

« Secretariat for the coordination of the Team Europe Initiative on social protection »

Belgian contribution on TEI Social Protection

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Table of contents

Abbreviations	
1	TEI development 3
1.1	TEI SP Concept note 4
1.1.1	The highlights of the concept note can be resumed as follows: 4
1.1.2	Raisons for a regional TEI on SP..... 4
1.1.3	Objectives and Results framework of the TEI SP 5
1.1.4	Geographical concentration 5
1.2	Interested EUMS..... 6
1.3	Place of Belgium in this TEI 6
2	Regional TEI Social Protection official announcement 6
3	Proposal for a Belgian Position and financing in the regional TEI-Social Protection 6
3.1	Coordination of a team of experts..... 7
3.2	Collaboration with DGD 7
3.3	Financial proposal and planning initial year 8
3.4	Mid-term and long-term perspective 8
4	Annexes 9
4.1	Annex 1 : TEI Infographic - Africa - Social Protection 9
4.2	Annex 2 : Profil expert protection social 9

Abbreviations

AFD	Agency Française de Développement
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency
DGD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
EU	European Union
EUMS	European Union Member States
GiZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ILO	International Labour Organization
(DG) INTPA	(Directorate-General for) International Partnerships
MAV+	Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies
MS	Member States
OpenIMIS	open Insurance Management Information System
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SP	Social Protection
TEI	Team Europe Initiative

1 TEI development

1.1 TEI SP Concept note

Over the past 2 years, a concept note was developed under the impulse of INTPA, but with close and continuous support from the Belgian side that did most of the redaction and the planning and follow-up of the meetings.

See reference towards the infographic on the website of the EU in annex 1.

1.1.1 The highlights of the concept note can be resumed as follows:

The role of Social Protection as an instrument to combat poverty, address life-cycle risks and contribute to sustainable economic growth, development, and social justice has gained significant recognition on the international stage. Over the last two decades, many governments have engaged in social protection, developing new programmes and extending coverage, including in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Notwithstanding fiscal and capacity constraints, countries have made significant strides towards an expansion of social protection to its populations.

The key role of social protection for inclusive development has also been underlined by the Agenda 2030 and in particular by the pledge “to leave no one behind” (LNOB). Social protection is explicitly mentioned in targets 1, 3, 5, 8 and 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and particularly for SDG1 on ending poverty.

Despite impressive achievements made regarding the extension of social protection programmes and inclusion of particularly vulnerable groups across many low-and middle-income countries, major challenges remain including gaps in financing, policy and technical capacity, and limited appreciation of the benefits of investing in social protection.

The concept note recognizes the 4 SP floors from ILO:

- universal access to essential health care, including maternity care, health insurance and health assistance for the poorest;
- basic income security for all children providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;
- basic income security for the working-age population who are unable to earn an adequate income, in the event of sickness, unemployment, maternity or disability;
- basic income security for the elderly.

1.1.2 Raisons for a regional TEI on SP

This regional TEI recognizes that social protection is first and foremost a national matter and country specific. However, social protection in Sub-Saharan Africa can benefit, on a demand driven basis, from transnational reflections, approaches and support involving the countries in the region and Team Europe. A coordinated approach, including joint political dialogue, which supports and builds on existing national social protection policies, is an important reason why transnational coordination and synergies between EUMS and African partner countries should be proactively looked for.

AUDA-NEPAD recognizes the high need for regional coordination and the importance and potential of the regional TEI of INTPA.

1.1.3 Objectives and Results framework of the TEI SP

General objective

The general objective of this regional TEI is to jointly support and strengthen national social protection systems in Sub-Saharan Africa via the regional level.

Specific objective

Effectively influence regional and national social protection policies and systems in Sub-Saharan Africa through enhanced regional coordination

Results framework

R1: Team Europe members, partners, local and national and regional stakeholders are better coordinated on selected social protection issues

R2: Increased regional innovation, exchange, and learning on national social protection systems

INTPA recently confirmed this general agenda for the TEI SP and highlighted a number of specific areas of attention to be taken into account in the more general consideration of a systemic approach.

According this short INTPA report, social protection system strengthening entails 3 major challenges:

- The integration of contributory and non-contributory schemes
- The financing of SP as a major challenge for many low-income countries
- The inclusivity of SP, reaching out to the informal economic sector in which the majority of the poor in Africa can be situated and the migrant population that for obvious reasons does not benefit easily from SP schemes.

INTPA highlights also the need for ‘Shock-responsive SP’, meaning that SP schemes should surpass the merely humanitarian approaches to SP to come up with sustainable SP national institutions and organizations. They should not depend on external interest and financing, but be structurally embedded in national social policies and organization.

Still according INTPA, the green and digital transition agenda also touch upon the challenges posed to SP mechanisms. In this context, GIZ and Enabel are promoting OpenIMIS, with great interest from AUDA-NEPAD. This digital ‘open source’ application, hence accessible to all countries, will allow not only the digitalization of SP in health at national level, but has also the ambition on a more long-term perspective to permit portability of SP mechanisms across countries in the African continent.

1.1.4 Geographical concentration

The TEI is principle would be covering the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, but might in practice concentrate on the West- and Central African subregions.

1.2 Interested EUMS

Most important EU Member States (EUMS) that were involved in the conception of the TEI are: Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland and to a lesser extent The Netherlands (that officially announced not to participate in the role-out of the TEI), Luxembourg and Sweden.

Belgium and AFD already made a short general proposal to indicate their interest in actively participating in the role-out of the TEI. Germany and Ireland have expressed their interest without further initiative. Spain would be approached for joining the Team.

1.3 Place of Belgium in this TEI

Belgium indicated in the TEI concept note to intervene already in three core areas regarding social protection:

- Social protection in health
- Social protection as a pillar of the Decent work Agenda (extending social protection coverage of workers in the formal and the informal economies)
- Supporting ILO's Flagship Programme on building social protection floors for all

2 Regional TEI Social Protection official announcement

During the high-level event on health, organized in the frame of the Belgian EU presidency on March 20, 2024, EU announced officially the launch of the TEI SP.

The EU contribution to this TEI would amount to 7 million €, a budget that would become effective in 2025.

3 Proposal for a Belgian Position and financing in the regional TEI-Social Protection

For the moment, a detailed action plan for the TEI, with complementary and synergetic actions from different EUMS is not yet established. Such a plan should be developed in the upcoming months, and surely before the end of 2024.

INTPA demands financial contributions from its MS.

Clearly, within this very diverse concept of SP, it will necessarily appeal to many different competences and expertise and hence will impose intense coordination between different European stakeholders. The multi-country aspect of a regional TEI can only increase this need for coordination and concertation.

Among the EUMS, Belgium has had the lead during the whole process of identifying the regional TEI. Belgium has therefore a comparative advantage to profile itself as the lead or the coordinating

body of this TEI. Contacts with, among others, AU confirm international recognition of our expertise.

Strategically, social protection in all its dimensions is a thematic that won't disappear from the international aid landscape for decennia to come. It is therefore in the interest of Belgium, far beyond this TEI as such, to remain active and to profile itself in this theme of interest.

3.1 Coordination of a team of experts

At this stage, the TEI SP does not have yet a detailed joint action plan. In the coming months, such consensual plan should be established among MS and in principle also with consultation of regional African stakeholders.

Efforts should be made to bring MS around the negotiation table for a technical and strategic dialogue but also for financial pledges and division of labour.

This demands intensive work, combining expertise and strategic organization. For Belgium, it is of utmost importance to keep the lead in this coordination process for the year to come.

At the image of MAV+ initiative, it would be interesting to startup a coordination secretariat in Brussels, staffed with Belgian expertise to conceive the completion of the TEI conception as described in the previous paragraphs and to instigate other EUMS to subscribe a Belgian coordination secretariat in Brussels for the years to come.

The Belgian expert would have the following main tasks for the coming 12 months:

- Bring all interested European MS around the table to develop a common vision on the TEI SP
- Support the efforts of INTPA to finalize the TEI SP through defining priority areas of attention, potential regional activities and the coordinating mechanisms to execute the TEI.
- Stimulate and negotiate financial contributions from interested MS for this SP.
- Identify and negotiate possible African partners interested in promoting SP in the African continent and the ways of possible collaboration and organization of joint activities
- Propose coordinating mechanisms
- Coordinate the effective planning of the activities
- Organise joint meetings with European and African partner organisations every 6 months in order to coordinate efforts and monitoring

As the design of the regional TEI SP will progress, the mandate of a Belgian expert in SP will evolve as well. Ideally, this expert will be integrated into a European expert team that will manage the TEI.

3.2 Collaboration with DGD

The Belgian expert under Enabel will inform DGD at regular intervals on the progress of the TEI and will provide technical advice on demand of DGD in order to facilitate the negotiations between DGD, other MS and INTPA on the strategic and financial choices of the TEI SP.

3.3 Financial proposal and planning initial year

For the first year, July 2024 to June 2025, an Belgian expert in social protection should be engaged, who should work intensively with INTPA on the finalization of the TEI, on building consensus among EUMS on the strategies and broad activities of the TEI as well as on the organization of a TEI initiative (coordination, strategic and financial management, planning and implementation of activities, communication / negotiation with regional African organisations, etc.

This initial work should take a year, full-time, which will gradually evolve towards a more operational coordination of organizing and financing activities identified by the TEI. Especially the organization of 6-monthly coordination meetings between EU-MS and African regional partner organization will need to be organised.

TOTAL BUDGET in Euro				TOTAL	%	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A Effectively influence regional and national social protection policies and systems in Sub-Saharan				695.000	70%			
A	1		Secretariat TEI Protection sociale	695.000	70%	225.000	232.000	238.000
A	1	1	Expertise Social Protection	465.000	47%	150.000	155.000	160.000
A	1	2	Coordination activities, meetings, field visits	230.000	23%	75.000	77.000	78.000
Z General means				236.579	24%			
Z	1		HR support	165.000	17%	55.000	55.000	55.000
Z	1	1	Personnel de support	165.000	17%	55.000	55.000	55.000
Z		2	Operational costs	71.579	7%	22.500	24.000	25.079
Z	2	1	Office Bxl	39.000	4%	12.000	13.000	14.000
Z	2	2	Others costs	32.579	3%	10.500	11.000	11.079
SOUS-TOTAL COUTS DIRECTS				934.579	93%	305.500	311.000	318.079
Z	99		Indirects costs 7%	65.421	7%	21.385	21.770	22.266
TOTAL				1.000.000	100%	326.885	332.770	340.345

3.4 Mid-term and long-term perspective

If INTPA and EUMS for this TEI SP agree, the Belgian secretariat could expand and coordinate all activities of the TEI. A guaranteed Belgian expertise and coordination capacity for 3 years will allow Belgium to keep its strategic role in this TEI, a role that should probably even expand. It is therefore recommended to foresee additional funding as from Q4 2025 on, for the organization of a full coordinating secretariat in Enabel's offices that could lodge Belgian and other European experts in a multi-country coordination organ that could assure as well the financial management of the complete TEI.

These costs could be estimated at an additional 1.000.000 € for 2025 – 6/2027.

4 Annexes

4.1 Annex 1 : TEI Infographic - Africa - Social Protection

See : https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/resources/team-europe-tracker/partner-countries/sub-saharan-africa/social-protection-africa_en

4.2 Annex 2 : Profil expert protection social

Niveau d'étude et expérience requis

- Macro-Economiste ou économiste de la santé polyvalent ou master en sciences humaines avec une connaissance avérée des notions économiques et des mécanismes de protection sociale
- Une expérience en protection sociale prouvée de minimum 5 ans au niveau politique et stratégique, dont 3 ans minimum dans un contexte Africain
- Au minimum 5 années d'expérience professionnelle dans la coopération au développement dans le domaine de la protection sociale ;
- Au minimum 2 années d'expérience professionnelle dans les pays en développement (de préférence en Afrique) ;

Connaissances et aptitudes exigées

- Connaissance de la problématique du développement dans sa globalité, des tendances actuelles et des instruments de la coopération internationale ;
- Connaissance de la stratégie belge de coopération au développement et de l'UE dans le secteur de la protection sociale ;
- Connaissance des méthodes et instruments couramment utilisés dans la coopération au développement (gestion du cycle de projet, cadre logique, indicateurs...) ;
- Compréhension de la préparation, du suivi et de l'évaluation de projets et programmes de développement ;
- Expertise en matière d'organisation de la protection sociale dans des pays en développement ;
- Excellentes capacités de synthèse, de rédaction et de présentation ;
- Capacité de travailler dans un environnement multiculturel
- Connaissance de base de l'analyse statistique et des méthodes de recherche ;
- Bonne maîtrise de MS Office (au moins Word, Excel et PowerPoint) ;
- Excellentes aptitudes en français et en anglais oralement et par écrit ;
- Une capacité de travailler en équipe constituée d'experts pointus et de coordonner des équipes internationales.

Constituent un atout :

- Une expertise en matière d'appui institutionnel et de financement des systèmes de protection sociale ;
- Une expertise spécifique en matière de protection sociale en santé ;
- Connaissance du réseau d'expertise national et surtout international dans le secteur de la protection sociale ;
- Une connaissance des approches d'ILO en matière de travail décent et l'activisme syndical
- Une expérience ou connaissance de la pensée systémique et de méthodes adaptées à la gestion de projets complexes.