



Everything you always wanted to know about GESS but didn't know where to ask

GESS is an interactive knowledge management and knowledge sharing Internet platform on the extension of social security (www.socialsecurityextension.org) run by the ILO Social Security Department and its STEP programme. It is the key tool of the Department's knowledge management strategy.

The challenge of extending social security lies in both the number of people without access to coverage and the lack of information and know-how about extending social security to all. In this context, GESS provides comprehensive access to information on the extension of social security, technical tools, latest developments on the country level. GESS also offers online collaboration opportunities to all those working towards universal social security coverage.

GESS facilitates **advocacy for the extension** (e.g., page on the [right to social security](#)) and enhances the dissemination of **ILO's vision on social security** as part of decent work agenda. Various thematic pages are developed by SECSOC's specialists on policy areas and instruments, like [health](#), [old age](#) or the [basic social protection package](#). They offer a synthetic presentation of the state of knowledge about the subject, policy documents and links to further readings, ongoing projects, training, etc.

GESS is an **observatory** of the “**Global Campaign on Social Security for All**” that tracks the progress of coverage in various countries and provides examples of projects and initiatives that can serve as source of inspiration for others. A set of [statistical pages](#) provides links to various databases and inquiries. A number of [country pages](#) have already been developed by social security specialists and experts, presenting countries' initiatives and outcomes in terms of social security coverage.

GESS is a technical reference centre providing **concrete tools and methods** for conducting a preliminary assessment of the country context, drafting legislation (e.g., [legal tools](#)), as well as designing, costing and implementing social security schemes. For instance an [electronic basic social protection tool](#) is available online and can be used by policy-makers and other stakeholders to produce a first rough assessment of the feasibility of financing basic social security programmes in a country. Many examples of application of Social Protection Expenditure and Performance Reviews (SPERs; e.g., [Tanzania](#), [Zambia](#)) and social budgeting methodologies as well as actuarial valuations are presented in detail in workspaces and country pages. An online self-learning kit on [social budgeting](#) is also available as well as STEP guidelines for [designing](#), [managing](#) and [monitoring](#) microinsurance schemes.

Training programmes of the ILO Social Security Department, [Quatrain Americas](#) and [Quatrain Africa](#), as well as the ILO International Training Centre (ITC)'s workshops on the extension of social security, are interlinked with the GESS platform. The courses use the knowledge developed through the GESS platform and GESS's resource centre. Participants are also trained in using the platform, and become regular users and contributors to the platform after the course.



The platform is designed to be as interactive and user-driven as possible. In addition to providing information, almost all the sections offer opportunities for users to get involved, e.g. by posting [news](#) and comments, suggesting further [resources](#), adding [questions and answers](#), inserting terms or definitions into the [glossary](#), etc. Users' news are regularly gathered in a newsletter, which is then sent to about 1800 contacts. The GESS site is also a way for professionals and experts to communicate directly about their work and get in touch with other specialists and people who work in their field via the online forum, or by creating their own [workspaces](#).

All departmental specialists and experts are responsible for the development of at least one country, regional or thematic page, according to their core expertise and responsibilities within the Department. Moreover they have the possibility to develop workspaces on any TC project, workshop, conference or research project. A helpdesk facility has been implemented to facilitate utilization of the platform both for SECSOC and external users.

To visit GESS and register on the platform, go to www.socialsecurityextension.org click on "Sign up here" under the "Sign in" box, fill in the fields and click on "register". You may then surf on the platform, search for information and contribute.

