THINKING OF USING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT TARGETING FOR SHOCK RESPONSE?
FOUR KEY STEPS!

1. **ASSESS** your social assistance data and associated registries and information systems, and compare with alternatives.

   Depending on existing design choices...

   - What percentage of population is covered?
   - Whose data is collected/stored?
   - What data is collected/stored?
   - How (and how often) is data collected and updated?
   - What approach to information integration is used?
   - How is data validated, stored and maintained?
   - Who is responsible for data collection and management?
   - What level of security and data privacy is guaranteed?
   - What pre-existing data sharing agreements and protocols are in place?

   ...these will be more or less suitable for shock response in terms of their...

   - Completeness: Level of coverage of population/needs
   - Relevance: Suited for the purpose (e.g., helps identify HHs exposed to shocks)
   - Currency: Up-to-date
   - Accessibility: Ease to obtain
   - Accuracy: Free from mistakes and omissions
   - Data protection: Ensuring security and privacy

2. Based on this assessment and on your analysis of the needs that you are trying to address, **DECIDE** how you will be using that data or its underlying systems, if at all.

   a. **Vertical expansion** of existing programme/s or new programme piggybacking on beneficiary data? Make sure you have strategy to reach all other affected households.
   
   b. **Horizontal expansion** of existing programme/s or new programme piggybacking on the data of potential beneficiaries? Think through carefully in advance of the shock, requires high levels of preparedness and does not fully address potential for exclusion (and inclusion) errors.
   
   c. Strategies to reach affected households whose data are not held within existing registries will always be needed (e.g., refugees/non-citizens, etc).

3. **PREPARE!** Ensure you have thought through what this will entail in practice when the shock hits. Lack of preparedness will severely compromise timeliness and meeting needs. For example:

   - Strengthen data quality and audit existing systems to ensure trust.
   - Ensure informed consent and comprehensive outreach and communications.
   - Sign memorandums of understanding for data sharing.
   - Develop protocols and standard operating procedures on how data will be used.
   - Ensure software/hardware has required flexibility.
   - Ensure surge capacity, training and guidance for all stakeholders involved.
   - Where possible, use existing data to estimate financing needs, caseloads, etc.
   - Pilot the new approach!

4. In the long term, you could also **ADAPT** existing data and underlying systems to better respond to shocks (where relevant, e.g., especially recurrent, predictable shocks). For example:

   - Adapt variables collected to better capture vulnerability to shocks.
   - Ensure higher coverage in vulnerable areas.
   - Integrate caseloads from previous emergency responses into routine provision.

The views expressed here are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Australian government.