



Social Protection Reform Project
中国欧盟社会保护改革项目

TASK FORCE ON TECHNICAL COHERENCE AND SYNERGIES PROJECT WORKS ON CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES ToR Point 6.b

According to its Terms of Reference, the Task force is “(...) to ensure that the project addresses the cross-cutting issues identified in the Grant application form”. The following paragraphs therefore summarily present the scope and focus of activities conducted by the project under its various components with special reference to their relevance for the said identified four cross-cutting issues. The intention of this Note is of course not to enter into the detail of activities, for which other reporting tools are available, but to confirm the extent to which project activities contributed, beyond addressing specialized individual topics, to the appropriate consideration by the Chinese social protection reform of transversal, overarching concerns.

I1 - GENDER EQUALITY

The issue of gender equality is at the core of project preoccupations, since in the area of pension insurance (component 1) different rules apply in China for men and for women, while gender is a significant component in evaluating the cost of the system (component 2) and women represent one of the focus categories for social assistance and social welfare (component 3).

More specifically, Gender considerations in employment and social protection was introduced as a specific topic for Component 1 activities in 2017 – with associated indicator “A methodology to assess gender implications of proposed social protection reforms is developed”. Two Provincial assessment reports (Guangdong and Sichuan) were produced in 2017, while those will be confronted with European experience during the course of the year 2018.

In 2018, Component 2 is pursuing a research on occupational profiles, gender segmentation and training programmes in the long-term care industry. The gender issue plays a central role in the research due to two reasons: the first is that the majority of recipients of long-term care are women, since they live longer, and the second is that women are the great majority of care-givers, an occupation that has a bi-product, keeps women out of the labour market.

Further, when working on the design of pilot activities on social assistance (Component 3) at the provincial and other local levels, the Project promoted and used the recognition (first approach) of gender issues in social assistance – actions started from April 2018. The project has established working relations with the All China women’s Federation, including close links with Beijing Women’s Federation.

I2 – DISABILITY

Disabled persons are one of the vulnerable groups identified in China as likely to fall or remain into the poverty trap. Special attention was therefore devoted to the situation of disabled persons under consideration by project of its topic 3.3.1 – Social assistance for specific groups (services for children, elderly, *people with disabilities*¹, with a special focus on poor rural people.

This area of work was covered through different means of action pertaining to Component 3 of the project, namely assessment reports, ministerial and study visits conducted between 2015 and 2017.

Under social insurance provisions outside protection against occupational risks, protection against disability is limited in China to the service of basic pension in case of full inability to work, which is not considered to meet the requirements of reasonably advanced international standards. The project therefore produced a technical Note intended at decision makers and researchers, to provide a summary of advanced contemporary doctrine around protection against disability in advanced economies including in its relation with employment, based on works conducted by the OECD and the ILO.

I3 – GOOD GOVERNANCE

Project activities are for a very substantive portion devoted to improving governance in social protection.

The Project produced an assessment of the situation concerning social insurance management as early as in the year 2015. Subsequently, central and provincial activities were devoted, in China as well as abroad, to the issues related to the management of social insurance. Particular attention was devoted to the situation of migrant workers, and significant improvements were introduced during project life, to which related activities definitely contributed.

Financial governance has evolved into an area of particular relevance for social protection system sustainability. In that area, the Project contributed to improvements through activities benefitting Ministry of Finance related to Models and methodologies for social and economic sustainability analysis; division of decision power and expenditure responsibilities on social security between central and local government; investment strategies of social funds and risk control methodologies; an integrated system for the coordinated management of the social assistance system, conducted in country and abroad with support of Chinese and European specialists. In 2018, other relevant activities will deal with social contribution collections: toward a unified system; and the sustainability of the welfare system: the methodological approach of the EU aging commission and other international organization.

Governance of social assistance and social welfare was present in all of the activities conducted by the project with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Those activities dealt more specifically with the legal framework (definition and application of the rule of law), with efficiency and accuracy in delivering benefits and monitoring access to services, in avoiding duplication of efforts and tracking fraud across administrative entities at different levels of Government and in promoting a reasonable standardization in benefit

¹ Emphasis added. According to the social assistance scheme poor disabled people receive additional benefit or services beside Dibao allowance. This means that in China does not exist scheme to support disabled people as it is the case for many EU countries offering several policy instruments beside benefits payment for disabled people depending on disability level (usually three grades), age, work ability, etc.

levels and administrative operations all across the territory. Project support was provided in country (nationally and at the decentralized levels) and abroad through a combination of means of action (research, training, study visits and policy dialogue).

I4 – HUMAN RIGHTS

Entitlement to social security, understood as including both social insurance and social assistance or universal benefits and services², “became a human right with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 16 December 1966”³. In that respect, all project activities bear relevance for the issue of human rights, inasmuch as they intend to improve the equity and/or sustainability of the Chinese social protection system.

Particularly worth mentioning are the activities of the Project aiming at strengthening the basic pension protection made available through the social insurance system, at protecting the affected individual against the effects of ageing, becoming a dominant demographic feature in Chinese modern society, at expanding a decent social insurance coverage to those in precarious employment or working in the informal sector.

In the area of social assistance and access to social services, project activities paid continuous and focused attention to the situation of most vulnerable groups. Particular importance was attached to the delivery of social care provisions and benefits, and the design of relevant tools for monitoring and evaluation. The optimization of social assistance procedures, eligibility criteria and service delivery was designed and will be tested also at the decentralized level in pilot areas, thus confronting the theory to the practice of work in favour of human rights for those most in need.

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² Which is comparable to the realm of “social protection” as defined under the Project framework.

³ Ana Gómez Heredero, “Social security as a human right: The protection afforded by the European Convention on Human Rights”, Council of Europe publishing, Strasbourg 2017