



International
Labour
Organization

Progress Report - Malawi

01/01/2023 – 31/12/2023

ILO GLOBAL FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME ON BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION
FLOORS FOR ALL - PHASE II. ACCELERATING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF
UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTIONS, LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Project GLO/22/31/IRL



Malawi Minister of Labour, Youth and Social Protection ©ILO, 2023.

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Project title:	BUILDING SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS FOR ALL - PHASE II. Accelerating the Achievement of Universal Social Protection, Leaving No One Behind
Report type (pick one):	Annual
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Linkages:

ILO Strategic Policy Outcome: P&B Outcome 7: Universal Social Protection

ILO Country Programme Outcome: MW 152: Enhanced and extended coverage of social protection to vulnerable groups

Sustainable Development Goal: Goal 1. End Poverty: Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries: 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

Preparation and Review

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1. Country context

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa and its population is vulnerable to frequent climate shocks, chronic poverty and food insecurity. Besides these factors, it faces the challenge of persistent poverty and unemployment with attendant deficits in decent work and adequate social security. Thus, according to a 2013 Malawi Labour Force Survey 2013, the country's unemployment rate stood at an average of 21 per cent, 23 per cent of which was comprised of youth unemployment (that is, persons aged between 15 and 34 years)¹. The country continues to rely on agriculture as the main source of employment for semi- and unskilled workers. In Malawi 50.74 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. Despite high levels of poverty and inequality, unemployment and vulnerabilities to climate change, Malawi's social protection system is inadequate, being based mainly on social assistance programmes that principally target the poorest. Thus, only 21.3 per cent of the population are covered by at least one social protection benefit and only 19.6 per cent of vulnerable persons receive a non-contributory cash benefit.

The legal framework is only limited to employment-based contributory social security schemes. Labour protection in Malawi is limited in application and is restricted to the formal employment sector. Workers are protected in cases of employment injury, termination and maternity through employer liability schemes, but these do not provide adequate protection and constitute a high and frequently unpredictable cost for employers. Under the Pension Act of 2011, the pension scheme is managed by the Reserve Bank of Malawi; however, there is no authority or mechanism to facilitate coverage of enterprises and workers in the informal economy. As a result, affiliation remains extremely low and only 2.3 per cent of persons above statutory retirement age are covered by an old-age pension. The Government has established a private health insurance scheme that mainly covers governmental and private sector workers.

The Malawi National Social Support Policy of 2012 and the National Social Support Programme principally focus on the provision of social assistance programmes. The priority areas in the National Social Support Programme include consumption support promoting resilient livelihoods; development of shock-responsive social protection to meet needs and to prepare for unpredictable shocks and respond to these; promoting linkages for a coherent and effective social protection system and strengthening social protection systems. Though non-contributory programmes form the largest part of the Malawi social protection system, they are nonetheless still characterized by limited coverage and benefit adequacy. The limited social protection programme design and coverage leave large groups of Malawians without adequate support; thus, the flagship Social Cash Transfers Programme, for example, is currently targeting 15 per cent of labour-constrained ultra-poor households. Other programmes include public works and school meals programmes, which are implemented in selected districts. Furthermore, social protection programmes face challenges to their coordination and implementation at all levels.

Malawi does not have a well-defined legal framework to provide legal backing to the implementation of social protection policy. There is poor data availability and limited resource allocation by the Government to the social protection sector, with currently about 90 per cent of financing for social protection coming from donors and a domestic fiscal envelope for social protection amounting to only 0.6 per cent of GDP in 2021 (UNICEF, 2021). This results in disproportionate support for non-contributory social protection at the expense of efforts to build a more comprehensive social protection system.

Given the lack of a comprehensive and integrated social protection system, the Government, with the support of the United Nations and development partners, has reviewed the National Social Support Policy with a view to expanding the current scope of the social protection system. The Regional Programme outputs will contribute to addressing the challenges and enhance the adequacy and coverage of the social protection system by supporting the Government in carrying out the National Social Protection Policy

¹ See 'Malawi Labour Force Survey 2013', Section 5.1 'Unemployed persons' (page 37). National Statistical Office (NSO) 2014. Malawi Labour Force Survey 2013. Zomba, Malawi.

Implementation Plan. The Programme has supported analytical studies to explore the extension of social protection to excluded groups, including persons in the informal economy. Likewise, the Programme has given support to consultations and dialogue among constituents to facilitate policy reforms in existing national social protection programmes through national consultative meetings on the extension of social protection coverage. In the area of financing social protection, the Programme undertook a social protection fiscal space analysis focused on promoting sustainable financing of social protection floors. Strengthening the capacity of social protection practitioners also remains a critical component in the building of a strong and sustainable social protection system. Against this backdrop, the ILO continued to provide technical support to ILO constituents and civil society organizations and thus foster an inclusive culture of social protection and promote their participation and contribution in the design, implementation and monitoring of social protection programmes.

2. Progress report

Outcome 1: Social protection coverage in Malawi is extended and enhanced with the aim of increasing inclusiveness, adequacy of benefits and fiscal space

Output 1.1 A comprehensive plan for the rollout of the national social protection policy is developed and implemented

Output status: on schedule

Following in the steps of the achievements made by the 2016-2022 ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme, in 2023, the ILO provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to undertake validation meetings for the Draft National Social Protection Policy. The current National Social Support Policy has been reviewed to expand the scope of the social protection policy framework to include both contributory and non-contributory benefits within the same policy framework. During May 2023, three validation meetings were conducted in the Southern, Northern and Central regions, where stakeholders (including Development Partners and UN agencies) provided final inputs on the draft national social protection policy. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division submitted the draft policy document to the Office of the President and Cabinet for consideration and approval. The revised national social protection policy is expected to be approved by December 2024. Its implementation will contribute to enhancing the coverage and adequacy of the current social protection system in Malawi by providing an opportunity to introduce comprehensive social security schemes.

Output 1.2 Studies identifying the needs, gaps and opportunities to enhance the capacity of workers and enterprises in the informal economy, with a focus on gender and disability, are conducted and shared

Output status: On schedule

The Department of Economic Planning and Development, through the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division and in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources, commissioned a feasibility study on the extension of social protection coverage to the informal economy with a focus on the fisheries sector. Similarly, the Regional Programme, in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Department of Economic Planning and Development, Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division and Ministry of Natural Resources to explore mechanisms and strategies for extension of social protection to the informal economy with a focus on the agriculture sector.

The Regional Programme, in collaboration with the FAO project “Boosting Livelihoods Resilience and Response and Recovery from COVID-19 in Southern and Eastern Africa”, also facilitated the engagement of a consultant to conduct a feasibility study on the extension of social protection in the informal sector with a focus on the fishing and tobacco sub-sectors. The agriculture sector is the main source of employment for those in the labour market in Malawi and promotion of decent work in the agriculture sector is therefore critical. The feasibility study provided evidence that was used to facilitate national policy dialogue on the importance and practicability of extending social protection to the informal sector in Malawi. The final feasibility report on the extension of social protection to the informal economy in Malawi was validated by stakeholders, including social partners, on 11 December 2023. The outcome and recommendations of the feasibility study have contributed to the development of the policy brief, which aims to facilitate further policy debate and advocacy on policy options and strategies for the extension of social protection. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the feasibility study and policy brief will contribute towards the envisaged Joint ILO-FAO partnership on the extension of social protection to the agriculture sector. The report will be disseminated to feed policy discussions on the extension of social protection coverage to the informal economy.

Output 1.3 The campaign for ratification of Convention No. 102 is implemented, which will include comparative assessments between national legislation and practice and ILO social security standards at the request of tripartite stakeholders and tripartite workshops to validate the conclusions and plan ahead

Output status: On schedule

The project commenced discussions with the Government and social partners on the Global Ratification Campaign on Convention No. 102 in the course of inception meetings conducted with tripartite partners and national stakeholders. The consultations revealed the need for further sensitization and capacity-building among national stakeholders and ILO constituents on the ratification of Convention No. 102.

It is envisaged that the subregional capacity-building seminar on Convention No. 102 and follow-up activities to support the Global Ratification Campaign of Convention No. 102 will be implemented by the second quarter of 2024.

Output 1.4 Consultations and constructive dialogue are conducted between constituents for policy reform of existing national social protection programmes to better address the needs of older people (women and men), children and people with disabilities

Output status: On schedule

The Regional Programme, in partnership with the Department of Economic Planning and Development through the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division and the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), conducted a validation and policy discussion workshop on the feasibility of extending social protection to the informal economy, based on the recommendations from the feasibility study conducted under Output 2 on extension of social protection to the fisheries sector. The stakeholders’ validation and policy dialogue meeting held on 11 December 2023 at the Golden Peacock hotel provided a platform for meaningful dialogue on policy recommendations and strategies for the extension of social protection to the informal economy.

To strengthen gender-inclusive social protection programmes, the project is currently engaging with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division) to support the finalization of the draft social protection gender mainstreaming strategy. It is anticipated that this strategy will be validated by the second quarter of 2024.

Output 1.5 A costing and fiscal space analysis for nationally defined social protection floors, to be discussed in national tripartite social dialogue process is conducted and published

Output status: On schedule

Inadequate Government funding for social protection is one of the key challenges that has hindered the development of the social protection system in Malawi. Therefore, emulating the achievement of the EU-funded project on Promoting Financial Sustainability and Financial Management of Social Protection, the project with co-financing from the EU-funded Global Project on Social Protection and Public Finance Management supported the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division in the recruiting of a national consultant assigned to facilitate the updating and finalization of social protection costing and a fiscal space analysis report. It is anticipated that the recommendations from the fiscal space analysis report will contribute to policy review discussions and the development of a sustainable financing strategy for social protection in Malawi. The fiscal space report was submitted to the Government for consideration and it is expected that it will be used to support policy dialogue on sustainable financing for social protection in the medium to long term.

Output 1.6 An implementation plan for extending social protection coverage is designed and discussed in national tripartite social dialogue, including an investment plan consolidating contributions from the national Government (relevant Ministries and public institutions), funding partners (UN agencies, international financial institutions) and the private sector

Output status: On schedule

The Regional Programme, with co-financing from the Regular Budget Technical Cooperation and SKILLdevelopment projects, provided technical and financial support to facilitate inception processes for the Global Accelerator on Decent Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions initiative in Malawi. The Global Accelerator is the UN Secretary-General's initiative launched in September 2021 to help countries address multiple crises and to accelerate economic recovery by investing in decent jobs and extending universal social protection. The Global Accelerator aims to support the creation of 400 million decent jobs and the extension of social protection to the 4 billion people currently excluded from coverage. The Government of Malawi expressed its interest in becoming a pathfinder country of the Global Accelerator in September 2022.

In accordance with the Global Accelerator strategy, the Regional Programme supported the Global Accelerator scoping mission undertaken by the joint UN Global Accelerator's Technical Support Facility Coordination Team. This comprised representatives from ILO, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, FAO and UN Women under the oversight of the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Malawi. The scoping mission national consultative meetings, which were undertaken from 19 to 23 June 2023 with policy and technical level Government representatives, social partners, UN agencies, development partners, civil society, financial institutions and other development partners, reinforced the relevance of the Global Accelerator. The meetings provided an opportunity for dialogue and engagement with Government and national partners and promoted an opportunity to facilitate the identification of concrete actions to accelerate job creation and social protection extension in Malawi. The national dialogue contributed to identifying strategic entry points for the Global Accelerator initiative in Malawi and facilitated the co-creation of a draft road map on job creation and social protection extension in Malawi. It is expected that the draft Global Accelerator road map will be finalized in the first quarter of 2024 and will facilitate the implementation of integrated policy options for job creation and social protection expansion in Malawi.

Output 1.7 The design and implementation of effective and sustainable social protection including contributory and non-contributory schemes, with a focus on people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other uncovered vulnerable persons, as well as on promoting transitions from informal to formal employment is supported

Output status: On schedule

In line with Outcome 1, the Regional Programme provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare through the Department of Disability and Elderly Affairs in promoting and strengthening disability-inclusive social protection programming. The Programme supported the Ministry in conducting a 'writeshop' that took place between 5 and 9 June 2023 at Chikho Hotel and which culminated in the development of a draft training package to facilitate capacity-building for Disability and Elderly Affairs District Desk Officers. Thus, with support from the Regional Programme, the Department of Disability and Elderly Affairs conducted a pilot training of its District Desk Officers across 14 districts. The pilot training represented the first opportunity for the District Disability and Elderly Affairs Desk Officers to benefit from training, enabling them to ensure effective disability and elderly programming at district level.

The draft training manual is expected to be finalized during the first quarter of 2024. It is further anticipated that the training manual will ultimately be used to roll out the capacity-building of front-line officers on inclusive disability and elderly social protection programming.

<p>Outcome 2: The governance of the social protection system is improved to strengthen its administrative, operational and financial capacity in Malawi</p>
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Output 2.1 Studies to improve the coordination of fragmented social protection programmes are conducted and published, for example, building on the experience of the Single Window Service in Zambia

Output status: On schedule

The project provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare through the Department of Social Support to develop an implementation framework for the Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan. This intervention built on the achievement of the regional ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme of 2016–2017, which supported the development of the Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan. The project provided financial support to the participatory workshop that was conducted in collaboration with UNICEF in 2023 at Thope Lodge. The participatory workshop developed the costing framework for the Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan. The finalization of the Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan implementation framework will contribute to strengthening the administration and operationalization of the social cash transfer programme, which is the main flagship social protection programme in Malawi.

During the second quarter of 2023, the project in collaboration with the FAO supported sensitization and training of district structures on social protection programmes in four districts, namely: Mangochi, Salima, Nkhata Bay and Karonga. The sensitization activities were delivered to a total of 60 district officers, 32 extension workers and 50 community cooperative members. The sensitization and training interventions contributed to promoting understanding and built capacity among district and community structures with regard to the social protection programmes. The implementation of social protection programmes in Malawi is mostly supported by local authorities, while community structures are also involved in the targeting and monitoring of social protection programmes. The sensitization and capacity-building activities at district and

community level are expected to improve implementation and governance of social protection programmes through active involvement of key structures at district and community levels.

Output 2.2 Tools to improve the transparency and accountability of existing social protection systems are developed and disseminated

Output status: On schedule

One of the gaps in social protection has been the lack of systematic advocacy on the need for and impact of social protection programmes. To strengthen social protection advocacy and promote awareness of the need for social protection programmes and their impact, the Regional Programme provided financial support to the Civil Society Social Protection Network, which resulted in the development of a social protection advocacy strategy. The civil society organizations' advocacy strategy on social protection is expected to provide a framework through which civil society organizations will harmonize and advance the social protection advocacy agenda. The advocacy strategy pursued by these civil society organizations will strengthen civil society's voice on social protection by offering a platform for broadcasting key messages to Government policymakers and other relevant stakeholders, such as parliamentarians, development partners, other civil society organizations, traditional leaders and the communities at large.

Output 2.3 Technical assistance is provided to ILO constituents and civil society organizations (for example, representative of women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities) to encourage their participation and contribution in the design, implementation and monitoring of social protection interventions

Output status: On schedule

The Regional Programme provided technical support to the Civil Society Social Protection Network, which was formally launched in May 2023. One of the strategic objectives of the Civil Society Social Protection Network is to promote transparency and accountability in the implementation of social protection programmes. This entails tracking the progress of social protection interventions in terms of impact and tracking budgets. The ILO supported the Civil Society Social Protection Network to conduct a training on social protection budget tracking that was used to equip civil society organizations' members with skills and knowledge on the Government budget planning cycle, budget implementation and methods for budget tracking. Civil society organizations play a key role in monitoring implementation of social protection interventions as part of support for the Malawian Government's efforts in the sector. The capacity-building on budget tracking will hence contribute to effective implementation of the Civil Society Social Protection Network's advocacy strategy.

<i>Outcome 3: An inclusive culture of social protection is promoted in Malawi, ensuring that the capacity of leaders and practitioners is strengthened and that vulnerable groups are informed about social protection rights and services</i>

Output 3.1 Knowledge products (policy briefs, RMT, ILO tools, country studies on the development of national social protection systems e.g., financing, extension of social protection, comparative analysis, SWS, TRANSFORM, etc.) are published and shared in national, regional, and South-South platforms including Asia-Africa dialogues

Output status: On schedule

As reported under Output 1.2 the project supported the Government of Malawi to conduct a feasibility study on extension of social protection in the informal sector, focusing on the fishing and tobacco sub-sectors. The feasibility study is a knowledge product that has yielded evidence that will be used to facilitate national dialogue on the importance of extending social protection to the informal sector in Malawi.

Acting on the recommendations of the feasibility study on the extension of social protection to the workers in the informal economy, the ILO, in collaboration with FAO, developed a policy brief on the topic. This policy brief will disseminate the outcome and recommendations of the feasibility study (validated by national stakeholders) and is expected to feed policy discussions on the extension of social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy.

The Regional Programme, based on the achievements of the Project on Promoting Financial Sustainability and Financial Management of Social Protection, supported the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in the engagement of a national consultant assigned to facilitate the updating and finalization of social protection costing and a fiscal space analysis report. The final fiscal space report was submitted in 2023 to the Government for consideration. It is anticipated that once validated, the recommendations from the fiscal space analysis report will contribute to policy discussion and the development of a sustainable financing strategy for social protection in Malawi.

Output 3.2 Government and social partners are supported to promote a culture of social protection by organizing media training workshops, workshops for journalists and education and advocacy campaigns, including in the context of Malawi's Annual Social Protection Week and the Convention No. 102 Ratification Campaign

Output status: On schedule

The Regional Programme, through co-funding from the Coordination Hub and the ILO International Training Centre, provided financial support to facilitate capacity-building of two technical staff from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division, who participated in the ILO's International Training Centre course on leadership for social protection and the Academy on Social Security held in June and September 2023 respectively. Furthermore, the Programme supported representatives from the Employers Consultative Association of Malawi and the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions to participate in an e-coaching course on social protection, "Towards Responsive Systems", held from February to May 2023.

The Regional Programme supported the Civil Society Social Protection Network (CSSPN) to participate in the knowledge-sharing conference targeting civil society organizations in social protection. The conference was supported by the FAO and included participants from Malawi, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. The participation from the Government included the Ministry of Natural Resources; the Fisheries Department; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs; the Poverty Reduction Division; the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; the Community Development Department; and district councils from Karonga, Nkhata Bay, Salima and Mangochi. The conference, which took place in Salima, provided a platform and opportunity for sharing regional practices and experiences on how the civil society organizations can effectively contribute to implementation of social protection interventions at community level. The trainings have contributed to enhancing skills and knowledge in the area of social protection policy implementation.

The Programme, in partnership with other ILO projects, provided financial support to the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions to facilitate the commemoration of the World Day for Decent Work on 8 November 2023. The events of the Day, under the theme "Ensuring Decent Work, Dignity and Respect for All", included a press briefing that offered an opportunity to enhance awareness on the importance of social protection in promoting decent work.

Output 3.3 Capacity-building workshops using the TRANSFORM initiative's training tools are prepared and implemented, with a view to enhancing social protection in general, including for example, shock responsiveness, monitoring and evaluation and financing, in line with national objectives.

Output status: On schedule

The project supported the Department of Community Development through Magomero Community Development College in developing the draft road map for institutionalization of the TRANSFORM social protection capacity-building initiative to promote the sustainability of capacity-building interventions. The draft road map will be finalized by stakeholders during the first quarter of 2024, and is anticipated that it will facilitate resource mobilization for the implementation of the TRANSFORM institutionalization process in Malawi.

Output 3.4: Civil society organizations' networks on social protection are established and strengthened with a view to foment and set up partnerships with civil society organizations, including civil society traditional authorities, faith leaders, citizens and non-state actors that could facilitate effective participation in, and promotion of, social protection

Output status: On schedule

The 2016–2022 ILO-Irish Aid Regional Partnership Programme supported the systematic engagement of civil society organizations in the policy debates on social protection programmes and policies. Continuing the achievements of the previous Partnership Programme, the project provided financial and technical support to facilitate the establishment of the Civil Society Social Protection Network. The project supported the formation of the Civil Society Social Protection Network through a comprehensive participatory process. The Civil Society Social Protection Network was launched on 30 May 2023, at the Golden Hotel by the Director of Poverty Reduction and Social Protection, who was also the guest of honour, with the participation of the Registrar of Non-Governmental Organizations; the International Labour Organization Country Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique; and development partners, represented by the Embassy of Ireland.

With the aim of facilitating advocacy for social protection, the launch provided an opportunity for policy dialogue through panel discussions and presentations by different agencies in the social protection sector. To strengthen South-South experience and knowledge-sharing among ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme countries, the launch included a presentation from the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction in Zambia, on the theme “Zambia - achievements, challenges and lessons in promoting social protection advocacy”. The main issues identified during the launch included the need for the Civil Society Social Protection Network to strengthen community sensitizations, and undertake activities such as budget tracking, policy advocacy, research and evidence building, resource mobilization and monitoring of social protection programme implementation.

OUTPUTS: Overall delivery assessment ²			
<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.

² This is a self-assessment.

Summary of Outcome(s)

OUTCOME ACHIEVEMENT ³					
Indicator	Baseline (before project start)	Indicator Milestone (compare planned against actual)	Target (end-of-project goal)	Indicator Milestone 1 st Year	Immediate Outcome Summary
Outcome 1: Social protection coverage in Malawi is extended and enhanced with the aim to increase inclusiveness, adequacy of benefits and fiscal space.					
Number of legal policy documents designed, finalized or adopted through dialogue	1	1	2	1 draft national social protection policy validated	On track: most milestones met
Number of analytical studies conducted on extension of social protection to the informal economy including policy recommendations for extension of coverage to workers in the informal economy		1	3	1 feasibility study on coverage extension to workers in the informal economy	
Number of capacity-building/training sessions supporting C102 campaigns			3	Planned for 2024	
Number of social protection officials partners sensitized on C 102		20	80	Planned for 2024	
Number of policy tools developed to support policy reforms to enhance disability and elderly inclusion social protection		1	3	1 training manual on disability inclusion	
Number of dialogue sessions/events conducted to support protection policy Reforms		2	4	1 national validation and policy dialogue workshop on feasibility study for coverage extension; 1 National Consultative Workshop on Global Accelerator Initiative; 1 Stakeholders' write shop on development of a Global Accelerator road map	
Number of technical reports on social protection costing and fiscal space analysis		1	2	1 costing and fiscal space analysis report	

³ Based on the M&E plan.

Number of dialogue meetings to promote social protection fiscal space		1	3	0	
Number of social protection strategic documents/implementation plans developed to promote extending coverage of social protection		1	2	1 draft road map on the Global Accelerator on Jobs Creation and Social Protection	
Outcome 2. The governance of the social protection system is improved to strengthen its administrative, operational and financial capacity in Malawi.					
Number of tools/guidelines developed to improve administration and operations of social protection schemes	1	1	2	1 Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan implementation framework	On track: most milestones met
Number of Social Protection officials trained/oriented to improve administration and operation of social protection programmes		40	100	14 district disability and elderly focal point persons trained on disability inclusion in SP programming	
Number of tools guidelines developed to improve social protection accountability and transparency		1	2	1 social protection CSOs advocacy Strategy developed	
Number of awareness-raising/advocacy initiatives promoted	1	5	10	1 social protection CSOs launch; 1 World Day for Decent Work commemoration	
Number of capacity-building/training sessions conducted to facilitate participation of ILO constituents, civil society in design and implementation of social protection interventions		1	2	1 Capacity-building on budget tracking training; 1 regional knowledge-sharing conference on the role of civil society in social protection	
Number of ILO constituents, civil society trained to facilitate participation in design and implementation of social protection programmes		50	150	60 district officers, 32 extension workers and 50 community cooperative members sensitized on social protection; 1 participation in ITC course - leadership for social protection; 1 participation in e-coaching course on SP systems	
01.03. An inclusive culture of social protection is promoted in Malawi, ensuring that the capacity of leaders and practitioners is strengthened and that vulnerable groups are informed about social protection rights and services.					

Number of knowledge products, technical reports policy briefs produced		1	4	1 costing and fiscal space for social protection floors; 1 feasibility study on extension of social protection; 1 policy brief on extension of coverage	On track: most milestones met
Number of social protection Knowledge products/ policy briefs published and disseminated		1	4	1 policy brief on extension of coverage – to be published	
Number of national dialogue/debates on social protection and communication materials produced to support social protection advocacy	2	2	4	1 social protection advocacy strategy; 1 national consultative meeting on extension of coverage;	
Number of social protection practitioners participating in social protection capacity initiatives e.g on shock-responsive social protection, financing and disability		50	100	14 Disability & Elderly District Desk Officers trained	
Number of partnerships supported to promote advocacy on extension of social protection floors		1	2	1 social protection CSOs Network established: 1 partnership with FAO on coverage extension to informal economy	
Tools developed to support social protection advocacy		1	3	1 social protection CSOs advocacy strategy	

3. Collaboration and partnerships

The Regional Programme has enhanced its collaboration and partnerships with other UN agencies, the Government and civil society. For example, and as reported above, the ILO in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) project "Boosting Livelihoods Resilience, Response and Recovery from COVID-19 in Southern and Eastern Africa" provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Department of Economic Planning and Development, the Poverty Reduction and Social Protection Division and the Ministry of Natural Resources in order to explore mechanisms and strategies for extension of social protection to the informal economy with a focus on the agriculture sector. The recommendations of the feasibility study will provide input for a concept note on future potential partnership between the ILO and FAO on extension of social protection to the agriculture sector.

In the wake of the support provided for the establishment of the Civil Society Organizations' Social Protection Network, the Regional Partnership Programme has strengthened its systematic engagement and partnership with civil society organizations in social protection. The Regional Programme continues to provide capacity-building intervention to the Civil Society Social Protection Network, which has been acknowledged and is being utilized among social protection stakeholders and development partners such as GIZ and FAO in the promotion of advocacy on social protection programmes in Malawi.

The Programme contributed to the strengthening of partnerships with other UN agencies through support to the inception processes for the Global Accelerator on Decent Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions initiative. In accordance with the Global Accelerator strategy, the Global Accelerator initiative is expected to be implemented through integrated policies on jobs and social protection extension. In this regard, the Regional Programme contributed towards enhancing partnerships among UN agencies by facilitating the joint UN Global Accelerator's Technical Support Facility Coordination Team scoping mission, which included the ILO, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, FAO and UN Women under the oversight of the UN Resident Coordinator's office in Malawi. The consultative workshop that took place provided an opportunity for engagement of the Government and national partners, promoted a common understanding and contributed to initiating the co-creation of integrated strategies and policies that will lead to the development of a draft national road map for implementation of the Global Accelerator in Malawi. It is hoped that the execution of the Global Accelerator road map will enhance partnership and collaboration through joint UN-Government projects.

Report on engagement with social partners

The ILO used the inception phase of the Global Accelerator initiative to promote the engagement and consultation of social partners on policy reforms and thus to facilitate the acceleration of job creation and social protection extension. The social partners actively participated in the core drafting team for the draft road map on the Global Accelerator in Malawi. Further bilateral sensitization meetings were held with both the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi and the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions to enhance the social partners' knowledge on the Global Accelerator and to facilitate effective engagement.

The ILO supported representatives from the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi and the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions to participate in the e-coaching course on social protection, "Towards Responsive Systems", held between February and May 2023 with the aim of enhancing the capacity of social partners to participate in social protection programmes and policy reforms.

The ILO projects provided financial support to the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions to facilitate the commemoration of the World Day for Decent Work, held on 8 November 2023. The occasion included a press briefing that provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of social protection in promoting decent work.

4. Main challenges and corrective actions

Public social protection expenditure in Malawi is still very low. Such limited funding of social protection programmes is compounded by pressure to allocate funds across many competing priority spending areas. Heavy dependence on foreign aid poses a threat to the long-term sustainability of national social protection systems, while insufficient resources for social protection have the potential to adversely affect the sustainability of project achievements. As a mitigation measure, project outputs such as the Social Protection Costing and Fiscal Space Analysis Report will continue to support the Government in developing sustainable financing mechanisms that will be used to advocate for the allocation of more resources to the social protection sector in Malawi. The Programme will continue to leverage the development of partnerships, such as with the Civil Society Social Protection Network, with the aim of supporting advocacy and lobbying for increased funding to social protection.

The Programme's achievements risk facing inadequate Government ownership as most of the project activities were funded by the project on account of the fact that some Government departments lack sufficient funds to support project implementation. As a mitigation measure, consideration was given to collaboration in project implementation with other project components via the Coordination Hub within the Programme and thus to leverage available resources. Additionally, the project established partnerships with other UN agencies, such as the FAO, which contributed to improving the Programme's reach while paving the way for the establishment of long-term joint partnerships. The Programme will continue to promote engagement and the capacity-building of national practitioners and stakeholders and thus foster the sustainability of Programme achievements.

The current social protection system in Malawi is mostly tailored to social assistance schemes. This challenge has the potential to hinder the realization of Programme objectives because the current policy framework limits the expansion of the social protection system in Malawi. While the Programme has been supporting the national social protection policy review, this process has nevertheless faced delays. As a mitigation measure, the Programme will utilize advocacy interventions to support the adoption of the reviewed national social protection policy being undertaken by the Government of Malawi as the new policy provides a framework to facilitate expanding the scope and coverage of social protection.

The first year of implementation was hindered owing to limited funding of the Regional Programme, which led to postponement of some of the planned project activities, such as the TRANSFORM training initiative's institutionalization process and finalization of the gender mainstreaming strategy. To limit the effect of this obstacle, the Programme prioritized activity implementation in collaboration with national stakeholders. Other measures employed included collaboration in leveraging resources with other project components via the Coordination Hub and the establishment of joint programming partnerships with other UN agencies, such as the FAO. Cost sharing of interventions contributed to achieving the Programme's outputs.

5. Summary and outlook

Following the first year of its implementation, the project results achieved key milestones and outputs in line with the agreed work plan. The Partnership Programme has made considerable efforts towards the advancement of Malawi's current social protection system, while focusing on both non-contributory and contributory programmes. Key achievements to date include:

- A comprehensive review and finalization of the national social protection policy have been conducted, aligning with the goal of strengthening legal and policy frameworks. The expected Cabinet approval of this policy will represent a critical milestone in institutionalizing and expanding social protection measures.

- A feasibility study on the extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy (in particular to the fisheries sector) has been conducted in partnership with the FAO. A Policy brief on how to address coverage gaps and introduce mechanisms for extending coverage to workers in the informal economy was developed to support further policy dialogue.
- The Social Protection Fiscal Space Analysis and the drafting of associated reports have showcased progress in assessing sustainable financial strategies to support extended coverage.
- Inclusion has been a focal point, with support provided to the Department of Disability and Elderly Affairs in the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare in developing and piloting of training packages and tools focused on inclusivity for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- A civil society network for social protection was launched, and support was given for training on budget tracking and also for an advocacy strategy.
- Technical support was provided to the Government of Malawi in developing the draft road map for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.
- The Programme has also prioritized capacity-building, as shown in the draft of the Social Cash Transfer Strategic Plan implementation framework. The Programme has further supported the Ministry of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare in developing a Social Cash Transfer implementation strategy.
- The competencies of ILO constituents reinforced on disability inclusion and the advocacy tools and strategies developed and implemented by civil society organizations have contributed towards realizing the aims of improved coordination, extended coverage and adequacy of benefits.

In 2024, the ILO Malawi office will emphasize the following interventions:

Under Outcome 1, the project's priority is assisting the Government to operationalize and publicize the national social protection policy following approval by the Cabinet. This includes: bolstering capacity-building efforts; initiating campaigns for the ratification of Convention N.o 102; engaging in policy dialogue on extension of social protection to the informal economy; supporting reforms of pension and workers' compensation schemes; and fostering disability and elderly inclusive social protection programmes. A major anticipated challenge is the restricted funding to these programmes, thus potentially affecting the national social protection policy's implementation. However, Malawi's status as a pathfinder country for the Global Accelerator on Social Protection and Jobs offers promising prospects for the expansion of social protection.

For Outcome 2, the focus lies in supporting the Government in crafting a national strategy for expanding coverage and supporting the inception of a disability information database. The effort also extends to framing policy briefs on the enhancement of social protection coverage and its fiscal space. Present fragmentation and funding insufficiencies in the social protection system present challenges, but the Programme's measures aim at strengthening policy decisions and programmatic coordination.

Lastly, through Outcome 3, the objective is to consolidate the involvement of civil society organizations in championing a comprehensive social protection culture, focusing on strategies such as budget tracking, and community participation for heightened social protection awareness by using such mechanisms as community scorecards, awareness programmes, a social protection week, budget tracking interventions and strengthening social protection capacity-building through the institutionalization of the TRANSFORM initiative's training package.