

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

<b>Project name</b>	Supporting the Digital Transformation of Social Protection Systems Globally towards Achieving the Goal of Universal Social Protection 2030
<b>Assignment</b>	Research Product on Linking Employment with Social Protection Through Interoperability of Systems
<b>Contract's duration:</b>	14.4.2025 to 15.8.2025
<b>Work Days</b>	40 days

## Background

The Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI) is a collaborative effort to support achieving the goal of Universal Social Protection by 2030, by furthering the digital transformation of social protection and improving interoperability through advanced digital solutions and systems. Funded by the European Union, this initiative is jointly implemented by key partners, including GIZ, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) and Expertise France.

The integration of social protection—including both social insurance and social assistance—and active labour market programmes (ALMPs), particularly public employment services, is a critical strategy to enhance employment outcomes and reduce poverty. Ensuring coordination between these systems facilitates access to decent and formal jobs, provides economic resilience and supports labour market transitions. This approach aligns with the objectives of the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.

Interoperability between social protection and employment services enhances efficiency by reducing administrative burdens and enabling seamless access to both financial support and job placement services. Individuals benefit from increased participation in ALMPs, better employment outcomes and improved awareness of available support. For enterprises, it ensures better skills matching and reduces unemployment duration, while for governments, it optimizes resource use and strengthens public governance. Despite its advantages, achieving integration is complex and requires sufficient institutional capacity and robust digital systems.

Under the DCI project, the ILO is seeking to engage a technical expert to develop a research product that gathers evidence and analyzes successful models of interoperability between social protection and employment services.

## Objectives

The research aims to examine the integration of social protection and employment services, focusing on how system interoperability can enhance coordination and streamline service delivery. By analyzing successful models—preferably in developing countries—the research will provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and practitioners looking to improve service coordination and enhance social protection and employment outcomes.

## Outputs and Timeline

Two (2) outputs are expected from the External Collaborator under this contract:

### **OUTPUT 1 – Identification and Analysis of Institutional Coordination and Interoperability Models, 10 working days, by 30 April 2025**

The expert will produce a concise literature review and analytical report (15–20 pages, Arial 12, 1.5 line spacing) identifying and analyzing institutional coordination, integration and interoperability models that enhance linkages between social protection benefits and employment services, including registration, case management, referrals for training, job placement, income support during ALMPs, among other measures. The study will be based on a literature review of country experiences validated by the ILO team, with a focus on developing countries, highlighting successful institutional coordination mechanisms and interoperable digital systems that improve integration between social protection and employment policies. The expert will also prepare and deliver a presentation to share the key findings.

### **OUTPUT 2 – In-Depth Case Studies on System Interoperability Enhancing Service Access and Employment Outcomes, 30 working days, by 15 August 2025**

The expert will develop a report (50-60 pages, Arial 12, 1.5 line spacing) with three in-depth case studies of selected countries, in agreement with the ILO, showcasing how the integration of institutional business processes, data-sharing modalities and interoperability enhances access to quality services, social protection benefits and return to employment. The country analysis will begin with an overarching review of coordination and integration between social protection and employment services, followed by an identification of key touchpoints where interoperability has or could improve service delivery and policy outcomes. The report will outline best practices, challenges and lessons learned, providing actionable insights for policy recommendations. Findings should be presented in a structured format and the deliverables include a draft for review, a final version and a presentation for knowledge sharing and stakeholder discussions.

## Contract Duration

The duration of the assignment of this contract is from 14 April 2025 to 15 August 2025. The work will be completed and delivered no later than 15 August 2025.

## Qualification and Experience

The consultants should have the following qualification and experience:

- Advanced degree in social policy, public administration, economics, information systems or a related field.
- Professional with at least 8 years of experience in social protection, employment services and digital transformation, with a focus on interoperability and system integration.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting research, policy analysis and case study development, preferably in the context of developing countries.
- Strong knowledge of institutional frameworks, governance structures and digital systems supporting social protection and employment service integration.
- Excellent analytical, communication and writing skills in English, with the ability to synthesize complex information into actionable recommendations.

## Application Procedure

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following documents to [xiaol@ilo.org](mailto:xiaol@ilo.org) by **24 March 2025**, with the subject line: "Application for Research Product on Linking Employment with Social Protection Through Interoperability of Systems":

- Detailed CV and Portfolio: Highlight relevant experience, past projects and achievements that demonstrate your qualifications and expertise.
- Financial Proposal: Provide proposed fee structure (in USD) for completing the assignment.
- Cover Letter: A concise cover letter (max 2 pages) outlining your qualifications, experience relevant to the assignment and your understanding of the objectives.