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Progress Report – RWANDA

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ILO GLOBAL FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME ON BUILDING SOCIAL
PROTECTION FLOORS FOR ALL - PHASE II

Project Code: GLO/21/34/MUL



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Preparation and Review

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1. Country context

According to the 5th Rwanda Population and Housing Census, Rwanda's total population reached 13.2 million in 2022, of which 27.1 per cent were aged between 16 and 30 years. The working age population is projected to double from almost 7.5 million in 2022 to around 14 million in 2050. Significant improvements have been achieved in the education sector, but still only 15.1 per cent of the population have completed secondary education and only 3.3 per cent have graduated from university. While 78.1 per cent of private households own a mobile phone, only 22.8 per cent have used the internet in the last 12 months. The census also highlighted significant differences between urban and rural areas as well as provinces, with the capital of Kigali standing out as far ahead in many indicators.

Rwanda's GDP grew by 8.2 per cent in 2022 after reaching 11 per cent in 2021. Growth was spurred by the services sector, especially by the revival of tourism, leading to the improvement of employment indicators to levels similar to those at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. However, inflation has also been on the rise, reaching 14.1 per cent in May 2023. Rising food prices are affecting poor households the most and are expected to exacerbate poverty and food insecurity. Employment indicators have improved, but unemployment and underemployment remain of concern, especially in the case of young people and women.

The National Strategy for Transformation (2018–2024) (NST1) reaffirms the central role of social protection in eradicating poverty and enhancing the standard of living of Rwandans. The sector is further guided by the National Social Security Policy (2009) and the National Social Protection Policy (2020–2024). The national social protection system includes contributory and non-contributory schemes. The Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) - established in 2010 provides six contributory schemes: (1) the pension scheme; (2) the occupational hazards scheme; (3) the maternity leave scheme; (4) the medical scheme; (5) the Community-based Health Insurance Scheme (CBHI); and (6) EjoHeza, a long-term saving scheme with membership available to the whole population. Moreover, several non-contributory social assistance programmes aim at covering the most vulnerable. Established in 2008, the Umurenge Programme (VUP) is Rwanda's flagship social assistance programme. The VUP provides direct support to the poorest and to labour-constrained households; however, providing adequate coverage to all households in need remains a major challenge.

In 2022, the midterm evaluation of NST1 highlighted significant progress but also some areas, including social protection, where additional efforts are needed. The results from the 5th Rwanda Census also highlighted disparities between rural and urban areas. Social protection will have to play a role not only in reducing poverty but also in reducing inequalities. The Government of Rwanda commenced the development of the National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2) in late 2023 by requesting inputs from development partners through the different sector working groups.

While social health coverage reaches over 85 per cent of the population (13.4 million), the coverage of other schemes remains low. The Rwanda Social Security Board's contributory schemes reach only formal workers, who account for less than 10 per cent of the population. However, the COVID-19 pandemic also underlined the vulnerability of workers in the formal economy who are currently without unemployment protection. Since its launch in 2018, EjoHeza has increased its membership, now reaching over 2,710,000 subscribers and potentially providing protection to additional population groups, including informal workers. However, to be effective as a mechanism against poverty in old age, the number of subscribers as well as the amounts saved will need to be increased, while developing strategies to expand social insurance to larger segments of the informal economy remains essential.

According to the Rwanda Labour Force Survey 2022, persons with informal employment in their main job accounted for 87 per cent of total employment. From a legal perspective, all workers, regardless of their status or contract, are required to be registered and to contribute to the social security schemes. The

Rwanda Social Security Board and the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) have recognised this as a challenge and are therefore developing a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their collaboration.

2. Progress report

In 2023, the Technical Working Group (TWG), composed of the ILO's tripartite constituents (the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA); the Rwanda Social Security Board; the Private Sector Federation; the Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Rwanda (CESTRAR); the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN); the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC); and observers from the Belgian Embassy to Rwanda and the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs), met twice in order to provide strategic and technical guidance for the Programme's implementation. The 2023 work plan jointly designed has been regularly adjusted over the course of the year to match partners' priorities.

Outcome 1: In Rwanda, formal and informal economy workers and their families have access to better social protection schemes, in line with the Social Protection Floors Recommendation 202

Output 1. Social security products and services, including unemployment protection, respond to the needs and priorities of workers in the informal economy and in the formal sector

Activity 1.1 Study on the extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy

The ILO worked with a research network in Rwanda to collect data on barriers informal workers face in terms of effective social protection coverage. The research aimed at deepening the understanding of the working conditions of informal workers, their socio-economic status and their access to social protection, as well as the barriers to coverage they face. The research team organized 20 focus groups (154 participants including 46 women, one group entirely composed of persons with disabilities, two groups with only women and two groups with refugees) across six specific sectors (construction; retail; vehicles and garages and motor/bicycle taxis; mining; agriculture; domestic workers) in different regions of Rwanda. Despite the heterogeneity of the informal sector, several cross-sectoral findings have been highlighted, including precarious working conditions, low wages and little to no awareness of social security schemes. Informal workers consider that lack of information, low contributory capacity and the lack of trust constitute the biggest obstacles to accessing social protection.

A workshop was organized in early December 2023 to capitalize on the preliminary findings of the study and to define a strategy for extending social protection in Rwanda. A total of 34 people took part in the workshop, including numerous representatives of Rwandan Ministries and agencies, namely the Rwanda Social Security Board, the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA), the Business Development Fund, the Rwanda Development Board, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Rwanda Cooperatives Agency, along with social partners and development partners (WFP, UNICEF, GIZ). The materials from the workshop are available on a dedicated workspace on the ILO Social Protection Platform. The findings from the research, as well as contributions from the workshop in early December, will feed into a comprehensive report providing policy recommendations for the extension of coverage. The report will be shared with the Technical Working Group on Social Protection in its next meeting, planned for February 2024, and will constitute the basis for identification of several follow-up activities.

Activity 1.2 Assessment of Public Employment Services and Active Labour Market Policies to strengthen linkages and capacities to support unemployment protection

To inform the discussions to be held on the possible introduction of an unemployment scheme in Rwanda (Activity 1.3), the project developed a background report consolidating the current labour market trends and evaluating existing public employment services. This input was crucial in guiding discussions during the workshop. Employment promotion services in Rwanda have been scaled up in recent years but they continue to encounter challenges in terms of coverage of programmes, such as public works and skills development, which remain limited. The findings of the study suggest that clarifying and strengthening the role of the public Employment Centres could increase their capacity, effectiveness and reach. In Rwanda, public employment centres primarily service an urban population with a high level of education, but they could also serve as a focal point charged with coordinating all active labour market policies (ALMPs) and directing jobseekers and the unemployed to programmes matching their individual needs. A comprehensive picture of the situation is needed in order to support not only persons who have lost their jobs to get back into employment, but also to benefit first time jobseekers and workers in the informal economy.

Activity 1.3 Support the development of unemployment protection in Rwanda

In October 2023, the ILO organized a capacity-building workshop on the design, costing, legal and institutional framework for unemployment benefits in Rwanda, which brought together more than 40 participants over a three day period. The event was attended by representatives of Rwandan agencies and Ministries working in the areas of employment, training and social protection issues, namely: the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA); the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC); the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM); the Rwanda Social Security Board; the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and the Employment Centres, or Rwanda TVET Board, as well as social partners and development partners. The workshop had a twofold objective of building capacities on the concept of unemployment protection and gathering the first inputs from tripartite and other stakeholders on the relevance of such a scheme for Rwanda and priorities for implementation. As a follow-up, the Rwanda Social Security Board requested the ILO to conduct a feasibility study for the development of an unemployment insurance scheme linked to the existing mandatory schemes.

Workshop materials and presentations are available at a [dedicated workspace](#) on the ILO's social protection platform. The 'Rwanda New Times' also covered the workshop in an article that can be found [here](#).

Activity 1.4 Provide support to implementation of recommendations on pension reform

The ILO works with an international consultant to support the Rwanda Social Security Board in developing a medium- to long-term strategy towards a multi-pillar pension model. A study will be conducted to further ensure the coherence and complementarity of the existing schemes, namely the mandatory contributory pension scheme, EjoHeza and non-contributory pensions for the most vulnerable, in order to move towards universal coverage and to ensure impact in terms of poverty reduction in old age and reduced inequalities. It is anticipated that the study will inform future policy developments with relation to income security in old age and that are in line with international standards (Convention No. 102, Recommendation No. 202, Convention No. 128 and Recommendation No. 131). The results of the study are expected in the second quarter of 2024.

Activity 1.5 Provide support on the revision of maternity protection

In Rwanda, 91.2 per cent of women working in the informal economy do not contribute to maternity leave benefit (MLB) schemes or else are ineligible for them. As outlined in the Rwanda Social Security Board Strategic Plan (2020-2025), the Rwanda Social Security Board is examining the possibility of broadening the

category of persons eligible for maternity leave benefits beyond the formal workforce to include female workers in the informal economy. It plans to accomplish this goal with financial support from Enabel. The Rwanda Social Security Board has also conducted a preliminary assessment of the potential to extend maternity leave benefits to other categories of female workers via the long-term saving scheme (EjoHeza) and/or Community-based Health Insurance (CBHI). In this setting, the Rwanda Social Security Board is likewise considering working with the ILO to develop a feasibility study for the pilot initiative within the framework of the Enabel project.

Activity 1.6 Support to increase registration and contributions to EjoHeza based on international standards and experience

EjoHeza, a long-term saving scheme with membership available to the whole population, is a Rwandan home-grown solution that works towards the extension of social protection for workers in the informal economy. Promotion of the EjoHeza scheme is a national priority not just in terms of its role in improving the income of all residents in old age, but also with respect to developing a culture of saving for old age among the general population. For the purpose of increasing registration and contributions to EjoHeza, the ILO has worked with the Rwanda Social Security Board on the terms of reference for a study on identifying potential aggregators that could promote the sharing and exchange of information and encourage and assist in collecting contributions for EjoHeza, as well as other mandatory social protection schemes. The assessment will compile a list of up to five potential aggregators with specific reach to priority target populations. The study will then develop a specific engagement plan which will potentially include a remuneration structure, training needs on social security and social insurance for the respective agency, a timeline for implementation and expected costs. The study is expected to be conducted in the third quarter of 2024 after receiving final approval by the Rwanda Social Security Board.

Activity 1.7 Support to the review of the social security policy

The activity has not yet commenced. The Government of Rwanda is in the process of revising its overarching strategic plan, the National Strategy for Transformation. The revision of the framework will in turn yield guidance for making revisions to related policies. In collaboration with the Rwanda Social Security Board, the project team will identify the optimal entry points for promoting an integrated social protection system either through the revision of the National Social Security Policy and the updating of the National Social Protection Policy or by advocacy for a comprehensive social protection system implemented through the Social Protection Sector Strategic Plan.

Output 2. Mechanisms and tools are available to strengthen administration and facilitate access to social security services for the informal sector

Activities under this output are based on the findings from the study and the workshop on the extension of social protection to informal workers, as well as through consultation with tripartite partners.

Activity 2.1 Support review of social security operations, data and management information systems and delivery mechanisms to incorporate recommendations for extension to the informal sector

One of the main obstacles to accessing social protection in Rwanda is the lack of awareness among the population about the various schemes managed by the Rwanda Social Security Board (including EjoHeza). To promote a culture of savings in Rwanda and raise awareness on social protection rights, the ILO has been supporting the Rwanda Social Security Board in the development of a behaviour change communication strategy, which will aim at improving how the Rwanda Social Security Board communicates about its schemes. The strategy will develop a clear and effective communication vision by defining communication objectives, identifying partners and stakeholders for implementation, acquiring a deeper understanding of

the Rwanda Social Security Board's audiences and selecting communication tactics and materials. It is expected that the strategy will have been developed by the second quarter of 2024 subsequent to final approval of the terms of reference by the Rwanda Social Security Board.

Activity 2.2 Feasibility study on one-stop shops for registration, contribution collection and payment of taxes

The project team will submit to the project's Technical Working Group a comprehensive proposal for the extension of social protection in a given target sector. Based on consultations with different tripartite partners, the construction sector will be proposed. The findings from the study on the extension of social protection to informal workers and the discussions in the related workshop have identified challenges primarily in relation to information and awareness both among employers and workers, as well as with compliance. Activities focused on awareness-raising, capacity strengthening and social dialogue concerning social protection will be proposed. The final activities will be discussed and approved by the Technical Working Group.

Activity 2.3 Support the Rwanda Social Security Board's governance of data and management information system

To strengthen its internal capacities for actuarial valuations in health and pensions and, more particularly, to improve medium term projections of schemes' revenues and expenditures, the Rwanda Social Security Board has requested support from the project to deploy the ILO/ISSA ILO/ HEALTH and ILO/PENSION Models. The deployment of the Models will be co-financed by the project and the Rwanda Social Security Board and is anticipated in the third quarter of 2024.

Activity 2.4 Support to organizing informal workers to increase outreach and uptake with the Workers Trade Union Confederation of Rwanda (CESTRAR)

Trade unions in Rwanda have made significant progress in advocating for labour rights and worker welfare. However, there is a growing recognition of the need to strengthen unity and build synergy among trade unions in order for them to enhance their collective bargaining power, share best practices, become more inclusive and address common challenges. Thus, in October 2023 the ILO and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) joined forces to organize a two day Trade Unions Building Synergy Workshop. The workshop included 35 trade union leaders and seven women trade union members, as well as partners supporting the work of trade unions in Rwanda, namely the FES, the ILO and Enabel).

The collaboration had a strong emphasis on joint advocacy, promoting social dialogue, labour rights and compliance, gender equality, social protection and formalization. Recommendations from the workshop will inform the design of a specific collaboration with trade unions for the promotion of social protection to be implemented in the third quarter of 2024.

Activity 2.5 Support to improved occupational safety and health

The ILO is working with the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) on the revision of the Rwanda Building Code. Discussions are ongoing over the strengthening of occupational safety and health provisions, social security and inspection. The ILO is planning to organize a workshop in 2024 to provide inputs on international standards, as well as to share experiences from other countries for use in guiding the technical experts tasked with drafting the Code.

Output 3. The Rwanda Social Security Board, labour inspectors and tripartite constituents have the necessary capacities and relevant information to effectively implement social protection schemes and to advocate for their sustainable financing

Activity 3.1 Support the Rwanda Social Security Board and tripartite partners on implementation of options (Output 1) for the extension of social security to workers in the informal economy and on unemployment protection

A proposal for trainings activities targeting a specific sector in line with activity 2.2 will be delivered to the Technical Working Group.

Activity 3.2 Support to training activities for labour inspectors

Labour inspection plays an essential function in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda by providing technical advice on labour law provisions to employers and workers and enforcing related legislation. In many developing countries, including Rwanda, labour inspectorates often lack the financial and human resources for providing labour inspectors with adequate initial and on-the-job training. Following consultations with the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA), the ILO organized a 5-day training for 34 Rwandan labour inspectors on building modern and effective labour inspection systems.

The training workshop, jointly organized with MIFOTRA, included topics such as capacity development on labour inspection, labour disputes mediation, occupational safety and health, child labour and labour migration. Training materials are available on the dedicated [workspace](#). The workshop is built on the ILO training package that usually covers a two-week period. A follow-up training to cover remaining modules is planned for 2024.

Activity 3.3 Strengthen capacities of private enterprises and small and medium enterprises (SME) on social protection

Awareness among employers on social protection, occupational safety and health and social dialogue remains limited. This is reflected in low registration rates with the Rwanda Social Security Board even among Private Sector Federation (PSF) – Rwanda members. The project supported the Private Sector Federation, and more specifically, the Imanzi Business Institute (the PSF's training centre), to develop a training package for enterprises on social dialogue, social protection and occupational safety and health specifically tailored to the needs and priorities of the private sector. A first batch of the training was delivered in January 2024 to around 20 representatives of the PSF at national and provincial level and to selected business owners. The training was delivered in collaboration with trade unions in relation to social dialogue and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre for sessions on occupational safety and health. It is anticipated that the training will be replicated within the framework of the project and also beyond it.

Activity 3.4 Capacity-building – development of capacity-building package for the Rwanda Social Security Board

The reorganization of the Rwanda Social Security Board, as well as its expansion, have required stronger investments in training to ensure that all staff have a sound understanding of social protection, the existing system in Rwanda and their role in its implementation. In this context, the ILO and its International Training Centre, Turin (ITC-IL) jointly organized a one-week training for 25 participants from the Rwanda Social Security Board's middle management. The training, which took place in June 2023 in Kigali, comprised a blend of instructor-led sessions, lectures and interactive sessions, which directly contributed to Output 3 of the ILO Social Protection Programme.

Activity 3.5 Analysis on macroeconomic impact of investments in social protection

Budget allocations for social protection accounted for 5.2 per cent of the Government's total budget in 2021/22 in Rwanda. Financial sustainability of social insurance schemes poses a further challenge, especially in the current context of multiple crises. A key question in this context is how to ensure adequate levels of investment in social protection. While making estimations of multiplier effects of various Government expenditures has become a standard practice, there is limited evidence on the multiplier effects of investments in social protection and social services. Consequently, the ILO has been working with a team of consultants on a study on multiplier effects of social protection expenditure in Rwanda. It is envisaged that the study will build the economic case for investments in social protection and contribute to overall advocacy for adequate financing of social protection. In particular, the study will examine how the multipliers of social protection spending compare with the multipliers of other public spending. Results are expected in the second quarter of 2024.

Activity 3.6 Strengthening of data collection, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of social security and social protection and occupational safety and health

The ILO is the custodian of SDG indicator 1.3.1 on the share of population covered by at least one social protection scheme. In order to report this information to the UN Development Cooperation Office, the ILO is working with its members to collect this data using its online Social Security Inquiry tool. In June 2023, the ILO organized a technical workshop on social protection data collection, with the participation of the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC); the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA); the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN); the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB); and the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR). The workshop aimed at mapping all existing social protection schemes in Rwanda. As a follow-up, the ILO organized a series of bilateral consultations to collect data based on the different social protection schemes identified. As a result, the ILO has updated the Social Security Inquiry data for fiscal year 2022–2023 in Rwanda. The various data collected have been entered into the Social Security Inquiry platform for fiscal year 2022–2023. This data and the aggregators will then be validated in an internal workshop before being sent to ILO headquarters for feedback and compilation of indicators. Currently, no consolidated reporting on social protection coverage across all population groups exists. Instead, reporting is done separately for social assistance programmes and contributory programmes, which thus leaves no scope for obtaining an overview of coverage across the whole system.

OUTPUTS: Overall delivery assessment¹			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Highly satisfactory Implementation of almost all (>80%) outputs is on schedule as envisaged in the implementation plan and almost all (>80%) indicator milestones have been met.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Satisfactory Implementation of the majority (60-80%) of outputs is on schedule as envisaged in the implementation plan and the majority (60-80%) of indicator milestones have been met.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory Some (40-60%) outputs are being implemented on schedule as envisaged in the implementation plan and/or only some (40-60%) indicator milestones have been met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very unsatisfactory Few (<40%) outputs are being implemented on schedule as envisaged in the implementation plan and/or only a few (<40%) indicator milestones have been met.

¹ This is a self-assessment.

Summary outcome(s)

See the table [here](#).

► Gender and non-discrimination

In all its activities in Rwanda, and in line with Recommendation No. 202, the ILO has aimed at covering the unprotected, the poor and the most vulnerable, with particular emphasis on workers in the informal economy and their families. Rwanda's National Social Protection Policy and the revised National Employment Policy have identified certain categories among informal workers as particularly vulnerable, namely youth, women and people with disabilities (PwD). To these categories must be added refugees, who are subject to chronic vulnerabilities. The project sought to shed light on the situation of these vulnerable groups by adopting, for example, a gender- or youth-sensitive approach in several studies; thus, the research on workers in the informal economy included two focus groups with refugees, two focus groups with only women and one focus group with people with disabilities. Another approach used by the project is collecting data disaggregated by age, and gender – the collection of data on social protection coverage, for instance, includes gender disaggregated data.

To ensure a gender balance among participants during workshops, the participation of women is especially encouraged; the workshop on building synergies between trade unions included trade union leaders and female leaders or deputy leaders so as to ensure women's representation. Workshops and trainings have so far had a balanced representation, notably with specific attention also being given to representation of women in panel discussions.

3. Collaboration and partnerships

The ILO is an active member of the Social Protection Sector Working Group (SPSWG), led by the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and co-chaired by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). This Sector Working Group represents an essential element in dialogue and coordination over key social protection issues. As social protection for informal workers is at the intersection of job creation and social protection, the project team also represents the ILO in the Sector Working Group on private sector development and youth employment, chaired by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) and the EU delegation and the related sub-sector working group on youth employment co-chaired by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) and the Embassy of Belgium. The project team is also representing the ILO in the Community-based Health Insurance Consultative Group.

Guided by the revision of the National Strategy for Transformation, the UN Country Team is in the process of reviewing the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The ILO's inputs into the Common Country Analysis have been crucial for ensuring a comprehensive systems perspective on social protection, as well as for reflecting social protection and decent work challenges linked to employment. The ILO expertise and perspective complements those by other agencies, such as UNICEF and WFP.

The project team has led consultations among the UN Country Team and the Government of Rwanda on the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, in close collaboration and with support from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office. This resulted in a joint UN scoping mission to confirm the relevance of the initiative for Rwanda. The mission was in fact a joint UN effort with the participation of Ms Valérie Schmitt, Deputy Director SOCPRO, Ms Mehjabeen Alarakhia, Regional Specialist UN Women, as well as colleagues from UNRCO, IOM, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNCDF and IFAD in Rwanda. The

mission identified three entry points: (1) formalizing and digitalizing the urban economy; (2) modernizing and greening agriculture and achieving food security; and (3) achieving gender equality through investments in the care economy. The organizing of the mission was led by the ILO project team and the UNRCO with support from the various agencies involved. The Government of Rwanda officially submitted the request to become a pathfinder country under the initiative in January 2024.

The project team is supporting the piloting of specific prototypes for extending social protection with a private sector perspective. Within a collaboration between the ILO and the GIZ initiative “Invest for Jobs”, three prototypes will be supported focusing on extension of social protection to sales agents, agricultural workers and motorcycle drivers. The objective of the prototypes is to propose voluntary coverage and to assess the feasibility of different options and their potential for being scaled up if they prove successful.

The project team also continues regular exchanges with other partners in the social protection sector, including the Enabel portfolio on decent work and social protection.

The strengthened presence of the ILO in Rwanda has allowed a strong engagement with key partners, including social partners. The trade union federations, CESTRAR, COTRAF and COSYLI and the Private Sector Federation are close partners in the implementation of the Programme’s activities. Trade unions are key partners in supporting the project, particularly when it comes to identifying barriers to access to social protection in different economic sectors and in assessing entry points whereby the project might realistically strengthen the formalization and extension of social protection. The Private Sector Federation has similarly been a key partner in providing training on social security standards and regulations for medium and small enterprises.

4. Main challenges and corrective actions

Two principal challenges were encountered. The first of them was in the quality of the deliverables produced by certain national consultants; thus, the quality of their studies was sometimes sub-optimal by ILO standards, both in terms of form and the relevance of data collection and analysis, which had the effect of delaying the implementation of certain activities. The second main challenge was that the ILO team faced significant delays in the implementation of certain administrative procedures and activities; nevertheless, the team successfully established a more consistent workflow and increased the efficiency of the division of project management tasks within the team.

As the focus of the project is on the linkages between social protection and employment, this means that coordination among multiple actors and sectors is required. This is reflected in the participation in a number of different working groups, which can be time-consuming. However, coordination is also crucial in order to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that key stakeholders are aware of project activities and actively involved in them.

5. Summary and outlook

The ILO’s presence and work are welcomed by the tripartite partners, as well as other development partners. The Organization’s mandate on supporting decent work is not only well placed to encourage stronger linkages between the contributory and non-contributory schemes but also linkages between social protection and job creation policies. The ILO has a strong comparative advantage in advocating for comprehensive social protection that covers multiple schemes, including social assistance and social insurance. Likewise, the ILO standards on social protection provide a framework to advocate for social protection following a life-cycle and rights-based approach, informed by principles of solidarity.

While the project encountered delays owing to the need to build up relations with tripartite partners, activities are now well under way and it is expected that most activities will be concluded by the fourth quarter of 2024. The official commitment of the Government of Rwanda to become a pathfinder country under the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions provides additional support to the ILO's agenda of linking jobs and social protection and both these areas are also envisaged as being priority ones under the National Strategy for Transformation 2. The technical expertise provided through the project continues to be highly relevant to the country.