



Terms of Reference

POLICY ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORMS IN LEBANON

BACKGROUND

Lebanon is currently facing a compounded crisis that is affecting the country's social, political, economic, financial, and fiscal stability. The repercussions on the social landscape are substantial, with millions of people unable to meet their basic needs, pushing significant numbers into poverty and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The gradual removal of subsidies for key imports – wheat, fuel, medicine – and a list of basic products has also increased income insecurity of the poor and middle class. The country is at a critical juncture today where key decisions around reforms and the (re)construction of national institutions will determine its ability to recover and grow in the long term. Social protection is an essential component of this path towards recovery and reconstruction, and can form the basis of a new social contract for Lebanon.

Lebanon's national social protection system is extremely weak, with significant policy, legislative and institutional gaps that leave large proportions of the population without any support. In this context, while short-term and emergency measures are essential to provide immediate relief to thousands of people, a paradigm shift from the current fragmented social protection programs and measures into a universal, rights-based, and inclusive system is essential, in line with Lebanon's international and national commitments.

In light of this, the ILO, in collaboration with UNICEF, has been providing technical assistance to the government of Lebanon on the development of a National Social Protection Strategy, led by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Highlighted amongst these policy directions is the need to establish a social protection floor ensuring basic income support to everyone. Such a social protection floor in Lebanon would include core lifecycle guarantees in the form of a tax-financed child grant, disability allowance and social pension, and access to essential health care services, with poverty-targeting programs such as the NPTP/ESSN acting as a last resort safety net for those still falling below a defined poverty line. While poverty-targeting programs are currently being scaled up to cover additional households that have fallen into extreme poverty, the Ministry of Social Affairs is also working, in collaboration with UNICEF and ILO, and with financial support from the EU-MADA fund, on developing core lifecycle social grants that provide income support to those experiencing lifecycle contingencies. The ILO also provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour and the National Social Security Fund, towards safeguarding and reforming social insurance benefits, including pension, unemployment, family allowance and social health protection, based on dialogue amongst social partners.

Under the framework of the project on ‘Addressing life-cycle vulnerabilities through social protection – Establishing Social Grants in Lebanon’, the ILO is seeking to support evidence-based dialogue with governmental and non-governmental actors on the above-mentioned reforms and on building a comprehensive and integrated Social Protection system in Lebanon. The ILO previously worked with The Policy Initiative (TPI) to support work on research, policy engagement and advocacy. This had resulted in several interlinked interventions, including engaging stakeholders in a social protection policy dialogue.

SCOPE OF WORK

In light of the above, the ILO has identified an urgent need for an informed and evidence-based dialogue on policy reform with political actors towards advocating for an integrated, inclusive and comprehensive Social Protection system that provides access to the full range of essential benefits, anchored in a rights-based approach.

Building on existing work and processes, the ILO is now seeking an organization/company to facilitate policy engagement with various political actors in Lebanon, towards the following objectives:

- Understanding the current political landscape as it relates to social protection policy reform
- Shed light on key social protection reforms, and ongoing initiatives in the country
- Improve the overall understanding of social protection issues leading to more informed decisions on key reforms
- Engage political parties to push for a social protection reform agenda anchored in international labour standards and human rights conventions

ACTIVITIES

The policy engagement will include, amongst others, the following activities:

1. Develop an understanding of positions and policy proposals of the various political groups, including traditional political parties and emerging groups regarding the issue of social protection reform, including through bilateral meetings and key informant interviews, desk review, and results from previously conducted survey.
2. Conduct a structured process of engagement with policy makers and political parties, including bilateral meetings and/or roundtables on key social protection reforms needed for Lebanon, in light of the National Social Protection Strategy and current draft legislations and policy proposals.
3. Facilitate dialogue and engagement between policymakers and civil society on key social protection issues.

An overall methodology should be submitted as part of the proposal and agreed on in more detail at the inception stage.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following table lays out an initial schedule of activities and payments:

Activity and deliverable	Deadline	Payment
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		(as a % of overall amount per component)
N/A	15 April 2023	30% upon signature of the agreement
Structured process of engagement with policy makers and political parties concluded	31 August 2023	30%
Dialogue and engagement between policymakers and civil society on key social protection issues conducted	31 October 2023	40%

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The ILO is looking for an organization/company to collaborate on the above-mentioned areas of work. The applicant is expected to have the following expertise and qualifications within its team, to conduct each of the three components:

- Experience in and knowledge of the policy-making process and the political landscape in Lebanon
- Experience in organizing and engaging in policy dialogue around social policies in Lebanon
- Expertise on social protection in particular is strongly desirable
- Experience in conducting political economy analysis
- Experience in conducting research on social policies, social protection, or other relevant areas
- Access to a wide network of stakeholders that are relevant to the exercise

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are invited to share the following documents by 31 March 2023 at bey-procurement@ilo.org

- Technical proposal including: methodology for building an understanding of policy proposals and positions of political actors; details of structured engagement process; and proposals for dialogue spaces between policy makers and civil society;
- Financial proposal.