

Terms of Reference:

Support to Iran Social Protection Mapping and systems analysis

Background

Since mid-February 2026, escalating conflict involving the US, Israel and Iran has generated significant humanitarian, political and economic implications both within Iran and across the wider region. The crisis has contributed to population displacement and heightened uncertainty inside Iran, while also creating broader regional spillover effects on neighbouring countries and global markets, including concerns around fuel, food and fertilizer prices. Particular attention has been placed on disruptions and risks associated with the Strait of Hormuz, given its strategic role in global energy and trade flows.

Against this backdrop, there is a need for a rapid technical review and analysis of (i) the evolving social and economic conditions and potential humanitarian needs within Iran, and (ii) the current organisation and functioning of Iran's social protection (SP) system, including its capacity to mitigate the impact of the current crisis on Iranian citizens. Such an analysis would help inform decision-makers' understanding of whether existing national systems could provide potential entry points for future humanitarian engagement—at a minimum, ensuring that any external support complements, rather than undermines, effective national systems of social assistance and welfare provision—and, if appropriate, how such engagement could be pursued.

Support is required to strengthen situational awareness and provide timely insights on developments related to Iran's national social protection system and crisis response. Particular emphasis will be placed on helping humanitarian and donor stakeholders better understand emerging trends, implementation developments and potential entry points for humanitarian and donor complementary support. This work would contribute to informing preparatory documentation and response-readiness products should there be greater support to growing needs inside Iran.

Scope of work

A. Support contextual analysis and information gathering on SP responses in Iran

Gathering information and contextual understanding on how Iran's social protection system is responding to the current crisis.

This may include:

- Identifying emerging issues, excluded and displaced population's needs as well as access to SP systems and benefits, and implementation challenges;
- Highlighting national discussions and perspectives from government, media, think tanks and technical actors;
- Monitoring developments related to programmes such as Kala-Barg, subsidies, social insurance organizations, civil society groups (labour unions, women's rights groups etc.) and humanitarian response channels;
- Helping interpret developments and contextual dynamics where useful.

Provide rapid updates and contextual insights from Farsi-language sources regarding evolving policies, implementation developments, institutional discussions and emerging response measures that may not be easily accessible through English-language sources.

B. Support review, validate and contextually update Iran SP mapping

Help review the current Iran social protection mapping prepared by other inter-agency and donor actors and provide contextual updates where relevant, including:

- Regular social protection programmes,
- Subsidies,
- Social insurance mechanisms,
- Crisis-response measures and opportunities,
- Humanitarian assistance developments.

C. Support identification of emerging inter-agency regional considerations and donor entry points

Help identify practical considerations and possible areas where international (most likely multilateral) actors may complement existing national systems. Possibilities to be considered include:

- Support to excluded populations (e.g. Afghan refugees);
- Humanitarian financing channels;
- Opportunities for stronger alignment with national or quasi-national delivery systems;
- Broader contextual considerations relevant to humanitarian planning.

D. Contribute to any inter-agency Iran specific SP Research efforts and/ or other internal response-readiness products

UNICEF and other actors are looking at possible inter-agency collaboration on research required to provide insights on actual Iran SP in response to the crisis. Drawing on deep knowledge of political sensitivities and cultural considerations, the consultant can provide contextual updates and rapid review as inputs to regional briefing products and response-readiness documentation should interest emerge.

Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following:

- Complement, update or confirm any existing comprehensive snapshot mapping of social protection programs in Iran, including those developed by FCDO as part of the Regional Collaboration Initiative for Social Protection in Crisis Contexts.
- A briefing note of context analysis and entry points for humanitarian actors and donors to support and complement existing social protection programs.
- A slide deck and a presentation to stakeholders with the main findings?
- Participation on specific meetings and discussions with key stakeholders.

Estimated Level of Effort

30 days, between October and November 2026. The schedule will be agreed upon with the consultant. All outputs from this work will be completed and submitted to NORCAP before 30 November 2026.

Required qualifications

- Master's degree in social protection, public policy, economics, international development, humanitarian assistance or another relevant field.
- Advanced knowledge of social protection systems, including social assistance, social insurance, labour market policies, and shock-responsive social protection, with demonstrated experience conducting research and analysis of national social protection systems, including institutional arrangements, governance, financing, delivery mechanisms and information systems.
- Strong understanding of humanitarian architecture and the linkages between humanitarian assistance and national social protection systems, including approaches to complementarity, alignment, and systems strengthening.
- Strong knowledge of Iran's governance structures, social protection landscape, political economy, and socio-economic context, including vulnerability patterns and the impacts of shocks on households.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct policy and institutional analysis, map complex government systems, identify opportunities and constraints for humanitarian engagement with national systems, and produce high-quality analytical reports and briefing notes for senior decision-makers.
- Iranian national, to ensure context-specific analysis, access to national sources, and locally grounded recommendations.

Application process and requirements:

Applications should include:

- Technical proposal outlining methodology and approach (1-2 pages)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Financial proposal
- Availability for the assignment
- Completed Ethical Standards Declaration

Application deadline: 10 September 2026

Applications should be submitted to: norcap.bids@nrc.no. Please include in title of application "Iran SP mapping"

Note that **this consultancy is subject to funding confirmation.**