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Technical support to improve design of targeted cash transfer program to be more responsive to the needs of families with children

Final Report

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Preface / Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

4+B	State benefit for families with four or more children
ESPO	Employment and Social Programmes Office
HBS	Household Budget Survey
KZT	Kazakhstan Tenge
MCI	Monthly Calculation Index
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
MIS	Management Information System
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
SML	Subsistence Minimum Level
SW	Social worker
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance
SCA	State Child Allowance

Executive summary

Kazakhstan has a comprehensive set of social protection policies in place which includes both social insurance programmes (in particular pensions and unemployment benefits) and social assistance with a mixture of benefits reaching certain ‘vulnerable demographic groups’ and means-tested residual assistance which is designed to operate as the last resort after all other interventions. With a vision of ensuring that more resources go to those who need them most, strengthening incentives to work and increasing the coordination and integration between cash assistance and social services, the Government is planning a reform of three main current benefits: the targeted social assistance (TSA), the special child allowances (SCA) and benefit for large families (with 4 or more children) (4+B). In particular, the plan is to stop SCA and 4+B and instead substantially increase the importance of TSA by raising the eligibility threshold to maintain support for some of the current beneficiaries of SCA and 4+B and, when people are entitled to social assistance, introduce a social contract between the local authorities and citizens who need to take responsibilities to actively try to improve their circumstances.

To a large degree the reform is modelled on the experience of the ‘Orleu project’, which introduced the concept of a ‘social contract’ to ensure that beneficiaries of TSA could become socially active and, in particular, could engage in economic activities. Under the same project an outreach role was developed for consultants and assistant consultants to social work to identify potential beneficiaries. In relation to this it is relevant to say that the reform also specifically aims at improving the delivery of social assistance to enhance coordination with various social services at the local level.

Therefore, the reform is very ambitious because it aims not only at changing the eligibility rules to social assistance, but also transforming the way access to benefits and their administration is implemented.

Since the benefits affected by the reform are primarily received by households with children UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to better understand the role of the current set of targeted social assistance on families with children as well as developing simulations on the likely impact of the reform: 1) an assessment of the revised design of targeted social assistance and 2) a review of the ways administration of cash benefits can enhance access also to social services.

The study not only involved a careful review of the current and proposed new legislation, but also an analysis of both administrative data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Household Budget Survey¹. To understand how the programmes are implemented in practice and explore the inevitable difficulties that arise in administering such types of benefits some primary fieldwork was undertaken in Mangystau and Kyzylorda.

The study concluded that the reform has indeed the potential of a significant redistributive effect and the real opportunity to create outreach services at the community level and support the integration of financial assistance and social services. However, there are also a set of risks in the reform, and these can be addressed through some adjustment and concrete actions. Below we

¹ The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection currently is also developing an ambitious household database which compile household information from different sources and could potentially provide the source for alternative simulations and assessments, but the construction of the database is still underway and could not be used for this specific study.

briefly summarise the main findings and then focus on the key recommendations that come from this study aimed at ensuring that the planned reform will achieve its ambitious results, but at the same addressing some of the risks that characterise every reform.

Key findings

Analysis of current benefits

Before assessing the reform it is important to understand well the role currently played by the benefits that will be affected by the reform.

By far currently the most important benefit in terms of coverage and poverty impact is the benefit for large families (4+B), its budget is more than 23 times higher than that of TSA and covers 35 times more children than TSA. SCA is somewhere in between TSA and 4+B. Moreover, 4+B is a much more secure source of income for the recipients. While at most 48% of beneficiaries of TSA receive support throughout the year, the percentage increases to 65% of SCA and 94% for 4+B.

Currently, when looking at who receives TSA and their profile, for example where they live, there are some contradictory findings. Since TSA is clearly targeted to low income and extremely poor households, one would expect that beneficiaries would be found where the very poor are. However, while according to the statistical agency 32% of the poor are found in South Kazakhstan, the percentage of TSA beneficiaries in the same oblast is only 6%, and conversely we find that 10% of TSA beneficiaries are from Mangystau oblast, whose percentage of people below the Subsistence Minimum Level (SML) is only 3%. Such contrasting differences between the profile of poor households and the beneficiaries of TSA raises some doubts on the capacity of the administration to identify and deliver the benefit to those who most need it.

To better understand the scale of the current problems in the implementation of the benefits, the study used the Household Budget Survey (HBS) data to estimate the number of households eligible to the three benefits based on the current legislation and compared such number with that of the actual beneficiaries. Such exercise shows that while 4+B is basically received by all those eligible to receive it, there are very significant differences between eligible and recipients in TSA and to a lower extent also for SCA, revealing large exclusion errors, which are indirectly estimated to be 80% for TSA and 20% for SCA. Differences between eligible and recipients appear to be explained by difficulty of access/lack of information (whereby eligible in rural areas are relatively less likely to receive), by the way agricultural income and assumed income is imputed in the administrative calculation of income and in some cases also by the relative short-term and seasonal need, which does not materialise in requests to support.

The reform and where to set the threshold

The planned reform has the potential to redistribute resources to those most in need and provided targeted employment services to TSA beneficiaries as well as the opportunity to develop community outreach services.

However, at the moment the threshold of eligibility under the new TSA appear to have been set too low: simulations based on HBS data show that the Government would spend for the new TSA much less than what is currently spending for 4+B, TSA and SCA.

Moreover, the simulations assume that all eligible households actually receive the benefit, but given that currently there are significant discrepancies between eligible and recipients in means tested benefits it is legitimate to question the ability of the new TSA to reach the intended beneficiaries.

Implementation challenges

The primary data collection revealed that the Orleu pilots that represent the blueprint for the new TSA are very focused on employment and livelihoods with no other interventions being made to support individual plans for family support and social activation. If families are receiving unconditional cash benefits because they have children under 7 years of age, they are not being supported with other measures to address the needs of household members, including child focused social support or measures that could support adults in the household in to employment. The kinds of services needed include training and skills development, micro-enterprise support, support in returning to work for women who have been on maternity leave for extended periods, support with childcare and accessing preschool. If the intention is to support improved access to services for TSA recipient households, then other services identified as needing to be developed include accompaniment services to support families to resolve issues related to registration and eligibility for benefits and services, managing debt and household budgeting and services to strengthen parenting competencies. Eligibility for family support services for TSA beneficiary households is not defined clearly in legislation, nor for households that may be eligible for TSA according to the income criteria, but are not able to apply as they do not have the correct documents or registration status.

The study found that the staff delivering the Orleu pilots in Mangystau and Kyzylorda oblasts mostly have higher education qualifications, but in fields unrelated to social work or community based support services. There are low levels of knowledge and skills related to social services, social activation, family support, developing individual plans and intersectoral working. Staff demonstrate stronger understanding of issues related to administering benefits and supporting households to set up small enterprises or access employment. There is a need to: provide training to staff ahead of the introduction of the new targeted social assistance programme; develop clear guidance on social contracts for all targeted households (conditional and unconditional), and; phase in the new programme to avoid families missing out of support during the transition to the new system. Training needs to include a foundation course in basic social work that can support assessment of family needs and referral to other services as required. Attention should be paid to assessment of child well-being/child development, the care needs of older people, the needs of PWD with a focus on inclusion, social participation and economic activation and on the needs of people with mental health and other health conditions that might affect their ability to work and engage in economic activity.

Intersectoral community and district level commissions exist for the purpose of identifying and assessing eligibility of households for Orleu support. These also offer an opportunity for stronger intersectoral working to improve access to services in the community, but explicit mandates are required for referral of Orleu eligible households and other vulnerable households to the services they need. A standardised assessment and case management framework and guidance for Employment and Social Programme Centre consultants and assistants would help to strengthen intersectoral working and integration of services into the system of social assistance.

Recommendations

There are four sets of recommendations: improving the effectiveness of the new TSA, ensure the development and integration of social services, implement some transitional arrangements for 4+B, and re-assess the role and level of the Subsistence Minimum Level.

1. Improving the effectiveness of the new TSA

Increase the threshold of eligibility for the new TSA

The threshold of eligibility for the new TSA has been provisionally set at 50% of the new SML, HBS simulations show that, maintaining the current level of expenditure for the three benefits combined (TSA, SCA and 4+B as of 2015), it would be possible to increase the eligibility threshold to 70% of SML. Therefore, we recommend increasing the eligibility threshold to this higher level and so increase the re-distributional impact of the reform and better protecting some of the current beneficiaries who are falling below the SML. This would allow a higher coverage of poor current beneficiaries of SCA and 4+B.

Review means testing imputations

There is also the need to re-assess the way some of the income imputations are currently made, in particular, reviewing and improving the way agricultural income is imputed and providing alternative checks on the way incomes are assumed.

Concerning agricultural incomes the current methodology appears too complicated and seems to result in substantial exclusion of potentially eligible households. It is therefore recommended to review the estimation of normative income that household can obtain from small scale self-employment and agriculture. Such calculations should be based on comprehensive agricultural data, but also simulated in the Household Budget Survey to understand the possible impact of the new methodology and help calibrating the methodology. This usually requires some collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Currently, if people have not formal proof of their employment and refuse to register with the employment agency, it is normal practice to assume that such people earn at least the equivalent of the minimum wage. As an alternative methodology we would encourage the Ministry to consider the possibility of understanding whether people's income declaration matches their living conditions using an indirect assessment based on housing conditions and other assets owned by the household (for example this could be done through regression analysis). Income declarations can be accepted provided the household living conditions confirm that the household displays the typical characteristics of relatively poor households.

Seasonality and duration of support

We also recommend to re-consider the standard duration of support, in particular by increasing 'default support' from 6 to 12 months as a way to ensure some stable assistance, but also to address the problems that are currently arising because of lack of synchronism during quarters

between SML and inflation, whereby the SML is relatively low while prices are high, and instead is high when inflation is reduced.

Broaden social activation

Currently the main focus of social contracts for employable household members concerns work opportunities. However, we should recognise that these are often dependent on the capacity of the economy to generate job opportunities. In circumstances where such opportunities are lacking the concept of social activation should be broadened to include other elements such as some form of training and or participation in some community activity. This should avoid the risk of excluding households or some of its members from the receipt of social assistance and so ultimately affecting also children living in the household, since the amount received by the household would be reduced.

Introduction of additional indicators to monitor implementation of the new TSA

In order to ensure an approach more focused on achieving government social policy goals, including the provision of integrated social services for children and families, alignments of goals, objectives and methods across social assistance, special social services and child-focused policies and programmes in health and education is recommended. The indicators used on the Orleu pilot are focused mainly on employment and livelihoods and there is a need to ensure that key indicators for monitoring and evaluation are introduced that are child-focused across the whole range of policy areas. One option is to consider the adoption of a child well-being framework that can be used across sectors to monitor children and how they are affected by interventions from social assistance, health, education, social services, or other programs.

If the goal of the TSA reform is to help other family members to achieve goals in social activation or economic participation, then a similar framework can also be established for people with disabilities, mental health issues, older people or other family members who are not subject to the employment conditionalities, but whom the government would like to support in accessing services so that they can also move towards engagement in the labour force. Ideally, a set of outcomes and indicators could be developed to ensure that the programme is able to monitor progress against desired outcomes for all household members who are benefitting from the new TSA not only the employable adults.

It would be important to ensure that staff and beneficiaries fully understand that the recipients of unconditional TSA are not obliged to fulfil social activation measures, but should be able through the social contract and individual plan to access opportunities that can promote social activation, inclusion and improved well-being for all household members.

2. Ensure the development and integration of social services

Define and harmonise the goals of social services and social assistance in policy and legislation

The intention of the new TSA law is to support families through the ‘individual plan of family support’, but does not elaborate what is meant by this in relation to unconditional benefit recipients or to non-employable adults and children in families receiving conditional benefit. At present, article 4 is both very specific (‘registering pregnancy by the 12th week’) and very general (‘timely use of special social services’...‘other measures’...) in stating the purpose of the individual plan of family support. So far pilots have focused on employment and micro enterprise, if TSA recipients are to access other services they need to be eligible for services. The Law on Special social services (2008) should expand the definition of difficult life circumstances to ensure that families with children living in poverty or facing other challenges are included among those eligible to receive community based special social services. Policy goals in child protection and family support (and inclusion of PWD, elderly) need to be more fully integrated into the new TSA legislation and guidance. Community based social services to support families with children experiencing difficult life circumstances (and other households with additional needs) need to be specified in the Law on special social services. These are not high intensity residential care services, but social accompaniment services delivered in the community and homes of the service users to help them to address specific social, legal or psychological issues. Means-testing access to social services, however, is not recommended, so a mechanism is required for designating households with children living in difficult life circumstance as being in need of social services. This could take the form of self-referral or statutory referral agencies (community health services, education services, child protection agencies and police) triggering an initial assessment by community commissions. If this step is taken, then there is a need to develop standards for community based social services, assessment, case management and casework and to support social administration tasks such as restoring lost documents and addressing civil registration issues. A legal aid system could also be linked to this kind of social administration task. This step would also require a legal recognition of community-based social workers, such as the ESPO assistants and consultants, social pedagogues in schools, that may be operating in a range of settings (health services, school, NGOs, ESPO, akimat, child protection services) but with specific social ‘accompaniment’ functions.

Standard instruments and explicit mandates are required to make inter sectoral approaches work

The community commissions are a suitable mechanism to support intersectoral working, but need to be underpinned by an operational framework if they are to support fuller integration of services into the system of social assistance. Key elements required include:

- Assessment and referral instruments and procedures for ESPO and other services to support ensure individual organisations and agencies can pursue sectoral goals within a unified case management system
- Mandate for ESPO to refer households needing services to other organizations and services
- Mandate for other organizations and services to accept referrals and work jointly with ESPO team if the service user is a TSA recipient (conditional or unconditional)

- Resources for organisations to provide services to TSA recipients (for example an amendment to Law on social services (2008) to classify TSA recipients, applicants or rejected applicants as in 'difficult life circumstances' and eligible for services paid for by the government)

Development of social work and social services administrative framework

The development of an approach to assessment, case management and decision-making that is unified for social workers in child protection, health, education and social assistance organizations working with children and families could help to ensure more effective inter-sectoral cooperation, but could also help to create a system that can be responsive to changes in the family situation as children grow or new challenges arise that have to be addressed by services that should support families. Guidance, formats and case management algorithms need to be developed for use by social workers working in any sector or organization and in a range of settings (community based outreach, center-based or residential) that can also become the basis for the work of the ESPO consultants and assistants and other social workers operating in government funded services.

There is a need to develop a regulatory framework that can legally recognise the professional social work of the ESPO staff, NGO social workers and other types of social workers or para-professionals working in the wider social protection system. This requires harmonising the social work professional development framework with the full range of government policies and programmes requiring professionals with social work qualifications for implementation or requiring para-professionals to be deployed. A classification of social workers and para-professionals in the social services workforce could help to make clearer to government agencies and local authorities, the differences between the different types of workers, their mandates and functions and therefore the competencies (skills, knowledge and behaviors) required of them. This then can form the foundation for both education and training programmes (pre-service and in-service) and for performance management and continuous professional development. This is a long-term goal, but the reform of the social assistance system and the introduction of ESPO staff with community-based social work functions that include assessment, home-visiting, case management and monitoring, represents an opportunity to consolidate the way the social work profession has been developing and to ensure that a competent workforce develops to meet the challenges of implementing new policies.

3. Need of setting in place some transitional arrangements

Given the current challenges in the implementation of TSA it would be recommended not to suddenly stop 4+B, but consider a more gradual phasing out of 4+B, ensuring that the new TSA has been in place for some time. Moreover, we also recommend to take a pro-active role to ensure that all current beneficiaries of SCA and 4+B are informed and apply to the new TSA. At the same time that two schemes work in parallel it will be important to invest in improving various aspects of the administration.

It is necessary to develop a specific communication campaign about the new TSA to clarify that this is primarily a social assistance benefit, which only has some activation requirements. Information materials will be required setting out clearly the eligibility criteria for the new TSA and the process for applications targeted to potential applicants and to all relevant health, education and social services agencies and organizations. Ideally training should be provided to associated agencies and organizations in the use of referral protocols and the standard case management

instruments that the ESPO will be using to assess needs, develop individual plans and conclude social contracts with TSA beneficiaries.

4. Bring consistency in poverty measurement and provide alignment with social assistance

Social assistance is one of the policy instruments that addresses poverty, but at the moment the link between poverty and social assistance is clouded by different ways of assessing needs. While poverty measurement uses equivalence scales, for social assistance a per capita approach is used. Moreover, national poverty measure is under-estimated because the poverty line is defined in terms of per capita requirement and incomes are inflated using equivalence scales. It would be strongly recommended to bring consistency in the approach and bring into alignment the approach followed in poverty measurement and social assistance eligibility.

Moreover, there is need to re-assess the level of the SML in the country, which at the moment is set too low to be an effective tool for monitoring the role of socio-economic policies on poverty. Kazakhstan has been very successful in drastically reducing absolute poverty, but now the challenge needs to be raised at higher levels to continue socio-economic improvement focusing on those who are relatively worse-off. If the SML is increased by changing the share of food in the minimum basket from 60% to 55% and a consistent approach in poverty measurement, so that the SML is expressed in terms of per adult equivalent, then poverty head-count would increase to about 12%. This would become a more useful level of poverty against which to assess the impact of not only social assistance, but also broader socio-economic policies.

Finally, we recommend reviewing how the SML is updated over time to better reflect seasonal changes of prices.

1 Introduction

This report is the final output of a study carried out by OPM and P4EC CEE/CIS consulting group for UNICEF to assess the role of the current set of targeted social assistance on families with children and the plan of reforming them. More specifically the terms of reference asked for a study that has two main components: 1) an assessment of the revised design of targeted social assistance and 2) a review of the ways administration of cash benefits can enhance access also to social services.

The study included the analysis of administrative data on key benefits, simulations using household surveys (in particular the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Household Budget Surveys, HBS), fieldwork in two oblasts (Kyzylorda and Mangystau) to understand the specific implementation challenges faced by the programmes, and also some training activities for social workers in the same two oblasts. The study aims at providing concrete suggestions on how to ensure that implementation of the reform achieves good results. One separate output has also been the identification and the development of a vision for the possible role of NGOs in complementary service provision (see Annex B).

There are currently three main benefits that will be affected by the reform, the Targeted Social Aid (TSA), the Special Child Allowance (SCA), and the benefit for large families with 4 or more children (4+B). TSA is a means tested benefit provided to households with a per capita income below 40% of the Subsistence Minimum Level (SML) and for an amount equal to the difference between the threshold and the actual income of the household. SCA is provided to families with an income below 60% of SML and the value of the transfer is fixed for every child present in the family at a level equal to 1.05 Monthly Calculation Index (MCI). Family is different from household and includes only parents and their children under 18. Finally 4+B is provided independently from income to every family who has 4 or more dependent children, including not only children below 18 but also those in full-time education up to the age of 23 (children are excluded as soon as they turn 23). The reform intends to stop SCA and 4+B and introduce an enhanced TSA, with a higher eligibility threshold, equal to 50% of a new SML, which is 9.1% higher in real terms than the current one².

The study was conducted at the right time because the reform of social assistance is due to be implemented nationwide only from the first of January 2018 and is being piloted in at least one district in each oblast, including in Kyzylorda and Mangystau. Moreover, the reform is also very much based on the so called 'Orleu project' (designed with support of the World Bank), which introduced the concept of a 'social contract' to ensure that beneficiaries of TSA could become socially active and, in particular, could engage in economic activities. Under the same project an outreach role was developed for consultants and assistant consultants to social work to identify potential beneficiaries. In relation to this it is relevant to say that the reform also specifically aims at improving the delivery of social assistance to enhance coordination with various social services at the local level.

Kazakhstan has a comprehensive set of social protection policies in place which includes both social insurance programmes (pensions and unemployment benefits) and social assistance with a mixture of benefits reaching certain 'vulnerable demographic groups' and means-tested residual assistance, which intervenes as the last resort to support low income households. The envisioned reform will

² This increase occurs because of a revision of the structure of the SML, whereby the share of food in the basket will decrease from 60% to 55%, thus recognising a higher value for the requirement of non-food expenditure.

affect both benefits to ‘vulnerable demographic groups’ (in particular government special allowances) and targeted social assistance. While Kazakhstan has reformed social assistance at various points in the past, the current reform occurs at a more difficult point in time for the economy.

Indeed, while between 2004 and 2014 the economy grew at an impressive average annual rate of 6.5% creating 1.5 million jobs, in 2015 the economy slowed down growing only by 1.2% and it is expected to contract slightly in 2016 (see World Bank (2016): *A long road to recovery: Economic Update – Summer 2016*). The economic slowdown has its primary cause in low oil prices, reduced economic growth in China and continuous recession in Russia. While officially the unemployment rate has remained constant, it is likely that this is associated with a decrease in the active labour force and achieved through a significant percentage of ‘unproductive employment’, defined as employment with rewards below the minimum subsistence level, something occurring primarily in self-employment in agriculture. The worsening economic conditions have meant that in 2015 poverty rates remained stable halting the trend of poverty reduction achieved in previous years.

The Government of Kazakhstan recognises the new challenges that the country is facing and embarked in an institutional reform programme outlined in “One hundred concrete steps, a Modern state for all” where there is also a vision of improved social assistance: more efficiently targeted to the poor, linked to labour market policies to reduce dependency, and social assistance better coordinated with social services.

In general, in a period of more challenging growth and reduced fiscal space, it is correct to ensure that resources reach the poor and those most in need as much as possible and that administration is also made more efficient, but at the same time reducing dependency by enforcing activation measures is difficult in a context of reduced employment opportunities.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. The next section provides an analysis aimed at understanding number and characteristics of beneficiaries of the programmes that will be subject to the reform, but also determines the number of households that are eligible for these benefits and so explores whether there are any significant discrepancies between those who are eligible and recipients, perhaps driven by implementation failures. In the third section we then try to simulate the impact of the reform, how many households will benefit or lose out from the reform, and what is likely to be the different expenditure budget under the current scenario and with the reform. In light of the findings presented in the previous sections and the findings of the implementation challenges based on the fieldwork (see Carraro et al. (2016)), Section 4 re-assesses the aims of the reform to improve coordination between cash social assistance and social services reflecting on the current organization of frontline workers and how inter-sectoral working processes could be improved. Finally section 5 provides the key recommendations that emerge from the study.

2 Analysis of administrative and household survey data: recipients and eligible households

Before simulating the reform it is important to understand coverage and characteristics of the programmes that the reform intends to change: TSA, SCA and 4+B. Firstly using administrative data we want to better understand the number of recipients, their key characteristics and some information about the administration of these benefits. Secondly using household survey data we simulate eligibility: the number of people and households who, based on their situation as observed in the household survey, would be entitled to receive certain benefits. Eligible households are then compared to actual recipients to reveal differences in numbers and characteristics. We then assess to what extent households eligible to these benefits are poor. The above analysis enables us to disentangle and quantify two different issues: whether there are significant design (some of the eligible people are not poor) or implementation problems (not all eligible people are recipients: exclusion/inclusion of eligible/ineligible households).

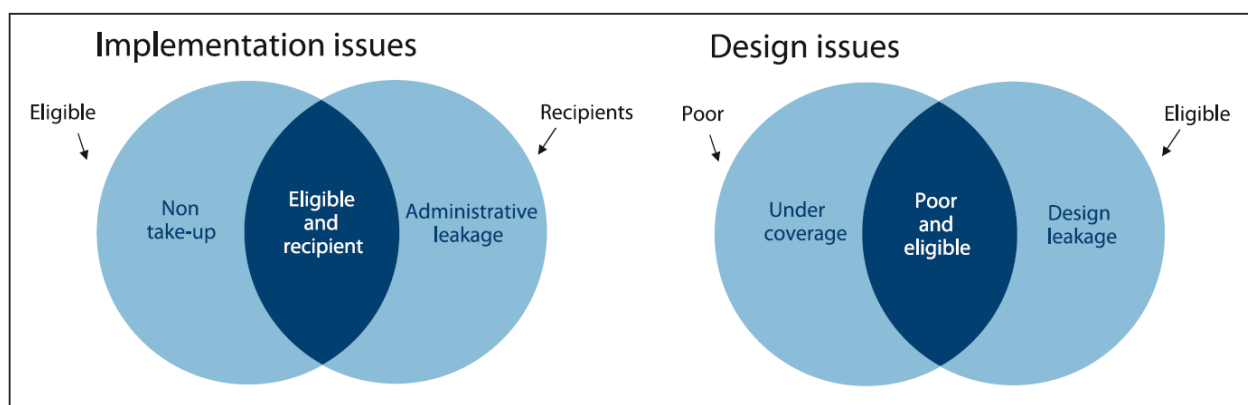
While management information systems and administrative data provide detailed information on beneficiaries, the advantage on the use of household survey is specifically on the possibility to simulate and design different policy options. Household surveys, such as the HBS, collect comprehensive information on household composition, income and expenditure and so represent not only the possibility to identify how many households/people should be receiving a certain benefit, but also its impact on poverty.

In the analysis that follows we aim at understanding how well the benefits reach their target group. In particular we want to distinguish between two factors that can undermine the effectiveness of targeting: design and implementation failures.

Design failures can arise where programmes have eligibility rules that unintentionally promote the exclusion of individuals who are supposed to be targeted or that leave room for leakages. On the other hand, even perfectly designed targeting criteria can be ineffective as a result of failures in the implementation process. For example, if a certain social programme does not conduct proper communication campaigns it is possible that many “eligible” households would never be aware of the existence of the benefit or of their eligibility and therefore would not apply. Potential implementation problems can be expected based on regional characteristics, including the administrative capacity.

Figure 1 below captures these distinctions showing how design errors appears from the mismatch between the target group (the poor in the figure) and the eligible population (the way in which the targeting mechanism identifies the eligible) and implementation errors from the mismatch between eligible and actual recipients of the programme.

Figure 1 Disentangling targeting errors into design and implementation failures



Source: Carraro (2007).

The above analysis can only be conducted using household survey data, which allows us to simulate the eligible. However, the full analysis cannot be conducted in the HBS data because, especially for TSA, the number of beneficiaries are so low, that it is not possible to obtain appropriate statistical estimates within the HBS.

It is important to mention that the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has been developing a household database that compiles information about household members from different sources and aims at providing a rich source of information on household composition, main income sources, and use of services. While this database is still under development and could not be used for this research, it definitely represents a possible important source of information to map different population needs and provision of services as well as provide alternative simulations of different reform scenarios. A word of caution also needs to be made since often these databases also encounter specific challenges in maintaining information up to date and distinguishing 'administrative' and 'actual' reality, but this future database could definitely offer the basis to interrogate some data and triangulate information.

2.1 Characteristics of beneficiaries based on administrative data

Headline administrative data tend to report the number of people receiving TSA, the number of children receiving SCA and the number of households receiving 4+B. This can result in over-estimating or under-estimating the relative importance of the benefits. For example, while in 2015 38,000 people received TSA, this includes all members living in households receiving TSA, but the number of households was just above 9,000. Whereas 4+B was received by 232 thousand households and benefiting 900 thousand children³, or almost 17% of all children under 18 in the country. Moreover, it is also important to know that the numbers reported show those who received the relevant benefit at least once in the quarter. This is not so important for 4+B, but it is much more relevant for TSA and SCA where there is some seasonal fluctuation and so the average number of beneficiaries per quarter can be significantly lower than the annual reported number.

Numbers for 2013 to 2015 are reported in Table 1 and these are also expressed as percentages of relevant population groups, so that relative coverage and importance can be better compared. We can see that TSA has a very minimal and almost irrelevant coverage, whereas SCA is much more significant, and 4+B is even more relevant. This is also reflected in the size of the budget of these different benefits.

It is also important to be able to compare the significance of the amounts of transfers for each household/family. In fact, for TSA in 2015 the transfer was equal to an average of 2179 KZT per capita per month, for SCA it was 2081 per child, but about 1123 KZT per capita per month, and 8245 per family per month for 4+B, which is about 1387 KZT per capita per month. Therefore, when looking at per capita transfers, TSA is the most generous benefit.

³ Here we report the number of children below 18, which on average is a bit less than 4 based on HBS data, whereas for the eligibility to 4+B dependent children are taken into account, including children 18-22 in full time education.

Table 1 Number of beneficiaries and budget for TSA, SCA and 4+B cash benefits

	2013	2014	2015
TSA			
No. of beneficiaries (people)	60715	56108	38244
% of population	0.36	0.33	0.22
No. of children under 18	38884	36262	25176
% of children under 18	0.75	0.69	0.47
No. of households	14562	13186	9109
Annual budget (Th. KZT)	1407419	1326862	1000015
SCA			
No. of beneficiaries (children <18)	569327	562614	551156
% of children under 18	10.9	10.7	10.3
No. of families	183159	176840	170094
Annual budget (Th. KZT)	8649491	9467665	10159321
4+B			
No. of beneficiaries (households)	209999	220128	232159
% of households	5.2	5.4	5.6
No. of children under 18*	818996	858499	905420
% of children under 18	15.7	16.3	16.9
Annual budget (Th. KZT)	17613279	20619707	23373023

*Note that the number of children under 18 for 4+B has been derived indirectly using the average number of children found among eligible households in the HBS data.

Source: Analysis based on Administrative tables (MLSP) and demographic statistics from the Statistical Agency of Kazakhstan.

2.1.1 TSA characteristics

From the analysis of administrative tables we also capture some important characteristics of TSA beneficiaries.

The first important insight is on the dynamics in the receipt of the benefit. While in 2015, the benefit has been approved for 38 thousand people, the approval in each quarter has been significantly lower: 26 thousand in the first quarter, 23.8 thousand in the second quarter, 22 thousand in the third quarter and 21.8 thousand in the last quarter. This implies that there is substantial variation in eligibility between one quarter and the next, and the percentage of people receiving TSA throughout the year (in every quarter) is at most 48%, but very likely even less.

Table 2 shows the location of TSA beneficiaries: the percentage from rural areas and their distribution across the 14 main regions and two cities of the country. These percentages are compared with those of the population and the percentage of people below the SML as officially reported by the statistical agency.

We can see that while the majority of beneficiaries come from rural areas (57%) and this is contrary to the population distribution, their percentage is significantly lower than the percentage of people falling below the SML (72%). There are also significant differences in the regional distribution of recipients of TSA and those falling below the SML, with some really puzzling results, for instance there appears to be a very low coverage in the South-Kazakhstan region and on the other hand a substantially relatively higher coverage in Mangystau. These of course are only relative coverage differences and do not necessarily imply that in Mangystau less people should

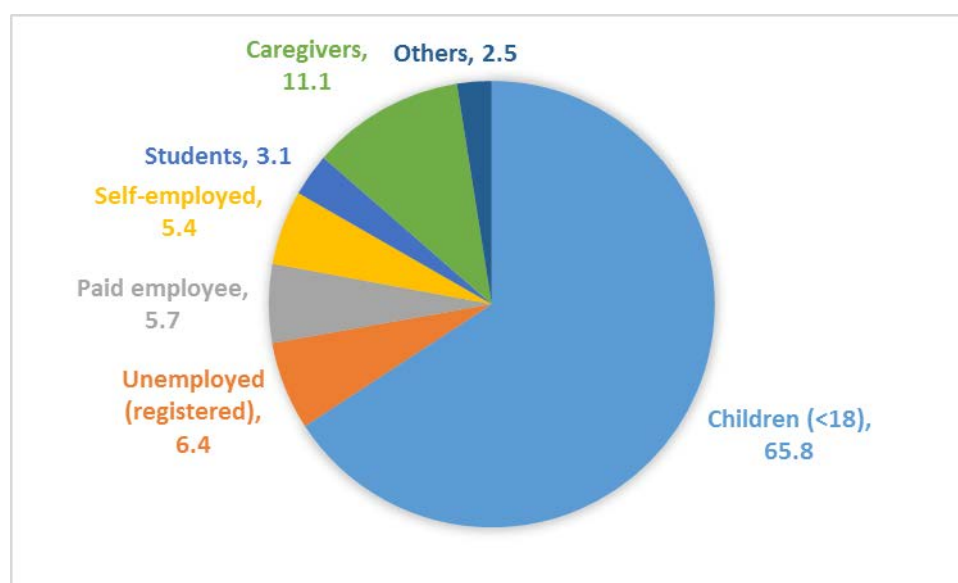
receive TSA, but simply that at the moment it seems that in South Kazakhstan less people than expected are receiving TSA and instead in Mangystau relatively more people do receive TSA.

Finally, administrative data also tell us something about the composition of households receiving TSA and the main occupation of beneficiaries: whether they are children, unemployed, employed, students, caregivers, etc. This is shown in Figure 2, where we can see that most beneficiaries are children (66%), followed by caregivers (11%), including adults looking after children less than 7 or disabled household members, employed people (11%) are divided among self-employed and paid employee and then unemployed (6%), who must be registered with the employment agency, full-time students (3%) and others, including persons with disabilities and pensioners. It is also relevant to know that 95% of TSA beneficiaries are also beneficiaries of SCA revealing a very high overlap between TSA and SCA.

Table 2 Percentage of TSA beneficiaries by location, 2015

	TSA beneficiaries	Population	Poor (under SML)
% from rural areas	57.1	43.3	72.1
Distribution by region:			
Akmola region	1.9	4.2	4.6
Aktobe region	0.7	4.7	3.0
Alma-Ata's region	9.6	11.0	9.6
Atyrau region	7.5	3.4	3.6
West-Kazakhstan region	7.6	3.6	4.2
Zhambyl	9.3	6.3	7.6
Karaganda	10.7	7.8	4.4
Kostanay	6.3	5.0	5.1
Kyzylorda region	4.4	4.3	5.7
Mangystau	10.2	3.5	3.5
South-Kazakhstan region	6.0	16.1	32.2
Pavlodar	1.8	4.3	2.6
North-Kazakhstan region	6.9	3.2	4.5
East Kazakhstan region	13.0	7.9	6.0
Astana	1.1	4.9	1.1
Almaty city	2.8	9.6	2.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Administrative tables on TSA (MLSP) and demographic/poverty statistics from the Statistical Agency of Kazakhstan.

Figure 2 Main occupation of recipients of TSA, 2015

Source: Administrative tables on TSA (MLSP)

As a way to understand the current administrative burden, we also have information on number of applications and why some of them are not successful. In 2015 about 9% of all new applications failed and in the great majority of cases this was due to the household income being above the eligibility threshold (83%). Overall the rate of refusal is relatively small, but it is unclear whether in practice many more applications are turned down even before a formal application is lodged and registered.

Instead, significant administrative inefficiencies could be associated to the high turnover, discussed earlier, and the fact that 95% of TSA beneficiaries also receive SCA. This second finding would suggest that there could be large duplication of efforts if these households need to undergo separate application procedures for TSA and SCA. Concerning the impact of the high turnover, to determine its implications more information would be required, particularly in understanding the causes of failing to renew the receipt of the benefit and whether the household is really in a practical better-off condition when support is interrupted. For example, it would be useful to explore whether there are seasonal variations related to seasonal economic patterns or occasional/temporary income sources, or issues related to household composition changes, whether increasing the threshold could reduce movements in and out of benefit, etc.

2.1.2 SCA characteristics

The administrative tables reveal significant quarterly fluctuations also in the receipt of SCA, but movements appear to be lower than for TSA. In 2015 170 thousand applications were approved, but they were 128.1 thousand in the first quarter, 128.3 in the second, 121.4 in the third and 123.7 in the last quarter. When comparing these to an overall number of 170 thousand families who received the benefit at least once in a year, we can work out that no more than 65% of families receive the benefit in all quarters and probably less. This percentage is significantly higher than that found for TSA. However, it is unclear to what extent the lower turnover is related to the higher income threshold. Refusal rates in the case of SCA applications is also lower than in TSA, being just 7%, but in the case of SCA this is the refusal rate across all applications (including renewal),

suggesting that in many cases families do not re-apply and simply drop-off from the benefit. Once again, the main reason of unsuccessful applications is income being above the threshold (73% of cases).

In the case of SCA we find that the distribution of beneficiaries by urban/rural areas and by regions is much more aligned to the population falling below the SML as reported by the statistical agency in official reports.

Table 3 Percentage of SCA beneficiaries by location, 2015

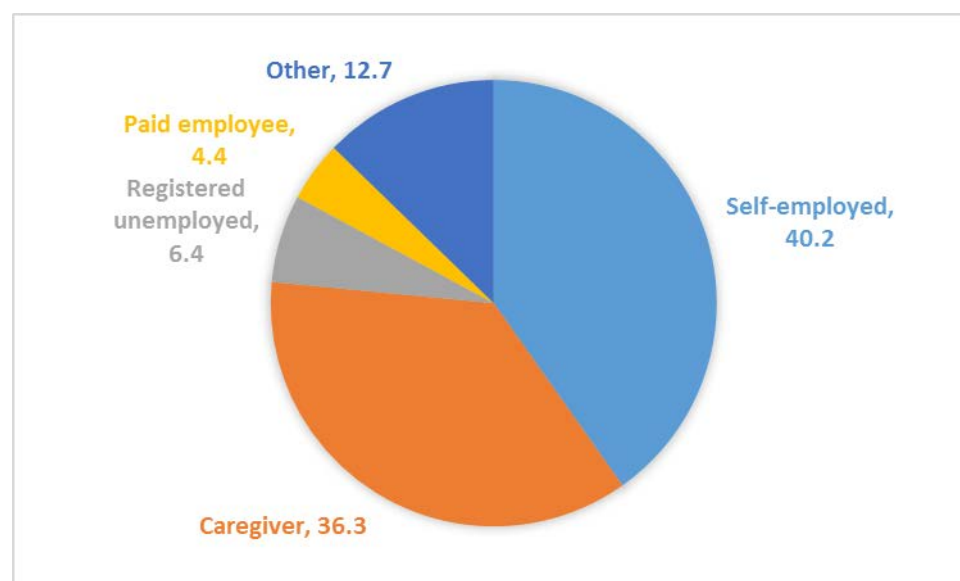
	SCA beneficiaries	Population	Poor (under SML)
% from rural areas	68.7	43.3	72.1
Distribution by region:			
Akmola region	1.3	4.2	4.6
Aktobe region	3.3	4.7	3.0
Alma-Ata's region	7.5	11.0	9.6
Atyrau region	2.7	3.4	3.6
West-Kazakhstan region	4.0	3.6	4.2
Zhambyl	12.6	6.3	7.6
Karaganda	2.2	7.8	4.4
Kostanay	4.0	5.0	5.1
Kyzylorda region	10.0	4.3	5.7
Mangystau	0.8	3.5	3.5
South-Kazakhstan region	44.0	16.1	32.2
Pavlodar	0.6	4.3	2.6
North-Kazakhstan region	1.2	3.2	4.5
East Kazakhstan region	4.9	7.9	6.0
Astana	0.3	4.9	1.1
Almaty city	0.6	9.6	2.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Administrative tables on SCA (MLSP) and demographic/poverty statistics from the Statistical Agency of Kazakhstan.

The percentage of SCA beneficiaries from rural areas is 69%, very similar to the percentage of people falling below the SML (72%) and a very large percentage of SCA recipients are found in south Kazakhstan (44%). The percentage of recipients is also relatively high in Zambyl and Kyzylorda, whereas in contradiction with that observed for TSA, there are very few beneficiaries in Mangystau.

Perhaps the most significant information on SCA is that 59% of beneficiary families are single parent families as opposed to a couple with children, with such percentage being particularly high in urban areas (69%). Knowing from household surveys that single parents often do not live independently, this suggests that beneficiary families are likely to be part of more complex household structures, for example with the beneficiary family living with the children's grandparents.

It is also significant to look at the main parent occupation, where we find that the large majority are self-employed, another high percentage is caregiving (taking care of a child less than 7 or a person with disabilities), not surprising given the high percentage of single parents, and then there are those registered unemployed or in other formal contracts. It is unclear what the relatively high percentage of other is capturing, since there are almost no pensioners or students, though some are persons with disabilities.

Figure 3 Main parent occupation among SCA recipients, 2015

Source: Administrative tables on SCA (MLSP)

Unfortunately, for 4+B there are not administrative tables with similar summary information. The only information available is the distribution of beneficiaries across the key administrative areas of the country. The percentage of beneficiaries by location is reported in Table 4, which is compared to the population distribution and those falling below the SML according to the official statistics. Once again, we find that a very large percentage of beneficiaries are found in South Kazakhstan and Alma-ata's region, where there is also a relatively higher share of the poor.

Table 4 Distribution of 4+B beneficiaries by location, 2015

	4+B beneficiaries	Population	Poor (under SML)
Akmola region	2.01	4.21	2.66
Aktobe region	3.36	4.72	4.15
Alma-Ata's region	10.72	11.02	14.00
Atyrau region	4.28	3.36	6.13
West-Kazakhstan region	1.85	3.60	2.14
Zhambyl	9.70	6.29	7.94
Karaganda	3.57	7.84	3.39
Kostanay	1.54	5.00	1.84
Kyzylorda region	7.63	4.33	8.45
Mangystau	6.01	3.55	6.58
South-Kazakhstan region	37.72	16.08	31.75
Pavlodar	1.38	4.29	1.82
North-Kazakhstan region	1.02	3.22	0.93
East Kazakhstan region	3.55	7.90	2.72
Almaty city	2.93	4.94	2.91
Astana	2.71	9.64	2.59
	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Administrative tables on SCA (MLSP) and demographic/poverty statistics from the Statistical Agency of Kazakhstan.

2.2 Eligibility based on HBS data and exclusion errors

Using data from the household budget survey we can reproduce people's eligibility to different benefits. In the case of 4+B this is relatively straightforward, since eligibility is based exclusively on family composition and more specifically if a parent/couple has 4 or more dependent children living with them (including both children under 18 and children 18 to 22 studying full time). However, both for TSA and SCA it is also necessary to reproduce the income test: household/family income must be below the eligibility threshold. Therefore, using incomes declared by household members as captured by the HBS we try to re-create the test performed by the administration to verify whether their income falls below the threshold. In particular, the income declared by the household needs to be adjusted to take out one-off payments (for example birth payment) and other social assistance payments, such as housing assistance, TSA and SCA payments⁴.

In the case of agricultural income, we do not have the information required to reproduce exactly the calculation followed by the administration and instead we relied on the calculation of household cash income from agriculture provided by the statistical agency. This amount could differ from the administrative calculation and perhaps also increase seasonal fluctuations in income.

Finally, it is important to say that the calculation ignored one extra important aspect of the eligibility assessment for the new TSA, i.e. the requirement of every unemployed person of working age⁵ to register in the employment office and comply with the work/training requirements. Unfortunately, the HBS does not have information on who is registered with the employment office, and we simply assume that all unemployed people are registered with the employment office if they are eligible to a certain benefit. In other words, we assume that they will register if this allows them to receive assistance, and so the rule can only have a temporary effect. We are aware that this is a strong assumption, and we will try to determine its implications when comparing HBS estimates with administrative data.

However, in the case of SCA we also need to identify whether within the same household there could be more than one 'nuclear family'. Indeed, we should remember that eligibility for SCA is determined based on family income, whereby the family is simply defined by the parents and their children under 18, which we refer to as 'nuclear families'. It is only the income of the parents that is considered to determine eligibility to SCA. When planning to assess income, eligibility based on household rather than family members could affect many current recipients depending on the frequency with which families live with other relatives and the level of income of these other relatives. In previous progress reports submitted under this assignment we did identify this as a potential issue, but now we have the possibility to determine how frequent these cases are using HBS data⁶. We find that in 2015 about 45% of households in the country did not have children, and that among those having children 31% were complex household structures, whereby the nuclear family of parents and children lives in the same accommodation with other relatives.

⁴ While for TSA and Housing assistance the HBS questionnaire has specific individual questions, in other cases social transfer payment for children are reported lumped together, and so the calculation of any eventual one-off payments for birth or SCA payments had to be made indirectly, based on amounts reported and likely eligibility (for example presence of child less than one year old for one-off birth payments).

⁵ Unless this person is taking care of children below 7 or another family member with disabilities.

⁶ Unfortunately, the HBS does not provide all the information that would be required to construct family composition, since we only have information on the relationship to the household head, but not information on partners and father/mother identification code within the household. Nevertheless, using relationship we could re-construct most cases.

However, this occurs with a significant variation across regions, for example in Kyzylorda households without children are only 23% and 51% of those with children are multi-nuclear, whereas in Astana 62% are without children and only 14% of those with children are multi-nuclear.

Table 5 starts by reporting the estimated number of households/families, people and children eligible to the different benefits based on our HBS calculations and the actual number of recipients based on administrative data. Differences between eligible and recipients represent estimates of errors of implementation, either exclusion or inclusion errors. In particular, when eligible households/people are more than the actual beneficiaries we have a lower estimate of administrative exclusion error, since there is no guarantee that all recipients are actually eligible. Unfortunately it is only possible to provide an indirect estimate because the number of TSA beneficiaries is so low that HBS data cannot offer reliable statistics. Concerning indirect measures our analysis does find some significant discrepancies. In particular, we find the largest difference for TSA, where recipients are only 1 out of 5 eligible people, or about 20%, which implies an exclusion error of 80% (in 2015 the ratio between recipient and eligible households was 18%). The discrepancy is significantly smaller in the case of SCA, where recipient children are more than 80% of the number of eligible children, implying an exclusion error of at least 20%, and for 4+B there is almost no difference between the number of recipients and that of eligible households. It is important to emphasise that this is the comparison of numbers that come from different sources, and we cannot say to what extent recipients are indeed falling among the eligible, and so exclusion errors could be even higher than the provided estimates.

It is also important to note that while for TSA the average household size of eligible and recipient households is very similar or slightly lower in eligible households, for SCA we do find a significantly lower number of children per family for the eligible compared to the recipients. It is also significant that based on HBS data, eligibility for TSA does not decrease in 2015 and instead increases slightly, whereas there is a drastic drop based on administrative data. Concerning SCA, while the number of those eligible increases slightly in the three years, the opposite is true for recipients. On the contrary in the case of 4+B, HBS and administrative data are in agreement on the increasing trends.

When looking at the differences observed it is important to be aware that, especially when an income test is involved, it is normal to expect that there will be some differences between eligibility and number of recipients. These differences could stem from the different way incomes are reported in the administrative calculation and as part of the household survey interview, measurement errors in either the administrative calculation or the survey and the time lag between income conditions and application for support. Moreover, household survey estimates should always be read allowing for some variation in the estimate due to possible sampling errors. Nevertheless, experience in similar analyses tell us that the difference found in TSA between eligible and recipients signals substantial implementation errors: either households fail to apply (for example because of lack of information) or they are somehow deterred from applying, or the way rules are implemented in practice exclude many households.

Table 5 Comparison between number of people eligible and recipients to different benefits

	Eligible (HBS)			Recipients (Admin. data)		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
TSA						
No. of households	61571	48890	50826	14562	13186	9109
No. of people	256088	200987	189506	60715	56108	38244
Average household size	4.16	4.11	3.73	4.17	4.26	4.20
SCA						
No. of families	301001	307376	312156	183159	176840	170094
No. of children	665554	687208	702043	569327	562614	551156
Average no. of children per family	2.21	2.24	2.25	3.11	3.18	3.24
4+B						
No. of families	216332	219377	247374	209999	220128	232159

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data and administrative tables.

In order to better understand and interpret these large differences it is important to compare the key characteristics of eligible and recipient households and we start doing so for TSA. The key characteristics that we can compare are rural/urban location, the entitlement, the percentage who also receive/are entitled to SCA, and the percentage of children (see Table 6).

Table 6 Key characteristics eligible vs. beneficiaries, TSA in 2015

	Recipients	Eligible
% from rural areas	57.1	80.2
Benef. of SCA	94.8	87.9
% children (<18)	65.8	46.0
Monthly entitlement (per capita)		
Average by quarter	3560.3	2259.3
Average by year	2170.7	1100.5

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data and administrative tables.

Among those eligible, 80% of people live in rural areas, and this percentage is significantly higher than we found among the beneficiaries, where it was only 57%. This figure (80%) is much closer to the percentage of those falling below the SML according to the statistical agency (72%). This would suggest that eligible people in rural areas are less likely to benefit from TSA. Indeed, it is also in rural areas that it might be more difficult to obtain information and apply for TSA. Moreover, this also could imply that there might be an issue with the way agricultural income is accounted for either in the administrative data or in the HBS.

95% of TSA beneficiaries are also recipients of SCA, and for those eligible, while a bit lower, the estimate is relatively similar at 88%. This would suggest that there are some eligible TSA households who do not have any children. This is confirmed by the difference between the percentage of children among the beneficiaries and those eligible, which are respectively 66% and 46%.

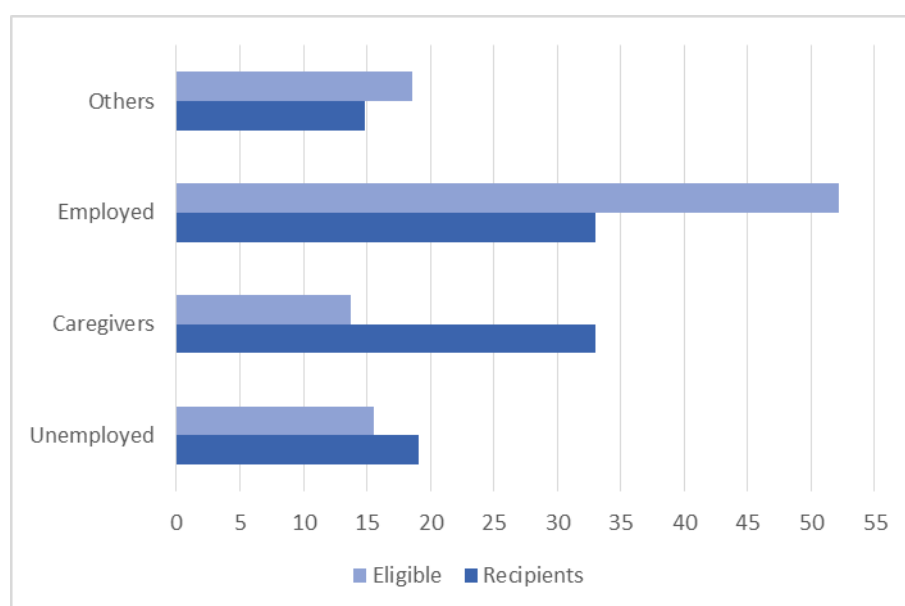
Concerning the average amount of entitlement for beneficiaries and those eligible, two calculations are possible depending on how the numbers of recipients or those eligible are counted across the year. In fact, since the determination of eligibility is conducted once every quarter, it is possible either to report the average per capita entitlement whenever a household is found eligible or the average amount of entitlements across the year, considering that households are not eligible in all quarters of the year.

Based on administrative data for 2015 the first calculation is 3560 KZT per month per capita, and the second only 2171 KZT, this is because there is only a small percentage of households who are eligible across the whole year. HBS estimates for the eligible households provides numbers significantly smaller, respectively 2259 KZT and 1100 KZT. Moreover, HBS data show that average estimates are substantially higher than the median with a skewed distribution on the left. While we do not have information on the distribution of entitlements from the administrative data, it is possible to speculate that many of those households with an income very close to the threshold might be discouraged to apply if their entitlement is very low and that could explain some of the differences observed between the number of recipients and eligible households.

HBS data also finds a higher level of movements in and out of eligibility between quarters, but similarly to findings from administrative data eligibility is always higher in the first quarter of the year.

It is useful to look at the main occupation of adult members among beneficiaries and eligible households. Their distribution is reported in Figure 4 where we can observe a rather different distribution: among those eligible the percentage of employed is substantially higher, 52% against 33% for recipients, and the opposite is true for caregivers, who are 33% of recipients, but only 14% among eligible people. There could be discrepancies behind such differences in the way people report their main activity in the HBS and administrative data, but it also suggests that, while in the HBS data we find many people employed with incomes below the minimum wage, this is not reflected in administrative data whereby often the minimum wage is practically assumed. One of these employment occupations is definitely agriculture and the discrepancy between eligible and recipients might also point to the different way of accounting income for self-employment in agriculture.

Figure 4 Main occupation among TSA adult recipients and those eligible, 2015



Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data and administrative tables.

We can conduct a similar analysis for SCA, where we compare the percentage of those eligible who live in rural areas, the extent to which eligible families are single parents, the distribution of children's age and how many come from multi-nuclear families (see Table 7). Finally, also in this case we look at the main occupation of the parents in eligible families and compare it with that of the recipients.

For SCA we find that the distribution of eligible and recipient families/children in rural areas is basically the same, differing from the huge discrepancy shown for TSA. However, we do find a significant difference in the percentage of single parent families. Among the recipients this is the large majority of families, 59%, but in the eligible families the estimate is only 37%. This difference might partly be due to the way we reconstructed the family composition in HBS data, whereby relationships had to be inferred indirectly because full information was not reported, and so it is possible that in some cases couples were wrongly matched while we were dealing with a single parent. However, these would have been limited cases and cannot explain such large differences. Instead, it is more likely that the HBS does identify as eligible some families with couples that do not actually receive the benefit. Indeed, especially in 2015 the number of eligible families is almost double that of recipient families.

While, the administrative data does not contain information on whether recipient families live with other relatives, the estimate from HBS data is that 63% do come from multi-nuclear households. This confirms that family vs. household income assessment might be a very crucial aspect in determining eligibility. Finally, concerning the distribution of children's age, recipient and eligible families show a relatively similar result, though there are some differences with recipients being lower for both those aged less than 1 and above 7.

Table 7 Key characteristics of those eligible vs. beneficiaries, SCA in 2015

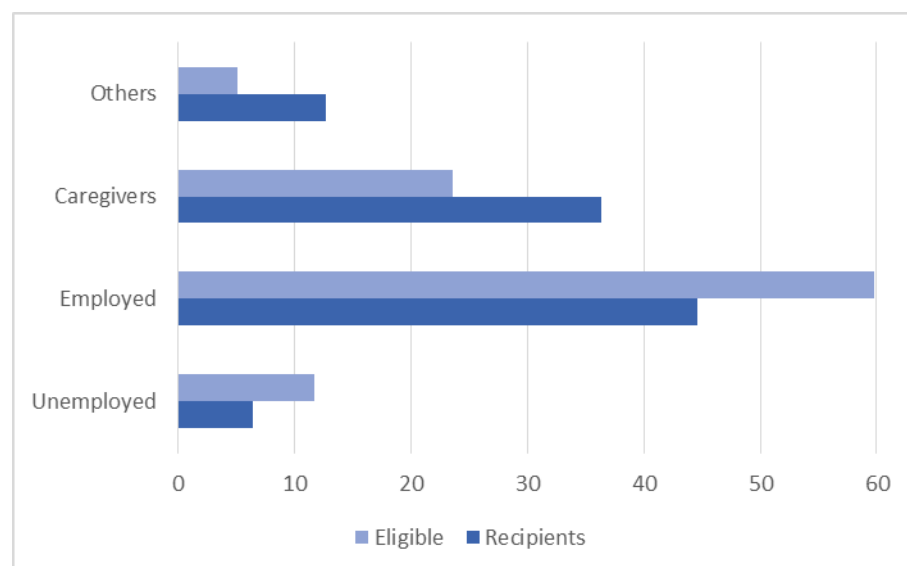
	Recipients	Eligible
% from rural areas (families)	68.7	68.8
% from rural areas (children)	70.5	72.9
Single parent family	58.6	37.5
Multi-nuclear household	-	63.3
Distribution of children's age		
<1	3.9	7.0
1-3	29.0	23.4
3-7	25.8	19.4
7-18	41.3	50.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data and administrative tables.

We do find significant differences in the main occupation of parents (see Figure 5) in similar ways to that found for TSA. The employed are a larger percentage among eligible families than for recipients and the opposite is true for caregivers. This result is clearly linked to the different percentage of single parent families, but as for TSA it could also be linked to the different way of accounting for assumed incomes in the case of the administrative assessment, as well as a different way in which agricultural income is computed. It is also significant to note that the percentage of unemployed parents is higher in the case of eligible parents and this could reveal

that indeed the registration requirement with the employment office might indeed force some families away from the benefit.

Figure 5 Main occupation among parents receiving SCA, 2015



Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data and administrative tables.

Finally, for SCA we know that movements in and out of the benefit are significant, although not as high as for TSA. We do find large fluctuations also in data from eligibility, with the number of families eligible for SCA being 210 thousand in the first quarter, 176 in the second, 188 and 190 respectively in the third and fourth quarters, with only one third consistently eligible across the 4 quarters. While the percentage that remains eligible across quarters is probably lower than that found in the administrative data for beneficiaries of SCA, the percentage is higher than a similar estimate for those eligible for TSA across quarters. Therefore, both for eligibility and recipients we find that fluctuations in and out are lower for SCA than for TSA.

Concerning 4+B we do not have detailed administrative tables, but as noted before the HBS estimate of eligibility is very close to the declared recipients. Moreover, using HBS data we can also see that for 4+B households eligible for the benefit across all quarters are much more stable at 94%.

2.3 Poverty and eligibility

One last aspect of this analysis that looks at the characteristics of these benefits concerns the overlap between eligibility and poverty across the programmes and their effectiveness on poverty reduction. This analysis can identify potential errors of exclusion or inclusion in the policy design when the policy objective is poverty reduction.

It is important to be aware that poverty and eligibility use not only different eligibility thresholds, but also different income aggregates and different adjustments in determining the needs of household members. While for eligibility for TSA and SCA household/family income is divided by the number of members, for poverty the statistical agency assumes that while the first member counts as one, all other members requires only 80% of the resources and this is known as an equivalence scale adjustment.

While the use of equivalence scales can be well justified, in this case it is problematic because poverty line (the SML) and income are measured using different scales and thus generates a fundamental inconsistency, which results in under-estimating poverty levels. In fact, the SML is computed as a per capita threshold, i.e. it is the population weighted average of different needs by age and sex (see the statistical annex A.1 for some more detailed explanations of the problem). Therefore, if the per adult equivalent approach is used to correct household income into person income, also the SML should be adjusted accordingly. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon mistake, and other countries have fallen in a similar inconsistency. This is something that would need to be addressed urgently and clarity should be brought on the role of different thresholds: the minimum income used for social assistance, and the SML used as an extreme official poverty line and as reference for setting various social protection policies. Moreover, the Government should seriously consider the need of a statistical poverty line that can be used more broadly for poverty analysis and assess effectiveness of socio-economic policies at a level of income higher than the SML.

Indeed, at the moment there are two essential risks and sources of confusion. On one hand there is often an association between poverty and beneficiaries of TSA, but the comparison is inappropriate because the two thresholds are different and the methodologies to determine who falls below the thresholds are also different. On the other hand, reinforcing the confusion the eligibility threshold for TSA (40% of SML) is also sometime labelled as the poverty line.

It is instead crucial to keep separate the functions of these different thresholds.

The threshold of eligibility for targeted social aid should be referred as the ‘minimum income guarantee’, and its amount can be linked to the SML, but not in fixed and rigid proportions, but in relation to what the country is able to guarantee. For example it could be set at 50%, and gradually increase to 70% or 100% of the SML.

The SML is currently both an extreme poverty line, but also the ‘cornerstone’ for setting minimum wage, minimum pension and basic social assistance benefits. Being such a crucial indicator its value is not only subject to a technical measurement, but is inevitably affected by political considerations.

Given the political influence on the SML it would be recommended to generate a different poverty line used for statistical analysis and for monitoring the role of socio-economic policy in the country. Such a poverty line would follow exclusively a technical measure and could be fixed at a level higher than the current SML.

In 2015 official poverty rates computed by the statistical office were very low, on average by quarter the poverty rate was just 2.5%. However, this is computed considering whether the per adult equivalent income for consumption is below the per capita requirement. If instead, we compare per capita income for consumption with the per capita poverty line, the percentage of poor increases 3 times, with an average poverty rate by quarter of 7.6%.

In what follows we do not consider the official poverty measure, whereby the statistical office adjusted the household declared income to take into account the household consumption, instead we use as reference the declared income, which is a more accurate measure of the level of income computed by the administration to determine eligibility to social assistance (the statistical annex A.2 provides alternative estimates with the official poverty levels).

For each of the benefits we want to determine poverty in the absence of that benefit, therefore we compute household income correcting its original value by subtracting the transfer received for that benefit and then determine whether income is below the SML. We do this separately for TSA, SCA and 4+B. In the absence of the benefit, in the first quarter of 2015 poverty would be higher without 4+B at 8.9%, then without SCA at 6.6% and finally without TSA at 6.4%. All such cases should be compared to a poverty level with all transfers equal to 6.4%, which implies that 4+B has the biggest simulated impact on poverty, then SCA and finally TSA.

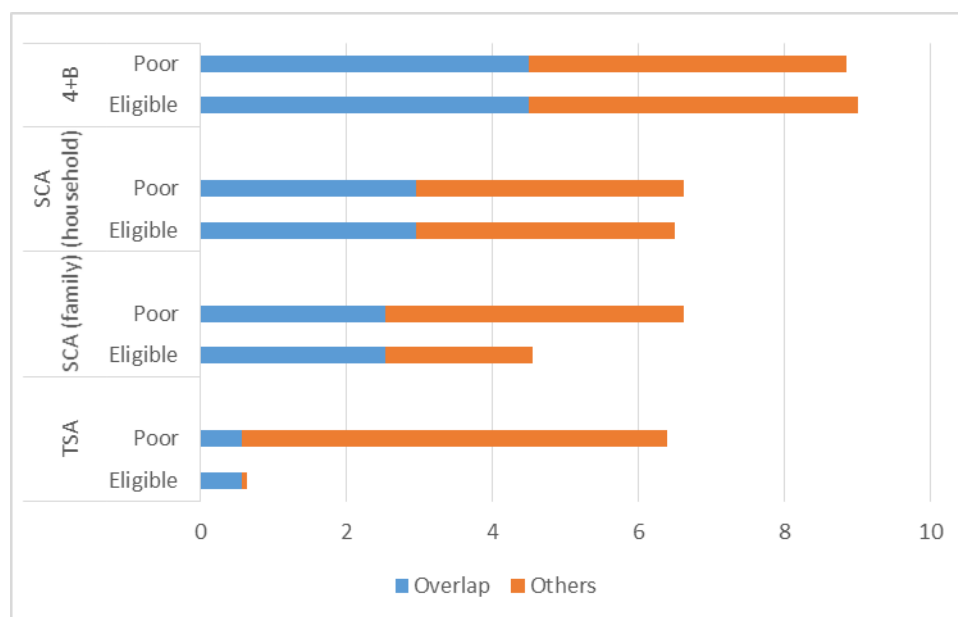
Moreover, Figure 6 reports the level of overlap between eligibility and poverty: the first bar for each benefit shows the percentage of poor who are eligible, and the second bar shows the percentage of eligible who are poor.

The percentage of poor who are eligible is the highest for 4+B at 51%, then for SCA at 45%, and finally for TSA at 9%. This tells us the theoretical coverage of the poor or based on its complementarity the level of exclusion errors, being 49% for 4+B, 55% for SCA and 91% for TSA. For SCA eligibility, we report two estimates: the first in which we consider as eligible all members of the household where the eligible family lives and the second in which we treat as eligible only the members of the eligible family. This is done for comparison purposes with the other two benefits.

Among the eligible the percentage of poor is the highest in TSA, whereby almost all eligible are indeed poor (88%), then for 4+B (50%) and SCA (46%), and so this shows the relative efficiency of the benefit or on the complementary measure the level of inclusion errors.

Very similar results are obtained for other quarters of 2015.

Figure 6 Eligibility and poverty for TSA, SCA and 4+B, first quarter of 2015 – Percentage of people



Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

2.4 Implementation issues

The above calculations and simulations provide estimates for eligibility, but when this is implemented in practice we have seen that there are substantial differences between eligibility and actual recipients. Some of them are the result of implementation failures or inappropriate practical administrative rules. Apart from information issues, the above analysis seems to confirm that there are three main potential problematic areas:

- the way agricultural income is computed

- the practice of assuming income whenever people are not able to prove their incomes and are not registered as unemployed with the employment office
- the difficulties related to the requirement of registration with the employment office

These issues were also highlighted as part of the fieldwork report and they are now been confirmed as not being isolated cases, but significant issues that would need to be addressed.

3 Simulation of the reform

The reform that will be fully implemented starting from the first of January 2018 intends to create a unique targeted social aid benefit provided to households with an income below 50% of the SML and for a benefit equal to the difference between the eligibility threshold and the household income (the calculation is conducted on a per capita basis). Whenever applicable the household will be required to sign a social activation contract whereby members of the households either commit to conduct a certain economic activity, a rehabilitation plan or other activities that put the household on a trajectory of taking active measures for moving out of poverty. Income from these economic activities will not be included in the income test. Signing the contract implies receiving the benefit for 6 months. After that the contract could be renewed for another 6 months⁷. If in the household there are no members for whom the social activation contract is applicable, but who meet the income eligibility criteria, then the household can receive the benefit without signing the social contract and their eligibility is confirmed every 3 months (see article 3 clause 4: “Right for unconditional cash assistance shall be confirmed by presenting the documents about incomes on a quarterly basis”).

This ‘new TSA’ will substitute the current TSA, but also SCA and 4+B. In other words both SCA and 4+B will stop and it is hoped that the new TSA should instead protect the poor, thanks to a higher threshold, which is determined not only by a higher percentage of the SML (50%, rather than 40%), but also an SML increased in real terms by 9.1%⁸.

Using the 2015 HBS data we can simulate the impact that such a reform will have on the numbers of people who will benefit or lose from the reform and, everything else being equal, what the expected impact on poverty will be. When we compare the theoretical eligibility before and after the reform we should be able to determine the combined effect of three major differences: higher/lower threshold, the way of computing the benefit amount, and the unit of analysis (household versus family, especially for SCA). Importantly, we do not attempt to simulate the effect of the reform in encouraging people to start an economic activity.

In order to analyse the effects of the reform it is useful to plot the simulated per capita income empirical cumulative distribution function before any relevant social assistance transfer (the income used to assess the eligibility for different benefits) and the key thresholds: 40% and 60% of the current SML, and 50% and the full amount of the new SML (see Figure 7)⁹. It is important to be aware that as the figure shows, this implies substantially higher percentages of people falling below the SML for two reasons: the fact that we use income before receipt of transfers and income received as part of special employment programmes, and because we are using per capita rather than per adult equivalent figures. Whereas for eligibility to social assistance per capita income is used, for poverty estimates per adult equivalent income is used.

The plotting of the SML is useful because it tells us the expected percentage of people falling in different intervals, especially because the relationship is not linear. For example, while only 2.1% fall below 50% of the new SML, another 15.8% of people fall between 50% and the full new SML.

⁷ See draft article 4, clause 7: “A social contract of family activation is concluded for the period of six months with possible of prolongation for up to six months in case of required extension of social adaptation of family members, and (or) incompleteness of professional training of employable family members and (or) of youth internship and (or) of employment in social workplaces. Should the social contract of family activation be prolonged, the size of conditional cash assistance shall not be reconsidered.”

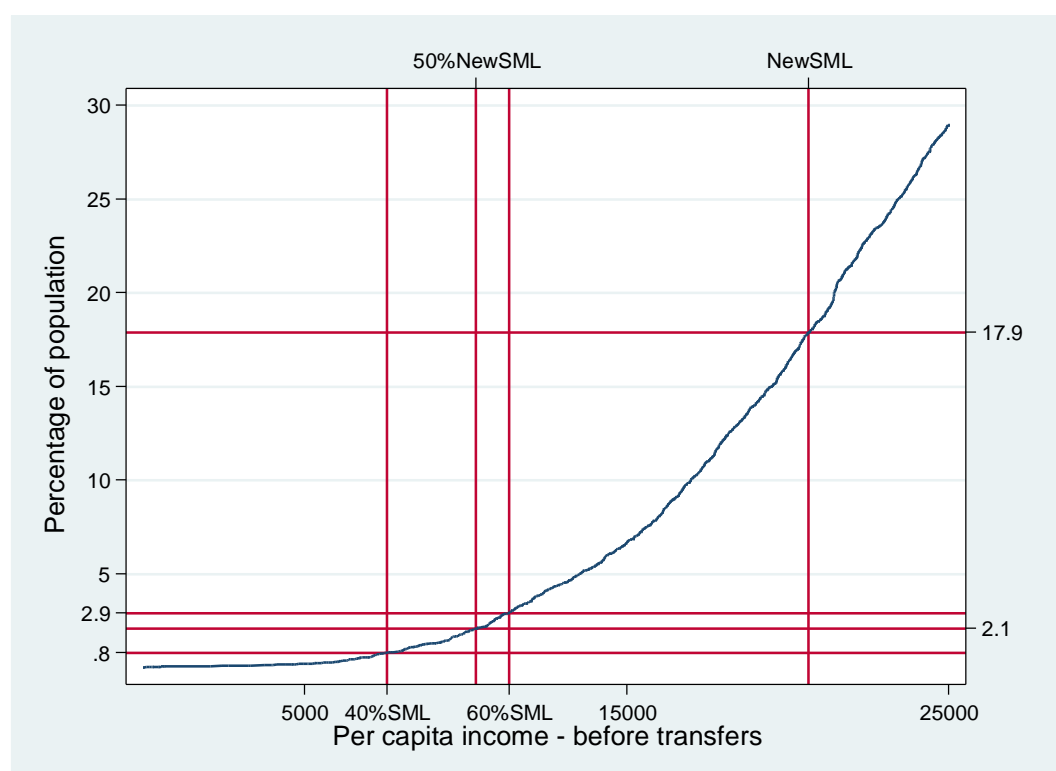
⁸ It is useful to note that increasing the SML by 9.1 percentage point has quite a big impact on poverty measures. Using the current methodology of the statistical agency, the average percentage of population below the current SML by quarter in 2015 was 2.5%, but it would increase to 4.7% using the new SML, and so almost double. Estimates by quarter are respectively 2.7 for the first quarter, 2.5 in the second and third quarter, and 2.3 in the fourth quarter and would increase respectively to 4.6, 4.7, 5.2 and 4 with the new SML.

⁹ In order to be able to construct this graph, we considered the different SML observed in each oblast as an indicator of the regional price differences and therefore adjusted nominal income by the ratio of oblast SML and country average SML. This allows us to create comparable levels of incomes across the country and a unique SML.

In other words, the graph shows that while the new TSA would cover 50% of the new poverty line, that turns out to be just a very small percentage of those falling below the new SML. Similarly there are many more households with a per capita income between 40 and 60% of SML than those falling below the 40% SML.

All this is very important in assessing the likely impact of the reform. However, in order to have a better understanding of what theoretically happens as a result of the reform it is useful to analyse how many households/people are eligible to receive the different benefits and the amount of benefit they are entitled to.

Figure 7 Income per capita cumulative distribution function and key thresholds



Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

The benefits under analysis are the new TSA, to which people are entitled if their per capita income falls below 50% of the new SML, the current TSA, SCA for which entitlement is for families whose per capita income is below 60% of SML, and for 4+B for which there is no income test.

It is also useful to show statistics for the key intervals that separate eligibility to different benefits. In particular, we do this for five key intervals: below 40% of current SML, between 40% of SML and 50% of the new SML, 50% of new SML and 60% of SML, between 60% of SML and the new SML, above the new SML.

However, we should remember that for SCA the rule of eligibility is at the family rather than the household level, and since we have shown earlier that in most cases families eligible to SCA are part of multi-nuclear households, their household per capita income could be above 60% of SML and the family still be eligible to SCA.

Results are shown in Table 8 for 2015 and for an average month across the year. Statistics are divided under the headings of 'reform' for the new TSA and 'current benefits' for TSA, SCA and

4+B and showing numbers and simulated amount for eligible households and people, and so these represent simulations under the assumption of perfect implementation, where the main objective is a comparison of the scenarios with and without reform. Amount of transfers per capita are reported as the sum of all transfers in the relevant interval divided by the people in the same interval to better compare the impact with and without reform. In the table there is also a final column showing the overall number of households and people falling in the different intervals.

We can see that the number of current beneficiaries by far exceeds the expected number of future beneficiaries under the reform, but also that many of the current beneficiaries have a per capita income above the new SML. More specifically, 32% of SCA beneficiary households have a per capita income above the new SML and the same is true for 43% of 4+B beneficiaries. It is also relevant to note that in the first interval while the per capita transfer under the reform is 5115, the combined transfer under the current benefit is only 3563, thus for the very poor the reform provides a substantially higher income¹⁰. However, already in the second interval the amount transferred under the current benefits is higher than that provided under the reform scenario, respectively 1612 vs. 1158. In all other intervals under the reform no one receives support, while under current benefits a significant number of households would receive SCA and 4+B. From these figures, it is clear that the reform would be an attempt to significantly increase support for the very poor, and do this by redistributing resources from current beneficiaries above the SML. However, there will be still many people with a per capita income below the poverty line who will be left without support.

Table 8 Number of potential beneficiaries with and without reform, 2015

	Reform New TSA	Current benefits			Number of hhholds/people
		TSA	SCA	4+B	
Households					
<40% of SML	28368	24041	20283	8461	28368
40% SML - 50% of New SML	38476	0	28752	13985	38476
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	0	0	15660	7662	25911
60% of SML - New SML	0	0	64451	105870	527045
Above New SML	0	0	60371	102041	4540093
Total	66844	24041	189517	238019	5159893
People					
<40% of SML	114048	85832	103149	54928	114048
40% SML - 50% of New SML	186667	0	146582	91800	186667
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	0	0	75646	52496	126157
60% of SML - New SML	0	0	385160	706895	2519429
Above New SML	0	0	329206	679600	14575000
Total	300715	85832	1039742	1585718	17525000
Per capita average monthly amounts					
<40% of SML	5115.3	1842.9	1096.7	623.4	
40% SML - 50% of New SML	1158.2	0	991.7	620.1	
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	0	0	720.0	514.9	
60% of SML - New SML	0	0	114.4	346.8	
Above New SML	0	0	14.4	57.8	

¹⁰ The number of eligible under the new TSA for per capita income below 40% of SML is higher than the current number of eligible of TSA because TSA is assigned only after 4+B and there are cases where 4+B takes household income above the threshold and so TSA is no longer given.

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

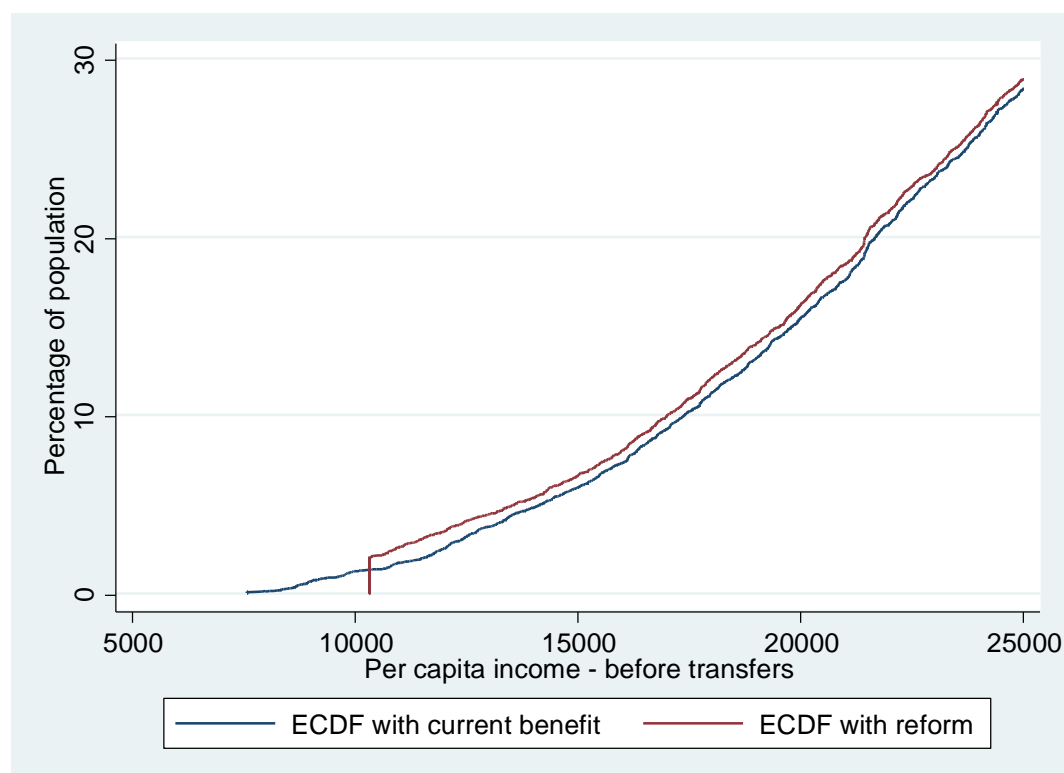
While providing a clear understanding of how many people would be eligible for the different benefits under the two scenarios, the previous analysis does not clearly tell us the combined effect of the benefits and how many will actually 'lose' and 'win' under the reform. Therefore, Table 9 provides such figures where we simulated the average per capita income after the receipt of benefits with and without reform. A household is a 'winner' if their per capita income in the reform scenario is higher than the per capita income with current benefits, and the other way round for identifying a 'loser'. The table reports both the number of households, people and the simulated average per capita incomes for the different intervals. As expected in the first interval, below 40% of SML, all households will be winners with a significantly higher income of about 1600 KZT per capita per month. However, in the second interval there will be more losers than winners and on average people would have a higher per capita income under the current scenario. For all other intervals there would be only losers, who are currently beneficiaries of 4+B and SCA.

Table 9 Winners and losers from the reform, 2015

	Households		Persons		Average simulated per capita income	
	Winner	Loser	Winner	Loser	Reform	No reform
<40% of SML	28368	0	114048	0	10606	9014
40% SML - 50% of New SML	18189	20287	70688	115979	10622	11094
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	0	20000	0	104258	11225	12464
60% of SML - New SML	0	161819	0	1021283	17518	17995
Above New SML	0	160157	0	989759	45507	45581
Total	46557	362264	184735	2231280	40641	40774

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

The results of the above table are also summarised graphically in Figure 8, where we show the empirical cumulative distribution function (ECDF) of the simulated per capita income with and without reform. The reform would increase incomes only for a small percentage of people, but for the rest the income provided under the current scenario is always higher (this can be seen by the ECDF with current benefits being on the right of the ECDF with the reform).

Figure 8 Income per capita cumulative distribution function with and without reform

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

Finally, the comparison of the scenarios with and without reform is completed showing the simulated budget of the different benefits assuming full take up of all the benefits. Table 10 provides the simulated monthly average expenditure in each interval. While the simulated expenditure is higher in the first interval under the reform than in the current scenario (583 million KZT per month vs 404), in the second interval expenditure is already lower and overall it is only 800 million KZT compared to 3068 million (the actual expenditure in 2015 for the three benefits was 2878 million KZT per month, and the difference is explained by the lack of take-up). This means that the projected expenditure commitment would only be a quarter of what is currently committed.

Table 10 Expected monthly budget with and without reform, 2015 – Million of KZT

	Reform	Current benefits			Total
	New TSA	TSA	SCA	4+B	
<40% of SML	583.4	208.8	125.0	69.8	403.6
40% SML - 50% of New SML	216.2	0.0	184.9	115.3	300.2
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	0.0	0.0	89.2	63.2	152.4
60% of SML - New SML	0.0	0.0	288.1	872.9	1161.0
Above New SML	0.0	0.0	209.3	841.3	1050.7
Total	799.6	208.8	896.6	1962.5	3067.9

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

All this suggests that while the reform could have the potential to redistribute resources towards the poor, its redistributive effect is confined to a very tiny percentage of the very poor with minimal impact. It clearly appears that the eligibility threshold has been set too low and overall simulated expenditure would be reduced substantially.

Moreover, what is not included in these simulations is the likely further effect of implementation problems, whereby especially for benefits that are means tested the number of actual recipients is drastically reduced from those who are eligible.

4 Social services development and integration

The focus of national policies and programmes relevant to the development of social services is primarily on addressing ‘*social apathy and dependency*’¹¹. The concern of policy-makers is to ‘*activate*’ the poor to make them more economically secure and reduce reliance on social assistance. The new conditional cash assistance program due to be introduced in 2018 following the ‘Orleu’ pilot reflects this concern with a strong emphasis on employment and sustainable livelihoods. The government recognizes that social services are also required to make cash assistance programmes more effective and there is a need to ensure that the goals of the organizations responsible for implementing the reform, mainly the Employment and Social Programme Office (ESPO), but also other stakeholders such as Akimat administration, health or education services, are aligned with this aim of achieving greater efficiency of social aid through ‘*the consolidation of programmes and social support sources...to improve the coordination of social aid*’¹².

At the same time, the government is pursuing policy goals in relation to vulnerable groups that are reflected in the Law on Special Social Services of 2008 which designates individuals/families in the following difficult life situations as eligible for support from social services:

- Orphanhood
- Lack of parental care
- Lack of supervision of minors including deviant behaviour
- The location of a minor in an educational organization with a special regime of maintenance
- Limited ability of early psycho-physical development of children from birth to three years
- Limited livelihood as the result of socially significant illness and illness that are dangerous to others
- Inability to take care of oneself because of old age, the result of illness and (or) disability
- Violence leading to social inadaptation and social deprivation;
- Homelessness
- Release from prison
- Being on the probation service register of the criminal executive inspection

In some cases there are overlaps with the beneficiaries of social assistance programmes – children and adults with disabilities or certain illnesses living below the poverty thresholds, older people with limited abilities, ex-offenders returning to their communities and seeking employment, people with no housing, victims of domestic violence who are also receiving social assistance and home environments that present a threat to the psycho-physical development of children from birth to three years of age. It is not clear that the Law on special social services applies in other cases to social welfare recipients or to those households who may be eligible for social assistance, but have not applied. It is likely that many of the individuals or families eligible for special social services are also living in poverty and are eligible for social assistance.

The design of the new TSA is closely aligned with the Orleu programme and was piloted in Kyzylorda and Mangystau as well as several other regions. By the end of 2016 the new TSA had been piloted in all regions of Kazakhstan. ..

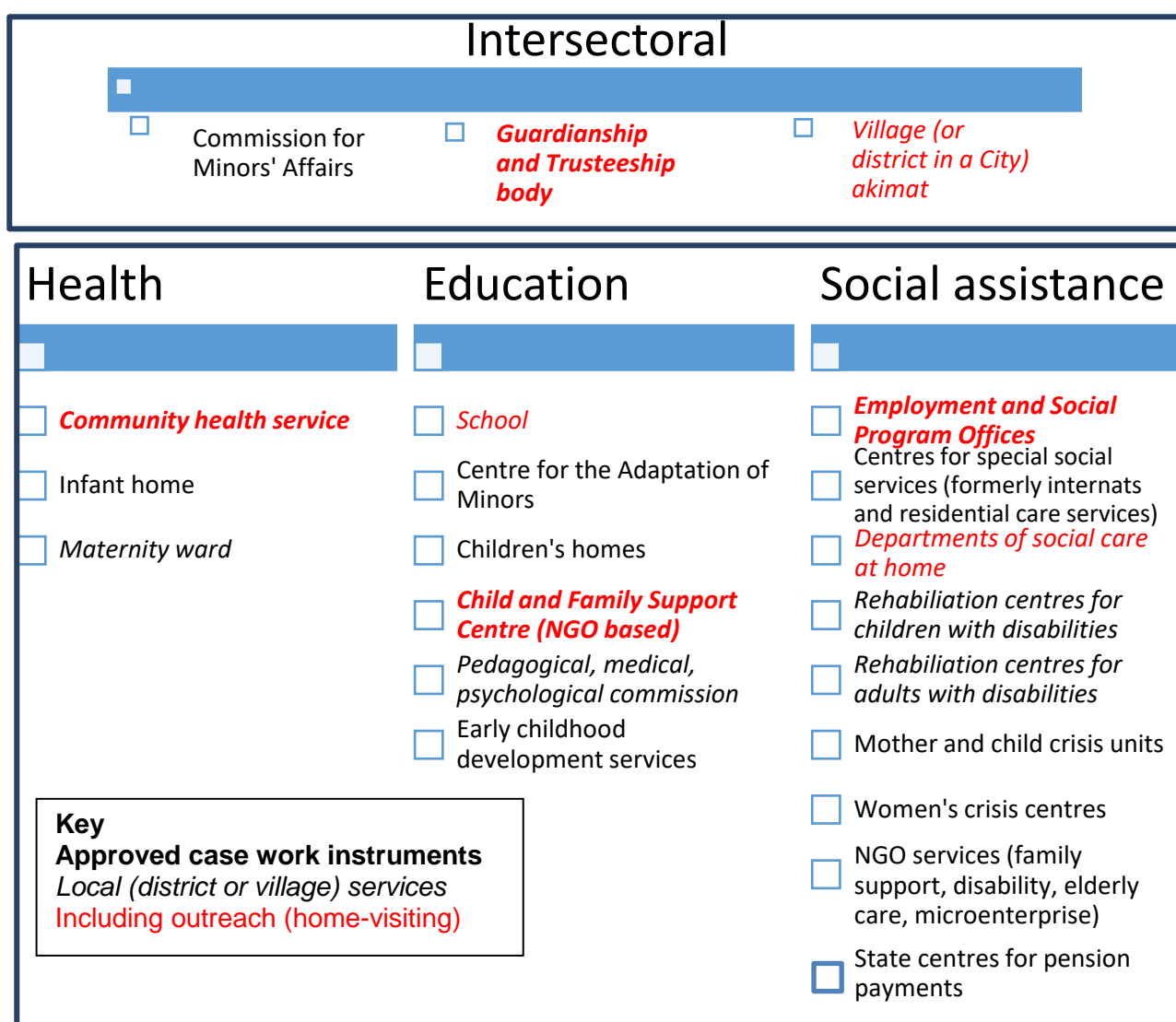
¹¹ Concept of Social Development, 2030

¹² Ibid.

4.1 Current situation

Gaps, barriers and bottlenecks for effective inter-sectoral cooperation were documented during the fieldwork and training delivered in Mangystau and Kyzylorda (Carraro et al, 2016). More detailed recommendations, based on the findings from fieldwork, are provided here on facilitating the provision of integrated social services. Figure 9 illustrates the range and types of services in each sector where social workers are employed or where staff with social work mandates and functions can be found.

Figure 9 Agencies or organisations where social workers or designated personnel with social work functions and mandates can be found in any given oblast or city of Kazakhstan



Source: OPM/P4EC CEECIS consulting group based on findings from the field work and UNICEF Kazakhstan reports: Assessment of the needs of social workers and specialists performing the social work functions in social protection, health care and education systems(2014), and; Documenting the Development of Child and Family Support Services in East Kazakhstan Oblast (2017).

There are three types of services employing social workers that combine all three characteristics (local, standardized/approved casework instruments and with home-visiting taking place) needed

for outreach (community-based) social work using a structured casework approach and with formally instituted job descriptions that can be considered as using methods based on international good practice:

- Community health service social workers (working with community doctors and nurses)
- Employment and Social Programmes Offices (social work consultant and assistants working on TSA)
- One example of a child and family accompaniment service from Ust-Kamenogorsk – the Child and Family Support Centre

The Guardianship and Trusteeship bodies fulfill critical functions in decision-making about children and child protection issues, are local and use approved assessment tools, but do not have the resources or mandate to conduct casework beyond initial assessment and referral to alternative care services.

The Village (or district in a City) akimat has responsibilities for identifying people in need of support living in their administrative territory and conducting an initial assessment of eligibility which is then confirmed or authorized by a community commission. This initial assessment is a social work function and requires some basic competencies in social work. At present it is not clear how the village (or district in a City) akimat ensures that the person holding this function has skills, knowledge and guidance to be able to undertake initial assessments.

Some services shown in Figure 9 fulfil only assessment functions (Pedagogical, medical, psychological Commission) and decision-making functions (Commission for Minors' Affairs) or only administrative functions (State Centers for Pension Payments). Most of the services shown, therefore, apart from those in bold and italics are not able to provide outreach social services using case management systems as they are serving children or families from the whole oblast (children's homes, psycho-neurological residential services, crisis centres) and physically cannot travel to visit the whole oblast. Many services are delivered to specific clients in a particular building (a residential service or centre-based service) and specialists do not visit clients or their family members in the home.

The Child and Family Support Centre in Ust-Kamenogorsk is a service model developed by the East Kazakhstan oblast administration together with the Ust-Kamenogorsk Committee of Education and UNICEF and which offers the kind of accompaniment service that can benefit families with children living in poverty. The Child and Family Support Centre has a well-tested case management and accompaniment service methodology, documented by UNICEF in 2015, that can be replicated for use by Employment and Support Program Offices or by NGOs providing services to children and families living in difficult life situations who have been rejected by the TSA program.

School social workers or social pedagogues are involved in identifying children in need of support, but it is not clear the extent to which they use a common assessment framework or criteria for identifying which children and families need support and which kinds of support they help them to receive. It could be, for example, that these workers are focused very much on child behaviours, school performance and readiness for school (e.g. ensuring children from low income families have adequate nutrition by enrolling them for hot lunches and adequate equipment by making sure they benefit from any school based support with education supplies). Theoretically, however, these workers do have the skills and the mandate to help families with school age children to overcome

barriers to accessing social assistance, but it is not clear how the schools and Ministry of Education ensure that these workers have the right skills and knowledge for these tasks.

Primary community health services have well-established social worker posts attached to community health teams, but some studies have shown that the nature of the family support work being conducted by these social workers can vary from service to service (Rogers, Kuzminskyy, 2016). Some social workers may be involved extensively in meeting health sector targets and goals (e.g. vaccination targets) while others may be working in a more intersectoral way with families to help them to access a range of services outside of the health sector including early childhood development services and social assistance. Departments of social care at home provide individual care services to older people and people with disabilities in the home, but these are not social work services, rather direct care services (assisting with personal hygiene, housework and other home based tasks). Centers for State Pension Payments administer pensions, 4+B and disability pensions.

NGO services exist in all oblasts and cities of Kazakhstan, but with differing degrees of quality, service coverage and types of services available. The Mangystau and Kyzylorda NGOs work mainly with children with disabilities, but can also provide support to families to establish sustainable livelihoods. There are also some single issue NGOs offering specialised services for example for women in crisis or ex-prisoners returning to live in their communities.

4.2 Intersectoral working processes

There is a need to specify more clearly what the ‘individual plan of family support’, means in relation to unconditional benefit recipients and to the non-employable adults and children in families receiving conditional benefit. At present, article 4 is both very specific (‘registering pregnancy by the 12th week’) and very general (‘timely use of special social services’... ‘other measures’...) in stating the purpose of the individual plan of family support:

“Individual plan of family support ‘for promoting employment and social adaptation of the family to increase living standards of lower income persons in particular: i) active job search, ii) attending professional training, retraining, advanced training, iii) running private enterprise or smallholding, iv) participation in regular screening inspections, v) medical registration by the 12th week of pregnancy, vi) voluntary treatment of existing socially significant illnesses alcoholism and drug addiction, vii) timely use of special social services and / or rehabilitation measures for the disabled, viii) other measures based on specific needs by decision of the inter-agency commission’. (Article 4 of proposed amendments to the law on targeted social services)”

More effective inter-sectoral coordination of services and assistance can be achieved through changes in working processes – job descriptions, casework instruments, mandates and authorities of the different actors that need to be engaged. The new TSA will have a ‘community commission’ that is made up of a range of actors from the community where the TSA applicant lives to determine eligibility to apply:

“A special commission, created by decision of the akim of the administrative-territorial unit for assessing the situation of the persons (families) who have applied for TSA. ...The community commission can consist of representatives of the local authorities, public

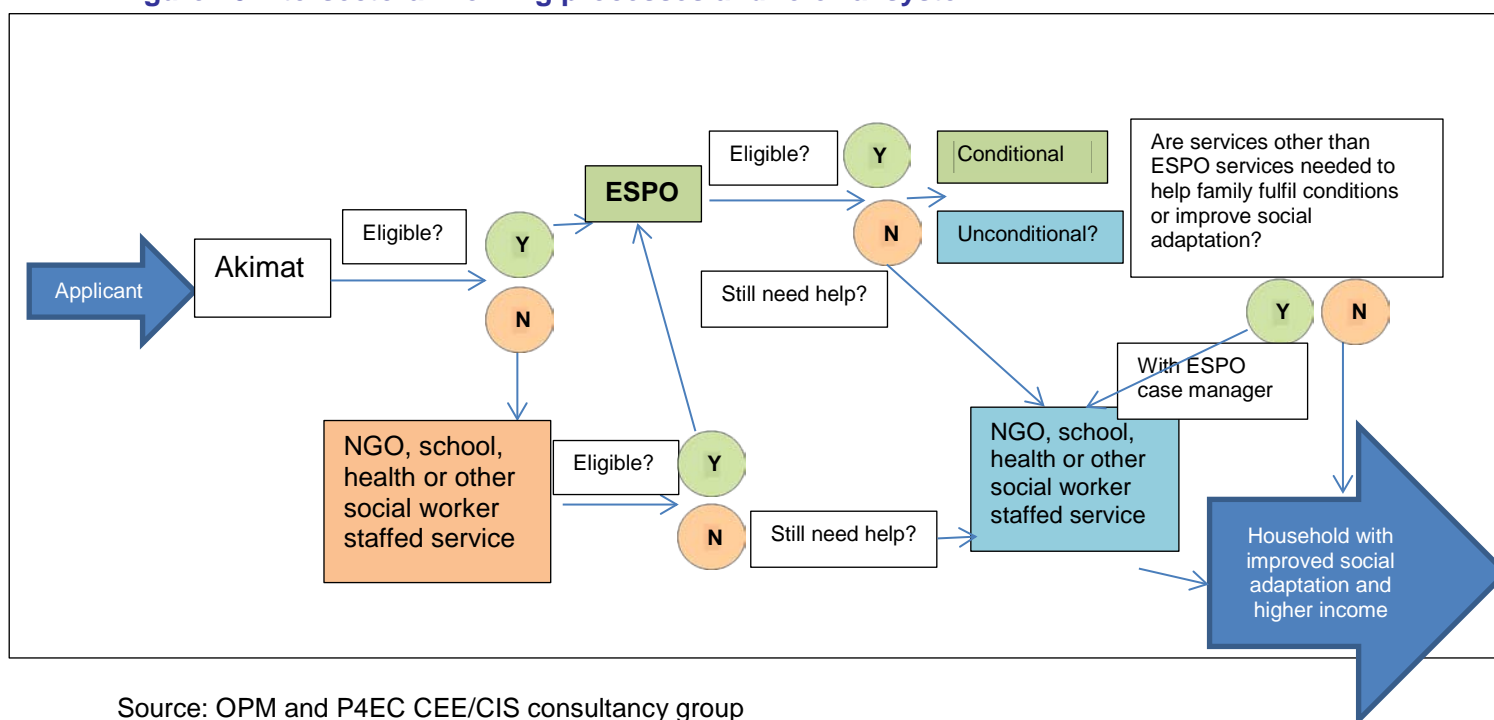
unions, homeowner’s cooperatives, the public, organisations and mandated organs of health and social development, police”. (Articles 1.7 and 5 of the existing law on targeted social services No. 246)

This form of intersectoral cooperation represents a resource that can potentially be further used for case management purposes: developing and agreeing a plan with the TSA recipients where resource mobilization or collaboration with different agencies is required at the community level (e.g. on housing, transport, access to kindergarten, health services etc.) or monitoring implementation of social contracts. The law also refers to city/district level commissions that should be involved in decision-making that is outside of the competency of the local community commission, for example if additional services are required at district or oblast level.

These existing forms of intersectoral cooperation can be more fully exploited through the whole cycle of casework with individual families, especially if the commissions are being served by staff (assistants from the ESPO or from the local akimat administration) who have the skills to conduct assessments and case reviews.

Figure 10 shows how the Employment and Social Programme Offices can direct applicants towards relevant services in other sectors. The individual plan which comes into play at the point where the applicant is approved for conditional or unconditional TSA can be strengthened by inclusion of other services in the district under the overall case management of the ESPO consultant.

Figure 10 Intersectoral working processes and referral system



Source: OPM and P4EC CEE/CIS consultancy group

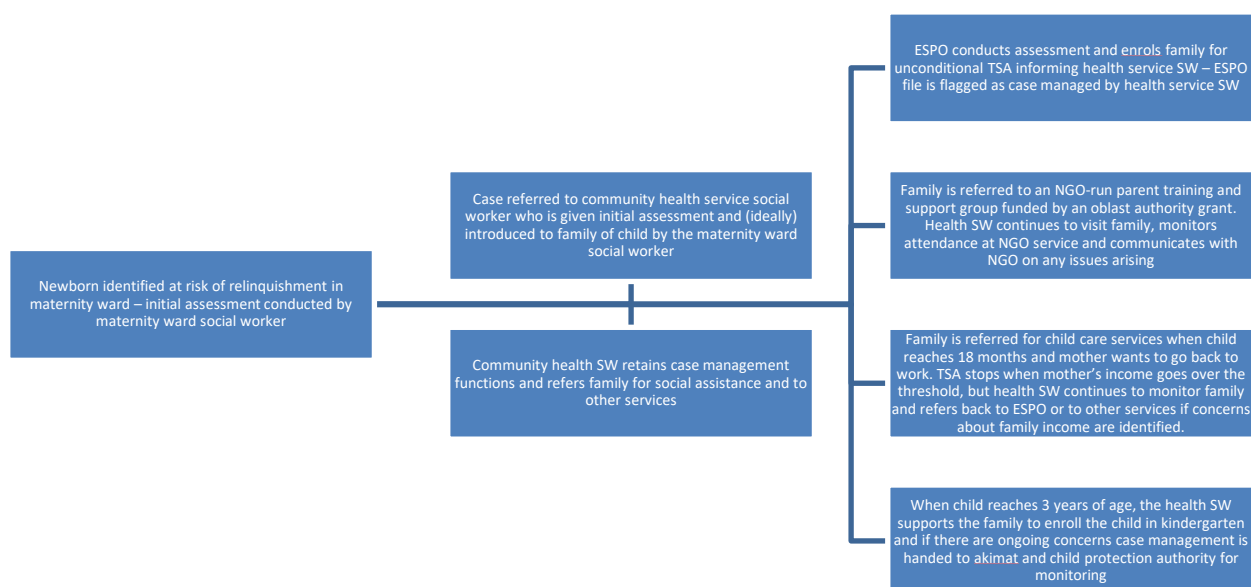
Clearly, the referral arrows can also run in the other direction – NGOs, schools, health services, disability rehabilitation services may identify families in need of social assistance and refer them to the local akimat to become applicants to the TSA.

The assessment and referral system proposed in Figure 9 requires the ESPO to have a set of assessment and referral instruments and procedures and be mandated to refer households needing services apart from social assistance and employment/livelihoods services to other organisations. In turn, those organisations have to be mandated (and resourced) to accept referrals and work together with the ESPO consultants/assistants as the case manager if the household is a TSA recipient (conditional or unconditional). The district/city commissions can reinforce this process of referral and case management to ensure that measures and activities set out in individual plans are being followed through from the side of the authorities. The links between the case manager from ESPO, health or other services needs clear and explicit guidance to be fully realized.

This system also requires TSA recipients, applicants or rejected applicants to be classified as experiencing ‘difficult life circumstances’ to be eligible for special social services paid for by the government. It should be noted, however, that this type of service beneficiary should be classified as eligible only for non-residential services. Gatekeeping to residential special social services should continue to be based on a more thorough assessment of care needs, based on in-depth understanding of child development and best interests, than those conducted by the ESPO workers and channeled through appropriate gatekeeping mechanisms.

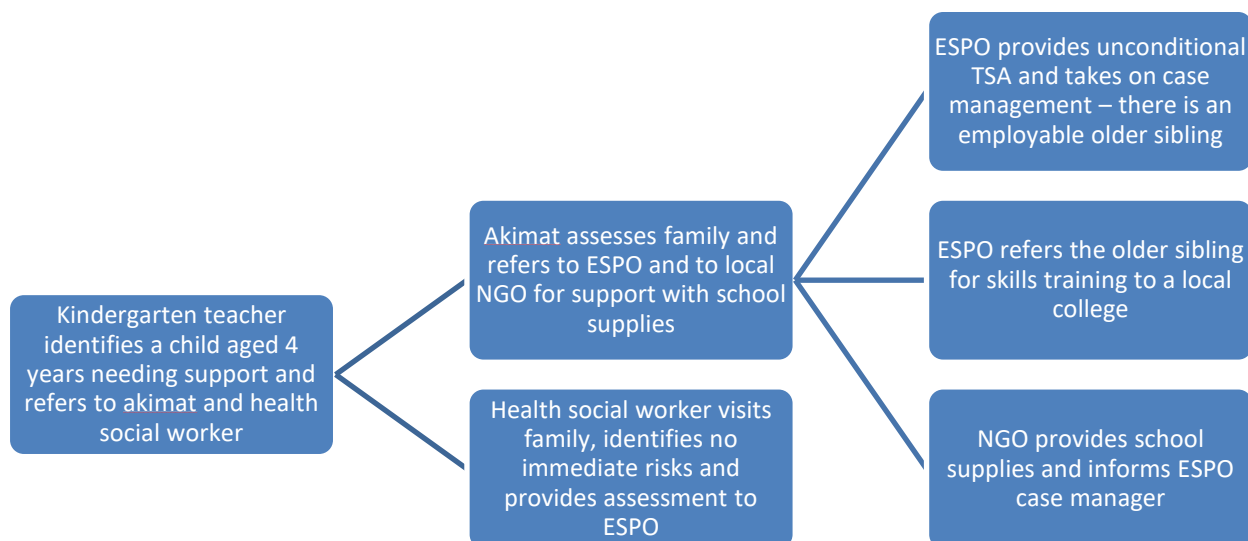
A standardized assessment and case management system can help to ensure the streamlining of assessments and referrals in both directions. Guidance can also be provided on how the case manager should be appointed for any given intervention or set of interventions. Examples are given in Figure 11 and Figure 12 of how different cases could play out using an integrated, inter-sectoral approach with common assessment and case management frameworks.

Figure 11 Risk of relinquishment at birth – health sector SW as case manager



Source: OPM and P4EC CEE/CIS consultancy group

Figure 12 Child identified in need of support by kindergarten teacher – ESPO as case manager



Source: OPM and P4EC CEE/CIS consultancy group

A key issue in such an approach is to ensure that there is a degree of flexibility for individual organisations and agencies to pursue their own sectoral goals within a unified case management system. The health SW may be focused on early childhood health targets relating to nutrition, growth and vaccinations, but noting concerns about household income or maternal depression or other issues, may request that other agencies become involved. If there are child protection concerns, for example, then the child protection body should be notified and may request a comprehensive assessment from the health SW as the case manager for which the health SW may need to involve an ESPO specialist to provide an assessment of household income or the akimat to provide information on housing conditions. The key would be to ensure that the overall case manager retains oversight of all aspects of the case across sectors and is mandated to request information and action from specialists in other agencies, in NGOs and akimat departments as necessary.

In a system like this, the TSA recipient households, whether receiving conditional or unconditional cash benefits, could be assigned to a case manager outside ESPO depending on the issues that need to be addressed. In a case where employment and sustainable livelihoods are the main conditionality, the ESPO specialists would retain case management functions and would be expected to involve health, education or child and family support services as required in relation to other family members as set out in the individual plan. ESPO specialists would also be expected to refer households to other services when they 'graduate' from TSA, especially if their household income is only marginally above the designated poverty threshold. In the case of unconditional TSA recipient households, ESPO might refer them for health services, child care services, education support, parent groups or other types of services as needed and hand over case management responsibility as appropriate, but would retain an active interest in the household for as long as they are TSA recipients.

In this system the mechanism for assigning lead responsibility for case management would need to be flexible, use clear criteria and fit within an integrated, standardized case management system that meets the needs of a range of sectors – child protection, education, health, social assistance. A common assessment framework will also help to avoid repeated assessments by different agencies and if protocols are in place for transferring existing assessments and case materials at the point of referral this will exclude the duplication of work of social workers from different systems. For example, social workers in education or health not making repeated assessment of the child's and family situation, but to use one already made by ESPO and only add to the assessment the elements required for their own system. This not only streamlines the process for families, but makes the work of social workers more effective as it reduces administrative burdens and ensure they can use more time for direct work with families. The community and district commissions can play a role in supporting implementation of individual plans requiring multiple additional services especially in ensuring that state and NGO services fulfill their responsibilities in implementing the plan and have the resources to do so.

4.3 Short-term tasks in launching the reform

The discussions for supporting strengthened linkage between social assistance and social services set out in 4.1 and 4.2 above are focused on longer-term systems changes that are required to ensure stronger access to services for social assistance recipients. This section provides observations on the immediate task of providing services to support the task of transferring current recipients of SCA and 4+B to the new TSA once it is introduced in January 2018. The task will be the responsibility of the ESPO, but additional numbers of staff may be required in 2017 in the run up to the new law becoming effective and in the immediate post-implementation period throughout 2018 and into 2019 as households apply for the new form of assistance. This additional capacity can be contracted on fixed-term contracts by the ESPO and/or through NGO contracts. The transfer of many thousands of SCA and 4+B recipients to the new TSA offers an opportunity to also assess needs for services/activation measures among unconditional TSA recipients as well as rolling out the social contracts for conditional TSA households.

A common assessment framework and approach to establishing social contracts with unconditional as well as conditional TSA recipients should be created ahead of the transfer and staff should be provided with a foundation course in basic social work that can support assessment and referral as set out in 4.2 above. Attention should be paid to assessment of child well-being/child development, the care needs of older people, the needs of PWD with a focus on inclusion, social participation and economic activation and on the needs of people with mental health and other health conditions that might affect their ability to work and engage in economic activity. Information materials will be required setting out clearly the eligibility criteria for the new TSA and the process for applications targeted to potential applicants and to all relevant health, education and social services agencies and organizations. Ideally training should be provided to associated agencies and organizations in the use of referral protocols and the standard case management instruments that the ESPO will be using to assess needs, develop individual plans and conclude social contracts with TSA beneficiaries.

Ideally the transfer of households should be phased, with SCA and 4+B ending only once the new TSA has been approved for families falling within the eligibility criteria for the new TSA. Procedures should be set out to refer former 4+B and SCA households who are not eligible for the new TSA to other social services. Procedures should include provision for sharing of datasets on 4+B and SCA

beneficiaries with relevant district ESPO teams. Information campaigns should be timed to prime households ahead of any cut-off dates for transfer to prevent last minute surges in applicants.

5 Recommendations

A number of political statements inspired the proposed reform of social assistance: ensure adequate protection to very vulnerable groups, improve targeting, avoid dependency, and increase integration between cash benefit administration and social services. These inspiring principles of the reform can be found in different documents from the “2030 National Concept of Social Development” and the “One hundred concrete steps, a Modern state for all”.

Our review of the legislation, data driven simulations and some evidence collected during fieldwork in Mangystau and Kyzylorda clearly show that the reform could deliver the following:

- some positive redistributive effects and rationalization of benefits;
- an opportunity to provide targeted employment services for supporting people to move out of poverty;
- an opportunity to develop community outreach services and better social protection coordination.

However, there are also some broad challenges and clear signs of risk:

- The threshold for the new TSA has been set too low and could result in drastically lowering coverage of many poor people and families with children;
- While there are positive stories on the impact of employment activation measures, we also came across substantial implementation challenges and we do not have overall robust evidence to say that the current resources and training is sufficient to make a positive impact;
- The current legislation appears to be incomplete in delivering a vision of integration of social protection services

Below we provide a set of concrete recommendations that try to address the above issues and identify aspects of the legislation (laws and regulations) that could be improved to ensure a good impact of the reform and that people are not worse off as a result of the reform. These recommendations concern four aspects:

- design elements of the new targeted social aid (eligibility threshold, means testing calculation, etc.),
- aspects related to the administration of targeted social assistance,
- ways that could ensure a better integration between social services and cash benefits, and
- issues related to the setting of the SML.

5.1 Recommendations on aspects related to the design of the new targeted social assistance

5.1.1 Re-assess and increase the threshold of eligibility

We are not aware of any previous study that tried to clearly analyse and estimate eligibility or even studies that fully understood the different unit of eligibility between TSA and SCA. It is likely that setting the threshold for the new TSA at 50% of the new SML, the thought was to cover both

current beneficiaries of TSA and SCA. Indeed, if the new SML would have increased by 20% then 50% of the new SML would have been equal to 60% of the current SML, but we have shown that the problem is not so much on the level of the SML, but the fact that for SCA eligibility is based on a different unit of reference, i.e. the nuclear family within the household. Moreover, the simulations have shown that at the current threshold of eligibility for the new TSA the reform would result in substantial underspending, and also lack of coverage of many poor households. When support to poor households for children is withdrawn there are increasing risks for children and in particular the possibility of their placement in residential institutions.

In the way the reform is conceived it would be possible to achieve a redistributive impact and also simplify the current duplications that exist in the administration of three separate benefits (TSA, SCA and 4+B), but it is necessary to increase significantly the proposed eligibility threshold.

HBS simulations show that it could be possible to maintain the current level of expenditure by increasing the threshold to almost 70% of the SML. This would cover about 6% of the population and about 230,000 households. This scenario is computed assuming that all eligible people actually receive the benefit both in a scenario of the current expenditure and the simulated one. In reality actual expenditure is only 40% of the simulated one for TSA and 94% and 99% respectively for SCA and 4+B. Therefore, assuming that the simulated budget of the new TSA is equal to the current budget is likely to represent an under-estimate of the final budget since non take-up is likely to be high in means tested benefits.

Under this significantly higher threshold of eligibility the combined monthly budget at 2015 prices would be of 3042 million KZT and would substantially reduce the number of households that will lose out of the reform. Moreover, while the absolute number of losers would be still high, they will be relatively better off households and the loss will be for a relatively small amount, since the difference between simulated income with and without reform is small (see Table 11).

Table 11 Winners and losers from the reform at a threshold of 70% of SML, 2015

	Households		Persons		Average simulated per capita income	
	Winner	Loser	Winner	Loser	Reform	No reform
<40% of SML	28368	0	114048	0	14502	8933
40% SML - 50% of New SML	38476	0	186667	0	14462	10930
50% of New SML - 60% of SML	25911	0	126157	0	14470	12271
60% of SML - New SML	73050	143876	338763	908116	17359	17577
Above New SML	0	160157	0	989759	45795	45867
Total	165805	304033	765634	1897875	40947	40948

Source: Authors' analysis of HBS data.

5.1.2 Review the calculation of agricultural income

The simulations suggest that some of the eligible households might be excluded because of the way agricultural income is currently imputed. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully review and simplify the way agricultural income is assessed and accounted for. Currently the methodology

has not been updated for a long time, it remains very problematic with unclear rules on how this is implemented in practice. We recommend to review the methodology

Incomes from agriculture could be estimated based on the amount and quality of land and livestock owned and labour provided by the household. This approach should be carefully estimated using both the HBS and agricultural survey/census data. The objective would be to determine the normative amount of income that people can obtain from the land based on the available inputs (amount and quality of land, livestock, and family labour), or in other words the income that is usually expected to achieve. This should be based on actual survey data to reflect the economic reality of the agricultural sector in the country. The specific approach to be used depends on the existence of good land registries and the reliability of existing assessment of soil quality. Ideally this information should be matched with survey data. This is not a simple task and would require the collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

If the Government succeeds in formulating a new approach in the calculation of income, this would also require a re-assessment of the eligibility estimates and the possible need to adjust the eligibility threshold for TSA.

5.1.3 Review the approach followed in assuming incomes

Our simulations have also indirectly shown that the practice of assuming incomes whenever people declare incomes below the minimum wage could be the reason why many people are not receiving support. This is a problem directly related to the estimation of agricultural income, but perhaps also an issue in relation to the treatment of people who do not want to declare themselves as unemployed, but cannot prove their sources of income, as these are of occasional and informal nature. Since it is well known that indeed many people do earn less than the minimum wage (are ‘unproductively employed’) it is compelling to verify through detailed analysis of administrative data the exact frequency with which incomes are assumed and assess its appropriateness through some selected household visits. Subsequently this could provide alternative guidance on how to deal with these circumstances. It is important to ensure that such practice is not a way to artificially reduce the number of beneficiaries and exclude poor households.

An alternative approach to verify household’s eligibility to social assistance could also involve an indirect verification that household’s declared income is consistent with the household living standards. In other words it could be possible to devise an indirect test based on household’s characteristics and ownership of assets to verify that the household is indeed relatively poor. If this is the case, income will not be routinely assumed, social assistance could still be provided, but the household would still need to sign a contract and services should be provided to support the household to find adequate employment whenever possible.

5.1.4 Duration of support

There are two fundamental aspects related to duration of support: the prescribed maximum duration of support, and the frequency with which eligibility is assessed in relation to seasonal economic opportunities.

Issues with setting maximum duration of support: Both in the amended legislation (article 4 clause 7) and in the way legislation was implemented in Mangystau and Kyzylorda, it appears that conditional TSA support is provided with a limited duration. However, duration of support should distinguish between duration of income disregard linked to a specific job opportunity and duration of the benefit itself that should continue if the household income remains under the threshold. The design of the Orleu project aimed at providing an income boost to households that were willing to accept jobs provided through the scheme as a way to encourage them to find jobs and break the poverty trap of low incomes. This is essentially achieved providing support that ignores the eventual income obtained by households during a 6 month period. However, it should be recognised that such approach may or may not succeed in providing lasting solutions. This ultimately depends not only on individuals and households circumstances, but on the wider socio-economic opportunities. It is possible that, even continuing to engage in some of the offered economic opportunities, the household will remain under the eligibility threshold or that the economic activity completely ceases because conceived from the start as a temporary employment. In such cases the household should be entitled to receive assistance, whereas as we observed in Kyzylorda and Mangystau current implementation basically stops any support after the 6 month period, leaving most households still in a situation of extreme poverty. Therefore, there is a gross confusion between duration of the income disregard (the income boost provided by some economic activity that is ignored when computing the entitlement to TSA) and the duration and eligibility to TSA, which should not be understood as fixed term assistance. It could also be possible to conceive differently the effect of the disregard, rather than simply stopping after 6 months. Indeed, it could be reduced, but maintained as a certain percentage of employment income in order to maintain adequate employment incentives. In any case, we believe that it would be very important to issue some clarifications on this aspect as current implementation seems to interpret the new conditional TSA as a '6 month support'.

Seasonality and frequency of assessment: Especially in rural areas the economic circumstances and job opportunities display a strong seasonality, currently this results in large movements in and out of benefit, but it is unclear to what extent the same people return to social assistance after a very short spell. More analysis should be carried out on this issue and determine to what extent a longer period of assistance could result in having more impact on poverty and more efficient administrative operations. As will also be discussed under recommendation 5.4, this is linked to the way quarterly SML is set and ensure that its level does reflect actual changes in prices and not a lagged increase that actual is out of phase with actual price changes: SML decreases when prices increase and increase when prices fall.

5.2 Recommendations on the administration of the new TSA

Based on the simulations and as part of the fieldwork conducted for this study we have come across a number of issues related to the way the legislation is implemented, and we summarise below the key recommendations aimed at improving the way the reform will operate.

Need of setting in place transitional measures: As mentioned also in section 4.3 many of the current beneficiaries of 4+B, TSA and SCA should become eligible to the new TSA (especially if the preliminary threshold will be increased). It is therefore recommended that the MLSP should take a proactive role to ensure that all current beneficiaries be contacted and invited to apply for the new TSA. This will require some coordination between ESPO and the State Centre for Pension payments, which currently is responsible for 4+B payments. It will also be necessary that

during this transitional period the ESPO will have an adequate number of staff who have been trained to support people in their application.

Need of better monitoring the implementation of the legislation. There seems to be significant discrepancies in the interpretation of the legislation. In fact, in a number of cases we did find that rules have been interpreted with significant differences and contrary to what contained in the legislation:

- Withdrawing housing allowance when in receipt of the new TSA;
- Include activation measures for just one household member or for all adults in the household;
- Requesting mothers to work when the child is between 3 and 7, even though for this age the requirement was only temporary;
- Stopping benefits for the whole household when one member is not compliant with the rules.

It is necessary to ensure that the Management Information System (MIS) is not only well designed to capture relevant aspects of implementation, but also used accordingly by local managers to ensure compliance with the legislation and identify problematic areas that require intervention. The MIS should not only capture information about beneficiaries and applicants, but also on staff processing the applications: workload, performance, etc. It would also be very important to track more consistently duration of support and seasonal variations, as well as introduce some indicators related to general family well-being (see section 5.5.3 for more details on this).

Need for communication campaign and better explanations on the new TSA. We found that there was some confusion in people understanding of the new TSA, some people understood this was a sort of loan, but could not explain why certain households got more than others. There should be clarity that this is primarily a social assistance benefit, which only has some activation requirements. It is necessary to develop a specific communication campaign about the new TSA, which should also address problems of lack of take-up, especially in rural areas.

Introduce flexibility in the way individual contracts are stipulated for employable household members as part of the new TSA. Based on the individual circumstances and the activation measures identified with the applicant it should be possible to consider a different disbursement schedule of the support provided. For example, disbursement does not necessarily need to be made on a monthly basis, but in specific circumstances could allow larger upfront payments to support people to start a new economic activity. Similarly, the rule of employable household members should be considered as a safe-guarding rule for people falling in such category, but not a necessity. For example, also parents with children less than 7 years old could apply for a job in some circumstances.

Timing of public works as part of individual contracts of social activation: In many cases, we observed that social activation ended up being participation in public works. As much as possible it would be important to ensure that public works should focus their intervention in the 'lean season', rather than being offered during the 'peak season' as we found that there is a risk of crowding out jobs in the economy.

Migration and residence issues: Problems with registration at a certain address or with lack of some documents is frequently coming up as one issue hindering the ability of households to apply for support. This is an issue that needs further assessment to identify ways it can be resolved.

Nevertheless, the fundamental issue that needs to be addressed is to ensure that the same person will not be paid twice in different parts of the country. Once this is ascertained then temporary certifications can be made to determine household eligibility to support. A review of how civil registration operates is required. While, it is a duty of every citizen to have proper identification and residence registration, it is in the interest and responsibility of the administration that this is done properly. Therefore, there is scope for the administration to support citizens with lack of documents (see also what recommended under 5.3.1).

Exclusion of non-cooperating employable members: The current version of the law on the new TSA (article 2, clauses 1 and 2), considers ineligible to social aid persons who are unemployed and refuse to register with the employment office or refuse to undertake a social contract of activation. However, we have come across cases where this translates in leaving out of support the whole household. Rather than excluding from support the whole household, it is important to be able to interpret with some flexibility the household social conditions. In cases where people have an un-registered disability or some other specific issue affecting their capability of registering with the employment office and accepting job offers, only the concerned member should be excluded, but other household members should be still in a position to receive support. Moreover, this is also an area where non-compliance needs to be better understood because often is linked to specific social issues in the household. Such cases need a more comprehensive assessment of household needs and perhaps referral to specific social services.

Staff implementing the programme need training and ongoing professional development and support. The staff from Employment and Social Programmes Offices that have been delivering the pilot have been employed on temporary contracts, with little training and have apparently been interpreting the rules of the programme in slightly different ways. It would be recommended to establish a comprehensive workforce development plan for the new workforce that will be attached to the Employment centres and implementing the social contracts. Recommendations on minimum qualifications of staff employed as consultants or social assistants include a degree in social work and at least one year of experience working as a social worker with vulnerable groups. Given, however, that the functions and mandates of the staff of the ESPO have not yet be finalised, it seems likely that experience in employment, community development and social assistance programmes such as Orleu, BOTA CCT or other similar programmes including micro-credit and small/medium enterprise development could also be relevant. If staff do not have a social work qualification but rather have experience in para-professional roles, there is an important need to ensure that basic, foundational social work skills and competencies are provided through induction training and then through regular supervision and ongoing top-up training. The basic foundational competencies need to be defined once the mandates of the ESPO staff have been finalised in law but are likely to include: establishing relationships of trust; home-visiting; community services; basic knowledge about vulnerable groups, causes and impact of poverty on family functioning, basic knowledge of the social assistance system, health and education services and the special social services law and regulations; knowledge of disability legislation and programmes as well as legislation and programmes concerning the elderly. Special attention should be paid to ensuring a straightforward case management system is introduced and staff are trained to be able to use it. Key elements of the case management system are an assessment framework for the whole household assessment; planning with clients; regular review and monitoring. Ideally the case management system should be linked to information management systems and staff should be trained in data entry to ensure streamlined administrative systems can be implemented. If ESPO staff are to be mandated as case managers, then they may need

additional knowledge and skills relating to particular client groups, for example child development, child protection, family support, working with parents who have mental health problems etc. The details of the staff development programme should be developed as the roles and functions of the staff are finalised.

5.3 Recommendations on improved legislative framework related to integration of social services and cash benefits programmes

5.3.1 Recognition of low income households as in need of special social services

The single most important improvement could be the recognition that TSA recipients, rejected applicants or households below a poverty threshold slightly higher than the TSA threshold are ‘in difficult life circumstances’ and therefore eligible for special social services funded by the government. If the government decides that politically and financially it can support poor households with more services than they can currently access, then this would represent a clear and decisive step towards integration of social services and cash benefits programmes. Means-testing access to social services, however, is not recommended, so a mechanism is required for designating households with children living in difficult life circumstance as being in need of state support. This could take several forms:

1. Self-referral – applications to the Akim or directly to the ESPO or the community commissions should trigger a preliminary assessment of need that could result in a referral to services whether families have been means-tested or not.
2. Health social workers, who encounter children and families early in the child’s life (as well as throughout childhood) and can identify challenges or issues as they arise could be a key source of referrals both to the community commission and ESPO and to other types of services.
3. Education services who encounter children in early childhood (pre-school settings) and through to young adulthood (schools, colleges, further education settings).
4. Commissions for the affairs of Minors are an inter-sectoral body that have a good idea of which families in the district are vulnerable and may require additional support in order to access TSA or other kinds of services. They may, however, encounter children only in an ad hoc way when problems have already occurred and brought a child or family to their notice.
5. Child protection authorities are well-placed to identify children in families that are struggling to provide adequate care and are in need of family support services, but depending on how they currently work, the specialists may become aware of these children and families only at a late stage when problems are already endemic and more challenging to address. Nevertheless, all children who are considered to be at risk of removal from parental care by the child protection authorities should be referred first for family support and preventive interventions before any decision to remove children into state care is taken¹³.

¹³ See UN Guidelines on the Alternative care of Children, 2009

6. Police – although referrals from police usually come at a late stage i.e when violence, neglect or abuse has already taken place, children and families that have come to the attention of the police should be eligible to receive services (and TSA if they need it and are eligible).

Assessment guidance and training would be required for all relevant health social workers, child protection specialists, police, Akim staff, ESPO consultants or assistants and community commissions to ensure a standardised approach to determining need, a process that is always vulnerable to subjective interpretation. A child well-being framework could be one way to structure a needs assessment of this kind. Otherwise the risk framework currently being used by the health social workers in the Ministry of Health approved case management and case work system is a good starting point for needs assessment that doesn't necessarily involve the administrative burden of means-testing.

Services that families need and do not yet exist can be developed through Oblast social services development plans, grants for NGOs and through ESPO and other existing networks of community based services. There is a need to develop standards for community based social services, case management and casework and to support social administration tasks such as restoring lost documents and addressing civil registration issues. A legal aid system could also be linked to this kind of social administration task. This step would also require a legal recognition of the community-based social worker that may be operating in a range of settings (health services, school, NGOs, ESPO, akimat, child protection services) but with specific 'accompaniment' functions.

5.3.2 Standardization of case work and case management instruments

As discussed above, the development of a more unified approach to assessment, case management and decision-making about children and families could help to ensure more effective inter-sectoral cooperation, but could also help to create a system that can be responsive to changes in the family situation as children grow or new challenges arise that have to be addressed by services that should support families. The Orleu guidance on case management could be strengthened, but given the lack of clarity on the extent to which the government plans to align with UNICEF goals on child and family support services becoming more integrated with social assistance and on the overall goals and objectives of a more integrated system of cash assistance and social services, it is not clear that there is any real value in improving the Orleu guidance when other, existing guidance approved by the government, could also be used as the basis for a more inter-sectoral approach within the Orleu programme. The guidance, formats and case management algorithm for social workers in the health system, for example, could be adapted for use by social workers in a range of settings and become the basis for the work of the Orleu consultants and assistants and other social workers operating in government funded services.

Similarly, the current regulatory framework for social workers and the development of the social work profession is also patchy in the way it has been developed. Most of the recognised professional social work roles are located in residential services or in health services. There is a need to develop a regulatory framework that can legally recognise the professional social work of the ESPO staff, NGO social workers and other types of social workers or para-professionals such as social care assistants providing care in the home for elderly or disabled adults. This requires harmonising the social work professional development framework with the full range of government policies and programmes requiring professionals with social work qualifications for implementation

or requiring para-professionals to be deployed. To date, the social work profession seems to be developing with new types of social workers being added on as new initiatives are undertaken. This means that the starting point is reasonably well developed, but a classification of social workers and para-professionals in the social services workforce could help to make clearer to government agencies and local authorities, the differences between the different types of workers, their mandates and functions and therefore the competencies (skills, knowledge and behaviors) required of them. Of course this then can form the foundation for both education and training programmes (pre-service and in-service) and for performance management and continuous professional development systems that can help to ensure a growing and steadily more competent workforce able to meet the challenges of implementing new government programmes and supporting the development of new types of services. This is a long-term goal, but the reform of the social assistance system and the introduction of ESPO staff with community-based social work functions that include assessment, home-visiting, case management and monitoring, represents an opportunity to consolidate the way the social work profession has been developing to date and to ensure that in the immediate transition period at least some of the challenges can be met for ensuring a competent workforce is in place.

5.3.3 Introduction of clear indicators for monitoring implementation of TSA program

The field work suggested that the current indicators are focused mainly on employment and livelihoods. In aligning goals, objectives and methods across social assistance, special social services and child-focused policies and programmes in health and education as recommended above, there is a need to ensure that key indicators for monitoring and evaluation are introduced at all levels that are child-focused. One option is to consider the adoption of a child well-being framework that can be used across sectors to monitor children and how they are affected by interventions from social assistance, health, education, social services, or other programmes. Such a framework should be as simple as possible to ensure that the data that needs to be gathered for key indicators can be gathered without excessive additional administrative burden. For example, four aspects of child well-being can be considered as relevant to the goals of the TSA program and the wider government child and family support policies set out in the Concept of Social Development 2030 – education, health, care and safety. Each domain can then be assessed using simple and clear indicators and means of measurement that can be ascertained during the assessment for TSA or for other services:

1. Safety – sense of being protected

- The child feels safe at home
- The parents always know where their child is
- Young children and children with health problems are not left alone without parental oversight

2. Health

- The child is registered with the community health service, takes part in check-ups and vaccination programmes and receives treatment when he or she has health problems

- The family observes basic minimum hygiene and nutrition standards
- Parents teach the child how to look after herself and her health
- The child is not involved in heavy or dangerous labour or other forms of exploitation and abuse

3. Care

- The child is living with a trusted adult who understands and can meet his or her developmental, physical and emotional needs as they change with age

4. Education

- The child attends school and does homework with help from parents if needed

If these indicators are monitored and can be demonstrated to have remained the same or improved following the provision of TSA and/or other services, then as well as increased income for the household, employment of the adults in the household and other current ways of monitoring TSA effectiveness, it will be possible to understand whether the program is also influencing the well-being of the children in the family.

These domains can also be measured using administrative data from the administrative territorial unit in question. For example, child safety can be monitored through health data on serious injury, accidents and death at home or police data on children being picked up without supervision. Health and education data can give information about the proportion of TSA households with children who are registered with health services and education services compared to all households. Child protection data can provide information about the proportion of children who are not in the care of their own families. This offers a way of triangulating service level data.

If the goal of the TSA reform is to help other family members to achieve goals in social activation or economic participation, then a similar framework can also be established for people with disabilities, mental health issues, older people or other family members who are not subject to the employment conditionalities, but whom the government would like to support in accessing services so that they can also move towards engagement in the labour force. In the case of people with disabilities, for example, this might include support in accessing skills training or specialized employment services in accordance with the commitment of the government of Kazakhstan under the UNCRPD. In the case of women who are looking after children or other relatives at home, this may include supporting access to services that can ease the transition back to the workplace after maternity leave or once children reach school age. Ideally, a set of outcomes and indicators could be developed to ensure that the programme is able to monitor progress against desired outcomes for all household members who are benefitting from the new TSA not only the employable adults.

It would be important, of course, to ensure that staff and beneficiaries fully understand that the recipients of unconditional TSA are not obliged to fulfil social activation measures, but should be able to access opportunities that can promote social activation, inclusion and improved well-being for all household members.

5.4 Recommendations on setting the SML and poverty measures

Currently there are a number of issues in the way the SML is set and used for determining eligibility to social assistance and to generate poverty estimates.

There is currently a mismatch in the way eligibility is assessed for social assistance and the way poverty is defined. This is because the SML is defined in per capita terms, but household incomes are adjusted using some form of equivalence scales. We have argued that the current approach results in heavily under-estimating the level of poverty in the country, because a per capita poverty line is used against a per adult equivalent income measure: poverty would be 3 times higher if measured consistently.

Moreover, we were unable to retrieve from administrative data the actual level of SML used by different oblasts on a quarterly basis. However, using information provided by the statistical office on their monthly bulletins, it appears that the SML does not always increase in relation to changes in prices and there seems to be a mismatch between seasonal variation in prices and changes in the SML: the SML is the highest in the third quarter while prices decrease and then SML decrease in the last quarter when prices are very high (see information presented in the statistical annex).

For consistency in the approach and a more direct assessment of the impact of social assistance on poverty, it would be useful to adopt a per adult equivalent approach in determining both eligibility to social assistance and poverty, but in such case the SML would need to be adjusted accordingly and also expressed in per adult equivalent terms. At the same time it would be necessary to review the specific methodology used to determine the quarterly level of the SML, and ensure that this is in line with seasonal price changes.

Kazakhstan has been very successful in drastically reducing absolute poverty, but now the challenge needs to be raised at higher levels to continue socio-economic improvement focusing on those who are relatively worse-off. If, changing the share of the minimum basket that is spent on food, the SML is increased and poverty line and poverty measurement is made consistent, the head-count would increase at about 12%. This would definitely become a more useful level of poverty against which to assess the impact of not only social assistance, but also broader socio-economic policies.

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Annex A Statistical tables

A.1 Scale consistency in poverty line and income measurement

The subsistence minimum level is made of the food and non-food components. The non-food component is expressed as a fixed percentage of the cost required to buy the minimum food basket. The computation of the minimum food basket considers the food requirements of different age and sex groups: children 13 years old and younger, teenagers 14 to 17 (male and female), working population (men 18-62, and women 18-57) and those in pension age. For each of these groups the Institute of Nutrition of Kazakhstan recognises different required calorie intake (1521 Kcal for children below 14, 2775 Kcal for teenage boys, 2110 Kcal for teenage girls, 2646 Kcal for adult men, 2100 Kcal for adult females, and 2052 Kcal for pensioners). However, this is expressed as an average per capita need of 2175 kcal. This is simply obtained as the weighted average of the population share of different groups multiplied by their respective calorie intake need. Therefore the approach is to compute an average per capita requirement. To the food per capita requirement an additional fixed percentage of non-food expenditure is added to compute the overall per capita SML.

It is important to emphasise that this is a per capita average requirement. When poverty rates are computed, the specific age/sex requirements are not taken into account and instead the per capita requirement is used. However, to make the comparison appropriate the same approach should be used to compute the income of the household members. Income is computed at the household level and then divided by the number of household members.

On the contrary if income is expressed in per adult equivalent terms, then this must be taken into account in terms of poverty line.

It is widely recognised that per capita poverty lines are more appropriate for households of average size and composition, whereas they tend to underestimate the actual needs of small households and to overestimate the needs of large households. For instance, the average calorie intake is lower than the actual requirements of a single adult, but overestimates those of households with many children since individual calorie requirements vary with age and sex. In addition there are economies of size that make consumption 'cheaper' for large households, and some 'quasi-public goods', whose costs tend to be very similar independently of the number of members in the household (such goods are generally durable items and housing related services). Although it is widely recognised that it is necessary to make some adjustment for economies of size and equivalence scales, there is less consensus on how they should be made.

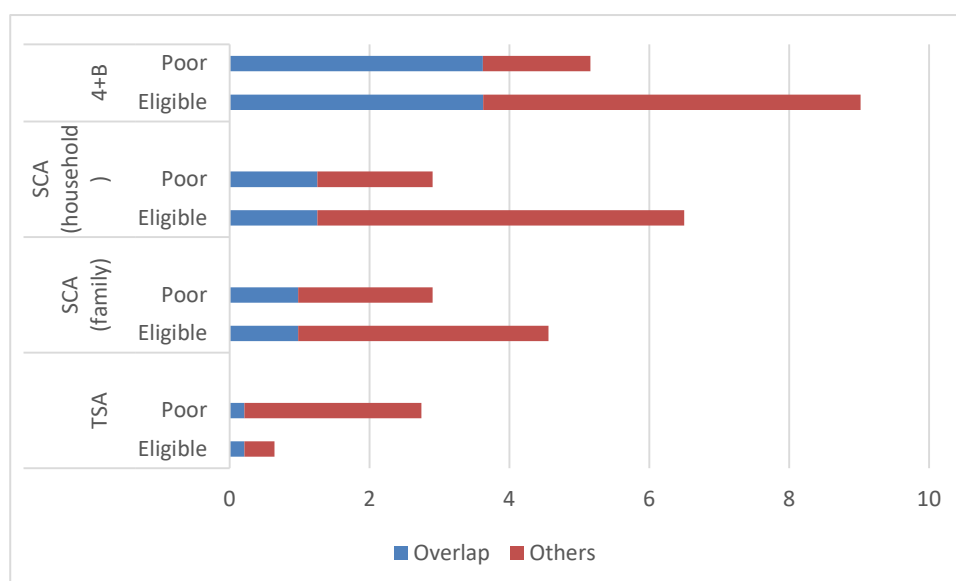
Once a specific set of parameters that define the equivalence scales and the economies of size are made, it is possible to express household size as a number of 'equivalent members'. For instance, using the current approach of the statistical agency in Kazakhstan, a household of four members made of husband, wife and two children, is made of 3.4 equivalent members ($1+3*0.8$). Similarly, the per capita poverty line can be transformed to represent the needs of a single member. Such correction is simply obtained inflating the per capita poverty line by a factor equal to the ratio of average household size and average equivalent member household size (the average household size in Kazakhstan in 2015 was approximately 3.4, while the equivalised household size was 2.9, so that the multiplying factor is about 1.16)¹⁴. Applying this correction the poverty lines for a single adult in 2015 should have been approximately 22,877 KZT per adult equivalent or 19647 KZT per capita.

¹⁴ An alternative approach is to compute the poverty line considering from the beginning the transformation of consumption and calorie requirements in equivalent consumer units. This approach usually reaches very similar results.

It is important to stress that here we do not enter in the merits of what should be the equivalence scales for Kazakhstan or the right per capita income level, but simply on the fact that poverty line (requirement) and measure of income must be made in the same space and using the same measurement scales.

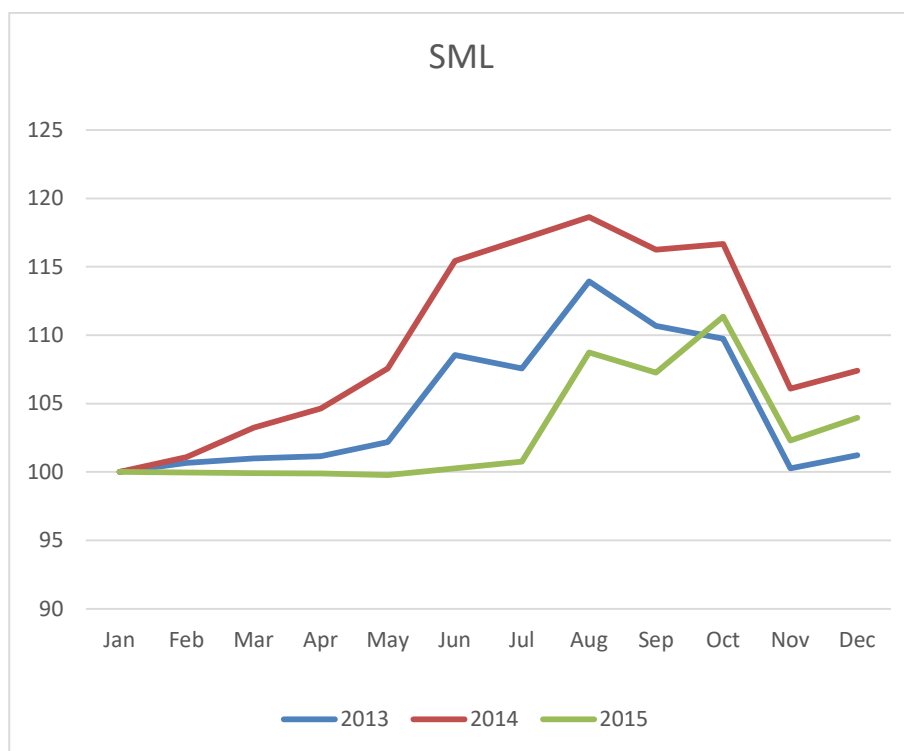
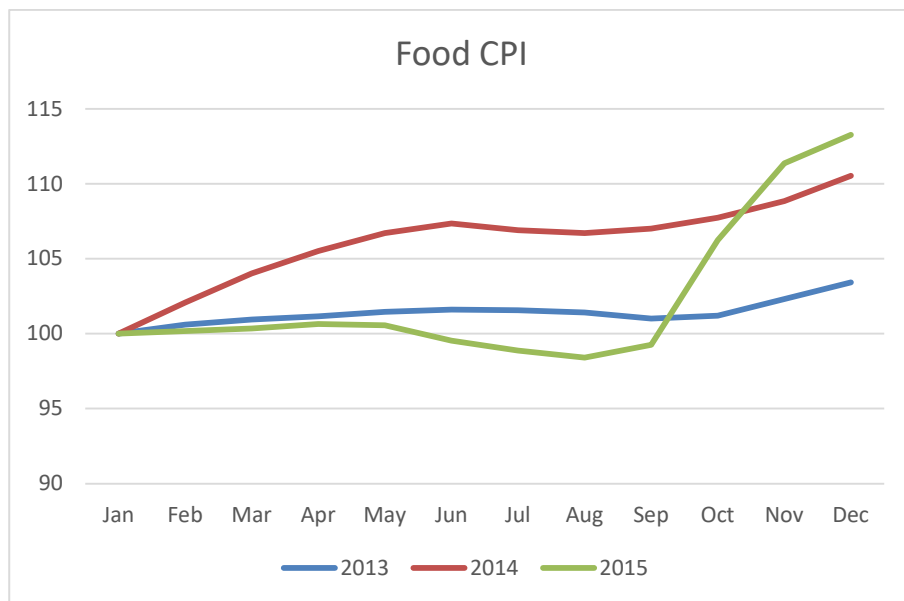
A.2 Overlap between eligibility and official poverty

The figure below presents an alternative measure to what shown in section 2.3 by using the official poverty measure and measuring its overlap with eligibility. We have argued that in this scenario poverty is heavily under-estimated, but the key results of the relative coverage of the different benefits remain the same, with 4+B having the biggest impact on poverty.



A.3 Different seasonal changes in food prices and SML

The graphs below show the monthly indexes of Food CPI and SML in three years, 2013, 2014 and 2015, expressed in relation to the level seen in January of each year. We can see that the three years have a broadly consistent pattern. For food prices levels inflation increases until June (the first two quarters), then prices decline in the third quarter and drastically increase in the last three months of the year. Instead for the SML, increases appeared to be lagged, resulting in a very different seasonal pattern, with levels increasing and remaining high until the third quarter and then dropping in the last two months of the year. There is a clear mismatch between SML and Food CPI, which has potentially distortive effects on eligibility to social assistance and also on poverty measures.



Annex B Design and terms of reference for an NGO contractor

B.1 Introduction

One of the outputs of the project is to develop terms of reference and design for NGO based social assistance reference centers (hereafter NGO SA Center) at district level (one in Kyzylorda oblast and one in Mangystau oblast). According to the UNICEF terms of reference, the goal of such a center would be to support beneficiaries to access cash benefits and services and enhance coordination across sectors. It has been agreed with UNICEF following the field work that the NGO SA Center design will be mainly focused on complementary service provision and will aim to enhance and not duplicate the functions and mandates of the Employment and Social Support Offices.

In any final version of the design for such an NGO run Center, the framing of the goals and objectives will be of critical importance and may require fine-tuning with UNICEF and interested government partners (regional and national government) before the design can be completed.

B.1.1 National policy and legislative framework

The focus of national policies and programs relevant to the goals and functions of the NGO SA Center is primarily on addressing '*social apathy and dependency*'¹⁵. The concern of policy-makers is to '*activate*' the poor to make them more economically secure and reduce reliance on social assistance. The new conditional cash assistance program due to be introduced in 2018 following the 'Orleu' pilot reflects this concern with a strong emphasis on employment and sustainable livelihoods. The government also recognizes that social services are also required to make cash assistance programs more effective and the proposed NGO SA Center goals should be aligned with this aim of achieving greater efficiency of social aid through '*the consolidation of programs and social support sources...to improve the coordination of social aid*'¹⁶.

At the same time, the government is pursuing policy goals in relation to vulnerable groups that are reflected in the Law on Special Social Services of 2008 which designates individuals/families in the following difficult life situations as eligible for support from social services:

- 1) Orphanhood
- 2) Lack of parental care
- 3) Lack of supervision of minors including deviant behaviour
- 4) The location of a minor in an educational organization with a special regime of maintenance
- 5) Limited ability of early psycho-physical development of children from birth to three years
- 6) Limited livelihood as the result of socially significant illness and illness that are dangerous to others
- 7) Inability to take care of oneself because of old age, the result of illness and (or) disability
- 8) Violence leading to social inadaptation and social deprivation;

¹⁵ Concept of Social Development, 2030

¹⁶ Concept of Social Development, 2030

- 9) Homelessness
- 10) Release from prison
- 11) Being on the probation service register of the criminal executive inspection

In some cases there are overlaps with the beneficiaries of social assistance programs – children and adults with disabilities or certain illnesses living below the poverty thresholds, older people with limited abilities, ex-offenders returning to their communities and seeking employment, people with no housing, victims of domestic violence who are also receiving social assistance and home environments that present a threat to the psycho-physical development of children from birth to three years of age. It is not clear that the Law on special social services applies in other cases to social welfare recipients or to those households who may be eligible for social assistance, but have not applied. It is likely that many of the individuals or families eligible for special social services are also living in poverty and are eligible for social assistance.

There is potential to explore the possibility of the service delivered by the NGO SA Center to become sustainable through becoming designated as a special social service, although this may require low income families with children being recognised by the Law on Special Social Services as eligible to receive this type of service paid for by the government.

B.1.2 UNICEF priorities

UNICEF supports child-centered social assistance policies and seeks to ensure stronger links between the system of social assistance and the provision of services to support families with children. The aim is to ensure that families in need of support can access the support they need in addition to cash benefits at as early a stage as possible in each child's life and at as early a stage as possible in the emergence of problems or challenges in providing care for children.

UNICEF definitions of family support and parenting support

“Family support is a set of (service and other) activities oriented to improving family functioning and grounding child-rearing and other familial activities in a system of supportive relationships and resources (both formal and informal.

Parenting support is a set of (service and other) activities oriented to improving how parents approach and execute their role as parents and to increasing parents' child-rearing resources (including information, knowledge, skills and social support and competencies).”

Family and parenting support: policy and provision in a global context, Innocenti Insight, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence (2015)

The new targeted social assistance (TSA) program represents an opportunity for engaging with low income families with children and providing social work interventions to improve well-being and improve family functioning. At present this goal is not explicit in the design of the new TSA, but UNICEF aims to advocate for strengthened family support beyond the 'social activation' currently included in the new TSA design. This terms of reference sets out the design and detailed operational plan for a UNICEF-funded NGO SA Center that can model ways of more effectively linking social assistance and social services bearing in mind the government goals and new TSA program design as it currently stands following the Orleu pilot.

B.1.3 New TSA program becoming effective in January 2018

The design of the new TSA is closely aligned with the Orleu program that has been piloted in Kyzylorda and Mangystau and appears to aim to further improve and strengthen the casework approaches set out in the guidance and government-ordered formats for the Orleu program. The new social assistance law amendments setting out the framework for the new targeted social assistance program strongly reflects the language and content of the Orleu programme manual. This approach to designing the NGO SA Centre is being adopted therefore on the assumption that UNICEF and the government of Kazakhstan are planning to build on and strengthen the Orleu program and not replace it with another, yet untested, program or methodology.

B.2 Design for a NGO SA Center focused on complementary service provision

The design is proposed for validation with UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and Social Policy and the participating NGOs. Commenting on the design and ToR should be part of the application process and the contracted NGO should introduce amendments as required following further consultations with the implementing partners and other stakeholders in the target districts and oblasts.

B.2.1 Key design principles

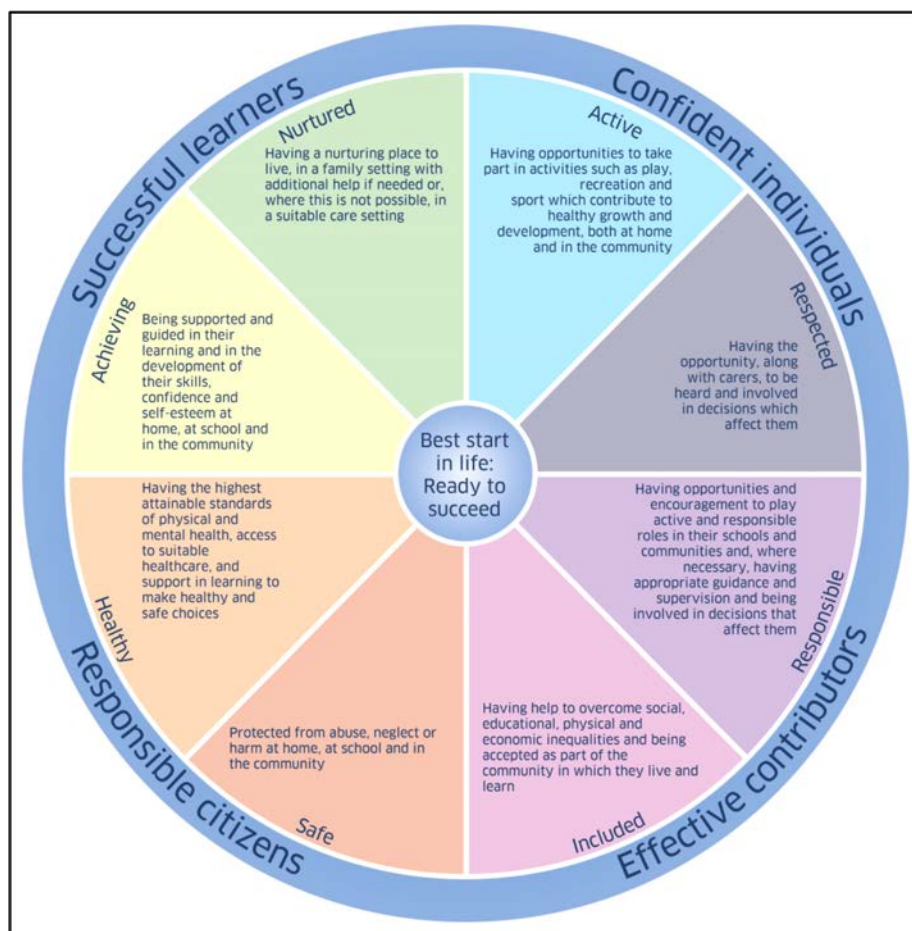
The NGO SA Center will use the principles of a '*single service window*' approach by co-locating the NGO-run service with the Employment and Social Support Office staff members who are responsible for implementing the new TSA. The focus will be on *adding resources* to those that the Offices already have and not replacing or duplicating existing functions and mandates.

The NGO SA Center will use an *individual casework* and case management approach to *mobilise resources in the local community* to support families. The methods will be adapted and developed on the basis of methods that have been proven to be *effective in Kazakhstan* and are based on international promising practices. Examples include the case management instruments used by social workers in the health sector, by the Child and Family Support Centre in Ust-Kamenogorsk and other NGO or government models.

The NGO SA Center will work at district level, serving the whole district, and be located physically within the office or building where the target district Employment and Social Support Office is also located. Staff will travel to clients in outlying areas of the district as required and will have access to transport for this purpose.

The NGO SA Center will be focused on child well-being with an assumption that the family can best provide for the child's well-being and may require some support to achieve this. Eight domains of child well-being are illustrated in Figure 1 and this framework, or parts of it, can be used to identify key areas for assessment and monitoring in the work of the NGO SA Center.

Figure 1 Child well-being framework – Government of Scotland



Source: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/wellbeing>

The consultants and assistants at the Employment and Social Support Office will have responsibilities for all their beneficiaries, for the 'social adaptation' of families and the drafting and implementing individual plans of family support in the widest sense as set out in Articles 4.1 – 4.3 of the new TSA legislation:

4.1 Social adaptation and the 'need for measures of social adaptation'

4.2 Social contract of family activation

4.3 Individual plan of family support 'for promoting employment and social adaptation of the family to increase living standards of lower income persons in particular: i) active job search, ii) attending professional training, retraining, advanced training, iii) running private enterprise or smallholding, iv) participation in regular screening inspections, v) medical registration by the 12th week of pregnancy, vi) voluntary treatment of existing socially significant illnesses alcoholism and drug addiction, vii) timely use of special social services and / or rehabilitation measures for the disabled, viii) other measures based on specific needs by decision of the inter-agency commission.'

The NGO SA center will add resources by:

1. *Providing services to families with children who have been rejected by the cash benefit program because of problems with civil registration or other documentation and help them to re-apply if they are essentially eligible.*

2. *Referring rejected applicants to other services in the community* where they can seek support and help rejected applicant families to access other services to which they are entitled (health, education, employment or social services).
3. *Providing these services and referrals to families with children who think they are eligible for the TSA, but need help to apply* because of issues such as health conditions, disability or mental health issues, civil registration, disability registration or other social administration challenges (lost birth certificates, passports, other documents).
4. *Providing methodological support to the consultants and assistants of the Employment and Social Support Offices and to the local Akimat staff to help strengthen social work competencies*, case work to support families in graduating from the cash assistance program and to strengthen the social accompaniment of households whether conditional or unconditional beneficiaries. This methodological support will help to integrate the targeted social assistance program with social services and be more effective in supporting family activation, social adaptation and reducing dependency on social assistance among families with children. Methodological support can take the form of training, on-the-job mentoring, supervision and facilitating case conferences as required and identified during a training needs assessment conducted by the NGO SA Center together with the Employment and Social Support Offices and local akimat staff.

B.2.2 Target beneficiaries and scope

Indirect beneficiaries of each NGO SA Center are an estimated 200 children in each district aged 0-17 years living below or just above the official poverty line as defined by the TSA program.

Direct beneficiaries: An estimated 100 households with children in each target district¹⁷ will require the direct support of the NGO SA Center in any given year although this may increase in the immediate implementation of the new TSA in 2018.

The NGO SA Center will work directly with the parents, guardians and other household members living with the target beneficiaries in an estimated 100 households in each district that have applied for TSA and been rejected or who think they are eligible for TSA according to the income criteria, but have not applied and are in need of support to prepare their application. In total an estimated 300 family members including 200 children in 100 households will be the target of the NGO SA Center services.

An estimated 25 staff of the village akimats and the district Employment and Social Support Office in each district will also benefit directly from the training, support and guidance given by the NGO SA Center.

B.2.3 Risks and assumptions

The goal, purpose, objectives, planned results and monitoring framework for the NGO SA Center have been harmonised with the goals of the Employment and Social Support Offices and with wider state child protection, child development and family support goals before being finalised.

¹⁷ Based on SCB and TSA applicant and recipient data from Mangystau and Kyzylorda for 2015 and child population data for Munailskii and Kyzylorda districts

The NGO SA Center and staff will be given a strong and clear mandate by the district and oblast akimats for working not only with the Employment and Social Support Office staff, but also with other structures and services in the district and the oblast including village akimats, education, health and housing services; child protection organs; specialized social services; employment services; judiciary and police; other NGOs.

UNICEF and its district/oblast authority partners will ensure that the Employment and Social Support Offices in the target districts and associated services are fully consulted about the role, functions, goal and purpose of the NGO SA Center.

A general lack of needed social services in the target districts mean that families may not be able to access services they need. The NGO SA Center will contribute to district and oblast social services development plans by providing information on gaps in services and barriers to accessing services identified through assessments of rejected TSA applicants and in the support they provide to the Employment and Social support Offices in accompanying conditional and unconditional TSA beneficiaries.

B.3 Indicative service specification

Indicative service specifications should be finalised following a consultation with key stakeholders, including practitioners, and confirmation of the goals, objectives, and expected results from the NGO SA Center services.

The goal of the NGO SA Center is to **create a model for supporting child well-being** in the family for TSA recipients and rejected applicants with a focus on child poverty, health, education and child protection.

Key goal indicator: district indicators on child poverty, child health, education and child protection stay the same or improve after project interventions.

The purpose is twofold:

1. Child wellbeing across four domains (health, education, care and safety) in 100 households stays the same or improves after service delivery by NGO SA Center and ESSO compared to initial assessment.

Indicator: number of rejected TSA households or other households receiving NGO SA Center services and number of TSA beneficiary households receiving ESSO services with same or improved child wellbeing in - health, education, care at home, safety - in final case assessment compared to initial assessment;

2. Improved social adaptation and family activation for TSA recipient households (conditional and unconditional).

Indicator: Income levels increased in TSA recipient households and remain stable for 6 months after services have been provided by ESSO staff; number of TSA recipient households are actively referred to services they need by ESSO staff.

B.3.1 The priority target groups (TSA applicants and beneficiaries and other service providers)

This service is provided mainly to low income households with children. The service prioritizes households with children who have been rejected by the new TSA program, and households with children planning to apply to the TSA but needing support to do so (for example to address civil registration or disability registration problems). The service also provides training and support to the village akimat staff and the Employment and Social Support Office staff who are working with households with children that are beneficiaries of the new TSA both conditional and unconditional.

B.3.2 NGO SA Center Principles

- The NGO SA Center will ensure that parents fully understand their rights and responsibilities in applying for TSA, seeking employment or sustainable livelihoods, support from social or other services
- NGO SA Center will ensure that parents understand what is meant by well-being of children in the four domains central to the service – health, education, care at home and safety
- NGO SA Center services are provided equally and consistently for all children and families who need them, irrespective of civil registration, income level, ethnicity, gender or social status
- NGO SA Center services are designed to promote the wellbeing of children and assume that families can best provide the environment where children can grow and develop fully and that families may need help and support to do this (in accordance with the UNCRC)
- All information about the family will remain confidential to the service unless the parent specifically agrees to this information being shared with other professionals or agencies

The objectives and expected results of the service are summarised in Table 1 with the key service delivery indicators.

Table 1 Service objectives, expected results and key indicators

Service objectives and expected results	Key indicators
<p><u>Objective 1</u> All households with children living in poverty in the target districts have access to the full range of services and support available in the district and oblast to support families, child development and child well-being.</p>	<p>Number and % of TSA and low income households with children in the target district accessing health, education, child care and other social services</p>

<p><u>Objective 2</u> Strengthened social work competencies and casework methods of the Employment and Social Support Offices and local akimat staff in their work with both conditional and unconditional TSA beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Number and % of TSA and low income households referred to services by Employment and Social Support Office and local akimat staff</p>
<p><u>Result 1:</u> Low income families rejected by the new TSA supported to reapply and to access social services in the community focused on child development, protection and family support.</p>	<p>Number and % of rejected families with children reapplying to the TSA</p> <p>Number and % of rejected families with children reapplying successfully</p> <p>Number and % of rejected families referred to social services or other family support services they need as identified by a competent assessment</p> <p>Number and % of rejected families accessing social services they need</p>
<p><u>Result 2:</u> Income maximised and barriers to employment or sustainable livelihoods addressed for family members who are not able to access cash benefits, but have low income.</p>	<p>Number of families with children applying for the TSA with support of NGO SA Center</p> <p>Number and % of families with children applying successfully with help from the NGO SA Center</p> <p>Number and % of families with children rejected after help provided by NGO SA Center for reasons other than income higher than the threshold</p> <p>Number and % of families with children referred to social services or other family support services they need as identified by a competent assessment</p> <p>Number and % of families referred accessing social services they need</p>
<p><u>Result 3:</u> Strengthened competencies of Employment and Social Support Office and local akimat staff to support social activation and adaptation of conditional and unconditional TSA beneficiary families with children</p>	<p>Number of ESSO staff trained in casework/case management, family support social work and community social work and mentored in practice</p> <p>Satisfaction of staff with training</p> <p>Satisfaction of TSA recipients with services received from ESSO staff</p> <p>Number and % of unconditional and conditional TSA recipient households with children referred to and accessing services they need as identified by a competent assessment</p>

The main activities of the NGO SA Center include:

B.3.3 In working with households with children:

Identification and provision of initial information

- Engagement of families in need of support with income maximisation, TSA applications or accessing services - as a result of self-referral or of referral from ESSO, akimats, other NGOs or other public agencies. NGO SA Center will support the ESSO, akimats and other agencies to inform the public about the new TSA and about its services
- The parent or guardian is provided information concerning their rights and obligations while participating in the service. This should include information about the four well-being domains that are central to the goal and purpose of the NGO SA Center. Information should be provided in an easy and clear format and in the local language.
- Information is provided about which services will be available to the parent and the family
- How and why the parents are to be included in the assessment and case management process and how the agreements will be concluded between parents and the NGO SA Center (including confidentiality protocols on use of data)

Initial Assessment

- Using standardised case management and case work assessment methods aligned with approved government instruments for the TSA program
- Always with the most active participation of the parent/guardian and the children according to their abilities as well as other household members
- Always taking in to consideration other existing assessments
- Targeted to assess the family's social needs, parenting and care-giving abilities and behaviour and the developmental or other needs of each child in the family
- Focus on four areas of child well-being – health, education, care and safety and with the best interest of the child as a guiding principle.

Planning

- Establishing an individual case plan for each family with attention to the different needs of children of different ages and abilities
- Identification of activities to be provided during the period of accompaniment that meet identified priority needs within the family
- Strong emphasis on the identification of possibilities for access to sustainable adequate living conditions

- Identification of a “case manager” to provide specific personal support for each family to assist the parent/s or carers to develop and maintain practical daily living skills as required
- Development of a plan for continuing maintenance of practical daily living skills if required
 - Empowerment training for the development of personal social skills
 - Self-maintenance and self-management skills (hygiene, nutrition) where appropriate
 - Social communication, adaptation and relationship development
- Recommending a pattern of regular review of the plan in accordance with the needs of the individual family as specified in the individual service plan itself.

Coordination of services amongst relevant agencies

- Establishing contact with and referral to agencies (village akimats, health, education, child protection, social services, NGOs) able to provide continuing support to families during and after the period of accompaniment
- Communication and information provision to other agencies and from other agencies to households in accordance with agreed information sharing protocols

Accompaniment of each household

- Regular contact in person and by phone with household members to support them as they implement the plan
- Coordination and mediation with other agencies together with household members if required
- Provision of direct support in restoration of documents, provision of legal advice if required
- Monitoring of implementation of each individual plan, re-assessing well-being and other criteria as the plan is implemented

Review and closure of cases

- Regular review and follow up of cases together with colleagues and representatives of external agencies as required
- Closure of cases once the goals have been achieved
- Final assessment of well-being and other parameters - income, access to social assistance, access to social services, access to employment or sustainable livelihoods
- Clear communication with families about the closure of the case
- Keeping and storage of the case management files (ensuring confidentiality)

Monitoring and reporting

- Monitoring gaps in services in the district (and/or oblast) that are needed by families
- Base on casework monitoring – reporting to the oblast and ESSO on quality, adequacy, efficiency of other services being provided; barriers to access and issues relating to coordination mechanisms and inter-agency working
- Reporting to the oblast and district authorities on progress against goals, objectives, planned results

B.3.4 In working with social sector staff:

Assessing competencies and gaps in knowledge and skills

- Assessment of the district ESSO and village akimats with a focus on competencies in social work, child development and well-being, community social work, resource mobilization, knowledge of new TSA, family support methods
- Individualized training needs assessments and professional development plans for each staff member with a focus on skills needed for the new TSA implementation

Providing training, mentoring and guidance in practice

- Implementation of professional development plans – delivery of training and provision of on-site guidance and support during household visits, assessment interviews and during the development of individual plans for the activation of each household
- Monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementation of plans and impact on practice
- Gathering data to reporting on key service indicators concerning practice improvements of ESSO and village akimats – rate of referrals to other services, quality of individual plans for conditional and unconditional TSA beneficiaries

Minimum Structural Standards	Performance Indicator
Organisational Standards	
The rules and principles of the NGO SA Center and its services are formulated	Published Service Specification
Information about the NGO SA Center is available and accessible for akimats, governmental and non-governmental organisations	Information leaflets published, information events conducted, web-site based information and internet links established, radio/TV/newspaper or sms campaigns as appropriate to reach the target audience
The NGO SA Center is located in the same space or building as the ESSO	Order of the district authority for the NGO SA Center to occupy the same space/building as the ESSO

Every family using the NGO SA Center has an individual case file	Number of families with an individual case file / number of families using the service
Every case file will have copies of assessments, signed agreements and work plans	Number of files with assessments, work contracts and work plans / number of case files
Each NGO SA Center worker will have access to a mobile phone, computer and the internet	Number of workers with access to mobile phones, computer and internet / number of workers
Each worker will have access to transport for making home visits or have transportation compensated by the NGO SA Center	Number of workers with access to transport/reimbursement for transport / number of workers
Human Resources	
All NGO SA Center workers will have completed special education in social work	Number of workers with diplomas in social work / number of workers
Every worker will have a minimum of 1 year of experience working in social services	Number of workers with at least 1 year of experience working in the social services / number of workers
Every worker must successfully complete a public health check	Number of workers with successfully completed checks / number of workers
Every worker must have no criminal record	Number of workers without criminal records / number of workers
Each worker will carry a pictured ID at all times during their work	Number of workers carrying picture IDs at work / number of workers
Every worker will have a clear job description and official work contract including a code of conduct	Number of job descriptions and signed work contracts/number of workers
Case work is managed to ensure a reasonable caseload for each worker (estimated to be 15-20 per worker per year depending on intensity of interaction required with the family during accompaniment ¹⁸)	Number of cases / number of workers

¹⁸ If 100 households are planned per year for each district, then 5 workers should be allocated)

Minimum Functional Standards	Performance Indicator
An initial assessment will be conducted within 2 days of first contact	Number of initial assessments completed within 2 days / number of completed assessments
The families are fully informed during the assessment about the nature of the work and their responsibilities and rights and sign a contract with the NGO SA Center	Number of contracts signed / number of families participating in assessment
Assessments include at least one home visit	Number of home visits / number of assessments
Assessments and work plans include intersectoral cooperation and consultation with other organisations as required by each individual case	Records of meetings with other agencies in the case files
Family work plans are completed and, discussed with the family within one week of the initial assessment	Number of work plans completed and discussed with families within one week / number of families assessed
Families are required to sign the work plan within three days of the initial assessment	Number of work plans signed by families within three days of initial assessment / number of families assessed
There will be a final assessment of well-being, income, access to services before the case is closed	Number of final assessments / number of closed cases
A service satisfaction survey will be completed by every family before closure of the case	Number of satisfaction surveys completed / number of closed cases

The case work and case management instruments and methods being used by the NGO SA Center should mirror those being used by the Employment and Social Support Offices. It is assumed that the government will be supported by UNICEF to align existing case management instruments for social workers in the health system with those for use by the Employment and Social Support Offices in order to strengthen and reinforce an integrated approach to service delivery. It is assumed therefore that the instruments being used by the NGO SA Center will have been approved by the government and be based on promising practice in Kazakhstan. If the NGO SA Center services adopts a focus on child well-being then additional sections can be added to the assessment and case management formats as follows:

1. Safety – sense of being protected
 - The child feels safe at home
 - The parents always know where their child is

- Young children and children with health problems are not left alone without parental oversight
2. Health
- The child is registered with the community health service, takes part in check-ups and vaccination programs and receives treatment when he or she has health problems
 - The family observes basic minimum hygiene and nutrition standards
 - Parents teach the child how to look after herself and her health
 - The child is not involved in heavy or dangerous labour or other forms of exploitation and abuse
3. Care at home
- The child is living with a trusted adult who understands and can meet his or her developmental, physical and emotional needs as they change with age
4. Education
- The child attends school and does homework with help from parents if needed

B.4 Terms of Reference for an NGO contractor

B.4.1 Introduction

UNICEF Kazakhstan seeks to establish a model of supporting child wellbeing in low income families with a focus on child poverty, health, education and child protection. The impending changes in the targeted social assistance program represent an opportunity to create a more child-centred social assistance system. With this goal in mind, UNICEF is seeking an NGO that can establish and run a Social Assistance Reference Center (hereafter NGO SA Center) in a target district that is co-located with the district Employment and Social Support Office. The NGO SA Center will work directly with families who are not TSA recipients and also support the ESSO to build the skills and competencies of staff working with TSA beneficiaries.

The goals, objectives, expected results from service delivery and indicators proposed for monitoring them are set out in the indicative service specification along with examples of possible structural and functional standards for the service.

The NGO contractor will be expected to use the indicative service specification and design as a starting point for consulting with stakeholders in the target districts prior to finalizing the service design and service specifications.

B.4.2 Purpose of the contract

To establish the NGO SA Center within the broad parameters of the design set out above and run the service for at least 12 months and document methods, results, standards and service specifications by the project end.

B.4.3 Scope of work and main tasks to be achieved during the project

All activities contribute to the achievement of the results, objectives, purpose and goal and are in keeping with the design principles of 'single window' and 'adding resources' to ensure complementarity and non-duplication.

- **Activity 1 Rapid assessment and finalising design and service specifications of the NGO SA Center**

Prior to establishing operations the NGO will conduct a consultation on the NGO SA Center design with key stakeholders in the target district and with the oblast authorities. The NGO will also conduct a rapid assessment of the need for services by reviewing the data on TSA, SCB, 4+B beneficiaries and research conducted with these target groups in the target districts (if any can be identified). The consultation and data analysis aims to establish the relevance of the NGO SA Center design, its proposed goals, objectives, indicators and activities. Adjustments to budgets, staffing plans and the project workplans should be made at this stage in project implementation.

- **Activity 2 Baseline and end of project survey for key indicators**

The NGO should propose a methodology for, and conduct, a survey at the project outset in relation to key indicators proposed in the indicative service specification:

- District indicators on child poverty, child health, education and child protection: e.g. number of children from low income households enrolled in health services, pre-school, school compared to other quintiles; educational attainment of children from low income households compared to children from households in other quintiles; % of children living in poverty in the district; number and % of children from the district living outside of the care of their own family; number and % of reports of child abuse, neglect, violence in the home (indicators to be decided following consultation with local authority partners and UNICEF)
- Number and % of TSA and low income households with children in the target district accessing health, education, child care and other social services
- Number and % of TSA and low income households referred to services by Employment and Social Support Office and local akimat staff
- Number and % of unconditional and conditional TSA recipient households with children referred to and accessing social services or other services they need

The indicators should be monitored again at the end of the project and summarised in a final report on the results of the project.

- **Activity 3 Establishing operations in accordance with the final service specifications**

Activities to establish operations are likely to include, but are not excluded to: establishing workstations and meeting rooms for the NGO SA Center co-located with ESSO; drafting job descriptions and person specifications in accordance with the final service specifications; hiring a service manager and staff through competitive open recruitment; providing induction training for staff.

- **Activity 4 Development and field testing of casework instruments**

Drafting an operations manual for staff giving guidance and instructions based on the final service specifications and aligned with the new TSA program; assessment, case management and other service instruments should be developed together with the service manager and staff, based on final service specifications and TSA formats and in close consultation with ESSO staff. The

casework instruments should be finalised following field testing by staff with at least 2-3 cases each. The instruments and operations manual should undergo a final revision at the end of the project.

- **Activity 5 Staff training for NGO SA Center staff and for ESSO staff**

Conduct a training needs assessment for NGO SA Center staff focused on the competencies required for delivering the NGO SA Center service and deliver any training that is identified as a priority. Provide initial training to ESSO staff and village akimats about the final service specification, methods and standards of the NGO SA Center service.

- **Activity 6 Service launch including awareness raising campaign and information events in village akimats held jointly with ESSO**

Create communications materials about the service and launch the service to ensure maximum visibility and information dissemination across the district among potential service users, government and non-government agencies. Work together with ESSO to run information events together with akimats.

- **Activity 7 Service implementation for 100 households with children over 12 months**

Run the service for 12 months and aim to reach at least 100 households with children using the final service specifications, casework instruments and agreed methods. Document all cases in accordance with the service specifications and standards. Document and report all results in accordance with the service indicators framework. Undertake regular reviews of practice and results and adjust practice accordingly as required.

- **Activity 8 Service implementation for 25 akimat and ESSO staff over 12 months**

Conduct assessments of competencies of akimat and ESSO staff in relation to the new TSA design and the need to ensure more effective case work and individual family support plans for both conditional and unconditional TSA recipients. Create individualised training and professional development plans. Implement the plans by providing tailored training and in practice mentoring and supervision packages. Monitor changes in practice and conduct a feedback survey from participants.

- **Activity 9 Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitor service indicators on a quarterly basis and compile an end of project report with full analysis of results.

- **Activity 10 Reporting on gaps in services in the district identified during the project implementation**

Create a mechanism for monitoring gaps in services based on the assessed needs of households with children. Use the project monitoring results and the case files to identify where services that are needed by families are not available and provide a full report to UNICEF and the district and oblast authorities.

- **Activity 11 Documentation and final report**

A full final report should provide a description of the service, its methods and instruments including job descriptions, assessment and case management formats, analysis of results, baseline and end of project studies for key indicators.

B.4.4 Expected outputs

1. Baseline survey and consultation focused on access to services of low income families and key district indicators as summarised in Activity 2; end of project survey and consultation to chart changes compared to baseline
2. Individual assessments, plans and casework for all family members in 100 rejected TSA households or households that want to apply for TSA receiving services from the NGO SA Center – including 200 child wellbeing assessments across four domains – education, health, care at home and safety - at outset, case review and case closure where cases have been closed during the project lifetime.
3. 100 households with children resolving civil registration, disability assessment or other barriers to applying for TSA.
4. 100 households with children accessing TSA, employment or livelihood opportunities and needed family support services which they otherwise might not have been able to access
5. 25 akimat and ESSO staff members can conduct casework to a satisfactory minimum standard, assess needs for family support services and help families to access the services they need
6. Report providing information to the local authorities about gaps in services needed by families with children in the district as identified during assessments by NGO SA Center and ESSO staff
7. Fully documented description of the service and its results that can help others to replicate the service in other districts

B.4.5 Qualifications and requirements of the contractor

Registration, human resources and financial management requirements

The contractor must be an NGO registered in the target oblast which has been operating in the oblast for at least 3 years.

The average annual turnover of the NGO must be at least 2 times the value of the project budget. The NGO must have prior experience of implementing a grant funded project to the value of the project budget. The NGO must have a book-keeper and computerised book-keeping system and a stable office/administrative structure.

The NGO must have at least 2 permanent/full-time staff members with experience relevant to the proposed project – in social work, child and family support, child development, sustainable livelihoods, social work training and/or community development.

Project and program experience requirements

The contracted NGO must demonstrate prior experience of working with oblast authorities, village and (district in a city) akimats and a range of health, social assistance or education services. In-depth knowledge and understanding of casework methods, case management, outreach and community social work, especially aimed at supporting children and families is required in order to

be able to implement the planned project. The successful NGO must, therefore, be able to demonstrate that it has experience in these areas, existing staff with relevant competencies and experience and, if there are gaps in the organisation's experience, it must demonstrate in its application how it expects to address these gaps.

Demonstrable understanding and experience of conditional cash transfer programs, social assistance and TSA is preferred.

The NGO must demonstrate a strong understanding of the task as set out in the project design, indicative service specifications and ToR. The application should comment on the goals, objectives, planned results and indicative activities and clearly set out the risks and assumptions foreseen by the NGO and a plan for managing the risks.

Preference is given to NGOs with prior experience in conducting research, surveys or documenting promising practices in the social sector.

Experience of small-medium enterprise development, community development and sustainable livelihoods programs is a bonus.

Application requirements

In addition to demonstrating its understanding of the task and the relevance of its previous experience, the NGO must provide detailed CVs for key staff who will be employed in managerial roles either directly implementing the project or with oversight of those who are implementing the project. At least one CV must demonstrate relevant education (social work, psychology, sociology, education, health) and at least 10 years of experience in training needs assessment of social sector professionals, continuous professional development and knowledge and competencies in social work. At least one CV must demonstrate a relevant education (social work, psychology, sociology, education, health) and knowledge of child development, theories of child and family well-being, methods for supporting families, case work and case management.

A clear and viable strategy for hiring and training the staff of the NGO SA Center must be presented.

Details of how the office will be established and run and how the social workers will travel to make household visits must be presented.

Details of how direct work with families will take place and how the NGO SA Center will support families to address barriers to accessing TSA or services must be presented.

All costs including salaries, direct work with families, travel for household visits and visits to akimats and other agencies, communications campaigns and other direct and indirect costs must be presented.

Proposed assessment criteria and weighting

Requirement	Marks out of 100
Organisational capacity including:	15
1. Registration and length of time that the NGO has been operational	5
2. Financial management capacity	5

3. Stability of staff, office, administrative structure and management	5
Project and program experience including:	64
4. Experience of working with oblast, district authorities, local akimats and a range of services and organisations	10
5. Knowledge, experience and understanding of social work casework, case management, child and family support	15
6. Understanding and experience of CCT, TSA and/or social assistance programs	5
7. Understanding of task as demonstrated in application	15
8. Understanding of risks and assumptions – plan for managing risks	4
9. Prior experience in conducting research, surveys or documenting promising practices in the social sector; experience of small-medium enterprise development, community development and sustainable livelihoods	5
Staff CVs and key experts proposed	21
10. Expert in training needs assessment, continuous professional development and training – preferably with a social work qualification and experience	7
11. Expert in child development, theories of child and family well-being, methods for supporting families, case work and case management – preferably with a social work qualification and experience	7
12. Understanding of task as demonstrated in a detailed budget and plans for implementation	7