



GOVERNMENT OF SAINT LUCIA

NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY

“A National Roadmap to Transformative Social Protection”



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

GOVERNMENT OF SAINT LUCIA

Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and
Community Empowerment



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A National Roadmap to Transformative Social Protection

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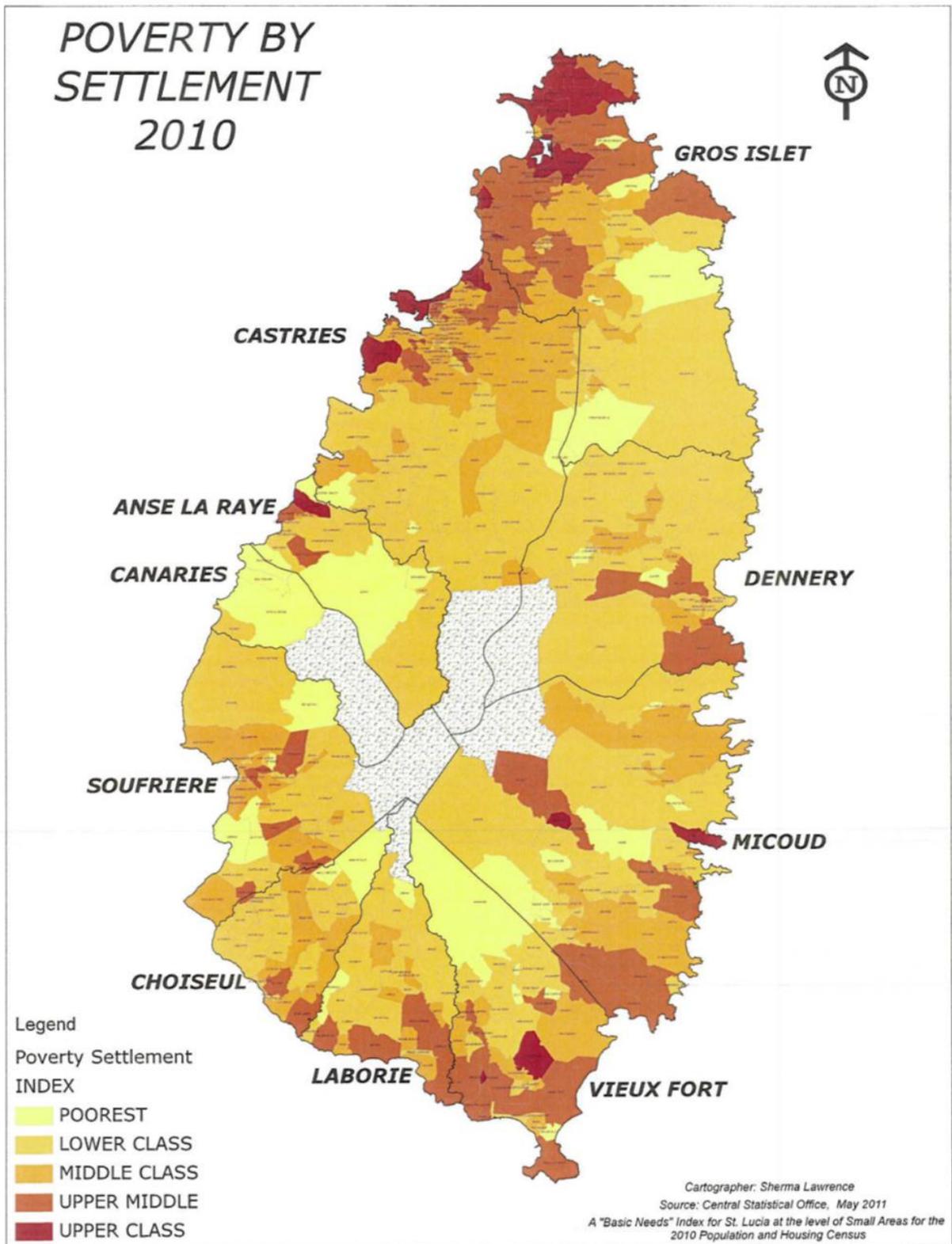


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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

The Government of Saint Lucia remains committed to ensuring an enabling environment that facilitates a broad range of Social Protection actions and programmes within society to address the challenges of inequality.

The financial, food and economic crises that began in 2008, coupled with environmental disasters, have brought new setbacks to the fight against poverty in Saint Lucia. Coping with declining incomes, the rising cost of living, as well as the increasing economic cost of environmental tragedies are a challenge for an increasing number of Saint Lucian households, most significantly, those living below the poverty line.

The Government of Saint Lucia recognizes that poverty is a multi-dimensional concept comprising of social, economic and environmental deprivation. Increasing environmental scarcities, risks and vulnerabilities, growing economic uncertainty and inequalities, and the continued existence of high rates of unemployment, are important factors for understanding and addressing poverty in Saint Lucia. Indeed, those who are in need of equitable and integrated Social Protection services include those who are already marginalized through poverty, indigence and lack of access to natural and financial capital, as well as those who are economically and socially vulnerable to marginalization. It is against this backdrop that the Government of Saint Lucia initiated this process to develop a policy that combines Preventative, Protective, Promotive and Transformative measures. A combination of social policy measures and green economy principals can offer an integrated approach for achieving short- and medium-term poverty reduction strategies and long-term sustainable development with multiple benefits in social, economic and environmental spheres.

From as early as the 1980s, the Government of Saint Lucia has been party to international agreements and commitments that speak to needs and rights relating to poverty and vulnerability and thus Social Protection. These include the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995; the World Summit for Children in 1990; the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992; the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993; the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994; the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994; the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, which saw the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals; the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in 2012; and the Post 2015 Development Agenda – “The Future We Want”. Through such international meetings and instruments, the Government reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable development as well as the greening of its economy for the long-term prosperity of its citizens. It also reaffirms the Government’s commitment for cooperation between Government and citizens based on a spirit of partnership that puts the needs, rights and aspirations of people at the centre of decision-making and joint actions.

The 1995 Saint Lucia Country Poverty Assessment (CPA) highlighted the need for special attention for a coordinated response to poverty, providing the impetus for discussions around the formulation and implementation of a number of public sector policies and programmes by the late 1990s and early 2000s (Renard, 2007: 6). Furthermore, throughout the intense period of public sector reform, a spirit of horizontal cooperation and willingness to share best practices with other nations characterized this process particularly in the form of technical assistance, which would serve to seed success for network-based capacity building on Social Protection strategies in Saint Lucia, (Nichols, 2013: 25-6).



The 2005-2006 Country Poverty Assessment of Saint Lucia clearly highlighted the link between natural resources and poverty. There is much potential for natural capital and ecosystems services to contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the poor. The greening of the Saint Lucian economy through investing in natural resources has the potential to: increase the capacity of the poor to generate financial capital; strengthen participatory governance; create green and decent jobs; attract investment in the modern economic sector built on green innovation and fuelled by youth employment, all of which can contribute to achieving the multiple benefits from the Social Protection Policy.

The Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment therefore seeks to:

...promote, support and facilitate the participation, development and organization of our people, in utilizing their resources to effect self-directed change towards the economic, social, cultural, political and spiritual advancement of themselves, their communities and the nation (Source: MOST Information Booklet).

The objectives of the Ministry are to:

1. *Reduce current levels of poverty and social vulnerability;*
2. *Improve the quality of service delivery to men, women and girls and boys;*
3. *Promote volunteerism, self-reliance and civic responsibility in communities;*
4. *Strengthen programmes which promote behaviour change;*
5. *Reduce vulnerability of the poor by strengthening social programmes to the most needy; while improving the capacity of vulnerable groups to earn better incomes in order to increase economic independence rather than only providing them with subsistence;*
6. *Coordinate strategies leading to achievement of the Post 2015 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): poverty eradication, preservation/sustainable use of natural resources, strengthening good governance and creation of decent jobs and adequate income through ecologically sound growth.*

The Government has initiated a series of reforms to achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction, namely the finalisation of the National Social Protection Policy to ensure that sustainable development in Saint Lucia is inclusive and equitable. In addition, a National Vision Commission has been established to set the long-term development aspirations of the nation, while the National Planning Framework is being finalized and includes clear recommendations for greening of the economy. We invite our development partners, international and regional organizations, private sector and civil society organisations to join us in making Saint Lucia a strong, green and resilient economy that benefits all.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Social Protection Policy was prepared by the Government of Saint Lucia in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area and UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean. This policy was drafted through a consultative process which included the establishment of a National Steering Committee representing the various Government ministries and department and civil society organisations; Technical Working Sessions; Focus Groups with beneficiaries, families from the various Social Protection programmes; and community consultations convened in each constituency to engage civil society and other non-governmental organizations. This process culminated in National Consultation convened on July 9th, 2014, which brought political stakeholders in addition to the aforementioned together to critically assess the draft National Social Protection Policy. The Green Economy Team of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) also provided valuable input and recommendations.

This process was developed under the leadership of the Honourable Minister Harold Dalsan, and Permanent Secretary, Ms. Juliana Alfred, of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment.

The first draft of this policy was prepared in 2013 by the former Deputy Director of the Social Research Unit of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Mr. Augustus Cadette. The draft was further developed by Mr. Carlos Alviar, Social Protection Consultant for UNICEF, who served as the lead drafter of the National Social Protection Policy. In addition, input and discussions with the Ministry of Education, Human Development and Labour; Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations; the Ministry of Legal Affairs; the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund and the National Insurance Corporation, in addition to various Civil Society and Faith Based Organisations, and other non-governmental bodies, contributed to the development of the draft policy.

The Ministry wishes to recognise the following individuals and partners who have contributed to the development of the National Social Protection Policy:

- The Consultants who contributed to the drafting of the National Social Protection Policy:
 - Mr. Carlos Alviar – Lead Drafter and Social Protection Consultant for UNICEF;
 - Ms. Deborah (Debbie) Budlender – UN Women Consultant; and
 - Mr. Asad Naqvi and Mr. Jose Pineda – UNEP Green Economy Experts.

- The staff of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment, both past and current.

- The National Steering Committee members representing the following Ministries and Civil Society Organisations:
 - Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations;
 - Ministry of Physical Development, Housing and Urban Renewal;



- Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour;
- Ministry of Legal Affairs;
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs;
- Office of the Prime Minister;
- Saint Lucia Social Development Fund;
- The National Community Foundation;
- The National Skills Development Centre;
- The National Council of and For Older Persons; and
- The National Council of and For Persons with Disabilities.



GLOSSARY

Categorical targeting: Eligibility criteria based on characteristics linked to poverty and vulnerability (age, sex, marital status, disabilities, etc.).

Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs): Programmes that transfer cash to beneficiaries on condition that they fulfill some specific behavioural and/or developmental investment or requirements (for example, attending parenting workshops).

Green Economy: One that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive, (UNEP, 2011).

Green Jobs: Work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute(s) substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution, (UNEP, 2011).

Household: A group of people who live together most of the time, and contribute to and benefit from a common economy.

Human Development Index: A measure of well-being based on indicators of health, education, and standard of living. The HDI value scale is from 0.0 to 1.0, where 1.0 is the highest possible score.

Indigent: Households or individuals who cannot afford a minimum acceptable consumption of food as quantified by a measure called the extreme poverty line (calculated in Saint Lucia at XCD 1,570.00 per annum per male adult equivalent in 2005/6), (Kairi Consultants, 2006: p. xvi).

Livelihood: The ways in which people or households make a living and meet their basic needs.

Means-tested targeting: Eligibility criteria based on verifiable income and asset tests.

Poor: Households or individuals that cannot afford a minimum acceptable consumption level of food and other basic needs as quantified by a measure called the poverty line (estimated at XCD 5,087.00 per annum per male adult equivalent for St Lucia in 2005/2006), (Kairi Consultants, 2006: p. xvi).

Poverty: Defined in terms of its chief characteristic, deprivation, it refers to any situation in which an individual or group possesses less than some standard of living that has generally been defined as acceptable. This standard may be determined either on the basis of the material condition of other persons or groups in the society, or on the basis of a measure of the gap between what is possessed and some objective indicator of elementary human need, (Kairi Consultants, 2006: p. xv).

Proxy-means Tested Targeting: Eligibility criteria based on a weighted index of observable characteristics statistically associated with poverty.



Risk: Exposure to the likelihood of a negative impact.

Risk mitigation: Reducing the severity of the potential adverse impact of a risky event.

Risk prevention: Reducing the probability that a risky event might occur.

Safety Nets: Non-contributory cash or in-kind transfers to reduce poverty and protect vulnerable households against risks and shocks.

Shock: A situation that disrupts people's way of life. Common shocks in Saint Lucia include major illnesses requiring hospitalization, death, crop failure and animal diseases.

Social Protection: A set of interventions whose objective is to reduce social and economic risk and vulnerability, and to alleviate extreme poverty and deprivation. Apart from Safety Nets, it includes public and private social insurance and active labour market programmes.

Targeting: A process by which beneficiaries of a social intervention are selected.

Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT): Benefits provided to beneficiaries without any behavioural requirements.

Vulnerability: The probable inability of individuals and households to deal with shocks to their livelihoods.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPA	Country Poverty Assessment
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECD	Early Childhood Education
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSL	Government of Saint Lucia
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
LIPW	Labour Intensive Public Works
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MOE	Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour
MOH	Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations
MoSTLG&CE	Ministry of Social Transformation, Local Government and Community Empowerment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAP	Public Assistance Programme
PD	Programme Document
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
SL-NET	Saint Lucia National Eligibility Test
SR	Single Registry
SSNA	Social Safety Net Assessment
SSNR	Social Safety Net Reform
SSPC	Saint Lucia Social Protection Council
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USD	United States Dollar
XCD	Eastern Caribbean Dollar



INTRODUCTION

Human rights-based arguments for Social Protection are grounded in the articles of various international covenants including:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- The Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- The Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons;
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);
- The International Labour Organization’s (ILO) minimum standards for social security;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and
- The Post 2015 Development Agenda: “The Future We Want”.

These international agreements establish Social Protection as an entitlement and not charity. The agreements also call for a global compact on Social Protection and a global socio-economic platform, or minimum standard of living for all citizens. Further, the rights-based approach places clear obligations on States to guarantee Social Protection and to enable citizens to claim their Social Protection Rights.

In addition, the Government of Saint Lucia is guided by a Constitution that explicitly safeguards fundamental human rights and freedoms for every citizen. The progressive vision of the State seeks to strengthen this provision by ensuring equality before the law and protection of personal privacy and family life.

As a signatory to the aforementioned conventions and given the existing Constitutional provision, while acknowledging the progressive vision of the state, the Government of Saint Lucia has initiated several social assistance programmes as part of its efforts to make Saint Lucia a strong, green and progressive country. These social programmes aim at improving the well-being of poor and vulnerable populations, and reaffirm the Government’s commitment to promoting the national sustainable development agenda. Furthermore, the Government shall seek to adopt relevant recommendations from the Concluding Observations of the Periodic Reports of Saint Lucia on the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

In 2009, a Social Safety Net Assessment (SSNA) was undertaken for Saint Lucia to ascertain whether the country’s social assistance interventions were assisting households in overcoming their poverty and managing their vulnerabilities and risks. The Assessment highlighted that “Saint Lucia



faces significant challenges in ensuring an adequate safety net in the face of economic and environmental pressures and the changing social landscape”, (Blank, 2010). As such, a clear correlation was established linking the island’s vulnerability to its limited assimilative capacity, fragile ecosystems, natural disasters, the impact of economic development on the environment, and the potential impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the Assessment reviewed the accessibility of Social Safety Net programmes and their expenditure, and analysed implementation arrangements and constraints. It also assessed existing programmes against the most prevalent vulnerabilities and made specific recommendations for improving social assistance policy and programming. Key recommendations included the rationalization of the existing interventions to avoid duplication, and the enhancement of institutional capacities and coordination mechanisms. The SSNA also recommended improvements in the targeting of beneficiaries, and development and strengthening of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to improve decision making.

Against the background of the foregoing, it is acknowledged that the delivery of Social Protection initiatives in Saint Lucia must be guided and supported by an explicit Social Protection Policy, which takes into account ‘green’, economic and other social and legal considerations. Recognizing the limitations of the current social protection provisions, and given the need to take into account all aspects of poverty and vulnerability, this Social Protection Policy presents a multi-dimensional approach that considers the contribution of education, health, housing, legal aid, and social security to poverty reduction in Saint Lucia. These efforts should be considered within a broader national effort for transitioning to a green economy in which improvements of human well-being and social equity are achieved, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, as stated in UNEP’s landmark Green Economy Report, 2011.

The National Social Protection Policy comprises five main parts. The first part summarizes the current poverty and vulnerability context in Saint Lucia, as Background information. The second part highlights the Policy Purpose and its directions with its Rationale and Policy Statement of Philosophy, including the Vision Statement and the Policy Goals and Objectives. The third part presents the Policy Benefits while the fourth part speaks to the Policy Principles and Key Policy Statements. Finally, the fifth part presents the Policy Implementation and Reform processes with proposed Priority Areas for Action, an Institutional Framework and a description of the Roles of the Stakeholders.

In addition, this Policy document is accompanied by a *Strategic Plan of Action: Implementation of the Social Protection Policy* that outlines a five year, costed plan of action (2014-2019), and monitoring and evaluation framework.



1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Context of Poverty and Vulnerability

The geography of poverty in Saint Lucia reveals that a higher proportion of those who live in rural communities - and depend on natural capital for their livelihoods - are affected by poverty compared to the proportion of their urban counterparts who are so affected. However, although the incidence of poverty is lowest in Castries City and suburban Castries, these districts are home to the largest share of the poor, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2005/6, p.18). Indigence is most prevalent in Castries City, Anse-La-Raye/Canaries, Vieux-Fort, and Micoud, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2006: p.16).

In the most recent Country Poverty Assessment (CPA) for Saint Lucia, conducted in 2005, 28.8 percent of the population was found to be poor, up from 25.1 percent in 1995, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2005/6: p. 17). Moreover, indigence or food poverty was reported to be at 1.6 percent, a noteworthy plunge from its 7.1 percent figure in 1995, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2005/6: p. 17). At the level of the household, the poverty and indigence figures for 2005 translated to 21.4 percent and 1.2 percent respectively of all households. The indigence line for Saint Lucia in 2005 was estimated at XCD 3.40 (USD 1.27) per adult equivalent per day or XCD 131.00 (USD 46.06) per month or XCD 1,570.00 (USD 588.02) annually. The poverty line was estimated to be XCD 13.93 (USD 5.22) per adult equivalent per day or XCD 423.83 (US 158.74) per month or XCD 5,086.00 (USD 1,904.87) per annum, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2006: p. 17).

As in most countries around the world, children bear the brunt of poverty. According to the CPA, over 50 percent of the poor were under the age of 20 and the incidence of poverty was higher among children than among adults. The incidence of poverty was slightly higher among men than among women, 29 percent and 25 percent respectively. The incidence of poverty among female-headed households (21.2 percent) was about the same as among male-headed households (22 percent), (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2006: p.16). The CPA poverty and indigence estimates were derived using an adult equivalence scale that accorded less weight to females than males at all ages from one year upwards, and also accorded less weight to children and older people than peak-age men. The use of this scale will to some extent have influenced the findings with respect of the age and gender incidence of poverty and indigence.

Other important indicators that provide information on the depth and severity of poverty are the poverty gap ratio and the poverty severity index which stood respectively at 9 percent and 4.1 percent for Saint Lucia in 2005, (Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2006: p. 18).

Data from the CPA reveals the existence of chronic or *long-term* poverty in some multi-generational households, and particularly those headed by grandmothers. These households were generally poorly endowed in terms of capabilities that allowed them to function adequately in the labour, credit and financial markets. Due to their educational, financial and social deficits, the chronic poor tend to be socially marginalized and disempowered. The many households made up of children and a sole mother are especially vulnerable as the mother bears the double burden of providing for the family economically and providing for the day-to-day care and upbringing of the children. Using a cut-off point of 25 percent above the poverty line (XCD 6,357.50 per adult equivalent per annum) as the criterion of vulnerability, 40.3 percent of the population was found to be either poor or vulnerable,



(Kairi Consultants Ltd. 2006: p. 18). Some major underlying contributors to vulnerability in Saint Lucia are:

- i. The size of the informal sector in the country;
- ii. The imminence of natural disasters;
- iii. The size and openness of the economy;
- iv. Credit and Insurance market failures;
- v. The pro-cyclicality of fiscal policy; and
- vi. Human underdevelopment.

In the past, poverty measurements have been dominated by quantitative methodologies, focusing primarily on income and consumption patterns. These measures do not adequately explain the level and variations of deprivations experienced by the poor. A global push for a more holistic approach to poverty measurements led to the development of the Human Development Index (HDI), a well-known measure based on a small number of indicators of health, education, and standard of living. The United Nations Human Development Report of 2012 ranks Saint Lucia at 88th out of 186 countries, with a HDI value of 0.725, on a scale where 1.0 is the highest possible score, (UNDP, 2012). However, it must be noted that this HDI value was mostly driven by the relatively good performances on the health and education components compared to the income component of the HDI (0.865 and 0.683 vs. 0.646, respectively), (UNDP, 2012).

1.2. The Impact of the Global Crisis

The poverty measures cited above relate mainly to 2005/06. The global financial, fuel and food crisis that began in 2007/2008 had a further negative impact on individuals, households, businesses, government and the economy. This triple crisis created severe difficulties for financial institutions throughout the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. According to the 2010 UNDP Country Report on Saint Lucia - *Social Implications of the Global Economic Crisis 2008/09*, the collapse of a major regional insurance company had harsh consequences for many households which lost savings and retirement benefits. In addition, households were forced to reduce consumption while coping with higher prices of goods. The crisis also brought an increase in unemployment, resulting in reduced income and anaemic economic growth for the country. This was compounded by rising debt, which meant that individuals and businesses struggled to meet financial commitments and defaulted on loans and mortgages, (UNDP, 2010). The overall impact would presumably have been more severe for the poor and vulnerable.

1.3. Planned Improvements to Existing Social Assistance Programmes

Saint Lucia has a number of social protection programmes designed to address critical vulnerabilities. However, the 2009 SSNA confirmed that the relevant interventions and agencies suffer from a number of constraints and face significant challenges in protecting the poorest and most vulnerable from the multiple risks they face.



In line with the recommendations of the SSNA, the Government of Saint Lucia plans to consolidate existing programmes and amend them where necessary so as to make them more efficient and equitable; to amend relevant legislation and implementation processes accordingly; and to review and improve targeting and management information systems. To address recommendations related to environmental vulnerability, a national report is being prepared to identify options and opportunities for greening of the economy, while reducing poverty. A National Vision Commission has also been constituted to develop an integrated and balanced social, economic and environmental development vision for the country. The Government also plans to amend relevant existing legislation and implementation processes, and to review and improve targeting and management information systems for social protection programmes.

For targeting, an approach based on the proxy-means testing (PMT) has been developed and is being tested for identification of the poor and indigent. This will be supplemented, as appropriate, by other forms of targeting such as categorical targeting. The targeting will be supported by a single registry (SR) of beneficiaries' database that will serve as the basis for a management information system (MIS) for social protection. The Government of Saint Lucia will also consider the introduction of behavioural conditions with respect to cash transfer programmes as a possible means of encouraging behaviour change among beneficiaries that could contribute to their current and future well-being.

Furthermore, in an effort to provide a more systematic and effective approach to the delivery of services to the Country's poor and vulnerable, the Government shall move to adopt a Phased Intervention Strategy following the harmonization of the Public Assistance and Koudmen Ste Lisi programmes. The ultimate goal however, is the realisation of a Holistic Intervention Strategy in the long-term. The phased approach provides an opportunity to introduce the mechanisms outlined above, while implementing a system that works within the confines of the Government's available financial, human and other necessary resources. It is a medium-term strategy that will provide a stepping stone towards the holistic strategy.

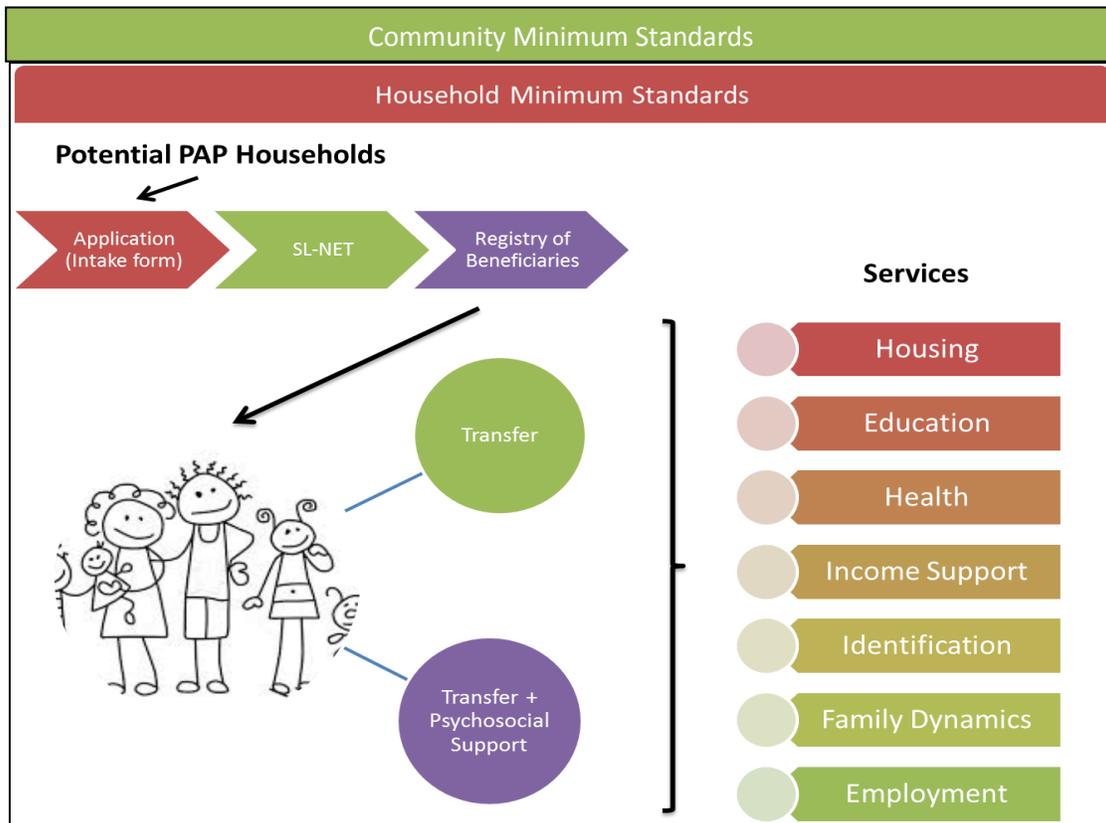
Both the Phased and Holistic Intervention Strategies shall encompass the following core elements:

- i) *Training of Ministry Staff*: Carry out a capacity building needs assessment and develop a Capacity Building Plan;
- ii) *Identification of Minimum Standards*: Development of household and community level minimum standards based on vulnerability and poverty risk factors and level of resilience to shocks;
- iii) *Institutional Arrangements/Coordination for the Delivery of Services*: Identification of ministries and agencies responsible for delivering services related to the minimum standards to ensure households can achieve them;
- iv) *System of Referrals*: Establishing a well-defined system of referrals in place to ensure that households have access to and information about critical services.
- v) *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*: Establish a mechanism to track beneficiary households, monitor the effectiveness of programme processes, and evaluate programme performance; and
- vi) *Budgeting and Planning*: Costing of resource needs including human resources, physical resources and business line processes.



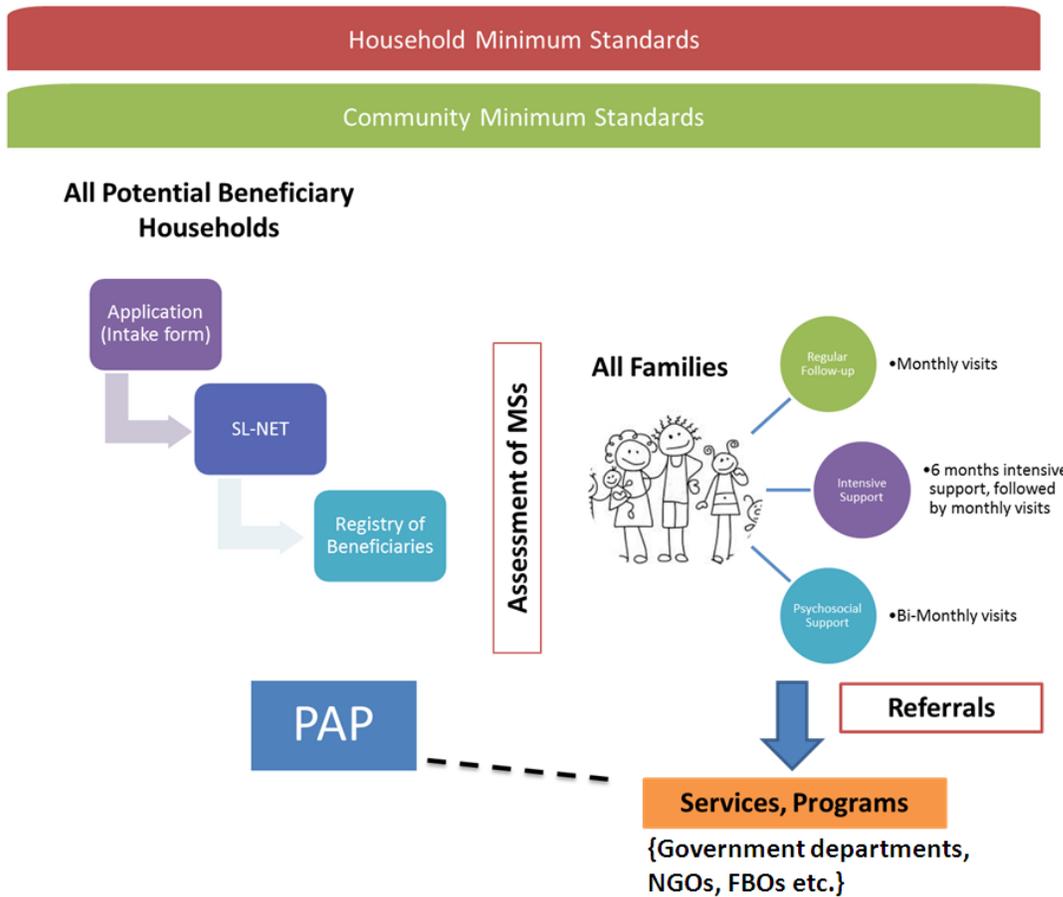
The Phased Intervention Strategy will **focus explicitly** on households seeking the benefits and services available through the consolidated **PAP/Koudmen programme**, where the Ministry responsible for Social Transformation will serve as the main entry point for the intervention, (see figure 1).

Figure 1: The Phased Intervention Strategy



The Holistic Intervention Strategy proposes the establishment of a central coordination unit within the Ministry responsible for Social Transformation, through which any household seeking assistance/benefits from **any** social programme may access social services in Saint Lucia. The Ministry would serve as the initial point of contact where potential beneficiaries apply and are referred to the various Government departments/NGOs/FBOs etc. to access services and programmes. Therefore, unlike the Phased Approach which focuses primarily on households seeking Public Assistance, the holistic approach would enable households seeking any type of assistance to apply through the Ministry responsible for Social Transformation, (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: The Holistic Intervention Strategy



2. PURPOSE

2.1. Rationale for a Social Protection Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a clear framework for enhancing equity, efficiency and transparency in the delivery of social protection services. This framework shall promote synergies among agencies, programmes and interventions to reduce poverty and protect the most vulnerable population of Saint Lucia, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts.

The Social Protection Policy provides an opportunity to establish a policy package that enables economic growth and investment while increasing environmental quality and social inclusiveness by embracing Green Economy policies. As a Small Island Developing State existing within the context of climate change, groups and populations most likely to be harmed by shocks - natural or anthropogenic - are those with limited resources to cope with the consequences. Therefore, a Social Protection Policy that seeks to marry the social, environmental and economic policies to address the multi-dimensional nature of poverty shall ultimately provide a more holistic and comprehensive strategy towards achieving national human and economic development.

Furthermore, the Social Protection Policy recognizes that Social Protection performs an important role in poverty reduction and strengthening resilience of children, households and communities. In this regard, the well-being of all citizens is reached for their greatest contribution to national development. This Policy, therefore, lays the basis for the progressive realization of an enhanced Social Protection Platform.

The Policy defines broad goals and guiding principles for delivering Social Protection and informs the development of a Strategic Plan of Action for achieving the established objectives.

The policy proposes the rationalization of existing interventions by merging, expanding or reducing some of them, based on their objectives vis-à-vis the actual needs of the population and the capacities of the implementing agencies and institutions. The new framework will establish the interrelation between services and institutions and develop coordination mechanisms to allow a combined effort to reduce poverty and different vulnerabilities.

The Policy combines a mixture of protective, preventive, promotive and transformative measures aimed at:

- Alleviating economic, social and environmental deprivation, including relief of chronic and extreme poverty (protective);
- Reducing the consequences and impact of shocks before they occur (preventive);
- Enhancing human capital, real income, capabilities and assets (promotive), while avoiding damage to the existing natural capital in order to facilitate the transition towards a Green Economy; and
- Addressing social equity and exclusion concerns, including discrimination and abuse (transformative).

The Policy provides a response to the findings and recommendations of the studies entitled: *Social Protection and Poverty Reduction in the Caribbean* (2004); the *Country Report on Social Protection* (2004); the *Country Poverty Assessment* (2005/06); and the *Saint Lucia Social Safety Net Assessment* (2010). It is in line



with other related national policies and plans such as the National Vision Plan (2008), the Social Policy for Human Development (2008), and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (NPRSAP) of 2011.

The Policy embraces the use of a progressive, holistic approach to Social Protection and understands environmental protection as a pre-condition to the enjoyment of internationally guaranteed human rights, especially the rights to life and health. The aim is to prevent the exclusion of vulnerable people and fulfill the various international commitments already made by the Government of Saint Lucia. The rights-based approach places clear obligations on States to guarantee social protection and to enable citizens to claim their social protection rights and, thus, argues for accountability mechanisms and institutional capacity to guarantee the appropriate design and delivery of social protection.

2.2. Policy Statement of Philosophy

Risk exposure is part of the human condition, as throughout their lives, all men and women are exposed to an array of risks and contingencies. Cognisant that each stage in the life-cycle presents new challenges, which may imperil people's enjoyment of life, the Government of Saint Lucia is adopting a life-cycle approach to investments in, and protection of its citizens.

The investments in the Government's Social Protection programme are aimed at empowering citizens to adjust to changes in the economy, and contribute to human capital formation. These investments shall lead to the reduction of poverty and insecurity, improved living standards, and the social inclusion of groups and people, who, for various reasons, have been excluded from society.

In this vein, the Government of Saint Lucia is committed to providing adequate, timely and sustainable social protection services that combine protective, preventative, promotive and transformative measures to respond to the most prevalent risks and vulnerabilities of its population, including those linked to the environment, as part of their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

2.2.1 Vision Statement

The Government of Saint Lucia envisions the progressive realization of an integrated Social Protection Platform for adequate needs, rights, and the development of the full potential of all citizens, paying particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable populations. It includes the human right to social guarantees, but not limited to:

- (a) Basic income security, in the form of various social transfers (in-cash or in-kind), such as pensions for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits, income support benefits and skill development and/or employment guarantees and services for the unemployed and underemployed; and
- (b) Available and affordable access to essential social services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, food security, housing, welfare and others defined according to national priorities.



2.2.2. Policy Goals

The overall goal of this Policy is to provide a framework, which promotes equity and enhances the well-being and capacity of poor and vulnerable households and populations in Saint Lucia to protect their consumption; invest in their future; and contribute meaningfully to national sustainable development.

2.2.3. Policy Objectives

In light of the above, the policy objectives are to:

- i) Identify the multi-dimensional nature and analyses of poverty and vulnerability in the design and implementation of Social Protection systems;
- ii) Outline key actions and milestones for the progressive realization of universal coverage and the reduction in social exclusion and all forms of discrimination, while recognizing Saint Lucia's capacity and context;
- iii) Conduct key social partners and institutional networks assessments to promote programme convergence and coordination for integrated and effective service delivery and systems;
- iv) Adopt a multi-dimensional approach for the evaluation and measurement of poverty in the future;
- v) Outline and adopt life-cycle, human development and rights-based approaches to provide services to the most vulnerable and poorest populations (including child sensitive and gender responsive approaches);
- vi) Target human capital investments in education, health, nutrition and skill development for vulnerable children and their families to overcome inter-generational cycle of poverty;
- vii) Identify clear exit or graduation strategies and transitions to economic independence and greening of economy, among Social Protection system beneficiaries;
- viii) Develop a Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for evidence based programming and policy formulation, and for the routine and periodic review and management of the Social Protection programmes;
- ix) Facilitate capacity building and institutional strengthening training programmes and reforms;
- x) Review the institutional and legislative frameworks for Social Protection;
- xi) Analyze Saint Lucia's fiscal space and outline budgetary plan for affordable and sustainably financed Social Protection programmes;
- xii) Develop effective information, education and communication strategies for achieving equitable and sustainable social protection systems for all;
- xiii) Develop a common targeting mechanism for the effectively reaching poorest and most vulnerable population and to minimize errors of inclusion and exclusion; and
- xiv) Develop Standard Operation Manuals and Toolkits for achieving equity, efficiency as well as child sensitive and gender responsive programmes.



3. BENEFITS

The provision of Social Protection is considered an investment in a country's population and a key contributor to its sustainable development. A pro-poor, green, gender equitable and child sensitive Social Protection Policy can achieve minimum standards of living and well-being for those most in need; guarantee systematic human capital investments; and promote participation in the labour market. A package of investments coupled with policy reforms aimed at making growth socially inclusive offers economically viable options to reduce poverty and hunger, and address challenges of climate change and degradation of natural resources, while simultaneously providing new and sustainable pathways to economic development and prosperity.

By reducing poverty, mitigating vulnerabilities and enhancing equitable access to services and opportunities, a Social Protection Policy can lead to and increase the demand for services and goods (especially social ones), expand domestic markets, as well as create a healthier, better educated, more empowered and more productive workforce for the future. In this sense, social protection contributes, in the long run, to breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty and promotes national economic development and growth. If properly designed and implemented, Social Protection can foster a more peaceful, stable and cohesive society.

Social Protection programmes can play four roles in development. Firstly, safety nets redistribute income to the poorest and most vulnerable, with an immediate impact on poverty and inequality. Secondly, access to Social Protection means that households do not have to fall back on coping strategies that can have irreversible, impoverishing impacts on families and children. Thirdly, safety nets can enable households to make better investments in their future, including investments in the human capital of their children and in the livelihoods of the earners. Fourth, Social Protection promotes a solid foundation for economic growth, as part of greener economic path that provides a societal insurance against perpetuating poverty and mitigates the effects of economic shocks and crises. When founded on a rights-based approach, Social Protection encourages countries to aim towards a universal standard of social protection coverage.

Given the multi-faceted nature of poverty and vulnerability, Social Protection cannot be delivered effectively through a single programme or intervention. Instead, it requires a set of programmes and interventions that together address all the different aspects of poverty and vulnerability. It also requires inclusion within a broader developmental framework such as the one proposed by the Green economy in which policies enable economic growth and investment while increasing environmental quality and social inclusiveness. A Social Protection Policy is necessary to ensure that the various programmes and interventions are based on a similar understanding of poverty and vulnerability, and that they work together in a coordinated fashion to achieve the highest possible level of Social Protection.



4. PRINCIPLES

4.1. Definition of Social Protection

Social Protection consists of a set of public and private actions that aim to address the vulnerability of people's life via *social insurance*, which offers protection against risk and adversity throughout life; via *social assistance*, which offers payments, in-kind grants, social services and psychosocial interventions to support and enable the poor; via *labour market interventions*, which offer improved prospects for participation by the poor in employment; and via *social inclusion efforts* that enhance the capability of the marginalized to access social insurance, social assistance, employment and social services.

The reference to public and private “actions” rather than only to government programmes and policies suggests that the role of Government is not only to implement Social Protection programmes itself, but also to enable alternative Social Protection actors in their provision of Social protection. In this vein, the private sector is an essential partner in any sustainable social development strategy in terms of fostering economic growth, job creation, improved living wages through Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) and social insurance.

4.2. Key Principles of Social Protection

It shall be the Policy of the Government of Saint Lucia that national Social Protection practice be guided by the following key principles:

4.2.1. Pro-poor Focus

The pro-poor focus of Social Protection interventions will be improved through the adherence to clear selection criteria, the use of efficient and objective targeting mechanisms, and subscription to inclusive legislation and programme rules.

The Government of Saint Lucia is committed to the adoption of a Social Protection Platform for the country.

4.2.2. Child and Gender Sensitivity

Greater child and gender sensitivity of Social Protection interventions will be sought by considering the particular vulnerabilities that girls and boys, women and men face in their life-cycles, and ensuring that the design and implementation of interventions caters for these.

4.2.3. Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

Long-term political commitment to Social Protection programmes is essential if they are to be effective in tackling environmental vulnerabilities, social exclusion and economic inequalities across the life-cycle and across generations in a sustainable way. Consistent with a Green Economy approach, it is understood that all Social Protection actions should promote



environmental sustainability as established in the legislation relating to environment and natural capital in Saint Lucia. A permanent, long-term commitment of adequate financial, human and all other relevant resources is necessary for the development and implementation of social protection, while ensuring the protection of the environment.

The Government of Saint Lucia shall ensure the absolute value of budgetary allocations for Social Protection during periods of recession or economic contraction.

4.2.4. *More Productive Jobs*

Employment and Social Protection are mutually reinforcing and indispensable avenues to socio-economic development, poverty reduction and human dignity. Provision of better and more productive jobs raise incomes and help finance Social Protection, which not only contributes to better and more stable household incomes but also improves the productivity and employability of the population. Economic growth and the impact of that growth on the quantity and quality of jobs are crucial for the sustainability of Social Protection.

4.2.5. *Efficiency*

Higher efficiency in the use of scarce resources will be ensured by reducing unnecessary duplication and overlap with respect to interventions, mechanisms and efforts, and creating modern processes and administration systems. Increased efficiency in reducing poverty and vulnerabilities will be obtained by: reducing inclusion and exclusion errors; ensuring higher impacts in the desired target populations through evidence-based policy design and programming; and the effective use of monitoring and evaluation information.

Social Protection in Saint Lucia shall be characterized in any given period by a mixture of all four types of social protection measures, namely: Protective, Preventive, Promotive and Transformative Measures.

4.2.6. *Affordability*

Affordable combinations of interventions will be selected. Over time, as financial, human and other resources become available, the interventions will be extended so as to move towards the goal of universal coverage.

4.2.7. *Transparency and Accountability*

Increased transparency and accountability will be sought by ensuring public awareness of the Social Protection Policy, its interventions and rules, budgets and M&E results. This will be achieved through development of improved mechanisms for reporting to beneficiaries, Government and the general public.

4.2.8. *Equity and Inclusion*

The adoption of a rights-based, equity-oriented approach to ensure the promotion of, and respect for, the rights and dignity of beneficiaries. This would encompass not only equality of opportunity, but also promotion of equality of outcome. This will be achieved through designing



and implementing interventions in a way that takes the differing situation and needs of different categories of people and families into account. Further, a rights-based approach means that no individual should suffer direct or indirect unfair discrimination on the basis, among others, of their gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, the family form and/or the geographical area in which they live. In addition, those most in need of assistance are more likely to be reached by a human rights-based social protection programme, and the assistance they receive is more likely to be appropriate and effective in addressing their deprivations.

4.2.9. Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency

Empowerment and promotion of self-sufficiency of beneficiaries will be promoted by designing and implementing interventions in a way that recognizes and supports beneficiaries' strengths and potential, and promotes access to the means to realize said potential. However, it is recognised that some groups of vulnerable people, such as persons who suffer from psychological and physical disabilities, have little chance of ever being fully self-sufficient.

4.2.10. Social Transformation

The Government of Saint Lucia shall adhere to the Transformative Paradigm of Social Protection, as a consequence of which the State shall have an obligation to eliminate, or reduce as much as possible, any and all systemic as well as other barriers faced by the poor and vulnerable in accessing social services. Social Protection shall embrace, therefore, the lowering of transaction costs associated with the uptake of Government services; the continuous improvement of public access to institutional and legal mechanisms of redress; and the institutionalization of State-led campaigns aimed at changing entrenched attitudes that are discriminatory and injurious to the poor and vulnerable.

4.3. Key Policy Statements in Social Protection

WHEREAS

The Government of Saint Lucia is committed to delivering an adequate and affordable combination of Social Protection services for the poor and vulnerable population;

AND WHEREAS

The Government endorses full access to Social Protection services with the long-term goal of progressively achieving the fulfillment of human rights for all.

Consequently, the Government, working with all other stakeholders, shall:

- ❖ Adopt a social assistance regime comprised of a mix of targeted and universal transfers, utilizing each approach as considered necessary and feasible;



- ❖ Adopt a Conditional Cash Transfer System with appropriate conditionalities;
- ❖ Develop Social Protection tools, that is Management Information System and Single Registry of Beneficiaries;
- ❖ Explore and test the possibilities of household-level targeting (with respect to means or proxy-means) for means-tested, non-contributory, social assistance programmes;
- ❖ Develop and implement the appropriate referral, graduation and exit strategies for the different interventions;
- ❖ Develop appropriate linkages and two-way referral mechanisms between the ministries and among Social Protection providers;
- ❖ Acknowledge Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) and other relevant non-state actors as legitimate and vital providers of Social Protection services;
- ❖ Increase collaboration and forge stronger partnerships with CSOs, FBOs and other relevant non-state actors in the coordination and delivery of Social Protection programmes;
- ❖ Provide tax exemptions to all credible and properly constituted CSOs and other relevant non-state actors to facilitate Social Protection initiatives by these organizations;
- ❖ Periodically adjust the value of cash benefits to maintain the value and relevance of the benefit;
- ❖ Strengthen and scale-up existing social assistance programmes while ensuring comprehensive geographical and demographic coverage;
- ❖ Establish an institutional framework for coordinating Social Protection to ensure consistent and adequate levels of support;
- ❖ Make the necessary provisions to support the functions of legal assistance in ensuring its availability to vulnerable persons on civil and criminal matters;
- ❖ Review the existing legislation and mechanisms with respect to low cost housing with a view to making the service affordable to the most vulnerable of the population;
- ❖ Strengthen the existing social security regime and establish comprehensive social security arrangements that will extend legal coverage to all workers, whether in the formal or informal sectors, and their dependants;
- ❖ Embark on a campaign to ensure that at least 90 percent of the self-employed become regular contributors to the existing social security regime;
- ❖ Define and enhance the pro-poor focus of health services and ensure their financial sustainability;
- ❖ Rationalize, reform and strengthen interventions and regulations concerning education services;



- ❖ Ensure that the design and implementation of programmes and development approaches are coordinated, including within social assistance and between social security and active labour market interventions;
- ❖ Accept Social Protection as a lever of national economic empowerment and development;
- ❖ Embark on the continuous review of legislation relevant to Social Protection;
- ❖ Ensure that in periods of economic contraction, the poor and vulnerable are protected by appropriate safety net programmes;
- ❖ Ensure that Social Protection in Saint Lucia is coordinated and overseen by a specialized agency that is established in law; and
- ❖ Institute a major national forum of all Social Protection stakeholders annually.



5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REFORM

5.1. Strategy and Action Plans

Given the breadth and range of sectors involved in Saint Lucia's Social Protection system, the realization of the ideals of this policy requires a phased approach to reform the existing Social Protection system.

Phase 1 (2014 to 2019): Consolidation and strengthening of the Social Safety Net Programmes for improved efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

Phase 2 (2019 to 2024): Wider reforms for establishing a coherent and integrated Social Protection system, including social security.

In line with the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS), Phase 2 will address the areas of health insurance, pension plans, and unemployment insurance, which require direct guidance and leadership from the Ministry of Finance.

In line with the recommendations from the 2009 Social Safety Net Assessment by Dr. Lorraine Blank, a separate document accompanies the Policy and includes a **five-year Strategic Plan of Action for the Phase 1 reform process**. It specifies objectives, strategies and actions, assigns responsibilities, and establishes milestones and targets with clearly defined indicators. In this vein, the Strategic Plan of Action also provides a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework to facilitate the assessment of implementation of the initial reform process. The M&E Framework also establishes information sources and methods for data collection, the periodicity required for reporting and the agencies responsible for production and distribution of the data.

The priority areas for action and related objectives and strategies for Phase 1 were identified through extensive technical consultations with the relevant line ministries and other implementing agencies.

In addition to the monitoring data to be collected under the M&E Framework, mid-term and final review processes will be undertaken to adjust the ongoing Strategic Plan of Action. This will also provide input for the next phase while determining additional areas for reform.

5.2. Priority Areas for Action

Given the complexity and magnitude of the reform, priority areas have been defined to meet the Policy goals and objectives. The following are the priority areas:

Priority Area 1: Modernize the Social Protection systems and strengthen the capacity to deliver services in an efficient and effective way;

Priority Area 2: Rationalize, reform and strengthen protective interventions and strategies;

Priority Area 3: Rationalize, reform and strengthen preventive and promotive interventions and strategies; and

Priority Area 4: Review and develop the institutional, financial and legal frameworks for more coordinated and transformative social protection services.



Priority Area 1: Modernize the Social Protection Systems and Strengthen the Capacity to Deliver Services in an Efficient and Effective Way

This priority area addresses the revision and adjustment of the Social Protection Framework. It aims to re-define the selection criteria for each intervention; unify and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the targeting and registration mechanisms; develop guidelines and instruments for more harmonized service delivery; and build institutional capacities. A special effort is proposed to design and implement research plans and M&E systems for evidence-based programming and policy formulation.

Objective 1.1.: Review and adjust the existing Social Protection Framework and modernize its targeting and registration mechanisms to increase objectivity, efficiency, equity and transparency for all key Social Protection interventions.

Objective 1.2.: Define, document and systematize operations and processes for all major Social Protection interventions to ensure standard quality service delivery.

Objective 1.3.: Strengthen the institutional capacity of key Social Protection institutions and agencies to increase efficiency and effectiveness in policy and programme design and implementation.

Objective 1.4.: Develop M&E systems for all Social Protection interventions and ensure the utilization of results and findings.

Priority Area 2: Rationalize, Reform and Strengthen Protective Interventions and Strategies

This priority area aims at reforming the main social assistance interventions to assist the poorest and most vulnerable population in Saint Lucia. The focus is on integrating objectives and goals, rationalizing available resources, and ensuring that the most in need are reached with quality and effective services. It entails strategic reforms mainly for the Public Assistance Programme (PAP) and the Koudmen Ste Lisi Programme, and for the emergency and housing interventions for the poor and vulnerable.

Objective 2.1.: Review, harmonize, and strengthen the existing poverty and vulnerabilities reduction interventions (PAP and Koudmen Programmes).

Objective 2.2.: Develop, reform and strengthen the emergency and housing interventions for the poor and vulnerable (Disaster Assistance Programmes – Housing Assistance, including Water and Sanitation - Burial Assistance)

Objective 2.3: Develop, reform and strengthen the interventions and regulations concerning family wellbeing, child protection, at risk youth, and gender based violence support.

Supportive Actions for Protective Measures

Although the first phase of the reform defines strategies for action for all Priority Areas, a special effort is required on the protective, social assistance measures of Priority Area 2. As such, the Government, working with all other relevant stakeholders, commits itself to the following measures:



- Ensure that the household-based approach adequately caters to ongoing changes in household shape and composition without individuals losing benefit; does not force vulnerable individuals (such as violated women and children) to remain in households that are bad for their well-being; and ensures that household-based benefits reach individual members in need; and
- Ensure household-level, means-based targeting is complemented, where necessary, with further categorical targeting to ensure that benefits reach individuals in particular vulnerable categories which are less able to cater for their own needs, such as the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and single mothers.

Priority Area 3: Rationalize, Reform and Strengthen Preventive and Promotive Interventions and Strategies

This priority area proposes reforms of the main social safety net interventions oriented at preventing foreseeable life-cycle risks (e.g. health and nutrition); ensuring that the required investment in the children's human capital takes place (e.g. education); and stimulating economic independence to overcome the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

Objective 3.1.: Define and enhance the pro-poor focus of health services and ensure their financial sustainability.

Objective 3.2.: Rationalize, reform and strengthen interventions and regulations concerning education services (early childhood development (ECD) and school-based social safety net services reform – books – uniforms – transportation – after-school community programme).

Objective 3.3.: Rationalize, reform and strengthen interventions and regulations concerning and related to employment services.

Priority Area 4: Review and Develop the Institutional, Financial and Legal Frameworks for more Coordinated and Transformative Social Protection Services

This priority area proposes the revision and further development of the institutional, legal and financial frameworks that will facilitate the provision of more coordinated, equitable and transformative Social Protection services. A customized institutional structure, together with an adequate legal framework will foster increased Social Protection Policy coherence and inter-agency engagement. In addition, modern financial systems and mechanisms will facilitate the timely delivery of services in a transparent way. Finally, to ensure accountability and informed stakeholder participation, a comprehensive Communication Strategy will ensure the flow of adequate information among the institutional structures, the communities, and the beneficiary households, as well as the general public.

Objective 4.1.: Develop institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms for Social Protection Policy management and implementation.



Objective 4.2.: Develop effective communication strategies for the implementation of the Social Protection Policy and its interventions.

Objective 4.3.: Develop sound and sustainable financial mechanisms for Social Protection.

Objective 4.4.: Review and further develop the legal framework and regulations for Social Protection.

5.3. Institutional Framework

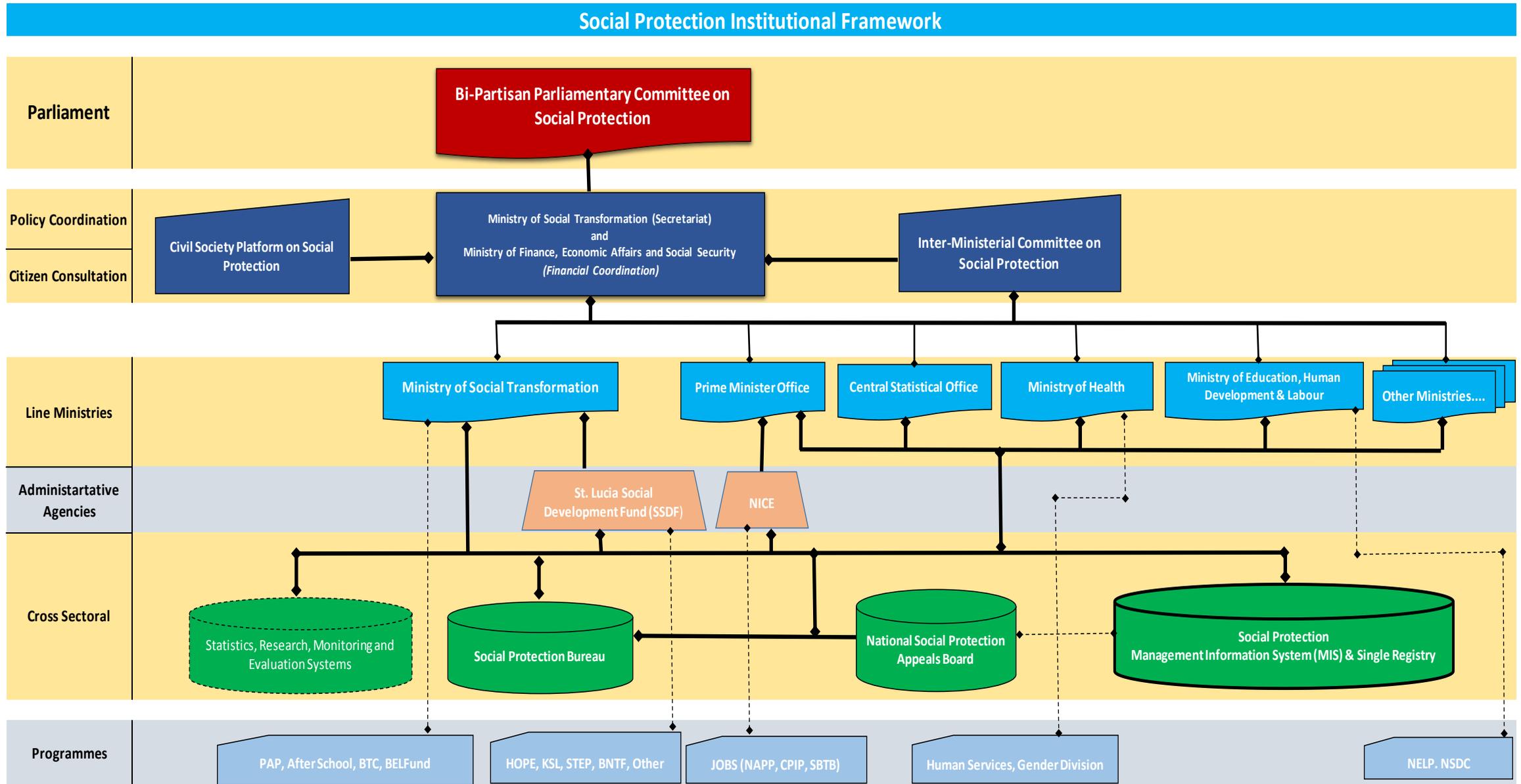
As established in Priority Area 4 (Objective 4.1) a reform of the institutional framework is needed to ensure coordination of Government's Social Protection provisions in Saint Lucia. Given that there are multiple Ministries and agencies implementing different Social Protection interventions, institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms are needed to facilitate harmonized decision making, implementation and service delivery. This framework will cover all Social Protection activities and programmes of the Government of Saint Lucia.

Moreover, monitoring and evaluation will be in-built into the Institutional Framework to allow for the assessment of the reform process implementation and its performance. This will include the utilization of indicators to track the achievement of specific objectives under each priority area included in the Strategic Plan of Action. In addition, reporting mechanisms will be developed to clearly define the necessary distribution of the information produced by the M&E system and the research exercises to ensure that the different users receive all relevant information and analysis in time to fulfill their role in the Social Protection Framework. Furthermore, the M&E system will provide crucial information for accountability and transparency, which is vital in maintaining the legitimacy of the Social Protection System among the many stakeholders and general public.

The Institutional Framework will cater to the roles and interactions of the public and private sector, and other non-governmental actors in the provision of Social Protection in Saint Lucia. Inclusion of non-government actors acknowledges that these actors may enjoy comparative advantages over public sector providers in some areas, such as, better access to information on the homeless.

The key elements of the Institutional Framework are depicted in the following diagram.





5.4. Roles of stakeholders

A **Bi-Partisan Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection** will protect the integrity of Social Protection provision in Saint Lucia and strategically influence its resource allocation. It will also play a key role in legislating and transforming the existing legislation to address power imbalances and ensure the reduction of social, cultural, political or economic barriers that create or sustain inequalities and exclude potential beneficiaries from accessing Social Protection services.

An **Inter-Ministerial Committee on Social Protection** will be created to provide overall Policy guidance to the Social Protection System and the institutions involved in it. The Inter-Ministerial Committee will periodically consult the Civil Society Platform on Social Protection and advise the Secretariat.

Subject to the authority of the relevant Ministers, the Ministry Responsible for Social Transformation and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security will have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the National Social Protection Policy is implemented, as well as for its monitoring, evaluation and review processes. They will fulfill these obligations in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, and report to the Bi-Partisan Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection.

The **Ministry Responsible for Social Transformation** will play the primary coordination role, serving as the Secretariat for Social Protection, ensuring timely information flows between Ministerial bodies and agencies involved in social protection service delivery, and will direct appeals and redress requests to the National Social Protection Appeals Board. The Ministry will have at its service the Social Protection Management Information System (MIS), Single Registry (SR) and Statistics, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems developed for these purposes.

The **Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning and Social Security** will, subject to the availability of funds, ensure sustainable financing for the implementation of the Social Protection policy in the short to medium term and progressive universalism of Social Protection platform in Saint Lucia in the long run, while maintaining fiscal and macroeconomic stability.

Other Social Protection Implementing Ministries and Agencies will assume both leadership and collaborative roles associated with the implementation of relevant provisions of the Policy, including service delivery, information management and reporting roles.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and other non-governmental organizations, provide a range of Social Protection services to vulnerable citizens. These organizations are sometimes better able to reach particular vulnerable categories, and/or to offer interventions appropriate for them. The CSOs will collaborate with and be supported by government in providing these interventions.

A **Civil Society Platform on Social Protection** will be established to allow a formal means for civil society and beneficiaries to participate in shaping Social Protection policy and programming for Saint Lucia.

Beneficiaries are individuals or households who benefit from or access specific Social Protection services at a specific point in time or during a period of time. As such they are entitled to programme benefits and services and have the responsibility to follow rules and regulations and to



provide prescribed information honestly and in a timely fashion to designated Social Protection administrators for the purposes of determining continued programme eligibility, compliance and possible graduation from programmes, as well as for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Beneficiaries can submit appeals and complaints related to their entitlements, including eligibility, selection and registration through the National Social Protection Appeals Board and the specific Social Protection Programme's Complaints Mechanisms. As stated above, beneficiaries can participate in shaping Social Protection policy and programming through the Civil Society Platform on Social Protection.

A **National Social Protection Appeals Board** will be created to process and channel all Social Protection appeals and complaints related to beneficiary selection, service delivery and quality service delivery. The appeals mechanisms will have clear processes and instruments and time limits for response.

Regional bodies such as the **Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)** and the **Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)** will provide opportunities for the hedging of risks associated with country-specific macroeconomic volatility through measures such as regional Stabilization Funds and Regional Social Protection Funds. Regional bodies will also facilitate regional goal-setting, monitoring of progress, sharing of experience and regional accountability.



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