

GUIDANCE NOTE

Post-Disaster Household Assessments and Eligibility Determination for Post-Disaster Social Protection Benefits



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Why it Matters:

The frequency and severity of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have necessitated improving the mechanisms to identify affected individuals and households; assess post-disaster needs and conditions; and determine who will be eligible for post-disaster Social Protection (SP) support. Intended populations for different types of post-disaster support vary and are often constrained by fiscal space and resource availability. Rapid increase of SP benefits to existing beneficiaries (vertical expansion) has been a common and useful SP response to support poor and vulnerable households affected by a shock. However, while LAC exhibits comparatively high coverage of SP programs among the total population and the poorest quintile when compared to other regions, there are still large coverage gaps, particularly in some countries. This further constrains rapid provision of SP benefits to non-beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) or deploying emergency safety nets to affected households. Furthermore, existing SP beneficiaries are not the only persons in need of support in post-disaster contexts, as disasters often push near-poor individuals and households into poverty. This guidance note shares country experiences and provides solutions for effectively assessing post-disaster needs and conditions to inform the provision of post-disaster social protection benefits and services. The note describes the tools and processes for determining eligibility and assessing needs and conditions for the provision of regular SP benefits and services, as well as common instruments and methodologies used for assessing post disaster impacts and needs. The objectives of this note are to (i) improve mutual understanding of SP targeting and disaster assessment instruments; and (ii) help LAC countries develop more integrated and comprehensive methodologies to assess post-disaster household needs and impacts to inform post-shock SP response. This guidance note is intended to help LAC countries strengthen the links between SP systems to risk identification, resilient reconstruction and financial protection objectives. The note provides recommendations to improve post-disaster household assessments for more efficient provision of post-disaster SP benefits and services. This guidance note complements the messages outlined in a separate guidance note in this series on *Making Social Protection Information Systems (SPISs) Adaptive. For specific recommendations and lessons on SPISs*, please refer to that note.

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1. Introduction

Social Protection and Labor (SPL) programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) cover 60 percent of the total population and 76 percent of the poorest quintile.¹ This represents the second highest coverage level of SPL programs compared to other regions globally. Additionally, most countries in LAC have well-established methods for identifying poor and vulnerable populations; social registries with comprehensive household information on potential beneficiaries for Social Protection (SP) benefits and services; and beneficiary registries with information on those who are eventually enrolled in SP programs. For instance, social registries² in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia cover over 70 percent of the population in those countries.

The frequency and severity of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have necessitated improving the mechanisms to identify affected individuals and households; assessing post-disaster needs and conditions; and determining who will be eligible for post-disaster Social Protection (SP) support. Intended populations for different types of post-disaster SP support may include all households in an affected area; all affected households (particularly when the scale and impacts of the event are severe); or certain categories of affected individuals based on demographic or other criteria. Where events are localized or impacts less widespread, governments and other implementers may choose to prioritize the poorest households or different categories of vulnerable, such as persons with disabilities, elderly, young children or female-headed households.

Automatic or rapid increase in SP benefits to existing beneficiaries (vertical expansion) has been a common and useful reaction to ensuring that poor and vulnerable persons who are affected by a shock are provided with additional support to help smooth their consumption in times of crises.³ However, existing SP beneficiaries are not the only persons in need of support in post-disaster contexts. The severity of disasters often causes changes in poverty and vulnerability – pushing near-poor individuals and households into poverty or resulting in the loss of all assets for some non-poor households. Additionally, while as a region, LAC exhibits high coverage of SP programs among the total population and the poorest quintile when compared to other regions, there are still large coverage gaps, particularly in some countries. For instance, 40 percent of the total population and 24 percent of the poor in LAC still receive no SP benefit.⁴ Furthermore, social registries, with information on potential beneficiaries of SP programs and services also exhibit varied coverage, limiting their utility for informing emergency SP support in some countries. There are therefore limitations to how effectively LAC countries can rapidly provide SP benefits to non-beneficiaries (horizontal expansion) or deploy emergency safety nets to affected households in a way that appropriately addresses their post-disaster needs and conditions.

While there are a range of SP targeting instruments to identify eligible beneficiaries for regular SP benefits, these often have limited utility in post-disaster settings, particularly since these tools are aimed at identifying chronic poverty and are less suitable for assessing rapid changes in well-being resulting from a shock event. There is also a myriad of post-disaster assessment instruments that are deployed to assess damages, losses, and impacts after disaster events. However, these assessments are largely carried out at a macro-level and have limited utility in assessing household conditions after disaster events.

Post-Disaster Household Assessments (PDHAs) have been routinely used, but sometimes in an ad-hoc manner or hindered by limited variables that have inadequate utility for informing comprehensive provision of SP support. The multiplicity of actors operating in post-disaster contexts have also reinforced fragmentation and duplication of these processes.

Given these challenges, it is important for LAC countries to improve coverage of social registries and of flagship safety nets, where gaps exist, and to improve the processes for assessing post-disaster household needs and conditions, so affected households can be better linked to available benefits and services in post-disaster contexts.

2. Core Features of Social Protection Targeting Systems and Post-Disaster Household Assessments

The myriad of Social Protection benefits and services offered in LAC countries and elsewhere are often intended for specific groups or individuals to address challenges and risks faced by these “*intended populations*.” These risks and challenges range from drops in well-being due to different shocks or life events; lack of, or inequality, of opportunity; and limited potential or prospects to build human capital and ensure adequate socioeconomic inclusion. To address these challenges, SP in LAC countries includes provision of social safety nets intended for chronic poor individuals and households; labor market programs for unemployed and other labor market interventions for working-aged persons; pension benefits to persons of retirement age; and social care services to vulnerable individuals and groups.

Targeting Regular Social Protection Benefits and Services

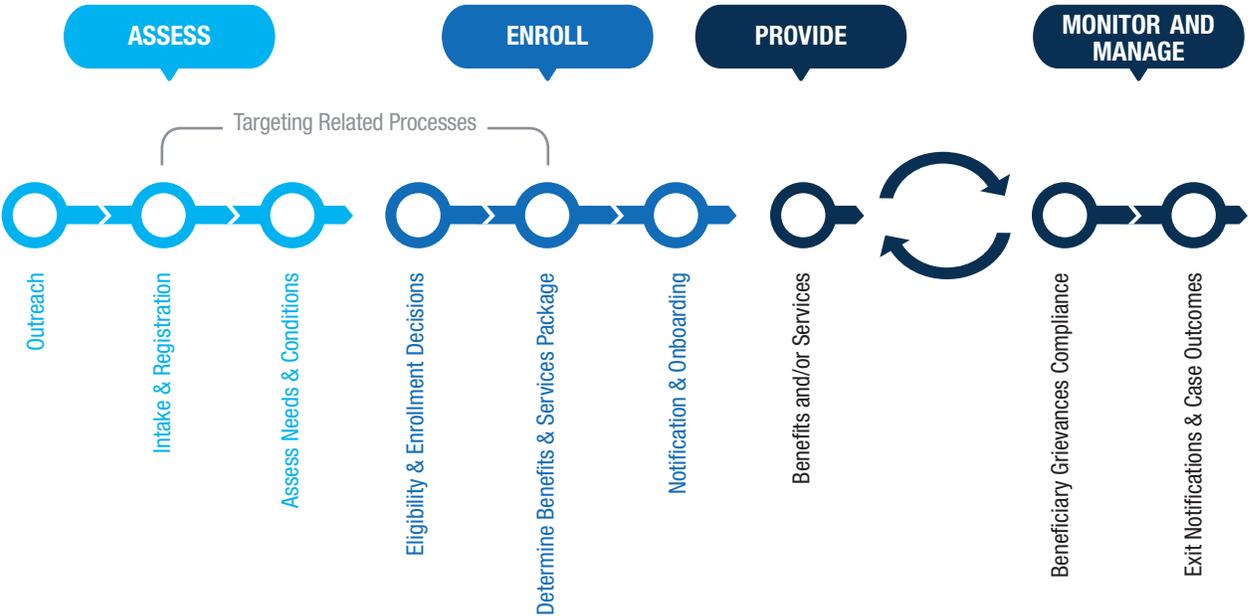
The process of linking SP benefits and services to their intended populations is referred to as ‘*targeting*.’ The targeting process helps SP implementers ensure that benefits and services are directed effectively to those they are intended for; that program objectives are met; and often, are used to help focus limited resources more efficiently. There has also been increased momentum and policy support recently for universal basic income (UBI), which removes the need for targeting by providing a basic unconditional cash grant to all citizens, with pilots in Kenya, the United States, Finland and other countries.

There are a range of methods that countries can use to identify and enroll the individuals and households that SP benefits and services are intended for. When poverty is the criterion for eligibility, two common approaches to targeting include (i) means tests, which assesses income levels of program applicants either through verified or self-reported/unverified mechanisms; or (ii) proxy-means tests which assesses household characteristics closely linked to poverty, which may include household size, characteristics of the physical dwelling, education level etc. Other targeting methods include categorical targeting based on particular characteristics such as age, gender, marital status etc.; geographic targeting based on physical location; and community-based targeting in which select community members identify those who would be eligible for the benefit or service based on the eligibility criteria. Programs also utilize self-targeting, allowing rolling on-demand enrollment for those who wish to apply. Although there are a range of options for targeting, most SP programs use a combination of targeting methods to identify those who would receive benefits and services.

Within SP, safety nets are predominantly targeted to the chronically poor, through use of means-testing, proxy-means testing or community-based targeting to determine poverty status of applicant individuals or households. Often, these methods are combined with other categorical or demographic criteria to identify and enroll eligible individuals or households. Labor market programs that seek to promote opportunity are usually categorically targeted to the unemployed within working age, while social insurance is largely focused on working-aged employed persons for contributory schemes and have different demographic or categorical criteria for determining eligibility for benefits, such as unemployment benefits for unemployed persons and pension benefits for persons of retirement age.

For delivery of regular SP benefits and services, the targeting process is affiliated with various stages in a program or service’s delivery chain, including the processes for intake and registration of applicants; assessing the needs and conditions of those who apply; and making enrolment decisions on who will become beneficiaries and deciding on what the package of benefits and services they will receive based on program design, resource availability and the needs and conditions identified during the targeting process. These processes are therefore of paramount importance to the effective implementation and delivery of regular SP benefits.

Chart 1: Targeting in the SP-Delivery Chain



Source: Adapted from Social Protection and Jobs Delivery Systems Global Solutions Group, World Bank.

The Importance of Social Registries

The information collected during the intake and registration process is critically important for linking applicants to SP benefits and services. As such, the targeting-related processes described above are best supported by a social registry. A social registry is “an information system that supports outreach, intake, registration, and determination of potential eligibility for one or more social programs.”⁵ These systems include information provided by all program applicants during the intake and registration phase, which can be later accessed by various SP benefits and services to identify eligible beneficiaries. Social registries function as “inclusion systems” by promoting access to programs and services and serve an operational role, as “gateways” for potential inclusion of intended populations into social programs, including targeted and universal programs.⁶

Social registries are critically important for promoting inclusion. Key concerns of SP programs include ensuring that vulnerable and hard-to-serve populations are informed and included in the programs targeted to them and facilitating dynamism when shocks and other crises warrant flexible approaches to assessing needs and conditions. As such the

methods through which intake and registration is conducted has implications for effective inclusion and comprehensive assessment of program applicants. There are two broad methods for intake of social registries, (i) on-demand approaches which permits registration at any time by interested applicants; or (ii) census approaches, which is characterized by periodic mass registration (usually 4-5 year intervals) in geographically prioritized areas. While the former permits flexibility and allows continuous application and update, the latter is a bit more rigid, with limited intake beyond the mass registration period. So, while census approaches usually facilitate the capture of information from a larger number of applicants than on-demand approaches, its data risks becoming out-of-date over time, particularly when shocks or other crises occur.⁷ A few countries, (notably Colombia in LAC), are also adopting a mixed intake approach with both census/survey sweep intake, complemented by on-demand applications.

Targeting of SP programs and benefits in LAC includes a variety of targeting mechanisms. For most LAC countries, the SP program with the most coverage and developed delivery mechanisms is a flagship safety net which is either a conditional cash transfer (CCT) or unconditional cash transfer (UCT). Proxy-means tests which assess household characteristics to determine eligibility is the most common targeting method utilized in LAC. Social registries are also common in the region, with varying coverage levels, usually aligned to the intake process. Countries with census or mixed approaches such as Colombia demonstrate higher levels of coverage in their registries, while countries using on-demand approaches usually exhibit coverage below 50 percent of the population. A notable exception to this trend in LAC is Chile, whose intake process is integrated and required for access to any of the country's social protection programs and services, including those that are universal. As such, Chile demonstrates high coverage of its registry, despite its on-demand approach.⁸

Despite the use of proxy-means and means tests to determine eligibility of households and the presence of registries used by single and multiple programs in LAC, there remains heterogeneity in the maturity of targeting systems and their associated processes. Some countries in LAC still use subjective mechanisms for determining eligibility for programs and use intake instruments that are outdated or fail to effectively capture the needs and conditions of applicants for SP programs. In these nascent systems, social registries, if they exist, may only be used by one program and may have low coverage, of both the poor and total population. On the opposite end of the scale, more mature systems are often characterized by objective intake instruments informed by current poverty data and linked to multi-program social registries with broad coverage of the poor and total population. The maturity of these systems and processes has implications for effective household assessment and eligibility determination for post-disaster SP support. This is discussed later in this note and in the guidance note on SP Information Systems.

Post-Disaster Assessment Instruments and Processes:

Large shocks continue to affect the region with environmental hazards, such as droughts, floods, landslides, hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions remaining a continuous threat. Natural hazards are also resulting in more intense and severe phenomena, given regional trends in urbanization and population growth, leading to a growing number of people and infrastructure exposed. As a result, the importance of SP systems to rapidly assess these impacts and respond appropriately, is paramount.

Following the occurrence of a disaster, there is urgent need to quickly assess damage, losses, and overall disaster impacts so that relief, recovery, and reconstruction efforts are adequately and accurately informed. To facilitate a thorough understanding of post-disaster needs, countries employ a range of post-disaster assessment instruments and tools, often applied within varying stages of the post-disaster timeline to assess immediate and long-term recovery needs. These instruments mostly assess macro-level and sectoral impacts, but also include community and household-level assessments to facilitate a more complete understanding of how disasters have affected infrastructure, service delivery, economic activity, livelihoods, and well-being. Table 1 includes a description of the most commonly used post-disaster assessments and tools.

Table 1: Types of Post-Disaster Assessments

Assessment	Features
Initial Situation Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out within hours of the event to get a broad understanding of initial impacts. • Largely includes aerial scanning or satellite imagery to identify affected areas and scale of impacts. • Often informs geographic prioritization for more detailed assessments.
Damage and Loss Assessment (DALA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures the closest approximation of damage and losses due to disaster events. • Uses national accounts and statistics from the country government as baseline data to assess damage and loss. • Accounts for the impact of disasters on individual livelihoods and incomes to fully define the needs for recovery and reconstruction. • Assesses damage as the replacement value of totally or partially destroyed physical assets; losses in the flows of the economy that arise from the temporary absence of the damaged assets; and the resulting impact on post-disaster macroeconomic performance. • Flexible and adaptable to specific disaster types and government ownership requirements. • Largely replaced by PDNAs – described below.
Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector-level assessment that estimates the damage and loss caused by a disaster to physical infrastructure, productive sectors and the economy, and identifies all recovery and reconstruction needs. • Helps governments assess the full extent of a disaster's impact and produce an actionable and sustainable Recovery Strategy. • Assess underlying risks and vulnerabilities to reduce risk and build back better. • Provides the basis for mobilizing resources for recovery and reconstruction through local, national and international sources. • Coordinated approach for post-disaster assessment and recovery planning. • Government-led, but includes non-government and international actors. • Synthesizes the DALA and Human Recovery Needs Assessment methodologies. • Commences usually within 1-2 weeks of the event and completed within 3-6 weeks.
Post-Disaster Household Assessments (PDHAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments that are applied at the household level, usually through a survey sweep of affected areas. • Seeks to capture demographic and essential data on households and their occupants, household-level damages, losses, impacts on livelihoods and well-being, and household-level needs. • Often deployed by government agencies and other humanitarian actors to improve understanding of household-level needs and to inform household-level responses. • Applied at varying timeframes in different countries, depending on when teams are mobilized and immediate rescue operations are completed

Source: Adapted from – (i) *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments: Volume A Guidelines, 2013. European Commission, United Nations Development Group, World Bank*; (ii) *Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment Guidance Notes. Volume 3, 2010. Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)*; and (iii) country experiences.

The post-disaster assessment process includes a range of actors, each seeking to get information to inform their individual responses. These include governments; international and local humanitarian agencies; international finance institutions (IFIs); other donors and NGOs who need to assess, *inter-alia*, fiscal impact, recovery costs, and how to best direct resources after the event. Even within government, different ministries need to measure specific sector-level impacts. The result is often, various assessments conducted in parallel, at times resulting in duplication of efforts and most consequentially, fatigue among the affected population from repeated assessment exercises.

At a macro-level, Damage and Loss Assessments (DALA) and Post-Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA) aim to reduce this fragmentation and duplication through a coordinated approach to assessing damage and losses. PDNAs are applied in most countries following large scale disaster events and usually involve convening stakeholders from government, humanitarian agencies, and IFIs to quantify sectoral and national-level damage, losses and recovery needs. Although the PDNA includes Employment, Social Protection and Livelihoods as a cross-cutting theme and also seeks to identify human development impacts, the exercise however, is not aptly suited for comprehensive household-level assessment.

The most common type of post-disaster assessment applied at the household level, is a ***Post-Disaster Household Assessment (PDHA)***. These assessments have various titles in different countries and a less standardized approach when compared to the more formal DALA and PDNA processes. Although the application of these instruments is less standardized, they share some basic elements. Firstly, PDHAs are applied solely at the household-level, usually to pre-identified affected households or all households in affected areas. The variables in these assessments range in number and complexity, but generally seek to assess the post-disaster needs, damages, and impacts of the event on the household and its occupants. The information from these assessments are usually used to assess the scale of household-level impacts and determine what should be provided to affected households to address the disaster's impacts on households' well-being and livelihoods. Finally, PDHAs may be applied by multiple actors in post-disaster contexts, including government, humanitarian agencies, NGOs and other actors involved in disaster response and recovery.

Several countries in LAC and elsewhere have PDHA instruments that are applied to households after disasters which are used to inform the provision of SP-related support to affected households. These instruments are at times formalized through standardized processes with strong legal foundations, such as Chile's Basic Emergency Sheet (*Ficha Básica de Emergencia - FIBE*); operate as formalized processes without associated legislation, such as Jamaica's Household Disaster Impact and Needs Assessment (JHDINA);⁹ or may be developed from scratch following a disaster event, as in the case of Dominica's Vulnerability Needs Assessment (VNA) instrument following Hurricane Maria in 2017. A summary of these instruments and their design features is included in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Features of PDHA Instruments in Select LAC Countries

Country	PDHA Instrument	Responsible Agency	Design Features	Variables Included <i>(not exhaustive)</i>
Chile	FIBE	Ministry of Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimized delivery through a FIBE app with online and offline functionality • Georeferenced data through GPS and photo upload features. • Data is cross-referenced with the social registry • Access to information by various institutions through a centralized platform. • Over 4,100 public servants trained in its application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event type • Family composition, including presence of vulnerable groups in the household • Dwelling characteristics and address • Post-disaster access to services • Employment and income impacts • Three priority emergency needs
Jamaica	JHDINA	Ministry of Labor and Social Security (as Chair of the Humanitarian Assistance Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced a previous paper-based Household Damage Assessment • Available in paper, mobile or tablet format with offline functionality • Photo upload capability • Data management temporarily supported temporarily by Survey Solutions • Applied by social workers who lead multi-sector assessment teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event type • Location and other basic information • Demographics and family composition, including presence of vulnerable groups in the household • Health information of household members • Receipt of regular social assistance • Housing information • Damage • Losses • Post-disaster assistance received and types • Five immediate needs
Dominica	VNA	Ministry responsible for Social Services; World Food Program and UNICEF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper application with ex-post data update in a simple database. • Developed to inform the delivery of a post-hurricane cash grant and to temporarily top-up the flagship cash transfer program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household composition, including presence of vulnerable groups in the household • Income • Housing • Receipt of regular social assistance • Access to basic services • Needs

Continued

Country	PDHA Instrument	Responsible Agency	Design Features	Variables Included (not exhaustive)
Mexico	Diagnostic Questionnaire for Persons Affected by Seismic Event 19S	Mexico City's Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed to inform response by the Mexico City Government to the September 2017 earthquake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household composition, including education level of each member and presence of persons with disabilities or indigenous Access to health services Dwelling characteristics and property value or rent amount Access to meals Income sources Access to social safety nets

Sources: Author's compilation based on assessment instruments; Government of Chile, 2018.

The data from these assessments optimally should be stored in information systems to ensure secure storage of data to inform a range of disaster response actions and to evaluate their impacts. In some LAC countries, PDHA information systems are called Victim Registries or '*Registros de Damnificados*' in Spanish. For instance, Colombia's Single Victims Register (*Registro Único de Damnificados - RUD*) contains information on household members; dwelling location and characteristics; affected property, crops and livestock lost; support received etc.¹⁰ Each household is given a system-generated unique identifier. The system is a web-based platform available for use by various sector stakeholders. It is important to note that not all LAC countries that have PDHAs store the data collected from this process in information systems. Some countries use simple excel based platforms to store this data, while others still rely on paper-based processes.

The use of PDHAs in various LAC countries have enabled governments to provide informed post-disaster SP support to households that address their needs. Nevertheless, there remain challenges with the application and use of these tools for informing SP response. These include:

- Finding an appropriate balance between collecting information rapidly and ensuring that sufficient data is captured to inform comprehensive response:** Some PDHA instruments are quite concise and facilitate rapid capture of data from households. However, these concise questionnaires often limit the utility of these instruments to inform comprehensive household response. For instance, insufficient data may be captured about livelihood impacts; psychological trauma; household composition etc. Decisions are therefore made from a general overview of the household context, rather than a thorough assessment of household conditions.
- Ensuring relevance of the variables to different shock types:** With the myriad of shocks affected LAC countries, it would be important for PDHA instruments to ensure applicability to different shock types. The nature and household impacts of earthquakes, floods, landslides and other disasters vary. As such, PDHA instruments should ensure that these impacts can be appropriately captured, regardless of shock type.

- Establishing clear criteria for determining eligibility for post-disaster SP support based on household needs and conditions:** PDHA instruments include a combination of observable impacts and self-reported data from households on their post-disaster needs and conditions. While this is aimed at informing post-disaster response, the eventual provision of SP benefits and services is often largely determined by resource availability. Additionally, post-disaster SP benefits often have varied levels and eligibility criteria, which may include a flat transfer to all affected households; to staggered levels of support based on the scale of damage or impact to a household and/or their poverty level. In using PDHA instruments to inform post-disaster support, it is critically important for governments to define what the criteria for receiving different packages of support will be and ensure that the required variables to assess this are included in the instrument. It is also equally important that these criteria do not undermine principles of equity, access, and adequacy.
- A static picture of needs, conditions and impacts:** PDHAs, particularly if they are applied within a short time frame of a disaster's occurrence, provide implementers and responders with an invaluable overview of a disaster's impact on a household. However, as time passes, the utility of the instrument tends to wane, as recovery efforts begin, and households resume regular activities. It is therefore critically important for these instruments to be applied quickly, ideally within two weeks of the disaster's occurrence, and also for the data to be processed quickly, so it can inform response in a timely manner. Lengthy delays in the application of the instrument, reduces its ability to accurately capture household needs and impacts resulting from the event. Additionally, if the data from the process is not acted on, its relevance wanes over time. For instance, PDHA data would be of limited utility for a program designed one year after a disaster, as household conditions would have likely changed. In such cases, establishing methods to update the data collected during the PDHA process, would be important.
- Fragmentation and duplication:** As noted previously, various agencies often implement their own household assessments to inform their response actions. Often, these instruments contain similar questions and are applied to the same households in affected areas. For instance, a government ministry may apply a questionnaire to inform safety net response to households, while a humanitarian agency will apply its own questionnaire to assess housing impacts; while another NGO may apply a separate questionnaire to assess gender and health impacts resulting from the disaster. This not only leads to inefficient deployment of essential human resources following the event, but also results in fatigue and frustration among already traumatized and drained families.

Box 1: Types of Emergency Safety Net Responses

- **Vertical Expansion:** Increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing program by adjusting the transfer amount/value, or introducing extraordinary payments.

- **Horizontal Expansion:** Adding new beneficiaries to an existing program by expanding geographic coverage, enrolment, modifying entitlement rules, or relaxing requirements/conditionalities to facilitate more participation.

- **Emergency Programming:** Deployment of a separate emergency safety net, independent from existing programs, which *may or may not* use the delivery mechanisms of the existing safety net.

- **Piggybacking:** When an emergency response uses element/s of an established SP system or program to deliver a new benefit.

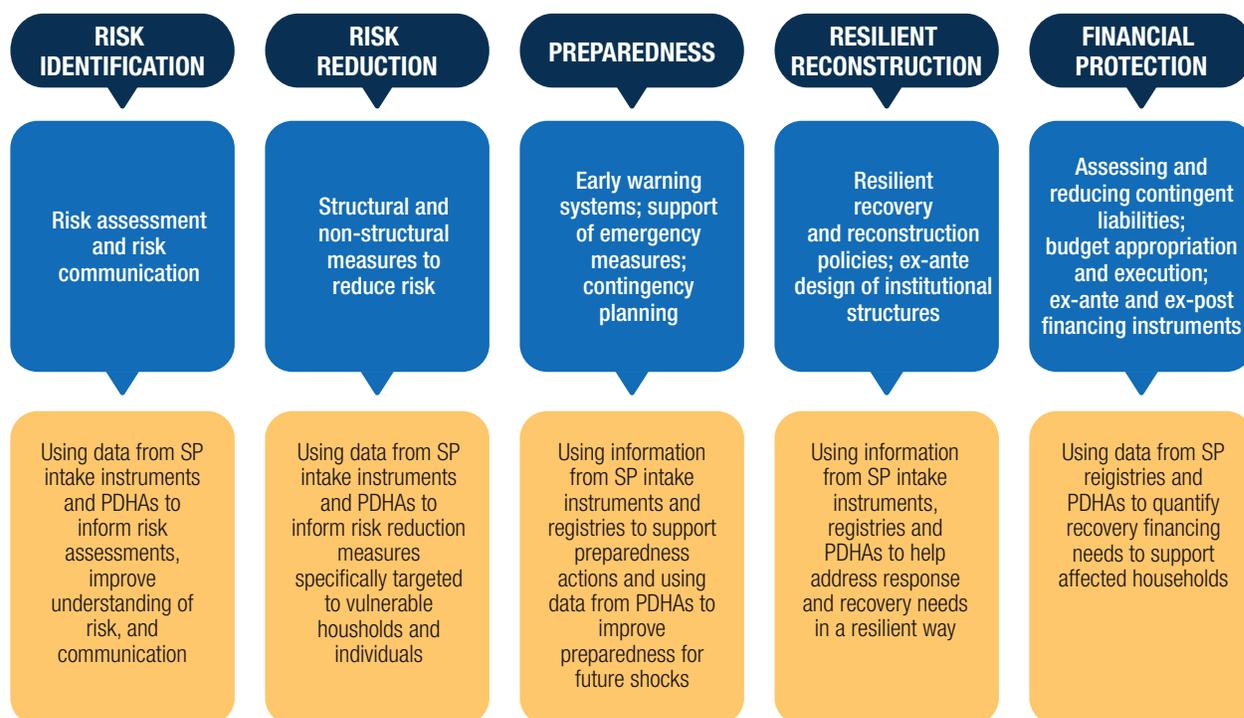
Source: Adapted from Oxford Policy Management, 2016.

- **Ensuring electronic processes for PDHA data collection and storing PDHA data in established information systems.** As noted previously, not all LAC countries store the data collected from PDHAs in established information systems. Some countries use simple excel based platforms to store this data, while others still rely on paper-based processes. When PDHA data is collected through a paper-based process, as was previously done in Jamaica, additional time was needed to digitize the data collected, delaying post-disaster decision making. Paper-based data collection not only increases the time needed to ensure that decision makers receive the data, but also increases the potential for error when transcribing the data. Further complicating this is when dedicated information systems are not in place to store this data. In such cases, the PDHA data risks being lost or tampered with. Storage of PDHA data in dedicated information systems are not only important for informing current response, but also for evaluating the impacts of disaster response efforts in the future.
- **Linking data collected to existing SP information systems and processes:** While Chile's FIBE instrument has clear linkages to the country's social registry, most PDHAs used in LAC have little or no formal linkages to SP information systems. Social registries can serve as a useful tool to verify and validate information collected in the PDHA process. These can help reduce the need to re-collect basic data from households if they are updated in registries and have broad coverage in affected areas. They can also support update of PDHA data in the months following a shock event. Some countries such as Chile and Jamaica use social workers and other social protection ministry staff (case workers, social promoters etc.) to collect data. This is a best practice that should be replicated, given that these categories of staff often have more experience interacting with households and are broadly familiar with families.
- **Ensuring consistency with established household survey methods:** Complementary uses of PDHA instruments include informing household-level support provided by other sectors as well as future impact evaluations of post-disaster support. When the variables in the PDHA instrument are inconsistent with those used by standard household surveys or the SP intake instrument, it becomes difficult or impossible to compare with other data sources. For example, if a PDHA was applied to all households but did not ask any questions on receipt of SP benefits and did not request the same ID for the household that is included in the social registry, identifying those households in the social registry will be nearly impossible. Additionally, if the definition of the household, household head etc. used in the PDHA is different from the formally established definition used by the country's main statistics office and SP programs, the feasibility of comparing these datasets will be limited.

3. Application of Post-Disaster Household Assessments to Inform Response

Post-disaster household assessments can help inform actions to support several DRM pillars. These including informing risk identification, risk reduction, resilient reconstruction and financial protection. The information collected could also help inform preparedness actions for future events. A summary of how these instruments can inform these objectives is summarized below.

Chart 2: SP Eligibility Instruments and PDHAs to Support DRM Pillars



SP responses to disaster impacts span a time continuum that ranges from immediately after, to months and years following the event. This can be in the form of immediate humanitarian relief, rapid support to vulnerable groups; emergency cash or in-kind transfers; cash-for-work initiatives to support relief and response efforts; and cash and in-kind transfers with longer term resilience and recovery objectives. For each of these responses, countries need to be able to effectively identify who needs support, what the disaster impacts on them have been, what their conditions are, and what packages of support are needed to help them recover resiliently.

Immediately after the event, support is usually in the form of humanitarian relief to all affected households as well as evacuation and shelter of displaced individuals and families, and vulnerable groups such as elderly and persons with disabilities. In the short term, emergency cash or in-kind support to those affected is usually mobilized, including through topping-up the existing safety net (vertical expansion) or providing cash or in-kind benefits for those who are affected who may not be existing beneficiaries (horizontal expansion, emergency programming, piggybacking and shadow alignment).¹¹ This is often with priority to those most in need – either through the scale of the event’s impact on the household, poverty levels, livelihood impacts, or vulnerability criteria such as disability, age or gender; or a combination of these characteristics. This usually commences once immediate rescue operations are completed and can last between weeks and months. Finally, in the medium to long term, different benefits and services may be provided to assist families with resilient recovery.

Chart 3: Bases for Determining Eligibility for Post-Disaster SP Responses Along the Time Continuum¹²

RESPONSE TYPE:	Immediate Humanitarian Response	Emergency Safety Net <i>Vertical Expansion</i>	Emergency Safety Net <i>Horizontal Expansion</i>	Emergency Safety Net <i>Standalone; Piggybacked; Aligned</i>	Recovery Benefits and Services
Phase <i>Exact timeframe depends on the severity of the event</i>	Emergency Response <i>(hours-weeks)</i>	Early Recovery <i>(weeks-months)</i>	Early Recovery <i>(weeks-months)</i>	Early Recovery <i>(weeks-months)</i>	Medium-Long Term Recovery <i>(months-years)</i>
Intended Beneficiaries	All affected Vulnerable affected populations	Safety Net Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiary affected population	Affected population <i>(varied criteria)</i>	Affected population <i>(varied criteria)</i>
Assessment Type/ Data Source/s	Initial Situation Overview Social Registry Disability and Elderly Registries	Initial Situation Overview Program Beneficiary Registry PDHA	Initial Situation Overview Social Registry PDHA	Initial Situation Overview Social Registry PDHA	Initial Situation Overview Social Registry PDHA PDNA
Country Case	Bahamas: Immediate humanitarian relief to Abaco in 2019 informed by a preliminary damage assessment.	Jamaica: automatic top-up to all PATH beneficiaries after Hurricane Dean in 2007.	Mexico: temporary increase in PROSPERA beneficiaries after 2017 earthquakes.	Chile: cash transfer to all households affected by the 2010 earthquake through the CT programs.	Dominica Housing Recovery grant for vulnerable households with complete or major damage.

Author's Illustration. For Mexico, the PROSPERA program has recently been transformed and no longer exists as a CCT due to shifts in the social policy in Mexico.

The intake, registration, and overall targeting processes for SP programs have significant implications for the effectiveness of different types of SP responses. Even in the immediate humanitarian response phase, social registries can help responders identify poor and vulnerable households, including those with disabled, elderly, children and single parents. Additionally, the completeness of program coverage to the poor, and data in beneficiary registries, will help determine the effectiveness of vertical expansion. Where coverage of the flagship safety net is broad, implementers can be assured that rapid vertical expansion will reach those most vulnerable quickly. Where coverage is low, vertical expansion will only reach a limited number of those affected and therefore quick efforts to reach non-beneficiaries would need to be done quickly.

Additionally, the comprehensiveness of a social registry's coverage and quality of its data will also help determine how useful it will be to inform horizontal expansion, emergency programming, or piggybacking. Where the social registry has

low coverage, its use for identifying potential beneficiaries for horizontal expansion or other emergency programming response will be limited. Where coverage of the social registry is broad, non-beneficiaries in the affected area will be easily identifiable for support. The intake process for the registry has several implications. Intake processes are either done via on-demand application or a census sweep approach. The former facilitates open access to program intake whenever individuals or households need, while the latter includes broad census-sweep approaches to capture all households in a given geographic areas. As mentioned previously in this note, on-demand intake processes are often characterized by low coverage levels but usually more current data, while census approaches facilitate higher coverage, but with less current data as time passes. Allowing a hybrid approach, as done by Colombia's SISBEN, may help bridge these challenges.

Finally, other post-disaster assessments are critical to identifying households to receive support and for determining the package of benefits and services that are required to help them address disaster impacts. Initial Situation Overviews provide a solid understanding of the areas most affected by disasters and consequently inform where response should be focused. PDHAs are critically important, particularly since they are usually the sole source of updated household data in the post-shock environment. Their utility to identify households and inform the adequate package of benefits and services depends on when they are carried out. If done earlier, they will provide a real-time snapshot of household needs and conditions in the post-disaster context. The comprehensiveness of the variables included in the PDHA and quality of data collection are of paramount importance if these assessments are to effectively inform SP responses to households. Finally, PDNAs also provide additional data which may inform SP efforts to facilitate recovery of households and to boost their resilience following the event.

4. Assessing System Maturity

This section proposes a typology to help LAC countries evaluate if their systems for assessing household needs and conditions after disasters and for identifying households for post-disaster SP response are appropriate.

At the nascent level, countries may have weak mechanisms for assessing eligibility for regular SP benefits; and beneficiary and social registries may not be in place or have very low coverage. These countries may not have any formal post-disaster PDHA processes in place ex-ante, and when done, these may be uncoordinated, ad-hoc, and paper-based. Decisions on determining who receives post-disaster SP support in these contexts are therefore not likely to be informed by reliable data or adequate coverage of existing SP programs and registries.

At the emerging level, countries may have developed mechanisms in place for deciding on eligibility for regular SP benefits and services, well-understood by the population and supported by adequate beneficiary and social registries. However, there may be coverage gaps with the flagship safety net or social registry which may limit the extent to which these can be relied on for vertical or horizontal expansion, or other post-disaster packages of SP support. There may be PDHA processes in place, but not formalized. PDHAs may be fragmented and implemented by multiple agencies, duplicating efforts and exacerbating fragmentation, and may include limited variables which are only sufficient to inform a single-program response. Data may be stored electronically, but not in sound information systems with offline capability and secure design and without interoperability with other SP information systems. Mechanisms to decide who will receive support and the suitable package of benefits and services to respond to their needs may be ad-hoc and based solely on available resources.

Chart 4: Typology for Assessing System Maturity



Source: Author's illustration

At the established level, a country's mechanisms for deciding eligibility for regular SP benefits and services is well-targeted, understood by the population and supported by beneficiary and social registries with broad coverage and good quality data. Flagship safety nets and social registries have high coverage, making it feasible to provide rapid support to a large number of poor, vulnerable, and affected households through vertical and horizontal expansion and emergency programming. PDHA processes are well-supported by legislation and include a coordinated approach for use by multiple agencies. PDHA instruments are supported by information systems and include offline capability. There is interoperability with PDHA information systems and other SPISS to provide a complete snapshot of household conditions and to inform comprehensive response appropriate to needs and impacts. Mechanisms to decide who will receive support and the suitable package of benefits and services to respond to their needs are formalized, appropriate, and well-aligned to household needs and conditions. Finally, systems and processes to update the PDHA data collected are in place, allowing implementers to assess the changes in household conditions over time.

5. Recommendations and Final Messages

Ensuring that households that are affected by disasters are quickly identified, assessed and provided with benefits and services to help address both their immediate and long-term recovery needs is of paramount importance for effective Adaptive Social Protection Systems. This guidance note illustrates that there are a myriad of available tools and instruments in LAC countries that can be leveraged to support these objectives. These include reliable targeting mechanisms and processes for regular SP benefits, particularly flagship cash transfer programs; good program coverage of flagship cash transfers; and well-populated beneficiary and social registries. However, these instruments are not well-developed in every LAC country, and despite their utility for immediate vertical expansion, there is less utility for effective horizontal expansion to affected non-beneficiary households. Given this, the design and institutional arrangements for PDHAs are also critical to informing both emergency response and longer-term recovery.

The following recommendations are presented as options which LAC countries could consider to ensure effective identification, assessment, and determination of benefits and services required to help restore livelihoods and well-being for households affected by shocks. These are complemented by recommendations in the accompanying guidance note on SP information systems, which contains key ASP design principles for both SP and PDHA information systems. These recommendations are aligned to ASP building blocks.

Ensure Government leadership of PDHA processes. Although multiple actors are involved in identifying and assessing households affected by disasters and providing them with benefits and services to address their post-disaster needs and conditions, government leadership is paramount. Government should lead all PDHA processes, including establishing a clear legislative or policy framework outlining the instruments relevance and uses for informing post-disaster household support; defining and documenting operational processes; data use and data sharing protocols etc. Where government leadership of this process is not feasible, there should be clear direction and oversight provided to the actors who take on these responsibilities on their behalf.

Ensure clear institutional and coordination arrangements in place for the PDHA and data sharing protocols. Clear institutional arrangements and policy oversight for PDHA instruments will help establish them as the main tool for assessing households after disasters. Protocols and service standards for when the instrument should be applied, how long data processing should take etc., should be in place, as well as routine training to staff who would apply the instrument should also be conducted. Ensuring clear protocols in place for data sharing, including with humanitarian agencies and NGOs is necessary if fragmentation of post-disaster assessments is to be reduced. Data sharing should be aligned to national laws on privacy and access to information.

Establish clear design and delivery mechanisms:

- ***Ensure targeting mechanisms for regular SP programs are well-designed, reflective of current poverty contexts, and broadly supported at the policy level and by the general public.*** The intake instruments for regular SP benefits, specifically, flagship safety nets are the main gateway for the social registry, and access to and enrollment for associated benefits and services. Given that vertical expansion following post-shock contexts relies on these processes, it is essential that these instruments and associated systems are well-designed to ensure effective identification and enrollment. Failures at this stage could hamper the effectiveness of vertical and horizontal expansion that uses program enrolment or social registry coverage as the basis for providing support.

- ***Expand coverage of social registries to improve their utility for horizontal expansion and emergency SP programming.***¹³ Social registries have potential for facilitating rapid identification of poor and vulnerable households in disaster affected areas, particularly in situations where the main safety net has low coverage. Suggestions for improving coverage include:
 - Adopt a mixed approach for social registry intake that includes both census approaches (to cover a broad segment of the population) and on-demand windows for inclusion and data update. A caveat here is that census approaches are costly, hence their infrequency. An alternate mechanism to address these cost concerns may be to adopt an approach similar to Chile's, where enrolment is on-demand, but required for all SPL programs. This could help facilitate broad registry coverage with an on-demand approach.
 - Census sweeps of geographic areas that are both poor and have high hazard exposure. Social registry intake often prioritizes geographically poor areas. Vulnerability to hazards however could also be prioritized in census sweep approaches of social registries, to ensure that households most vulnerable to both poverty and hazards have their information collected during the intake process. This could help improve the relevance of social registry data for informing horizontal expansion, particularly when disasters severely impact non-poor households. This would require working closely with the agencies responsible for hazard maps and risk information systems. It is important that this approach may come at a high financial cost for carrying out survey sweeps of broad geographic areas, and to update such data in appropriate intervals.
- ***Expand coverage of the flagship safety net if coverage of the poor is low.*** Ensuring that vertical expansion is effective, requires a flagship safety net with reasonable coverage of the poorest. Furthermore, if most of the poor are excluded from SP programs and most specifically, safety nets to improve their human capital and move them out of poverty, they will be more vulnerable to the debilitating impacts of disasters when they do strike. Expanding coverage has budget implications, but so too does persistent exclusion of the poor from SP benefits and services.
- ***Establish or reform the post-disaster household assessment instrument and associated processes to improve coherence and effectiveness.*** Vertical and horizontal expansion does not negate the importance of assessing household needs and conditions after disasters strike. Improving and formalizing the PDHA process will reap important benefits for increasing the effectiveness of response to households and ensuring that recovery efforts are well-informed by the actual impacts of the disaster on families. Some important options for improving these processes include:
 - Develop a harmonized instrument with sufficiently relevant variables to inform adequate response and reduce duplicate surveying of households. A harmonized instrument, with data available for use by all responding agencies, would reduce fragmented and duplicated processes, and most importantly, ease the burden on affected households who are subjected to multiple surveys in a time of paramount stress. As part of this process, it would be important to assess if the variables included in the instrument are sufficient to inform comprehensive response by SP and other related actors.
 - Ensure alignment to established household survey methods and definitions. To ensure consistency and reduce the need to collect additional information from households, it would be important to ensure that the variables included in these instruments include standard terms and language used in official household surveys. Linked

to this, common identification, ideally through unique ID or links to civil registries, georeferencing of dwelling location etc., will help ensure that the data collected in an PDHA can be comparable if it needs to be cross-referenced to other databases such as civil or social registries.

- Ensure capacity for applying the instrument ex-ante: Regular training for staff, stakeholders and volunteers who would apply the instrument in the event of a disaster should routinely be done ex-ante. This will ensure capacity for effective and efficient data collection ex-post. These trainings should optimally include simulations on the ground, utilizing varied delivery options including paper forms and tablets. Such training will not only ensure a cadre of trained staff to carry out PDHA assessments when disasters strike but could also inform improvements to the instrument's design.
- Apply the PDHA to all affected households. Ensuring the instrument is applied to households, including those in shelters and who may be displaced, is also critical. It is important that protocols be established for dealing with data collected from displaced households – including whether neighbors will be asked to provide data or if these households will be recorded as not present until located. Additionally, surveying families in shelters and at locations away from their dwellings is also important but should be accompanied by clear protocols for validation and verification.
- Establish clear protocols for how the PDHA data collected will be processed and quantified for response. Governments should factor into the instrument's design how the instrument's variables will determine the packages of support to be provided. This may include prioritizing some metric of poverty or vulnerability such as elderly and persons with disabilities. Additionally, with a sound information system linked to the PDHA, each agency using the data could apply its own criteria to identify households to receive support.
- Ensure multiple application methods for the instrument and associated information systems. It is important to ensure that PDHA data collection moves from paper-based processes to electronic methods where not yet applied electronically. Given the precarious nature of post-disaster environments, it is not always guaranteed that there will be sufficient connectivity for sound application of PDHAs in electronic format to all affected households. Given this, multiple application methods will help ensure that data can be collected effectively, despite the operating environment. An optimal approach would be to ensure that PDHA data collection includes mobile or tablet applications with offline functionality and cloud upload. This could be complemented with paper-based forms as a last resort.
- Develop a dedicated information system to store PDHA data collected during disaster events, with interoperability with Social Protection Information Systems (SPIs). Given that PDHA data is used to inform post-disaster response across a range of sectors, an associated information system will be needed to manage the PDHA data and ensure data sharing with relevant agencies. An optimal design for such a system could include storage from data for all events; clear security and data access protocols by user types; report generating modules to summarize impacts and needs quickly and to compare those impacts and needs across different disaster events. Ideally, the data from PDHAs could be interoperable with social registry data and data from other SPIs to complement the post-shock data with other data on the household's socioeconomic condition. This would require unique identifiers to enable matching households across databases. Bi-directional data sharing with the agencies using the system would also help flag which households assessed were provided with support after the disaster event.

- ***Introduce grievance mechanisms so affected households have an avenue to submit complaints and concerns about the process.*** Households should have an avenue to query their eligibility for the benefits being provided or submit grievances about assessment and enrollment processes. These processes should be simple and well-communicated to affected households and implementers. These mechanisms should be established ex-ante with consideration for the complex operating environment of post-shock contexts and decisions should be communicated in a timely and clear manner.
- ***Invest in systems and capacity ex-ante.*** It is essential to ensure that the aforementioned recommendations are addressed ex-ante. This may include investment in information systems to support social registries and PDHAs, including offline capabilities and emergency back-up; training of staff and associated stakeholders; and ensuring associated protocols and policies are in place and understood by implementers. Failure to prepare these systems and personnel beforehand will further hinder the SP system's ability to respond effectively to shocks.

In addition to these overall priority areas, countries could also prioritize actions for reform depending on where countries fit on the maturity and development of the SP targeting and PDHA processes. Countries with nascent systems should prioritize improving the objectivity of, and modernizing, instruments for determining eligibility for regular SP benefits, particularly flagship SSNs. Critical to this, establishing SP information systems such as social registries and beneficiary registries to improve monitoring and management of these programs. Comprehensive inter-agency PDHAs should be established ex-ante, with clear manuals, data usage protocols and information management systems. Countries with emerging systems should prioritize closing the lingering coverage gaps for flagship SSNs and their associated social and beneficiary registries. Existing PDHA instruments should be reviewed to ensure integrated use by multiple state and non-state actors, with sound data management systems and inter-operability to SP information systems. Clear metrics for use of PDHA data for determining post-disaster SP support should also be established ex-ante. Countries with established systems should continue to ensure that PDHA instruments are routinely reviewed and updated and facilitate more coordinated use of PDHA data for post-disaster decision making among a range of actors. These countries should also capitalize on the robustness of social registry, household survey and PDHA datasets, to evaluate the impacts of post-disaster SP benefits and services.

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Endnotes

- 1 The World Bank. 2018. *The State of Social Safety Nets 2018*.
- 2 A social registry is “an information system that supports outreach, intake, registration, and determination of potential eligibility for one or more social programs.”² Leite, Phillippe et al. 2017. *Social Registries as Inclusion & Information Systems for Social Assistance and Beyond: A Guidance Note and Assessment Tool*. The World Bank.
- 3 Index-based triggers are also used to provide rapid response, particularly for social insurance mechanisms and slow-onset disasters such as drought. The use of these triggers is not discussed in this note, but resources on these instruments are included in Bastagli, Francesca et al. 2015. *The Role of Index Based Triggers in Social Protection Shock Response*. Overseas Development Institute.
- 4 World Bank. 2018. State of Social Safety Nets.
- 5 Leite, Phillippe et al. 2017. *Social Registries as Inclusion & Information Systems for Social Assistance and Beyond: A Guidance Note and Assessment Tool*. The World Bank.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 The intricacies of applying social registries and other information systems for disaster and climate-related risk objectives are further discussed in a separate guidance note as part of this series.
- 8 For additional details on coverage of SP information systems, please refer to: Leite, Phillippe et al. 2017. *Social Registries as Inclusion & Information Systems for Social Assistance and Beyond: A Guidance Note and Assessment Tool*. The World Bank.
- 9 The JHDINA was previously referred to as the ‘Household Damage Assessment’ and revised in 2017.
- 10 User Manual for the Single Victims Registry (*Manual de Usuario Registro Único de Damnificados*).
- 11 All definitions, with the exception of emergency programming are derived from: Beazley, Rodolfo et al. 2016. “*Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review*.” Oxford Policy Management.
- 12 The phases referred to here are informed by: Crutchfield, Melissa. 2014. *Phases of Disaster Recovery Emergency Response*; and World Bank Institute, 2013. *Basic Concepts of DRM – Concepts and Terminology*.
- 13 Additional recommendations on the use of information systems are discussed in a separate note.

