been made to advance in this direction. However, it is not yet understood what impact convergence has at the level of beneficiary households. Progress has proven to be fragile and reversible, and the full potential of a policy shift towards working through a government-led shock-responsive social protection system has not yet been realised.

The study shows that at **the national level**, the legal frameworks, governance and financing for social protection and for the response to seasonal food insecurity differ, but the Pilot Project in 2017 and WFP piggy-back on certain elements of the national social protection system. There is full convergence of the legal framework, governance, and coordination between ARC Replica and the Government-led ARC mechanism but they are run in parallel to the social protection system.

The seasonal food insecurity programmes all support the annual PNR in achieving its objective of ‘improving the food and nutritional situation of households in crisis through emergency assistance’. WFP subscribes to that objective, adding an emphasis on the introduction of innovative tools (such as cash transfers). Though the ARC initiative’s primary objective is to cover risks and facilitate anticipatory action, it also contributes to supporting most vulnerable people in food security crisis situations.

PNBSF focuses on chronic poverty and thus has an objective that is different from, but complementary to, the objective of seasonal humanitarian cash transfers, and both share a focus on benefiting the poorest households (as they are often also the ones most affected by food insecurity). The programmes that were studied differ in terms of their overall goal (long-term poverty reduction versus short-term avoidance of crisis-level coping strategies), scope (nationwide versus areas most affected by a drought), and especially their duration (five years versus three to six months).

The Cadre Harmonisé¹ and the *Registre National Unique* (RNU, Social Registry) are the two main connecting points between the national social safety net and humanitarian cash transfers at programme design level. A third connecting point is the use of cash. These converging points are facilitated by a high degree of institutional legitimacy of these tools and positive attitudes towards their common use. The Cadre Harmonisé provides the common basis for assessing needs caused by seasonal food insecurity, and has also guided the prioritisation of regions in regard to updating the RNU data. The RNU is the common starting point for selecting beneficiaries for all types of social support – regular as well as seasonal assistance. Both tools benefit from a clear institutional setup and a high degree of legitimacy, though users of the RNU emphasise that the quality of the data needs to be proportionate to its dominant role in the targeting system.

Most parts of the elements that make up the delivery chain remain parallel and little progress has been made up to now with respect to achieving greater alignment, convergence, and integration. WFP implements all elements of the delivery chain in parallel and so does the ARC Replica initiative – except for community outreach and accountability to affected populations. The Pilot Project in 2017 showed some elements of piggy-backing on the social protection system.

The ‘alignment landscape’ results in an *implicit* unintentional expansion of the government system. Different programmes *de facto* sometimes support the same

¹ From Cadre Harmonisé | IPC Global Platform (ipcinfor.org): ‘The Cadre Harmonisé (CH) is a unifying tool that helps to produce relevant, consensual, rigorous, and transparent analyses of current and projected food and nutrition situations. It classifies the severity of food and nutrition insecurity based on the international classification scale.’

households but using different systems. Stakeholders see this as layering two kinds of support. However, communities' perceptions differ from this official policy position: they see it as unfair support being provided by different programmes to the same households. At any rate, this current model of funding humanitarian actors for an implicit unintentional expansion of the government system is costly as it means that operational costs have to be funded twice: once within the government social protection system and a second time within the humanitarian organisation. Given the low level of coverage in the PNR 2021, there is an urgent need to revise this inefficient use of very scarce resources.

A first key strategic shift would be to turn the implicit unintentional expansion into an explicit one, where different programmes overlap with the social safety net, i.e. using additional resources for seasonal support to intentionally leverage social protection instruments. This would make it possible to expand coverage and adequacy at lower administrative costs by using elements of the government system while still maintaining a good level of oversight over the payment process. Actors do coordinate to find practical ways to incrementally improve the use of social protection tools, such as the RNU, but they show a certain degree of path dependency that stands in the way of leveraging the full potential of using government systems. They still protect their parallel operations and are not yet prepared to use more of the government system – despite a policy commitment to doing so where possible, which in the case of Senegal is within reach.

A second strategic shift would be to implement a fully-fledged adaptive social protection system and to concentrate humanitarian funding on covering unforeseen needs. If chronically food-insecure people are adequately covered by routine social protection systems and receive a routine top-up by the government in periods of seasonal additional need, humanitarian funding can be used to cover spikes in unforeseen needs, in line with humanitarian principles and with available resources.

However, such a shift would come with some risks. In Senegal, most of the risks of an even stronger alignment with the government system are related to the way that politics influence the support to vulnerable people in times of additional hardship. Political considerations play a role when deciding whether or not to launch a crisis response, and in the selection of transfer modalities. Furthermore, the lack of institutional clarity in government structures responsible for organising relief operations poses a risk to an effective, adequate, and timely seasonal response.

The use of the RNU as a starting point for targeting is now fully institutionalised and this connecting point has a strong likelihood of being fully sustainable. However, the Government needs to provide operational resources for running the RNU, and the RNU needs to make continuous efforts to provide high-quality data that ensure growing user satisfaction. In particular, the regular and comprehensive updating of the data would be a pivotal aspect in regard to ensuring the credibility of the Social Registry – and, if not done properly, could undermine its legitimacy.

There had been a consensus around using cash after this was successfully piloted alongside using key social protection instruments for a shock response in 2017. At the time this was identified as a strong connecting factor between the social protection system and humanitarian cash transfers. However, the Government's decision to use in-kind food assistance in its 2020 ARC/COVID-19 response – taken against

the advice of international partners – shows that the agreement on giving preference to cash was not irreversible. Competing political agendas (that are beyond the scope of this study) have called into question the consensus reached earlier on the use of cash for a shock response, thus reversing already achieved levels of alignment.

Key recommendations

Convergence between social protection and humanitarian cash transfers is not an end in itself but it can be a strong enabler of a better response to growing needs in times when resources are very limited. The following recommendations highlight the most important steps that are required to achieve further progress (where appropriate) in the short, medium, and long term.

Short-term actions

Improve and deepen coordination: Coordination efforts currently take place within the respective spheres (social protection, food insecurity, and ARC) but there is room for improvement to reach out beyond each domain. There are a number of practical steps that the different stakeholders could take: in particular, setting up a coordination forum that would make it possible to discuss how to further develop the elements that already align, as well as developing a roadmap for achieving additional progress.

Put in place a systematised mechanism for receiving updated information collected by RNU users, and to react to user feedback. Users should develop a common position vis-à-vis further improvements of the Social Registry, and the Government should implement the technical upgrades necessary to make the Social Registry database responsive to updates and feedback information, and to prepare it for becoming inter-operable in the future.

Strengthen the role of frontline delivery staff: This connecting point should be strengthened. The different programmes should be more systematic in leveraging frontline delivery staff for community outreach and accountability.

Build a stronger evidence base on the impact of convergence at the beneficiary level: All stakeholders are aware that their efforts intersect at the beneficiary level but it is unknown what the exact extent and impact of the overlap is. There is thus an urgent need to create evidence and to draw respective conclusions. The evolution of households' food security situation should be monitored by comparing the different groups (recipients of single support versus those receiving support from more than one programme, or those not receiving any support).

Ensure the concept of layering different kinds of support, which is crucial to adaptive social protection, is well understood by communities (which is not currently the case). In order to ensure the longer-term buy-in of an adaptive system at the community level, it is important that stakeholders address this issue more openly and develop a way to enhance community understanding. The frontline delivery staff would be best placed to do this.

Conduct a political economy analysis. This would help to better understand the political dimension of decision-making on the use of the transfer modality by the Senegalese Government in 2020.

Medium-term efforts

Coordination and joint capacity building at different levels, across the three spheres – social protection, seasonal support to food insecurity, and ARC – could be strengthened and should include the full range of actors involved. This should also include further harmonisation of capacity building and advocacy work, including by donors, to ensure international partners ‘talk with one voice’. Donors should use their influence over the ARC financing mechanism to promote the use of the social protection system in an ARC-funded response. Staff of all key agencies, not only DGPSN, should be more actively exposed to ‘new ways of doing cash responses’ in other countries, in order to learn the lessons from the linking of social protection and humanitarian cash in those countries.

The long-term vision

The inter-operability of databases needs to be improved to allow different programmes supporting similar groups of people to achieve greater synergy. However, this is a long and very difficult task. It is technically complex but in the long run there is no alternative to making the technical solutions work for a common agenda so a roadmap needs to be developed that sets out a step-by-step process for making this happen.

In the long run, a shock-responsive social protection system that provides a higher transfer value and that adapts its caseload more swiftly is a realistic goal for Senegal. It would allow the country to respond to the risks of additional seasonal needs in an adequate way. Partners should operationalise their support accordingly, and donors should eventually make this a condition for funding.

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List of abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
ACF	<i>Action Contre la Faim</i> (Action Against Hunger)
ARC	African Risk Capacity
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CFA	West African francs
CSA	<i>Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire</i> (Food Security Commission)
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DGPSN	<i>Direction Générale à la Protection Social et à la Solidarité Nationale</i> (General Directorate for Social Protection and National Solidarity)
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
FSP	Financial service provider
MIS	Management information system
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OS	<i>Opérateur Social/Opérateurs Sociaux</i> (Social Operator(s))
PAFS	<i>Projet d'Appui aux Filets Sociaux</i> (Safety Net Project)
PNR	<i>Plan National de Riposte à l'Insécurité Alimentaire</i> (National Food Insecurity Response Plan)
PMT	Proxy means test
PNBSF	<i>Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale</i> (National Stipend Programme for Family Security)
SASPP	Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Programme
SE-CNSA	<i>Secrétariat Exécutif au Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire</i> (Executive Secretariat for the National Food Security Council)
SNPS	National Social Protection Strategy (Stratégie Nationale de Protection Sociale)
RNU	<i>Régistre National Unique</i> (Social Registry)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Context, scope, and methodology of the research

1.1 Context of the overall research

The Sahel region hosts some of the poorest countries in the world and is facing one of the most complex crises globally. The region struggles with the combined effects of climate change, widespread chronic and seasonal food insecurity, some of the highest rates of malnutrition, recurrent climate-related shocks, conflicts, and forced displacement. The needs of affected populations largely exceed what can be provided by the local community and national and international resources, and this has given rise to a call for innovative and more effective ways of working to address these needs.

Since the 2000s, and with the support of development partners, new social protection policies and programmes have emerged, including: long-term, regular cash transfer programmes for extremely poor households; seasonal cash transfers; long-term labour-intensive public works programmes; school feeding programmes; health fee waivers; and initiatives to set up general health insurance. Humanitarian assistance (which has frequently become a 'routine' response) and nascent national social assistance systems are often present on the ground at the same time, addressing similar needs, and often working through the same organisations. Social assistance and humanitarian assistance are often provided to the same groups of highly vulnerable people: people affected by cyclical and recurrent adverse climate conditions and socioeconomic inequalities; people who are internally displaced by violence or climate-related shocks; and refugees fleeing from armed conflict across international borders.²

There is growing commitment by development and humanitarian actors to join forces in providing social assistance and humanitarian cash assistance, especially for particularly vulnerable groups. Commitments also include the strengthening of policy and operational collaboration. A global research agenda is coalescing around the nexus between humanitarian cash transfers and national social protection systems, to support this effort.

The Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Programme (SASPP) aims to help poor and vulnerable households become more resilient to the effects of climate change and to expand the reach of shock-responsive cash transfer programmes in six Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. It includes a learning agenda to inform political dialogue and to support the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development nexus. This study is part of this endeavour, being one of six country-level case studies.

The objective and scope of the research are described below. Each country case study follows the same methodological approach set out in this chapter. However, each case study is tailored to focus on specific shocks and aspects of programming agreed with and

² To date more than 3.8 million people have been forcibly displaced in the countries included in this study (877,773 refugees and over 2.1 million internally displaced people). In 2021, 9 million people are estimated to be in need of emergency food assistance.

identified by national stakeholders as presenting interesting entry points for this research agenda.

1.2 Objectives of the research

The key objectives of this research are to:

- identify the most effective connecting points for alignment between social safety nets and humanitarian assistance, with a focus on cash-based assistance;
- identify the key enablers, barriers, and blockages, and assess the potential for convergence, as well as its added value; and
- provide strategic, policy, and operational recommendations to support SASPP but also to contribute to the global debate on how to leverage these instruments to better respond to crises and shocks.

1.3 Scope of the research

The research concentrates on the SASPP countries – Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali – and on cash-based interventions as the main area of convergence between humanitarian assistance and social safety nets. The focus is on whether, and if so how, enhanced cooperation between humanitarian and national actors could be achieved, and what added value this would generate. The case study countries ensure coverage of the main needs and crises in the region, ranging from forced displacement to climate-related shocks. Given that the respective significance of different risks and operational priorities differs between countries, a country-specific analysis is conducted as part of the case studies.

1.4 Methodology

The key focus of this research is on the linkages between humanitarian cash transfer programmes and social safety nets. As a result – and it is important to state this – the emphasis is on the convergence of the two systems (or parts thereof) and not their respective performance. Hence, individual programmes will not be judged based on their quality or how well they reach their objectives: rather, they will be examined for their potential – as a whole programme or in parts – to align with government-led social safety nets.

The analysis follows a three-step process:

- step 1: describing the existing humanitarian cash assistance and social safety net programmes along their delivery chains;
- step 2: identifying key enablers and barriers and assessing potential advantages as well as risks for (further) convergence; and
- step 3: providing recommendations on how to leverage the potential of convergence to better address needs.

1.5 Specific scope of the Senegal case study

The Senegal case study focuses on lessons that can be learned from the response to climate-related shocks, and more specifically to the predictable and recurrent impacts of droughts on food and nutrition insecurity during the lean season. The analysis focuses on assessing the levels of convergence between 1) the regular social safety net; 2) a Pilot Project implemented by DGPSN in 2017 that used cash as a response to seasonal food insecurity; 3) seasonal cash transfers provided by WFP; and 4) a cash transfer programme delivered in 2020 by a group of six NGOs using a pay-out from the ARC Replica insurance.

The ARC Replica experience is a result of an insurance-based financing initiative which is a specific feature of the Senegal case study. While the response financed through the pay-out follows the same steps as a classic humanitarian programme funded by a direct donor contribution, the legal and strategic framework for the insurance-based financing model is different.

1.6 Limitations

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that a large part of the work was conducted remotely, which always creates some limitations in terms of access to stakeholders. The case study was led by an international consultant who worked remotely due to travel restrictions. She worked in close collaboration with a national expert based in Dakar, Senegal, jointly conducting 30 interviews with key informants (see the full list of informants in the annex). This permitted the team to draw on different perspectives (including a gender balance in the team), and to complement remote work with targeted, direct interaction with key stakeholders. Challenges with accessing key stakeholders when working remotely were mitigated through follow-ups in-country by the national expert. Challenges with accessing documentation were mitigated by the excellent support provided by the Senegal World Bank team.

2 Senegal: context and overview of social protection and humanitarian assistance

This section provides a general overview of the main characteristics of the shocks that affect Senegal, and of the impact they have on vulnerable populations. This is followed by an introduction of the main social protection and humanitarian cash programmes. Main characteristics of the shocks and their impact on vulnerable populations

Senegal is a lower middle-income country that is regularly exposed to shocks and that has a high vulnerability to climate change.³ The most frequent shock are recurring droughts, which impact people's lives, erode resilience, and affect natural resources. Climate change causes irregularities in rainfall patterns and more frequent, as well as more severe, droughts. This is affecting the very fragile livelihoods especially of agricultural and pastoral communities, particularly in the north of the country, as 70% of Senegalese households depend on agriculture and 40% on animal husbandry. People in urban areas are more affected by floods. Recurrent shocks erode the coping capacity of most vulnerable people as the period between the individual shocks does not allow them to recover sufficiently and to adapt their coping strategies in time before the next shock hits.

The impact of seasonal shocks on households' livelihoods and resulting levels of food insecurity is significant but varies by the year. According to the March 2021 *Cadre Harmonisé*, approximately 500,000 people were projected to be food insecure between June and August of 2021 (the current year's lean season), which is only 64.5% of the number projected for the same period in 2020 but 144% of the number in 2019.⁴

Although the Senegalese population is exposed to risks very regularly, the severity of potential humanitarian crises is rated as being of a medium level. The INFORM Risk Index⁵ classifies the country as being at medium risk of a humanitarian crisis and ranks it 60th out of 191 countries in this regard. The INFORM Severity Index⁶ estimates a medium level of severity of a crisis, based on the analysis of the possible impact, the conditions of the affected people, as well as the complexity of the crisis.

Senegal is one of the most stable countries in the region and the economy grew steadily from 2014 to 2018. However, poverty reduction has been slow and inequality has stagnated. Growth stalled in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the country. The Human Development Index 2020 puts Senegal in the low human development category, positioning it at 168 out of 189 countries and territories. It lists 53.2% of the population as multi-dimensionally poor, while an additional 16.4% are classified as

³ IFRC (2020), p. 362.

⁴ See www.food-security.net/en/datas/senegal/

⁵ The INFORM Risk Index creates a risk profile for every country. Each country has a rating between 0 and 10 for risk and all of its components, so it is easy to compare. The profiles are available at <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Country-Profile>

⁶ The INFORM Severity Index measures the severity of humanitarian crises globally (i.e. between rather than within crises) and on an ongoing, up-to-date, and regular basis.

vulnerable to multidimensional poverty.⁷ Power shortages, recurrent food crises, continuous high population growth (over 6% per year), and high unemployment are constraining the country's development. The World Bank estimates that in 2020, 36.9% of the population still lived below the international poverty line⁸. The COVID-19 pandemic risks jeopardising the socioeconomic gains achieved over the previous years and the World Bank estimates that 600,000 additional people have become poor as a result of the secondary effects of the pandemic.⁹

This context is comparatively better than in other countries in the region and makes Senegal a country where a nationally led, relatively predictable shock-response system is possible. Political stability, some fiscal space – at least before the pandemic – a medium-level risk, strong international partnerships, and a capable civil society are all favourable conditions for piloting alternative models for disaster response, breaking away from the annual cycle of externally-funded short-term action towards a model based on existing processes and piloting alternative funding models.

2.1 Overview of key social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes

The flagship social protection programme of the Government of Senegal is the “*Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale*” (PNBSF) (National Stipend Programme for Family Security) implemented by the *Délégation Générale à la Protection Sociale et à la Solidarité Nationale* (DGPSN) (General Delegation for Social Protection and National Solidarity). It started in December 2013 and has grown over time into one of the largest social protection programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, covering approximately 300,000 households, i.e. 16% of the population.

Box 2: World Bank support

PNBSF is supported by the World Bank's *Projet d'Appui aux Filets Sociaux (PAFS)* (Safety Net Project), which started in 2014. Until the end of 2020 it committed US\$ 108.55 million, most of it on a credit basis, and additional financing of US\$ 110 million was approved in mid-2021 (36.4% as credit). The objectives of PAFS are to 1) support the establishment of building blocks for the social safety net, and 2) to increase the access of poor households to targeted and adaptive cash transfers. The first component includes support to key tools, institutional capacity building, and a consolidation of the Social Registry. The second component includes some support for actual transfers, productive inclusion measures, the design and implementation of cash transfers, as well as cash transfers to support the productivity and climate resilience of farmers. PAFS is mainly funded by the World Bank through credits and grants as well as co-financing grants from the SASPP Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

PAFS is anchored at DGPSN, the government agency in charge of implementing PNBSF. Since 2020, the PNBSF cash transfers have been funded by the Government of Senegal. PAFS provides technical support and finances implementation costs.

Humanitarian programmes responding to seasonal food insecurity adhere to the annual *Plan National de Riposte à l'Insécurité Alimentaire (PNR)* (National Food

⁷ UNDP (2020), p. 6.

⁸ World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook, www.worldbank.org/en/publication/macro-poverty-outlook/mpo_ssa

⁹ World Bank (2020b).

Insecurity Response Plan) elaborated under the leadership of the ***Secrétariat Exécutif au Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire (SE-CNSA) (Executive Secretariat of the National Food Security Council)***. Such programmes used to be numerous in the past but have been reduced significantly over the last few years as available funding has dried up. Each year SE-CNSA, together with food security partners, develops a PNR based on the needs assessment in the Cadre Harmonisé. The plan is then implemented – to the extent possible given limited financial resources – by NGOs and United Nations agencies, as well as the Government if budget permits. The number of seasonal support programmes is currently very limited. In 2017, a Pilot Project using some social protection tools was supported by the World Bank, and in 2020, a consortium of NGOs received a significant payout from the ARC Replica insurance programme. WFP also intervenes and has now moved its delivery to cash assistance.

The following programmes were analysed as part of the case study:¹⁰

- **PNBSF**

PNBSF provides a quarterly cash allocation of West African francs (CFA) 25,000 per household, transferred via the post office (or mobile payments in the past). 80% of the beneficiaries are women,¹¹ and according to a baseline assessment conducted in 2016, 93% of the beneficiaries were poor and 58% extremely poor in that year. Targeting is based on the Social Registry but only households passing a proxy means test (PMT) scoring are enrolled according to a geographical quota system based on local poverty levels. The programme included new cohorts of beneficiaries in 2014 and 2016 but since then no additional beneficiaries have been added, despite a commitment to conduct a re-evaluation of beneficiaries' poverty levels after five years of support. As at 2020, three-quarters of the beneficiaries had exceeded the five-year coverage. A re-certification exercise has been under discussion since 2018 and is a pre-condition for the World Bank to resume its support for paying actual transfers. Beneficiaries are required to participate in sensitisation activities designed to promote knowledge of health issues, education, and civil documentation. However, non-participation in the awareness sessions is not sanctioned.

- **2017 Pilot Project testing the use of social protection instruments to respond to seasonal food insecurity**

The World Bank supported DGPSN to pilot the use of cash transfers as a shock response during the lean season in 2017. In two out of the six departments classified as being in Phase 3 of food insecurity, 8,175 households received an unconditional cash transfer of a maximum of CFA 135,000 in two payments through a mobile money provider. The budget for this Pilot Project came from the World Bank. Key elements of the delivery chain, initially developed for the PNBSF implementation but now seen as the social protection system tools, were leveraged: the social workers implementation network, the payment system, and the Social Registry as a base for targeting (but

¹⁰ The research team conducted an inventory of humanitarian cash-based interventions and social assistance programmes. As part of our overall approach, only significant programmes have been included i.e. programmes assisting at least 5,000 households and lasting at least three months.

¹¹ An evaluation of PNBSF in 2017 found this not to be the case in one of the two studied departments. Key informants for the evaluation reported that the original rule of registering women as the principal recipients was first loosened and then abandoned over time (FAO/IRAM, 2017, p. 43).

adapted to ensure the most food-insecure households were considered as beneficiaries).

- **Seasonal humanitarian cash transfers by WFP**

WFP implements a targeted, seasonal unconditional cash transfer that aims to cover the basic food and nutrition requirements of severely food-insecure households during the lean season (June to September). In 2021, WFP provided cash transfers to 93,000 people (i.e. 19% of the caseload in need) in five departments. The transfer amount is CFA 5,000 per person, transferred through mobile money, for a maximum of eight persons in a household, for a period of three months. WFP's Cooperating Partners for this programme are *Action contre la Faim* (ACF) (Action Against Hunger) and World Vision. Targeting starts with the lists of the RNU, which are complemented by a layer of food security-related criteria.

- **A drought impact mitigation programme funded through a pay-out from the ARC Replica disaster risk insurance programme**

The Start Network, comprising 55 non-governmental member organisations, purchased its first ARC Replica policy to protect against the risk of drought in Senegal in 2019, alongside the Senegalese Government. Six Start Network members are part of the initiative in the country (World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Oxfam, Save the Children, and ACF).

A pay-out of US\$ 10.6 million to the Start Network was confirmed in December 2019 and made it possible to support 335,000 people through the lean season in 2020, out of which 203,000 received a total of CFA 5,000 per person, transferred through mobile money or cash in transit, for a maximum of eight persons in a household, for a period of three months. Targeting was based on the RNU, with some administrative corrections. In places where there were not enough RNU beneficiaries, partners added additional beneficiaries using food security-related criteria but still using the community targeting and validation mechanisms set up through the RNU registration process.

The Government of Senegal also received a pay-out of US\$ 12.5 million but used this for in-kind food assistance and not for cash transfers. This response was therefore excluded from the detailed analysis in Chapter 3.

3 The analytical framework, key findings, and conclusions

This chapter analyses the current level of convergence between the national social safety net programme (PNBSF) and the humanitarian cash transfer programmes and identifies effective connecting points. The analysis also identifies key enablers of, and barriers to, further closer alignment. The ‘unbundled framework’ is used as an analytical tool to identify where there is current practice of alignment and where there are opportunities for future convergence.

3.1 Analytical framework

Assistance to very poor and vulnerable people can be placed on a continuum of delivery options.¹² It ranges from completely parallel systems where there is no integration between humanitarian and national programmes, through alignment with existing social protection programme elements, to piggy-backing, whereby certain of these elements are also being used by humanitarian cash assistance. Full integration exists where national social protection systems lead and guide all cash assistance. However, actors do not have to choose one approach over another: they can pick and combine different options. Moreover, certain delivery functions can be more integrated than others.

This approach is set out in the paper *Unbundled: A Framework for Connecting Safety Nets and Humanitarian Assistance in Refugee Settings*, developed by Oxford Policy Management, together with the World Bank.¹³ This paper identifies a ‘harmonisation menu’ that can be applied across every element of the social protection delivery chain, including high-level design choices.

The research uses this ‘unbundled framework’ to describe the existing humanitarian cash assistance and social safety net programmes in Senegal, and to map the different programmatic functions according to where they fall on the continuum of delivery options. This descriptive step is followed by an analytical process that identifies enabling and constraining factors at four different levels: national policy, programme objectives, programme design, and the delivery chain.

The research acknowledges that convergence is not a goal in itself, and that it does not always result in beneficial outcomes. The study uses four dimensions to assess what potential value greater convergence could add: relevance, resource implications, risks, and sustainability. The outcome of this step is a qualitative assessment of whether – on balance – the potential advantages to be gained from further convergence outweigh the risks and

¹² O'Brien (2018).

¹³ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32467>. Further research has recently been completed on the topic, especially by the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert advice helpline (SPACE) team and the EU-funded Social Protection across the Humanitarian–Development Nexus (SPaN) team: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/sp-nexus/wiki/guidance-package-span-resources>

barriers that have to be overcome, and at what level and where this convergence would add most value.

The case study also identifies possible emerging trends and patterns in the findings and conclusions, and provides recommendations for next steps. The main recommendations provided at the end of the report highlight how the continuum from humanitarian cash to social safety nets can be further leveraged to better address needs and respond to crises in fragile contexts.

3.2 Overview of alignment levels

This section analyses the alignment levels of the shock-responsive social protection Pilot Project in 2017 and the humanitarian cash programmes implemented by WFP and ARC Replica with the systems and procedures set up through PNBSF. The analysis is conducted along 16 different dimensions, starting from the policy and legal framework to programme objectives and design, and ending with the implementation elements.

The main points emerging from the analysis are discussed in more detail in the subsequent section, which sets out the main findings and conclusions.

Table 1: Overview – A summary of the current extent of alignment with PNBSF

	Parallel system	Alignment	Piggy-backing	National system
Legal and policy framework	ARC Replica		2017 Pilot Project WFP	
Financing	WFP	2017 Pilot Project ARC Replica		
Governance	WFP ARC Replica			2017 Pilot Project
Coordination	ARC Replica	WFP	2017 Pilot Project	
Programme objectives				2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica
Poverty/vulnerability assessment				2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica
Price and market analysis¹⁴	ARC Replica	WFP		
Targeting design, eligibility, and qualifying criteria		WFP ARC Replica	2017 Pilot Project	
Transfer value, frequency, and modality	2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica			

¹⁴ The 2017 Pilot Project did not undertake any price and market analysis.

	Parallel system	Alignment	Piggy-backing	National system
Conditionality	2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica			
Beneficiary management information system	WFP ARC Replica		2017 Pilot Project	
Outreach and communication		WFP ARC Replica	2017 Pilot Project	
Registration and enrolment			2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica	
Payment and delivery	2017 Pilot Project WFP ARC Replica			
Accountability to affected populations	WFP	ARC Replica		2017 Pilot Project
Monitoring and evaluation	WFP ARC Replica			2017 Pilot Project

At the national level, the analysis of alignment levels shows a mixed picture: The 2017 Pilot Project piggy-backed on many elements of PNBSF. WFP also piggy-backs on the legal and policy framework but operates under its own governance and uses parallel financing. The national ARC insurance mechanism is a separate policy framework, with its own financing and coordination system. Even though ARC Replica is fully aligned with this mechanism, it is run mostly in parallel to PNBSF.

The institutional setup for the seasonal response to food insecurity is equally distinct from the social protection system, being directed by SE-CNSA, which sits under the Government Secretariat. All seasonal programmes align around the objectives and directives of the PNR but there is very limited connection with the social safety net.

Looking at the design of the programmes, the strongest connecting points across all analysed programmes are the Cadre Harmonisé, as the underlying needs assessment; the RNU, as the centrepiece for targeting; and the use of cash. However, transfers are different and do not copy the PNBSF conditionality. All programmes start their beneficiary selection using the RNU lists and follow the same steps of community identification and validation, followed by administrative endorsement first at regional and then at national level. However, all humanitarian programmes apply their own criteria at a certain stage in the process. With regard to transfer value, frequency, and modality, as well as conditionality, there is almost full harmonisation among all three seasonal programmes but their procedures run parallel to those of PNBSF.

With regard to the delivery chain, WFP and ARC Replica mostly run their own system, while the shock-responsive Pilot Project in 2017 showed a strong level of piggy-backing on the social protection system.

3.3 Main findings and conclusions

This section clusters the most important findings and discusses them under the overarching questions of a) what and where the most effective connecting points are; and b) what the key enablers of, and barriers, to further convergence are. The ‘added value of convergence’ with regard to strategic and resource implications, risks, and sustainability is discussed in the following chapter.

3.3.1 National context

Policy and legal framework

There are different policy and legal frameworks for social protection, for the seasonal response to food insecurity, and for using the ARC insurance mechanism. While these three frameworks interact through certain key players, especially SE-CNSA, they fall under different institutional setups – and thus different sets of policy directions.

The key policy framework for social protection is the current *Stratégie Nationale de la Protection Sociale (National Social Protection Strategy)*, adopted in 2017 for the period until 2035. The long-term objective of the strategy is ‘to build a social protection system accessible to all Senegalese, providing everyone with a guaranteed minimum income and health coverage, but also a comprehensive safety net ensuring resilience to all those who suffer from the shocks and crises that can push them into poverty’.¹⁵ The strategy identifies five strategic objectives over the life cycle. The fifth objective explicitly refers to building resilience to shocks.

The policy framework for seasonal food insecurity is the annual *Plan National de Riposte à l’Insécurité Alimentaire (PNR) (National Food Insecurity Response Plan)*.¹⁶ The PNR is developed by all food security actors, under the leadership of SE-CNSA, and provides directions for seasonal food insecurity in terms of the objectives, the geographic and household targeting priorities, monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as an estimate of the total costs. The PNR is based on the results of the Cadre Harmonisé (see details below).

The governance and legal framework for ARC Replica is entirely prescribed by the Government because that is the way that the (Replica) initiative has been built from the start. The ARC insurance mechanism, to which ARC Replica is linked, sits under the Ministry of Interior and its Directorate for Civil Protection. There is limited connection between the ARC insurance mechanism and the social protection system, which sits under

¹⁵ World Bank, Rougeaux, S. (2017), p. 10. Translation by the author.

¹⁶ République du Sénégal, Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement, Secrétariat Exécutif du Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire (forthcoming). In some years it is alternatively named the *Plan d’Urgence Sécurité Alimentaire* (PUSA) (National Food Security Emergency Plan). There is also a *Stratégie Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire et de Résilience* (SNSAR) (National Food Security and Resilience Strategy), but it focuses on longer-term food security development objectives.

the Ministry of Community Development. The framework for ARC is the bi-annual *Plan Opérationnel* (Operational Plan).¹⁷ This is also developed also by SE-CNSA, which is an effective convergence point, but it is a separate document to the PNR, though it integrates many similar elements. The Operational Plan elaborates the risk profile that is covered, and sets out the modalities for a response in the case of a pay-out, including the modalities of a response (cash transfers, support for livestock, and nutrition interventions), the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, as well as a monitoring and evaluation system and a budget overview.

The analysed programmes either fall within the PNR (2017 Pilot Project and WFP) or within the ARC framework (ARC Replica). Thus they all align with a certain government-set policy direction but they differ from the guidance set by the National Social Protection Strategy.

Financing

The degree of alignment of the different funding sources varies. This situation is neither an enabler of convergence nor a barrier to it, as donors allow sufficient flexibility to actors to align on key policy objectives.

Convergence regarding the financing sources varies considerably. The actual PNBSF transfers are mainly covered by a dedicated line in the government budget.¹⁸ The operational costs for building the social safety net are covered by the World Bank support and are equivalent to 13% of the costs of the transfers.¹⁹ The shock-responsive Pilot Project in 2017 was funded entirely by the World Bank. WFP receives its support mainly from bilateral donors, as well as through internal resources. In 2021 the key donors for the seasonal cash transfers are Canada and France. The ARC Replica premium, as well as operational costs, were covered through a grant provided by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This was part of Germany's global efforts to support the Start Network to build the ARC Replica initiative and Senegal was selected due to the favourable context and strong government buy-in for the mechanism.

The sources of funding play a key role with regard to the predictability of operations and the choices made for service delivery. The different sources of funding follow very different timelines: the annual amount for PNBSF is known when the government budget gets approved. World Bank financing is approved on a multi-annual basis, while WFP operates partly on multi-year funding cycles and partly on annual funding cycles. Because of its nature as an insurance mechanism, an intervention by ARC/ARC Replica only materialises when triggers are met and the insurance makes a pay-out. As will be shown below, certain elements of the delivery chain, such as the choice of modality (cash or in-kind) and payment mechanism (through the post office or via mobile phone operators), are

¹⁷ République du Sénégal / African Risk Initiative (2021).

¹⁸ Up to 2018, the Government funded 85% of the transfers and the World Bank covered the rest. This represented 0.22% of GDP (World Bank Economic Update 2019, p. 43). In 2019, the Government funded all transfers. In 2020, the World Bank supported the last quarterly payment (25% of the transfer volume), while the first three quarters were funded from the government budget line.

¹⁹ World Bank (2019), p.45.

strongly dictated by the source of funding and act as *de facto* barriers for further convergence.

Developing a financing strategy for shock response has been identified as one of the main building blocks for a shock-responsive social protection system.²⁰ In the past, the Government invested CFA 2.5 billion annually for the response to seasonal food insecurity, whereas the requirement was estimated at an annual amount of CFA 7 billion.²¹ However, this amount has declined significantly in recent years and there are no more predictable government resources for the PNR. Developing a disaster risk financing strategy has been a key element of the World Bank's policy dialogue with the Government in recent years. This would allow a predictable response that is commensurate to needs and would use a risk-layering approach to reflect the annual variation in the occurrence of shocks and their impact. Using disaster risk insurance opportunities such as ARC is recommended as one element. While this source of funding for a response cannot be predicted, the pay-out announcement comes early in an agricultural year, allowing actors to take early action aimed at preventing affected people from resorting to negative coping strategies. Improved predictability of the Government's own budgetary funds would also help to estimate the gap between available resources and needs, thus helping humanitarian actors to mobilise resources.

However, the potential of such a strategy to foster stronger convergence between humanitarian actors and PNBSF remains limited as long as the Government maintains parallel governance and coordination mechanisms for social protection versus disaster response.

Governance and coordination

PNBSF and ARC each have their own governance structure and coordination architecture. Coordination between these two spheres is limited and actors concentrate on coordination within their domain, inhibiting the proactive search for synergies and connections. Some institutional actors have a role in both spheres and provide an effective convergence point. The 2017 Pilot Project was strongly coordinated with the social protection system.

The lead agency for PNBSF is DGPSN, which was set up in 2012 under the Prime Minister's Office and which since 2016 also has regional representatives. DGPSN was integrated into the Ministry for Community Development in 2019. This change reduced its autonomy and key informants agreed that coordination has become more difficult because it has become unclear which entry points they should use for what kind of issue, i.e. addressing requests first to the Minister's Office or addressing them directly at the DGPSN level. DGPSN created the Social Registry in 2015, which was institutionalised by a Presidential Decree in August 2021 as the targeting base of all social support programmes.

²⁰ World Bank, Branders, N., Coudouel, A., Rougeaux, S. (2018), p. 28; World Bank (2019), p. 48.

²¹ World Bank (2019), p. 47. For example, the PNR for 2021 estimates a budget of CFA 7.6 billion (République du Sénégal, Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement, Secrétariat Exécutif du Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire, forthcoming, p. 21).

The ARC initiative is hosted by the Directorate of Civil Protection within the Ministry of the Interior. It is led by a coordinator who is a staff member of the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (CSA) (Food Security Commission). The CSA is located within the Ministry for Community Development. The initiative has its own governance structures and coordination architecture, in which DGPSN participates but does not have a major role. The NGO-led ARC Replica initiative participates in all coordination structures but develops its own implementation plan in the case of a pay-out.

The implementation of the annual PNR is coordinated by SE-CNSA, with inputs from food security partners. However, SE-CNSA has limited financial means to undertake this role. Implementing partners mostly work with the regional bureaux (*Bureaux Régionaux de Sécurité Alimentaire*) and provide reports back to the central level.

The interviewed partners reported a good level of coordination within the social protection system, within the ARC mechanism, as well as among PNR partners. However, discussions and coordination between these three spheres is limited. Within social protection there are a number of high-level as well as technical committees where different governmental institutions and supporting partners meet. There is also an active Social Protection Thematic Group, in which only development partners participate (but no NGO), which is currently chaired by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)²² and the International Labour Organization. ARC's activities are coordinated through a technical working group in which DGPSN as well as SE-CNSA participate. There is a monitoring committee for the PNR that meets monthly under the chair of SE-CNSA. Thus, both DGPSN as well as SE-CNSA have a role in more than one sphere, which enables dialogue. However, the interviews showed that stakeholders invest mostly in the coordination of the domain in which they lead (DGPSN in social protection and SE-CNSA in seasonal food insecurity), and play a minor role in the others. Hence there is an exchange of information but little proactive effort to create synergies.

The international partners focus their attention mostly on the direct areas in which they work. In interviews, several respondents made statements such as 'We have nothing to do with PNBSF' or 'I don't know much about ARC' or 'We don't talk about humanitarian programmes'. Coordination seems to occur on a needs basis when there are concrete issues to discuss, such as the delineation of geographic zones. Even partners whose programmes touch on more than one sphere seem rather compartmentalised within their own organisation. Partners' coordination fora also stick to their own theme: according to key informants the thematic group on social protection has so far not had many linkages with the humanitarian programmes, and, vice versa, the food security group has not discussed linkages with social protection.

However, there are individuals in these organisations who it is acknowledged are thinking about the linkages and who reach out within their personal networks. The only organisations that very clearly play an active linkage role are the local NGOs,

²² With funding from the European Union, UNICEF implements a capacity strengthening project focusing on improving the financial viability and coverage of the social protection system in Senegal. Because the project does not include any direct transfers it was not studied in detail for this research but key informant interviews were held with UNICEF and EU Delegation staff (see Annex A). For additional information see https://socialprotection-pfm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/EC-Projet_Presentation-Standard_Senegal.pdf

known as *Opérateurs Sociaux (OS) (Social Operators)*, which have an active role in PNBSF and some humanitarian programmes. These local NGOs ensure community outreach and mobilisation, assist in targeting, conduct the sensitisation sessions, and assist in the payment process, as well as supporting beneficiaries to submit a complaint. They do this work within PNBSF and they also played a very similar role at community level in the 2017 Pilot Project. In some areas some of them also collaborate with individual ARC Replica member organisations (see details below).

Good practical coordination is happening around the common use of the RNU (see details below) but the main barrier to harmonising coordination is the institutional division among government institutions. Each of the three spheres – social protection, the PNR, and ARC – has its own principal government actor and while there are lines of communication between the three, they each focus mostly on organising their own domain. In some instances, the responsibilities are not clearly demarcated, which leads to a blurring of roles.²³ International partners align their operations with the respective lead agency within their domain. There was clear optimism in 2018 around increased linkages that happened at that time, as clearly shown by the successful Pilot Project in 2017.²⁴ However, the changes to the institutional anchorage of social protection within the Government in 2019, and the government-led COVID-19 response in 2020, brought a setback and partners who were interviewed expressed disillusionment over the loss of momentum since.

3.3.2 Programme objectives

The seasonal food insecurity programmes all support the annual PNR in achieving its objective of ‘improving the food and nutritional situation of households in crisis through emergency assistance’. WFP subscribes to this objective, adding an emphasis on the introduction of innovative tools (such as cash transfers). Though the ARC initiative’s primary objective is to cover risks and facilitate anticipatory action, the response that is eventually financed through the mechanism contributes to supporting the most vulnerable people in a food security crisis situation, and thus aligns with the PNR.

PNBSF focuses on chronic poverty and thus has an objective that is different from, but complementary, to seasonal humanitarian cash transfers, with both sharing the focus on benefiting the poorest households (as they are often also the most affected by food insecurity). As a consequence, the programmes differ in terms of their overall goal (long-term poverty reduction versus short-term avoidance of crisis-level coping strategies), scope (nationwide versus the departments most affected by a bad agricultural season), and especially their duration (five years versus three to six months).

²³ The Department of Civil Protection, for example, has a clear role in the response to floods, but its role in a drought is less clear.

²⁴ As an example: ‘Les acteurs et bailleurs humanitaires renforcent leurs appuis aux institutions gouvernementales. Conscients de la nature structurelle des chocs au Sénégal, ceux-ci prennent conscience de la valeur ajoutée d’un système de protection sociale adaptative. Ainsi, ils renforcent leur appui aux institutions gouvernementales engagées dans la réponse aux chocs plutôt que de mettre en œuvre eux-mêmes la réponse auprès des ménages touchés par les chocs : utilisation du RNU, développement de systèmes de redevabilité, amélioration des liens entre programmes de résilience et de réponse aux chocs, etc.’ World Bank (2019), p. 45.

3.3.3 Programme design

At the programme design level, the Cadre Harmonisé and the RNU are the two main connecting points; a third one is the use of cash. These converging points are facilitated by a high degree of institutional legitimacy of these tools and a positive mindset towards their common use.

The differences in the design relate to the targeting process, and the transfer values, frequency, duration, modality, and conditionality. While these elements are similar or the same among the seasonal assistance programmes that were studied, they all differ from the respective features of the social safety net.

Commonalities in programme design

The Cadre Harmonisé provides the shared basis for an annual needs assessment of vulnerability to food insecurity during the lean season and is ‘at the heart of the system’²⁵ for seasonal support. The process is led by SE-CNSA and uses a recognised methodology and follows a well-established annual cycle: the different government services collect data: such as, for example, on rainfall, the size of land planted, types of crops, but also price and market monitoring information. A large group of different technical services as well as development partners come together during a workshop to estimate the actual and projected level of need, to classify departments by level/phase of food insecurity, and to determine the estimated number of people in need of assistance by phase and by department.²⁶ Informants described the atmosphere during the workshops as open, participative, and fostered by the fact that the same people participate every year and get to know each other well. Based on the results of the Cadre Harmonisé, SE-CNSA then develops the PNR and the different actors agree on respective geographic intervention areas, according to their programme objectives, geographic presence, and budget.

Ideally, humanitarian actors would only complement where the Government cannot cover all needs. In practice, there is no longer a government budget line linked to the PNR so humanitarian actors start first and in some years the Government also intervenes. However, key informants said that frequently the official approval is late and the unpredictability of government resources delays interventions. In the meantime, NGOs already go ahead, once SN-CNSA gives them the green light to intervene.

The national Social Registry is the strongest element of alignment in the targeting process. All social programmes use it as the first step of beneficiary selection, and use the community validation system first introduced through the RNU procedures. Some partners add additional selection criteria when finalising their beneficiary lists or when adding more people to the lists if there are more places in their programmes than there are RNU-registered households in a particular village. This was also the case in the 2017 Pilot Project. When beneficiaries are selected for new or additional programmes, all households

²⁵ Key informant interview.

²⁶ A discussion point relates to the demographic data used to calculate the number of people in need. Because the last census dates from 2013, not all participants agree with the calculations used to update the data while waiting for the next census that is planned for 2023.

that are registered in the RNU are listed, regardless of whether or not they are already PNBSF beneficiaries.

Despite progress in improving the quality of the RNU in recent years, and thus boosting its credibility, users voiced criticism about the quality of the data. The age of the RNU data is a key concern: initial data collection took place between 2013 and 2016, and, despite an updating exercise between 2018 and 2020, partners who were interviewed still have concerns about the current validity of the data. They also highlighted the lack of agility as there are no seasonal updates on the status of households' vulnerability, which would be key to inform targeting decisions for seasonal support. Other partners mentioned that key characteristics of their potential target groups – for example, street children – are not captured in the RNU. Many raised the absence of a national single identifier, as well as technical hiccups, such as spelling errors in the names of villages or household members. Several interviewed users noted the absence a systematic way to feed back the updates they collect on RNU member households when conducting verification exercises as part of their own beneficiary selection process. As one partner who was interviewed put it: 'The spirit of the RNU is a bridge between social protection and humanitarian cash transfers but the way it functions is a blockage'.

Stakeholders do not systematically ask if their beneficiaries are included in PNBSF,²⁷ and do not perceive this as constituting a double benefit. However, community perceptions differ from this official policy position. In their majority, interviewees insisted that the seasonal support is complementary to the regular safety net. Almost everyone agreed that PNBSF beneficiaries should not be excluded from seasonal support as they are the most vulnerable and experience additional hardship during the lean season. This position contrasts with frequently reported views coming from communities, who perceive it as unfair if the regular safety net beneficiaries are also selected as beneficiaries for lean season support.²⁸ There are anecdotal reports of communities proceeding to their own redistribution mechanisms: for example, by using the seasonal support provided in 2017 to buy food that was then distributed among all the households in the village.

With the update process that started in 2019 the transparency regarding who is included in the RNU has significantly improved.²⁹ However, this has as yet little influence on the caseload for PNBSF as all current beneficiaries have been included prior to 2016. Some

²⁷ The exact percentage of overlapping support only exists for WFP's 2020 cash transfer, when it was 22%. In 2021, WFP only asked whether beneficiaries were part of the RNU, which was the case for 44.4% in Saraya and 30% in Ranérou. ARC Replica members did not ask the question. A performance evaluation for PNBSF conducted in 2017 asked the same question but did not obtain any data (FAO/IRAM, 2017, p. 87).

²⁸ This position has also been reported in an evaluation of PNBSF conducted by FAO in 2017: 'Les bénéficiaires du PNBSF sont moins susceptibles d'être ciblés par des programmes d'assistance alimentaire. Ainsi, le cumul du PNBSF, perçu par la population comme une aide principalement destinée à soulager les dépenses d'alimentation, avec d'autres programmes de sécurité alimentaire semble soulever des oppositions de la part des populations non bénéficiaires. Face au nombre de personnes dans le besoin, il n'apparaît pas juste pour les populations qu'une personne bénéficie de deux aides ciblées sur l'alimentation.' (FAO/IRAM, 2017, p. 87).

²⁹ See the evaluation of the RNU updating process (N.N., 2018).

partners perceive the selection of PNBSF beneficiaries as being politicised and question whether the most vulnerable households have really been selected.³⁰

Box 3: The Social Registry

- The Social Registry is viewed by the Government as its central repository for data on the poorest households. It was institutionalised in August 2021 by a Presidential Decree and it is now mandatory for all social programmes to use it for selecting beneficiaries.
- Often even well-informed actors confuse the RNU with PNBSF. PNBSF is one of the government programmes using the RNU, but there are many others that also do so, such as the health insurance programme, the governmental nutrition programme, and many more.
- The Social Registry is not well known among the population and there is no name for it in the local language. This hinders effective communication and outreach to communities.
- The Social Registry is viewed by key stakeholders as a way to gain time and to reduce the cost of targeting beneficiaries for the lean season response. However, numerous respondents highlighted the importance of keeping the data up to date in order to maintain the credibility and relevance of the Registry for future use.
- In 2017 the Social Registry updated its unique questionnaire and integrated all the data typically used by food security actors to assess the level of vulnerability. However, from a user perspective much more regular updates on seasonal vulnerability elements would be needed to reflect the impact of successive shocks and other elements impacting people's living conditions.
- There has been a debate on the relationship between using a household economy analysis methodology versus the current RNU methodology.³¹ A collaborative study was conducted in 2017 to compare the two targeting methodologies. Only just about half of the households selected through the household economy analysis exercise were also found in the RNU, the correlation being stronger the poorer a household was.
- Partners apply their targeting criteria to the existing database to mitigate the shortcomings that they see in the quality of the data. The use of additional filters is explicitly recognised in the Presidential Decree. Partners report that a good percentage of their beneficiaries are RNU members but that their caseloads also regularly go beyond it, due to correcting exclusion errors or simply offering more spaces for one village than what the RNU allows.
- Partners experience challenges when using the lists as administrative data are not always up to date and there is no biometric system to verify the correctness of personal data.
- Partners have signed formal partnership agreements with DGPSN for using the data, mainly on data protection regulations. This partnership also includes the possibility of providing feedback to the Social Registry from the results of verification exercises and complementary targeting. However, this is not yet being done at scale and a structured mechanism for doing this is still missing. So far, user experiences have been collected through annual meetings, but a monitoring committee has recently been introduced through the Presidential Decree that, among other tasks, will look at improving the use and the return of user information.
- The long-term sustainability of the investment in the Social Registry is not secured as long as its operating costs are covered 100% by the World Bank.

³⁰ This question was already raised in a performance evaluation of PNBSF in 2017 (FAO/ IRAM, 2017, p. 76), especially for the two first generations of PNBSF beneficiaries.

³¹ Diagne, M.F. (2017).

Differences in programme design

The transfer values, frequency, duration, and modality are set in the PNR and are followed by the seasonal programmes³² but they differ from PNBSF. So far, the transfer values have been largely the same among the programmes that were studied, over the last few years.³³ The frequency varies in practice as the design of transferring three single payments has not been put into practice in any of the studied programmes. Instead a pattern of combining payments was found: in the 2017 Pilot Project, two payments were made in one department and a single payment in the other; WFP merged the two first payments followed by a single one; and the ARC Replica response merged the second and the third payments.

Table 2: Transfer value, frequency, duration, and modality

	PNBSF	2017 Pilot Project	WFP	ARC Replica
Value	CFA 25,000 per household per quarter	CFA 5,000 per person, max. CFA 45,000/household	CFA 5,000 per person, max. CFA 40,000/household	CFA 5,000 per person, max. 40,000/household
Frequency	Quarterly: four times a year	Monthly (planned) but effectively paid as a single payment in one department and two payments in the other	Monthly (planned) but effectively paid as a double and then a single payment	Monthly (planned) but effectively paid as a single followed by a double payment
Duration	Five years (planned); de facto since 2014	One-off for lean season 2017	Annually for the three months of the lean season but in different geographic areas	So far, one-off for lean season 2020
Modality	Cash (post office)	Cash (mobile money)	Cash (mobile money)	Cash (mobile money)

The transfer value under PNBSF has been static since its inception, while the transfer values under the seasonal programmes were last revised upwards in 2018 based on a joint ‘essential needs assessment’ conducted together with SE-CNSA, other food security actors, and the World Bank.³⁴ The PNBSF value was set in relation to the minimum wage at the time and the poverty line, and was meant to represent between 15% and 25% of the poverty line.³⁵ The value of the seasonal transfers was calculated based on the full average price of the food ration. Partners who were interviewed mentioned that the capping of the maximum number of household members at eight is related to the limited

³² There was one exception in the transfer value in 2017, where the maximum number of people per household was nine persons whilst it is eight persons for WFP and ARC Replica.

³³ But this consensus has been called into question for the near future as ARC Replica plans to increase its value to CFA 10,000 for a maximum of 10 persons per household, which is a clear deviation from the value set in the PNR.

³⁴ Before it was CFA 3,000 per person. Another update, and thus a potential adjustment of the value, is planned for early 2022.

³⁵ An evaluation in 2017 found that the transfer represented on average between 14% and 22% of the annual income of the beneficiary households (FAO/IRAM, 2017, p. 50).

resources and that they are aware that the average household size in rural areas (where seasonal support occurs) is nine rather than eight.

None of the seasonal programmes is conditional, while PNBSF has a light condition relating to attending quarterly sessions focusing on issues such as health, education, and civil documentation. The OS do report on absenteeism from the sessions but the conditionality is *de facto* not enforced as so far no payment has been withheld from families for not attending the sessions.

3.3.4 Implementation and delivery systems

The 2017 Pilot Project showed various elements of piggy-backing on the social protection system in the delivery chain, but the delivery systems of the other analysed programmes are only loosely aligned, or remain parallel. WFP implements all elements of the delivery chain in parallel, except for two (registration and outreach), and so does the ARC Replica initiative, again except for community outreach and accountability to affected populations. As detailed in the following paragraphs, the 2017 Pilot Project showed various elements of piggy-backing on the social protection system.

Beneficiary management information system (MIS)

Only DGPSN has a fully developed MIS: all other partners mainly use different tools for registration (see below). In 2018, DGPSN introduced an MIS, replacing beneficiary administration on paper first and in simple spreadsheets later. The MIS is also used to handle complaints and can be used to store the attendance lists for the sensitisation sessions. Since the end of 2020, WFP has been transitioning its dataset step by step from spreadsheets to its corporate system, SCOPE, with the objective of completing this by 2022. All ARC Replica partners have joined their beneficiary datasets into one common file, which facilitates efforts to harmonise monitoring procedures, but this falls short of allowing a joined-up comprehensive management of the overall response.

Outreach and communication

Community outreach and communication is a central piece of most programmes and shows a certain level of alignment. Community validation of the beneficiary lists is an important step in the targeting process and involves strong communication efforts. The local NGOs contracted by the DGPSN as so-called OS play a key role in many of the programmes – but not all.

Six local NGOs, called OS, are the eyes and ears of PNBSF on the ground. They are tasked with community mobilisation, explaining the objectives and procedures, assisting in the selection of beneficiaries, and supporting beneficiaries in the actual reception of their transfers. They are assisted by community volunteers on the ground, who receive a small stipend. The volunteers are supervised by individuals recruited by the OS.

The OS working on the routine safety net were also selected for the Pilot Project in 2017, where they played a very strong role in the identification of beneficiaries. They oversaw the payment process and regulated any complaints directly on the ground as it was a one-off process. In 2021 WFP is undertaking the beneficiary selection itself and ensures community

outreach during the payment process through two international cooperating partners, World Vision and ACF. At the community level, World Vision does not operate through an OS as they have a network of ‘community development agents’ in their areas of operation and do not see a need to work with the established community network of the OS. ACF works through its established local NGO partner to assist communities during the payment process but it sub-contracted the OS for assistance in beneficiary selection as part of the ARC Replica operation. Other ARC Replica members fell back on existing local partnerships for the entire process, due to concerns around delays in due diligence assessments for new partners, effective fraud prevention measures, and overall capacity of the OS.

Table 3: Overview of partnerships for outreach and communication

	PNBSF	2017 Pilot	WFP	ARC Replica
Outreach during beneficiary selection	One OS per region	OS	WFP recruits temporary staff for enumeration	Different members had different models: partially sub-contracting OS, partially working through their own community agents, and partially working through long-term local partners
Outreach during ongoing programme	One OS per region	OS	World Vision: through its own community development agents ACF: through established local NGO partners	Different members had different models: partially sub-contracting OS, partially working through their own community agents, and partially working through long-term local partners

The OS have been highlighted in a number of studies as a strong factor of convergence³⁶ but the interviews showed that their potential role as a key connecting factor is not fully utilised as some actors pursue their traditional partnerships and ways of working. The choice of whether or not to make use of the presence and long-term experience of the OS on the ground is influenced by agencies’ rules and regulations, their knowledge about the existence of the OS network, as well as traditional ways of working. Sub-contracting of OS on the ground seems to have occurred when it suited the responsible organisations or when it was seen as a pragmatic way to speed up the targeting process. The ARC Replica programme coordinator, due to his previous experience in DGPSN, tried to push member organisations to build on the OS’ experience, their knowledge of PNBSF activities, and their established relationships with the DGPSN actors on the ground, but due to the legal setup of the partnership he had no leverage to impose this way of working on member organisations, who preferred to work through existing partnerships with other local organisations. Hence, the full potential of the OS to bridge across all programmes has not yet been explored.

³⁶ World Bank, Branders, N., Coudouel, A., Rougeaux, S. (2018), p. 39; CaLP/Cissokho, N. (2018), p. 16. This was also confirmed in key informant interviews.

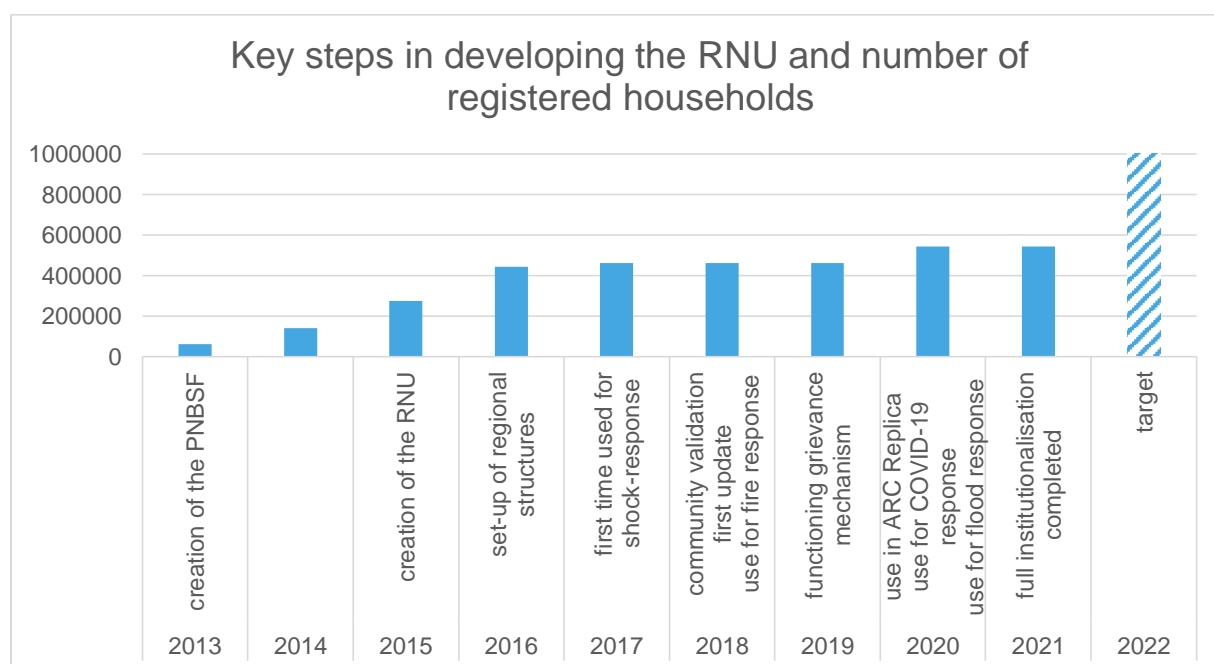
Registration and enrolment

Key steps in the registration process are largely shared. All actors start their enrolment process with the lists generated by the RNU and all actors actively involve the communities in validating the final lists.

All social programmes are now required to start their beneficiary selection process with the RNU. The process of including households in the Social Registry follows a number of steps: Based on the total number of free spaces in the Social Registry, the authorities establish quotas per community, calculated in proportion to the poverty level and the population size. Targeting committees set up at the village level pre-select a certain number of households whom they judge to be the very poorest in the village. These lists are then reviewed and validated in plenary by the village assembly, where each household has to be publicly confirmed. The list is submitted to the regional authorities before it is centralised by the DGPSN RNU unit. The selected households are visited and surveyed using a harmonised questionnaire that the RNU unit revised in 2017 in partnership with humanitarian and sectoral stakeholders and that it shares with other RNU users. The questionnaire includes household data that can be translated into a PMT, but also information on various social sectors (e.g. health and education), categorical information (such as disability status), and livelihood data that can be used for a food security analysis.

This process started in 2015 and the Social Registry produced three so-called ‘generations’ of RNU cohorts, totalling 461,769 households in 2017 – approximately 27% of the total population and an estimated 70% of all poor. No additional intake occurred until 2019. A process to update the data, as well as starting new enrolments, occurred from 2019 to 2021 and the current number of included households stands at 543,000. Having seen the usefulness of the Registry during the COVID-19 response, the Government decided to aim for an increase to up to 1 million households in 2022.

Figure 1: Key steps in developing the RNU and the number of registered households



For enrolment in PNBSF, a PMT-based scoring exercise ranks the RNU households by poverty level. The RNU directorate applies a PMT-based scorecard system that ranks households by poverty level. This final ranking is then used by DGPSN to enrol the beneficiaries in PNBSF according to the number of available places in the programme, ensuring a proportionate repartition of the quota across the entire country, based on the local poverty levels. All current beneficiaries of PNBSF have been selected from the first three generations of the RNU and up until now no one has been taken off the list – not even those who were enrolled at the very start, in 2013.

For the Pilot Project in 2017, an *ad hoc* list was created, starting with the RNU lists, to enrol beneficiaries. The pilot targeted the number of food-insecure households according to the Cadre Harmonisé and the PNR in the two departments selected for the pilot. The total number was divided by commune, based on poverty levels and population numbers. The commune quota was then split between all the villages of the commune based on population size, with some adaptation when villages were facing specific risk exposure. The OS were asked to assist the village targeting committees in selecting the respective number of households for enrolment. These lists were consolidated into spreadsheets, validated by the local authorities, and inputted into an IT system at the central level. Very often, the committees selected the same households as the RNU. In some villages, committees argued to exclude households that had already received the PNBSF support but were told that they should not automatically do that. There are examples of village committees accepting including them but later on deciding to share the entitlement among the whole population. Beneficiaries did not receive a specific ID card but were given a SIM card to receive the actual payment.

For its cash programme, WFP requests the RNU lists for its areas of operation and filters these using additional food insecurity verification criteria for enrolment. The food security committee of the *départements*, chaired by the prefect, and the mayors identify the most food-insecure communities and establish the quotas and numbers of beneficiaries per community. WFP staff are then sent out to facilitate community-led targeting, similar to the system that is used for inclusion in the RNU. The village assemblies are tasked with verifying the RNU lists based on a number of criteria, with identifying possible errors, and with adding additional households if the existing number of RNU households in an area is lower than the number of beneficiaries that WFP can enrol. Key informants mentioned that the local authorities prefer an equitable number of households across all villages, whereas WFP would prefer a higher concentration of households in a smaller number of villages as this would facilitate operations and would also ensure that only the most affected geographic areas are targeted, rather than the entire department. The final lists are stored in WFP's IT system and are gradually inputted into its MIS, SCOPE. Beneficiaries receive a paper-based ID card.

The ARC Replica partners also started their process with geographic targeting, using the Cadre Harmonisé data, and followed largely the same procedures, starting from the RNU and going through a community-based process. However, they consciously excluded the mayors from the process that led to establishing quotas by communities, as they saw them as too politically biased. The member organisations also set up village-level targeting committees, but they separated the members by gender. Both the women-only and the men-only committees had to accept each household on the final list in order to be enrolled. Again, the lists were consolidated into one spreadsheet and submitted to the local

authorities for administrative validation. Several of the partners joined World Vision in using their corporate Last Mile Mobile Solution system³⁷ to store the beneficiary data, but some continued with simple spreadsheets. Some provided beneficiaries with plastic ID cards, while others used fortified paper cards.

Verifying the RNU lists was seen merely as an administrative step, i.e. identifying households that had moved away from the village or where members had passed away. Stakeholders felt they did not have the power to verify whether including a certain household in the Registry was an error or not. Their perception was that partners would have run into trouble if they had voiced that sort of concern so they did not feel comfortable doing so, despite this being included as a task in the new versions of their memorandums of understanding with the RNU. While published documents³⁸ report that the inclusion error is around 13%, citing an evaluation of a small sample of households verified in the update process, key informants estimate that the number is significantly higher.

Payment and delivery

Payment systems are different in all of the programmes that were studied, partly due to the legal status of financial service providers (especially the postal service, as a parastatal company) and partly due to their scattered geographical presence, whereby they do not offer their services across the whole country. Since 2019, all PNBSF transfers are made through the local post offices, where beneficiaries collect their quarterly payment. The OS assist the local post offices in making a cash liquidity plan but frequent challenges remain. Due to its legal status as a parastatal company, the postal service could not participate in the tender launched to engage the financial service provider (FSP) for the Pilot Project in 2017. Orange Money was selected and mobilised payment agents at central sites where beneficiaries collected their one-off payments using pre-paid SIM cards. WFP also uses mobile money through two different FSPs (Free and Orange) that were identified through a cash feasibility study in the areas of operation. Partners reported considerable challenges with these service providers.³⁹ For ARC Replica, a joint contract with an FSP was discussed at the start of the operation but this idea was rapidly discarded, due to the scattered geographical presence of the providers. However, the network harmonised the tender procedures and developed shared criteria to identify the respective providers. Afterwards, each member organisation used its own procurement rules to establish a contract; this took some time and caused high staff transaction costs. As a result, different partners used different operators, providing money through mobile cash agents or microfinance institutions. Transfer fees were high as there were no economies of scale and FSPs charged significant overhead costs.

There is clearly room for stronger harmonisation – at least among humanitarian partners, but potentially also beyond. In the learning events after the completion of the ARC Replica operation, the idea of proceeding towards a joint negotiation with the FSPs, which had initially been proposed, has been brought up again. A mapping of FSPs'

³⁷ The Last Mile Mobile Solution is a digital application developed by World Vision that enables beneficiary registration, verification, distribution planning and management, monitoring, and reporting. For more details see www.lmms.org.

³⁸ Reported in: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (2019), p. 4.

³⁹ Key informant interview.

presence, products, and prices has been recommended and would be an essential part of 'cash readiness' and cash preparedness plans. There is a high potential to reduce the service fees if the market share of different partners is combined.

Accountability to affected populations (AAP)

The degree of alignment of the mechanisms ensuring AAP varies from programme to programme, and there is no pattern. WFP, similarly to all other elements of the delivery chain, shares no features of the process with any other programme: complaints reach them either through the NGO partners or through a hotline manned by WFP staff, but it has been found that beneficiaries are ill-informed about the programme, as well as about the ways of providing feedback.⁴⁰ WFP reports that occasionally their number is used by PNBSF beneficiaries – in which case they forward the information. Within ARC Replica, a common AAP guide was developed that also included procedures for safeguarding issues. The idea of a joint call centre was discussed but the operator said it would not have the capacity to handle the number of calls so each member organised AAP in its own way. Some managed grievances and complaints either through their own community structures or through the hotlines and call centres that they use for handling feedback on other programmes, but fully separate from what is done as part of PNBSF. Other members, however, used the community structures that PNBSF has put in place, especially the community volunteers. These volunteers are the main channel for PNBSF beneficiaries to raise concerns and provide feedback. Each volunteer is in charge of 50 beneficiary households and forwards the information via his/her supervisor to DGPSN. Before, this process was very slow,⁴¹ but since 2019 the OS can upload grievances electronically and they report having seen a remarkable acceleration in 2021 in the treatment of raised concerns by DGPSN.⁴² Actors who implemented the 2017 Pilot Project reported that because of its nature, consisting of a one-off payment, concerns relating to the payments were resolved on the spot, and the evaluation of the project reports that this was the only functional way of handling feedback, as no formal grievance mechanism had been put in place.⁴³

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation systems put in place by WFP and ARC Replica are completely different from the system put in place for PNBSF, on which the 2017 Pilot Project piggy-backed. The actors do not whether a benefiting households is also registered in another programme. Assisting DGPSN in setting up a monitoring and evaluation framework is a key component of the World Bank Social Safety Net Project, and a key element of the World Bank's own performance tracking of the main components of its

⁴⁰ WFP's outcome monitoring survey for the 2020 cash transfer programme found that only 20% of the beneficiaries had a good knowledge about the programme, only 10% of the beneficiaries reported knowing the hotline number, and only 7% used it.

⁴¹ By the end of 2020, only 5% of the calls had been handled on time (World Bank Implementation Status Report, July 2021).

⁴² One key informant mentioned that they used to have more than 1,000 cases pending, but now the number has gone down to 98. They can also directly access the DGPSN MIS online and see the live status of each complaint.

⁴³ Cabinet Sen Ingénierie Consult (2018), p. 7.

support. This includes monitoring of the functioning of the RNU (e.g. the updating process that started in 2018), monitoring of PNBSF key processes (e.g. payments), as well as monitoring and evaluating the 2017 Pilot Project. Several examples show that learning from earlier evaluations has indeed taken place.⁴⁴

WFP uses its corporate monitoring system, establishing a baseline at the start of the cash transfers, conducting regular post-distribution monitoring surveys after transfer cycles and completing the exercise with a yearly outcome monitoring exercise. Key variables for which information are collected include standard food security indicators. In 2020 WFP asked beneficiaries whether they also benefitted from PNBSF, but when monitoring the food security status of households this feature was not selected as a variable, which seems to constitute a missed opportunity to learn about the synergies (or lack thereof) between the two programmes, to find out whether their combined impact is meaningful or needed.

ARC Replica invested considerable effort in its monitoring and evaluation system and employed a dedicated coordinator as part of the network operation. The monitoring system included elements such as sentinel site remote monitoring and stakeholder interviews pre- and post-process, conducted by the coordinator. It had elements of independent monitoring conducted by a third-party provider and it relied on data collected by individual member agencies on markets and prices, as well as general post-distribution feedback and general household demographics. A comprehensive evaluation was conducted at the end of the operation, and this was made public. The relatively strong alignment of monitoring tools within the network was highlighted in the evaluation as a success factor and the evaluation assessed how these efforts related to the Government's ARC initiative. However, potential synergies or alignment with PNBSF or other partners in the PNR were not considered.

3.3.5 Cross-cutting issues

Data and information

None of the databases used to store beneficiary data are inter-operable with the DGPSN MIS. The partners who were interviewed frequently mentioned that the first step should be to focus on the inter-operability of the different databases used within the Ministry of Community Development. Making the Ministry's MIS inter-operable with humanitarian partners' IT systems would come second. The technical blockages to the inter-operability within the Ministry can be resolved but the partners who were interviewed see no agreement yet on who should lead the process and who would be ready to abandon their own system. There are also a number of different international technical and financial partners involved, with several international IT consultants working on different parts of the systems. With regard to sharing data with partners outside the Government, partners who were interviewed mentioned legal hurdles, such as data sharing protocols and identifying how to ensure similar data protection regulations.

⁴⁴ For example, in 2017 a PNBSF process evaluation recommended revising the terms of reference of the community volunteers, to develop an MIS, to improve the grievance and complaints mechanism, and to work on an exit strategy. The first three points were all addressed.

The decree on the use of the RNU foresees the creation of a legal framework for responsible data protection and data sharing. The committee overseeing the implementation of the decree is also tasked with reinforcing the MIS and with strengthening the requirements and protocols for governing data protection and data sharing.

Capacity

Different international partners intend to build the capacity of different actors for different purposes. The World Bank continues to invest significant effort in institutional capacity building through the Social Safety Net Project. This includes capacity building regarding the main elements of adaptive social protection among key actors in Senegal (such as early warning and disaster risk financing), and strengthening the capacity of implementing agencies to design and implement specific programmes (such as the RNU and key processes within PNBSF). The Senegal experience was part of the Start Network's ambition to build NGO capacity in applying alternative disaster risk financing models, and within Senegal the ARC Replica initiative wanted to show what NGOs can contribute to the Government's ARC initiative: for example, by strengthening gender aspects, reinforcing monitoring mechanisms, and strengthening accountability procedures. Individual ARC Replica member organisations wanted to either build the capacity of their own local partner organisations (as part of the global push for a stronger localisation of humanitarian aid) or strengthen their own internal capacity: for example, in contingency planning. As a consequence of these dispersed intentions, capacity strengthening remains parallel.

The capacity of national staff in United Nations agencies and NGOs is very high and staff turnover is significantly less frequent than in traditional humanitarian contexts. This is largely a positive element. However, the downside is that there is less exposure to ways that humanitarian cash is provided in other countries, and staff have less personal experience of how elements in the delivery chain can be more strongly aligned with government social protection systems elsewhere in the world.

Overall, institutional capacity in Senegal is far stronger than in an 'average' humanitarian context, and significantly stronger than in all neighbouring countries. Institutional capacity is not the main blockage to further progress towards responding to seasonal food insecurity in a more integrated way. Other challenges appear more significant, including the political economy and the blurring of roles and responsibilities between different institutions. The fact that there is a nationwide flagship social protection programme, as well as the successful use of a disaster risk insurance product, shows that the country has good building blocks it could use, and that national capacity exists to move towards bringing different programmes more closely together. However, key challenges have been repeatedly identified over the last few years,⁴⁵ and remain today, as summarised in one recent report: 'The political economy in Senegal remains a challenge. [...] Diverging agendas [...] around the response to food insecurity remain a challenge for policy dialogue.'⁴⁶

⁴⁵ World Bank (2019), p. 47.

⁴⁶ World Bank (2020a). This is echoed in the report on the BMZ-led workshops (BMZ, 2021).

4 The ‘value of convergence’, and its policy and operational implications – recommendations for short-term actions, medium-term efforts, and the long-term vision

Convergence is not an end in itself but rather a way to better address structural and cyclical needs in a resource-constrained environment. While Chapter 3 described the status quo in respect of convergence, this chapter discusses the added value of stronger convergence along four dimensions: strategic implications, resource implications, risks, and sustainability considerations. It concludes by setting out a number of recommendations which have been grouped into short-, medium-, and longer-term recommendations.

4.1 Strategic implications

This subsection on strategic implications assesses where further convergence would or could be a real game-changer, and for whom and at what level, given that shocks in Senegal are predictable and recurrent. This is particularly true for slow-onset shocks, such as seasonal food and nutrition insecurity due to drought conditions, which are the focus of this study.

As explained in the beginning of this report, the context in Senegal is favourable in regard to breaking away from the annual cycle of externally funded short-term action towards a nationally led model, using existing social protection tools and cash as the key connecting points. This new model would not only bridge the divide between social protection and humanitarian transfers but would even reach beyond to include insurance-based delivery models. Adaptive social protection has been on the policy agenda for a number of years, strongly promoted by the World Bank⁴⁷ but also included, for example, in WFP’s cash transfer strategy for Senegal.⁴⁸ The 2017 Pilot Project, as well as a small-scale response to a drought by the Government the following year, were useful ‘proofs of concept’ showing the feasibility of using social protection tools in an emergency response, and gave reason to believe that the policy shift was gaining momentum. The ARC Replica initiative also gained a lot of traction at the end of 2019, and there was no question that they would use the RNU as the starting point for targeting and cash as the modality.

However, momentum was lost in 2020 when the Government decided at the highest level to switch back to in-kind assistance for its ARC/COVID-19 response, missing the opportunity to use key tools of its own social protection system. That operation was partially funded with the pay-out from the ARC insurance that the Government received. The pay-out itself showed that insurance-based disaster risk financing works for the country. However, the pay-out was used in a very traditional way. Outside actors had little leverage to

⁴⁷ The most comprehensive policy document is World Bank, Branders, N., Coudouel, A., Rougeaux, S. (2018).

⁴⁸ WFP (2019).

push the Government to seize this opportunity to demonstrate that using the social protection system for a nationwide shock response is possible. This was a missed opportunity but it was not caused by the ‘traditional’ divide between humanitarian actors and social protection, and thus was beyond the control of the respective stakeholders.

Adequacy continues to be a challenge for the government safety net, which is one reason why humanitarian actors continue to implement their own cash programmes.

Since its inception, the quarterly transfers that form part of PNBSF have not been adjusted, and thus beneficiaries have seen an erosion in the support they receive. Government actors in the interviews acknowledged this, but they highlighted the lack of fiscal space. Some actors think that a too high value could carry the risk of creating a dependency culture.⁴⁹ However, non-governmental stakeholders are very critical of the low value and cite it as one justification for continuing their own programmes, as they see a need to fill the gap. If the adequacy of the government transfers improved, humanitarian actors could use their own limited resources to focus on niche areas where they can provide added value and where the Government’s ability or willingness to invest is limited (e.g. stronger gender and protection efforts).

What we currently see is a landscape of programmes that align on objectives and key design features, and that demonstrate a ‘peaceful cohabitation’ along the delivery chain. However, humanitarian actors still regard their parallel operations as a given and are not yet prepared to fully use the government system, despite a policy commitment to doing so where possible, which in the case of Senegal should be within reach.

The RNU, the Cadre Harmonisé, the use of cash, and to a certain degree the role played by OS, are strong connecting points. Actors coordinate to find practical ways to incrementally improve the use of social protection tools, such as the RNU, but they show a certain degree of reluctance in regard to leveraging the full potential of a policy shift. This is despite global policy guidance by key actors: WFP’s country programmes, for example, are meant to first ask whether responding through government systems would be possible, and to implement ‘with the clear intent to strengthen national systems’.⁵⁰ Instead, there is continued investment in improved delivery of actors’ own programmes. It is not fully clear why even in a country like Senegal, with a comparatively strong and mature social protection system, working more through government systems is still not taking place.

A first key strategic shift would be to turn the *implicit* unintentional expansion into an *explicit* one, where different programmes overlap with the social safety net, i.e. using additional resources for seasonal support to intentionally leverage social protection instruments and to expand the safety net vertically – and, where needed, also horizontally. This would make it possible to expand coverage and adequacy at lower administrative costs by using elements of the government system while still maintaining a good level of oversight over the payment process. Stronger strategic convergence in Senegal would not mean moving beneficiaries from a humanitarian programme to social protection support, but rather intentionally complementing the currently inadequate social protection support during critical times of the year. A first step in this direction would be to collect data about the overlapping of support by systematically

⁴⁹ Key informant interview.

⁵⁰ WFP (2021), p. 40.

identifying which households receive more than one type of support. A second step would be to use that information to create evidence on the impact of the double support. Do households who already benefit from PNBSF fare better when they get the seasonal support? This evidence would show how regular support and seasonal support impact people's ability to prepare for and mitigate a shock, and whether seasonal resources could be allocated more strategically.

An explicit vertical expansion would mean that humanitarian actors only provide a top-up to existing PNBSF beneficiaries, instead of the full transfer value. Such an adjusted amount was already proposed by the World Bank team in 2018⁵¹ but during interviews actors seemed unfamiliar with this model, which is already applied in a number of countries around the world. An explicit horizontal expansion would mean mapping the PNBSF coverage in shock-affected areas and covering additional communities and households where existing support is insufficient. The actual payment could still be done in a parallel way to ensure compliance with donor regulations. ARC Replica member agencies could do the same in the next pay-out.

Partners could be used more strategically to mitigate perceived weaknesses of the RNU. The RNU could use partners' outreach capacity to improve the agility of the Social Registry. A systematic and more frequent updating of the information would be possible through a structured return of information collected by the NGOs and United Nations partners. If allowed, they would also be in a position to improve the validity of the Social Registry by returning information on inclusion errors found during field-level verification.

4.2 Resource implications

In this section we discuss the resource implications that emerge from attempts to create greater convergence, and the trade-offs that have to be considered when thinking about whether these efforts are useful – and for whom.

Resources for supporting seasonal needs in Senegal are scarce and could be used more efficiently. The current model of resourcing humanitarian actors for an unintended but *de facto* expansion of the safety net is costly as it means that operational costs have to be funded twice: once within the government social protection system and a second time within the humanitarian organisation along their delivery chain. Given the low level of coverage in the PNR 2021, there is an urgent need to aim for a more efficient use of very scarce resources by leveraging government systems more comprehensively.

Competing political interests have led to reduced government funding for responding to seasonal food insecurity, and thus low coverage. While in the past the PNR was dotted with at least some in-kind resources, nowadays SE-CNSA prepares a plan but is not given any predictable funding to implement it. Food assistance, which used to be distributed as part of the PNR, is now used for supporting religious ceremonies. The predictability of the shock response is thus not only limited – as is often mentioned – because of the *ad hoc* nature of humanitarian funding, but also because of the Government's reluctance to pre-position its own funding. If only humanitarian sources of funding are left, and if those are

⁵¹ World Bank, Branders, N., Coudouel, A., Rougeaux, S. (2018), p. 38.

shrinking, this leads to a reduction of coverage as regards responding to needs. Only 19% of the people identified as critically food insecure in the PNR 2021 are currently receiving assistance because the Government is currently not mobilising resources to complement the very limited humanitarian funding.

And as long as government resources for covering the additional seasonal support are not predictable and available on time, humanitarian actors still have a role to play. Humanitarian partners mobilise the majority of the funding for the PNR – often (though not always) on time for the lean season. The insurance-based model is a clear opportunity to shift from a response during the hunger period to anticipatory action preventing even early stages of negative coping, and potentially reducing the costs of a response.

The predictability of government resources, as well as the overall availability of money, could be increased through the successful use of disaster risk financing strategies. If that funding was channelled into adaptive social protection, responding to seasonal needs (rather than funding a parallel response, as in 2020), it would reduce the gap left for humanitarian actors to fill. Anticipatory action also has the potential to reduce the costs of a response by intervening earlier and in a more prepared way. If that potential can be leveraged, resources could cover needs more broadly. But if the institutional setup around the mechanism sits outside the social protection system and acts outside social protection, another set of harmonisation challenges comes into play, making the progress that has already been achieved fragile and potentially reversible.

4.3 Risk implications

In this section we discuss the risks associated with linking humanitarian assistance and social safety nets: i.e. what strengths of the respective systems could be reduced or even lost, what unintended harm could be caused, and who would be negatively affected. The perception of whether (further) convergence is risky is highly dependent on the political context in a country, but also on perceptions, previous experience, and the trust that exists between the different actors, and the way they work together.

In Senegal, most of the risks are related to the way that politics interact with supporting vulnerable people through the regular programme, but also in times of additional hardship.

The biggest risks to fully aligning humanitarian cash with government systems are the unclear institutional landscape (which leads to delays in responses), the politicisation of responses, and the risk of competing political interests. As mentioned above, roles and responsibilities are unclearly divided among government institutions within the social protection system (e.g. the role of the Ministry of Community Development as a whole versus the role of DGPSN and the CSA) and within the PNR setup, and it is unclear how both interact with the risk insurance mechanism. The government institutions that set out the strategy for responding to shocks are not the same ones that hold the funding sources. This leads to a lack of institutional clarity in government policy regarding relief

operations, as well as delays in action.⁵² This view was confirmed in many of the interviews, even by government staff themselves. They highlighted that using government systems delays a response. Another factor causing delays is the politicisation of the decision to launch a response.⁵³ This decision is delayed by intra and inter-institutional competition but also by competing political interests in regard to declaring a situation in a region as having reached a critical level of food insecurity.⁵⁴ In the meantime, humanitarian actors are allowed to go ahead and intervene, which is a positive element in Senegal as it makes it possible to follow the humanitarian imperative and respond to needs, but at the same time it means complementarity is no longer possible, as humanitarian actors act on their own without a clear prospect for a government contribution to achieving the joint objectives, as set out in the PNR.

A reorganisation of the Government can pose a risk for an effective shock response if it leads to a weakening of key actors. In the past, the political anchorage of DGPSN directly under the office of the Presidency was seen as a clear success factor fostering the shock-responsive social protection agenda.⁵⁵ In 2019 the Government integrated DGPSN into a newly created ministry. This move resulted in a weakened position within government and added further institutional challenges.

Another risk relates to the OS, who play a critical role in community outreach but whose long-term funding remains unsure. The Government might not be willing to continue funding them, and there are already voices calling for their replacement by the Ministry of Community Development's own network of community agents. As the OS have played a key role as a connecting factor if not across all then at least across several of the studied programmes, removing them would weaken one of the converging elements and would weaken interaction with the communities. And if stakeholders want to make progress towards the strategic shift of an explicit expansion, as described above, communication with communities actually needs to be further strengthened.

Partners who were interviewed identified fraud and data protection violations as possible risks if they implement through government systems, but the assumptions behind, and reasons for, this perception remain not fully clear. Partners who were interviewed feel that government policies for preventing fraud and ensuring beneficiary data protection are not yet at the same level as their own internal systems but this has not yet been fully tested in practice. They are thus hesitant about handing over more control to government institutions, which acts as a practical blockage to stronger alignment.

⁵² World Bank country team and key informant interviews.

⁵³ Efforts by the World Bank, but also the FAO, to strengthen the early warning system and to set pre-agreed triggers for an automated response have been ongoing for several years but have encountered a number of challenges, leading to slow progress. One key barrier is the fact that the Government is reluctant to adopt triggers which would oblige it to take action and mobilise resources. Such a triggered response is seen as handcuffing the Government and reducing its discretionary power in the process.

⁵⁴ 'Il faut plusieurs semaines, voire mois, pour réunir l'instance (aujourd'hui un conseil interministériel) qui prend la décision politique de mettre en oeuvre le PNR'. World Bank, Branders, N., Coudouel, A., Rougeaux, S. (2018), p. 19.

⁵⁵ 'The introduction of a single body reporting to the highest office of government was a positive factor in ensuring the development of coherent government action in the area of social protection, including shock responses.' CaLP/Cissokho, N. (2018), p. 12.

4.4 Sustainability implications

In this section we discuss what has to be put in place for progress to be made in terms of achieving greater convergence that will last in the long run, and to support the development of national systems.

The use of the RNU as a starting point for targeting is now fully institutionalised and this connecting point has a strong likelihood of being fully sustainable. However, the Government needs to provide operational resources for running the Social Registry and the RNU needs to make continuous efforts to provide high-quality data, to ensure increased user satisfaction. Through the Presidential Decree the Government made use of the RNU for targeting legally binding for all social programmes, and none of the partners who were interviewed challenged this fact. However, the operational costs of the Social Registry are funded by the World Bank and, already in 2019, the Economic Update recommended that sustainable financing of the Registry, as well as its regular updating and further technological improvements, are necessary to ensure it is used to its full potential.⁵⁶ In particular, the regular and comprehensive updating of the data is a pivotal aspect as regards ensuring the credibility of the Social Registry. If this is not done properly, it could undermine the Registry's legitimacy.

There had been a consensus regarding using cash after the successful piloting of the use of cash (alongside key social protection instruments) for a shock response in 2017, as shown when the Government provided cash transfers in 2018 to support the response to food insecurity in Matam region. At the time this was identified as a strong connecting factor. However, the decision by the new government to use in-kind food assistance in their 2020 ARC/COVID-19 response – taken against the advice of international partners – shows that the agreement on giving preference to cash was not irreversible. In 2018, a case study on linking social protection and humanitarian cash transfers in Senegal identified the use of cash as one of the success factors for achieving stronger alignment. The study very enthusiastically concluded: 'The experiment conducted with the support of the World Bank since 2017 has altered this view of CTs [cash transfers], which are now fully recognised as an emergency mechanism.'⁵⁷ Also, the World Bank published at the time very positive outlooks on the progress of the two systems.⁵⁸ But the momentum created through the 2017 pilot did not last long. In 2020, 'the Government [...] opted for the distribution of food kits (rather than leveraging the social protection system) to provide shock-responsive assistance, and the implementation process revealed errors in the RNU, such as duplicates, missing households, incomplete information, or inclusion/exclusion errors.'⁵⁹ Key informants among international partners expressed

⁵⁶ World Bank (2019), p. 49. Key technological upgrades mentioned are the inter-operability of datasets, the use of biometrics, and thus ensuring unique identifiers for individuals.

⁵⁷ CaLP/Cissokho, N. (2018), p. 14.

⁵⁸ 'Les acteurs et bailleurs humanitaires renforcent leurs appuis aux institutions gouvernementales. Conscients de la nature structurelle des chocs au Sénégal, ceux-ci prennent conscience de la valeur ajoutée d'un système de protection sociale adaptative. Ainsi, ils renforcent leur appui aux institutions gouvernementales engagées dans la réponse aux chocs plutôt que de mettre en œuvre eux-mêmes la réponse auprès des ménages touchés par les chocs.' World Bank (2019), p. 45.

⁵⁹ World Bank (2020b), p. 21. Note that the RNU data had not yet been updated at the time.

disillusionment over the fact that their collective and coordinated advocacy in favour of the use of cash⁶⁰ did not succeed in convincing the Government that its plan to revert back to in-kind food parcels was the wrong decision. However, there is a sense that key actors in the Government now regret the choice and possibly would go back to cash again in a future similar situation. However, no formal communication has been made in this regard.

4.5 Recommendations

Senegal has a relatively mature social protection system and humanitarian programmes converge with it in a number of effective ways. The policy debate on further harmonising the two systems is very developed and clear efforts have been made to make further advances. However, it is currently unknown what impact the convergence has at the beneficiary household level. Progress has proven to be fragile and reversible, and the full potential of a policy shift towards a government-led and financed shock-responsive social protection system has not yet been realised.

The following recommendations highlight the most important steps required to achieve further progress.

4.5.1 Short-term actions

Improving and deepening coordination

There are a number of practical steps that the different stakeholders could take in the short term, especially setting up a coordination forum to discuss how to develop those steps that already align, as well as developing a roadmap for achieving further progress. For example, a Cash Working Group, in which all stakeholders who use cash participate, could do the following:

- Publish and discuss the respective methods for calculating the transfer value and for monitoring. For the seasonal transfer value, this is most likely part of the updating of the essential needs assessment planned for 2022. It is important to continue acting collectively on this and not to abandon the currently harmonised cash transfer value (as is signalled by a different value set in the Operational Plan for ARC 2022–23).
- Map existing FSPs, and their respective products, geographic presence, prices, and comparative advantages. This was planned in the beginning of the ARC Replica response but had to be abandoned due to time pressures. It would be useful to revitalise the idea as part of cash preparedness planning.
- Map the existing presence of partnerships with local actors on the ground, and their respective roles, capacity, geographic presence, and performance. DGPSN has the full overview and could facilitate this process.
- Map existing complaints and feedback mechanisms, looking for synergies and harmonisation. Impact monitoring shows that communities are not very well informed about feedback mechanisms, and that the existing channels are under-used. A

⁶⁰ A joint advocacy note on the comparative advantages of cash was prepared and presented to the Government.

harmonised toll-free number had been discussed by the ARC Replica partners but the call centre voiced concerns over the number of calls it could handle. This issue could also be integrated into the preparedness plan.

- Map existing MISs, and their respective advantages, and identify technical blockages to stronger inter-operability.

This forum (a Cash Working Group) would be able to build on the strong trust and personal connections that currently already exist among stakeholders. It would also ensure a better-structured information flow. Partners' presence in different regions could assist in making sure that the views from the different regions are represented at the national level.

Building on this trust, sub-groups of stakeholders could make swift progress on joint procurement of third-party services: for example, by negotiating joint framework contracts with FSPs, and combining their market shares to achieve better terms and conditions.

A systematised way of receiving updated information collected by RNU users and to react to user feedback is important. Users should develop a common position vis-à-vis further improvements of the Social Registry. The Registry management should develop a systematic way of collecting feedback from the users, implement the necessary technical upgrades, and provide the templates and tools. Users should synchronise their messages and concerns. This in turn would make it easier for the RNU management to use the collected data for a more regular updating of the Social Registry. And it is easier to react to user feedback when it is consolidated, instead of each individual stakeholder providing its own observations. Through deepened coordination, users should develop a common position vis-à-vis further improvements of the RNU with regard to flexibility and adequately capturing the impact of seasonal shocks on registered households' vulnerability.

The role of the OS as a connecting point should be strengthened by being more systematic in partnering with them for community outreach and accountability. The added value of the OS in community outreach and communication, as well as in practically assisting beneficiaries and ensuring accountability to them, has been demonstrated in all four programmes that were studied. Hence, partnering with OS should become a standard element of all programmes. This would ensure continuity at the local level, it would facilitate explaining different types of programmes to the same community, and it would help to foster trust at the community level. As OS are NGOs it might not be possible to fully institutionalise their role but coordination fora should develop standard operating procedures that clearly set out their role and how that role needs to be financially rewarded.

Building a stronger evidence base on the impact of convergence at the beneficiary level, and communicating adequately with communities about the layering of support

All stakeholders are aware that their support efforts overlap at the beneficiary level but it is unclear what the exact effect of the overlap is. There is thus an urgent need to research the effect of shocks on households that receive different amounts of support from different programmes, and to use this information as an evidence base to decide what type of an adaptive social protection system would best deliver this support, and how to improve communication with communities on this topic.

Actors should systematically map the overlap of their support by asking beneficiaries whether or not they receive another type of support (regular or seasonal). The evolution of households' food security situation should then be monitored by comparing different groups in a given region:

- households that only receive PNBSF support;
- households that only receive seasonal humanitarian support;
- households that receive both types of support; and
- households that are included in the RNU but do not receive any type of support.

WFP could act as a lead in supporting SE-CNSA in this exercise. Based on the evidence, key stakeholders should then draw conclusions on where and how to move towards an explicit expansion of the government system. A key step will be to establish whether a partial top-up for PNBSF beneficiaries is justified, and, if so, how the value would be calculated. A second step would be to identify how to provide that top-up in a cost-efficient way by using as many practical elements of the PNBSF delivery chain as possible while maintaining as many parallel elements as necessary to comply with donors' regulations. A nationwide change of policy might be difficult to implement all at once, so a pilot of a top-up exercise could be tested in a specific region.⁶¹

Key informants suggested that PNBSF could also test if a different annual repartition of the regular transfer value would lead to different effects.⁶² Another suggestion was to align the timing of the different programmes, with some actors intervening outside the lean season, some just before its start, and others during the height of the hunger period. This would be a variation of the vertical expansion, adding a time element to it.

The concept of layering different kinds of support is crucial to adaptive social protection but it is currently not well understood by communities. In order to ensure longer-term buy-in at the community level for an adaptive social protection system it is important that stakeholders address this issue more openly and develop a way to enhance community understanding. The OS would be best placed to do this as they have a longstanding presence in the villages and have the closest contact with the beneficiary households.

Conducting a political economy analysis to better understand the political dimension of decision-making on the use of the transfer modality

A political economy analysis could help to better understand the political economy behind the decision to switch back to in-kind assistance during the COVID-19 response. This would also help in identifying appropriate advocacy messages, and it would help avoid donors financing technical assistance on building social protection systems at the same time as the Government is deciding to spend its own resources through another system.

⁶¹ A similar recommendation was made in the 2017 evaluation of PNBSF (FAO/IRAM, 2017, p. 109).

⁶² In the 2017 PNBSF evaluation beneficiaries highlighted the critical importance of a reliable transfer – especially during the lean season.

4.5.2 Medium-term efforts

Coordination and joint capacity building at different levels, across sectors and groups of actors

Coordination and joint capacity building at different levels, across the three spheres – social protection, seasonal support to food insecurity, and ARC – could be strengthened and should include the full range of actors involved. This would ensure that synergies are sought between institutions and that there is less dependence on individual staff acting as connecting points. It would also ensure that the individual strengths of different actors – from the local level up to the national level – are fully leveraged. The multi-agency workshops initiated by BMZ in early 2021 are a very good start. However, the formalisation of cross-agency work needs to reach beyond only the World Bank, UNICEF, and WFP: it should also include key local and international NGOs. It should also not focus only on the national level but build on the early initiatives of decentralised social protection coordination platforms that have started recently. Joint action plans developed by stakeholders belonging to different domains (social protection, the PNR, and ARC) should be part of routine management and should be treated as living documents to which all levels of an organisation are expected to contribute.

Capacity building and advocacy work could be further harmonised among agencies, and donors should avoid funding parallel programmes for any longer than is absolutely necessary. The joining of forces on capacity building and advocacy work has already started but this could be further strengthened, including by donors, to ensure international partners talk ‘with one voice’. Development partners should discuss a common strategy for strengthening the Ministry of Community Development as the home of PNBSF, and should not only focus on DGPSN, as hosting PNBSF inside a ministry could be a positive factor for sustainable capacity building in the longer term.

In parallel with their support to government systems, donors should also create more incentives for their bilateral partners to seek proactive ways to use more elements of the government systems wherever possible. To continue funding them for parallel delivery contradicts the system-building efforts in the long run. This should include influencing the ARC mechanism at the global and regional level to advocate with government counterparts for the use of the social protection system that is in place, instead of working through a parallel system. ARC country operational plans and operating procedures should be adjusted accordingly.

Ensure greater exposure to international experiences for agency staff

Staff of all key agencies, not only DGPSN, should be more actively exposed to ‘new ways of doing cash responses’. In higher-profile emergencies a cross-fertilisation often occurs, due to staff moving from one crisis to the next, bringing with them previous experiences of how cash transfers are done in other countries and how convergence with social protection systems is sought elsewhere. There is less staff turnover and international exposure of this kind in Senegal, due to the high capacity of national staff in the country. There is also less francophone global research and literature available. Hence the peer exchange efforts that (for example) the World Bank organised for DGPSN staff should also

be replicated within humanitarian agencies to ensure that global good practice is known and potentially applied in Senegal.

4.5.3 The long-term vision

Explore options for working towards inter-operable databases

The inter-operability of databases needs to be improved to allow different programmes supporting similar groups of people to achieve more synergies.

However, this is a long and really difficult task. It is technically complex but also touches on the mandates, purpose, and ownership of programmes. Quick fixes are unlikely but in the long run there is no alternative to making the technical solutions work for a common agenda. Thus a roadmap needs to be developed that sets out a step-by-step process for making this happen. This process would have to start with the different programmes used inside the Ministry of Community Development, as well as within the group of humanitarian programmes.

Shifting to adaptive social protection in Senegal is within reach

In the long run, a shock-responsive social protection system that provides a higher transfer value and that adapts its caseload more swiftly is a realistic goal for Senegal. It would make it possible to respond to the risks of additional seasonal needs in an adequate and more cost-efficient way. Partners should operationalise their support accordingly and donors should eventually make this a condition for funding.

Government ownership of the PNBSF programme is a very positive element and the capacity to make it shock-responsive exists. However, the institutional division and politicisation of some decisions related to launching a crisis response stand in the way of speedier progress towards shock-responsive social protection. This extends to financing, where the Government's provision of domestic resources is a plus but subjects the launching of a response and the modality of the intervention to a political agenda. Adequacy versus coverage is another key trade-off with regard to government-funded support, as transfer values have to be adjusted to ensure that needs are covered in a more sufficient way. However, these challenges can be overcome given the Senegalese context and the maturity of the social protection system, and this would ultimately be more cost-efficient, thus allowing a better coverage of needs.

This would have significant consequences for how partners operationalise their support in the long term. Partners should actively work towards ending the parallel delivery of services and starting implementation through government systems, assessing the risks of doing so and taking into account the necessary pre-requisites for quality and oversight. Donors should envisage eventually making this a condition for funding.

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Annex A List of key informants

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WFP	Oliver Flamant	Head of Programme
WFP	Mamina Ndiaye	Head of Research, Assessment and Monitoring Unit
WFP	Ana Ocampo	Regional Social Protection Specialist
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)	Fatou Mbaye	Social Protection Specialist
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Start Network/African Risk Capacity Replica	Amadou Diallo	Start Network Coordinator Senegal (current)
Start Network/African Risk Capacity Replica	Aliou Diouf	Start Network Coordinator Senegal (former)
Consortium des ONG pour le Développement (CONGAD)	Mamadou Guiro	Social Protection Working Group
ACF	Bamba Ndiaye	Food Security Coordinator
Oxfam/ARC Replica	Mbaye Kane Dieng	ARC Replica Focal Point; Humanitarian Coordinator
World Vision	Leopold Charles Badiane	Senior Manager Awards and Grants Compliance
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Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK	Heidi Gilert	Regional Humanitarian Adviser
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