

O. Celestine Jombo, PhD

Department of Public Administration
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko
Ondo State, Nigeria

celestinejombo500@gmail.com; celestine.jombo@aaau.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper examines how governance structures and policy feedback mechanisms shape the implementation outcomes and overall effectiveness of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). Nigeria's social protection architecture has expanded significantly over the past decade, with NSIP emerging as a flagship initiative aimed at reducing poverty, enhancing human capital development, and promoting inclusive governance. Despite its ambitious design and large-scale implementation, the programme continues to face persistent governance challenges that undermine its effectiveness. The paper investigates the extent to which institutional arrangements facilitate or constrain adaptive learning and performance improvement within the programme. The study adopts a qualitative case study design, supported by policy analysis, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and secondary data from government and development partner reports. Findings reveal that the NSIP is characterized by significant implementation bottlenecks across levels of government. In addition, targeting inefficiencies have resulted in uneven beneficiary coverage, while limited feedback mechanisms have restricted the programme's ability to learn from implementation experience and adjust accordingly. These deficiencies collectively weaken the programme's impact and sustainability. The paper proposes the strengthening of monitoring systems, institutionalizing feedback mechanisms, improving coordination, and enhancing accountability as measures for improving programme effectiveness and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Governance, Institutional Capacity, Policy Feedback, Social Investment, Nigeria.

Introduction

Social protection has become an increasingly important component of development policy across sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in response to rising poverty, inequality, and vulnerability to economic shocks. In Nigeria, social protection has evolved from fragmented welfare interventions in the post-independence era to more structured policy frameworks in the Fourth Republic. Early interventions were largely ad hoc, consisting of subsidies, public works, and donor-driven programmes with limited coordination and sustainability. However, the increasing recognition of poverty as a structural governance challenge led to more deliberate policy efforts aimed at institutionalizing social protection as part of national development planning (World Bank, 2023).

A major milestone in this evolution was the establishment of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in 2016 under the Federal Government of Nigeria. The NSIP was designed as a comprehensive social protection framework targeting vulnerable populations through interventions such as the N-Power scheme, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), and the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. These initiatives were intended to address multidimensional poverty, improve human capital development, and promote inclusive economic participation (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, 2022).

The NSIP reflects a broader shift toward social investment approaches, which emphasize not only income support but also capacity building and long-term empowerment. In theory, such programmes are expected to enhance inclusive governance by integrating marginalized populations into economic and social systems (Anaekwe et.al, 2025; Olowu, 2020). However, the effectiveness of social

investment depends heavily on institutional capacity, governance quality, and the existence of robust feedback mechanisms that enable continuous learning and adaptation (UNDP, 2022).

Despite its ambitious design and widespread coverage, the NSIP continues to face significant governance challenges that undermine its effectiveness. Implementation challenges such as bureaucratic delays, inconsistent targeting, and weak inter-agency coordination have been widely documented in policy evaluations and independent assessments. These inefficiencies reduce the programme's ability to achieve its intended developmental outcomes and limit its impact on poverty reduction (World Bank, 2023).

A critical issue underlying these challenges is the presence of weak policy feedback mechanisms. Policy feedback refers to the process through which information from implementation outcomes is used to adjust and improve policy design and execution. In the case of the NSIP, such feedback loops remain underdeveloped, resulting in limited institutional learning and adaptation. As a result, errors in implementation are often repeated rather than corrected, leading to inefficiencies and reduced programme effectiveness (Pierson, 2022).

Furthermore, there exists a persistent disconnect between policy design and implementation outcomes. While the NSIP was conceived as a coordinated and data-driven intervention, its implementation has been characterized by fragmentation across agencies and levels of government. This disconnect highlights a broader governance problem in Nigeria, where policy ambition is not matched by administrative capacity or institutional coherence. These discrepancies raise critical questions about the role of institutional arrangements, administrative capacity, and inter-agency coordination in shaping programme outcomes. For instance, how do governance structures affect the implementation of the NSIP? What role do policy feedback mechanisms play in shaping NSIP outcomes? What institutional factors constrain effective learning and adaptation within the NSIP? These and many more constitute the central concern of this study.

This paper, therefore, seeks to examine governance challenges in the implementation of the NSIP, interrogates policy feedback dynamics within the NSIP and assesses the implications of these governance and feedback mechanisms for social policy effectiveness in Nigeria. To achieve this onerous task, the paper is organized into five parts. The first part captures the foregoing introduction and the second covers the literature review, including the explications of the theoretical frameworks of analysis for the study. The third part discusses the methodology adopted to examine the research problem. Part four presents the study's results and findings while the fifth part concludes the paper with proposals for improving programme effectiveness and ensuring long-term sustainability of social investment programmes in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Social Protection and Welfare Governance

The global evolution of social protection has increasingly shifted from narrowly targeted welfare interventions to broader social investment approaches that emphasize human capital development, productivity enhancement, and long-term poverty reduction. In advanced economies, social protection systems evolved through welfare-state expansion, later transitioning toward activation-oriented policies that link benefits to labour market participation and skills development (European Commission, 2022). In developing countries, however, the trajectory has been more uneven, often characterized by donor-driven programmes, fragmented safety nets, and institutional fragility (Oloyede, 2024; Mohammed et.al, 2023).

Comparative studies across sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia show that social protection systems in developing contexts tend to rely heavily on conditional cash transfers, public works programmes, and school feeding schemes as primary instruments of poverty alleviation (Dupe et.al, 2022; World Bank, 2023). While these interventions have demonstrated positive effects on household welfare, nutrition, and school enrolment, their effectiveness is often constrained by weak administrative systems and inconsistent political commitment.

In comparing global and developing-country approaches, a key strength of advanced social investment models lies in their institutional coherence and integrated delivery systems, which enhance efficiency and accountability. Conversely, developing-country models often suffer from fragmentation and donor dependency, limiting sustainability. However, a notable strength of many developing-country programmes is their adaptability and rapid expansion capacity, particularly in crisis contexts such as

pandemics and economic shocks (UNICEF, 2022). This comparative perspective highlights the tension between scalability and institutional robustness, a tension that is central to understanding Nigeria's NSIP.

Governance Challenges in Policy Implementation

A recurring theme in the literature on social policy implementation is the persistence of bureaucratic inefficiencies and institutional fragmentation. Both scholars and development-oriented organisations have argued that fragmented administrative structures often lead to duplication of roles, unclear mandates, and weak accountability mechanisms, which collectively undermine policy effectiveness (Fischer & Miller, 2022; Pierson, 2022; OECD, 2023). In many developing countries, including Nigeria, ministries, departments, and agencies responsible for social protection frequently operate in silos, limiting coordination and information sharing.

Comparative governance studies further emphasize that coordination failures in multi-level governance systems are a major constraint to effective implementation. In federal systems, overlapping responsibilities between national and subnational governments often create ambiguity in implementation authority. While decentralization is intended to improve responsiveness, it can also generate inefficiencies when coordination mechanisms are weak (Peters & Pierre, 2022). For example, subnational variability in capacity can result in uneven programme delivery, as observed in conditional cash transfer schemes across Africa.

Evaluating these approaches reveals both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, multi-level governance structures can enhance local responsiveness and contextual adaptation. However, without strong coordination frameworks, they tend to exacerbate fragmentation and inefficiency. The literature therefore converges on the need for balanced governance systems that combine decentralization with effective coordination and accountability mechanisms.

The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)

The National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in Nigeria represents one of the most ambitious social protection initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. Established in 2016, the programme comprises multiple interventions, including N-Power, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), and the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. Its design reflects a multi-sectoral and multi-agency institutional structure aimed at addressing poverty, unemployment, and human capital deficits simultaneously (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, 2022).

Empirical assessments of NSIP performance present a mixed picture. On the one hand, the programme has expanded access to social protection for millions of beneficiaries and improved short-term welfare outcomes. On the other hand, implementation challenges such as targeting inefficiencies, data inconsistencies, and weak coordination across implementing agencies have been widely documented (World Bank, 2023). These challenges reflect broader governance weaknesses in Nigeria's public administration system.

Comparative evaluations suggest that while NSIP's design aligns with global best practices in social investment, its institutional execution falls short due to limited administrative capacity and weak monitoring systems. In contrast to more integrated systems in countries such as Brazil and South Africa, where social registries and unified delivery platforms enhance efficiency, NSIP remains fragmented across multiple agencies with overlapping mandates (Adeyinka & Adewunmi, 2023). A key strength of NSIP is its political visibility and large-scale reach, which have enabled rapid expansion of social assistance coverage. However, its weaknesses lie in its limited institutional coherence and weak feedback systems, which constrain its ability to adapt and improve over time.

Overall, despite extensive scholarship on social protection, governance, and policy implementation, several important gaps remain. For instance, there is limited integration of governance and policy feedback perspectives in existing studies. Most research treats governance inefficiencies and policy feedback mechanisms as separate analytical domains, rather than examining their interaction. Similarly, there is weak empirical analysis of learning mechanisms within the NSIP. While numerous studies evaluate programme outcomes, few investigate how information from implementation processes is systematically used to improve policy design. This limits the understanding of whether NSIP functions as a learning-oriented system or a static policy intervention. And more importantly, there is an insufficient focus on implementation-to-feedback cycles, particularly in developing-country contexts

such as Nigeria. Existing literature tends to emphasize either policy design or implementation outcomes, without adequately tracing how feedback from implementation influences subsequent policy adjustments. This gap is particularly significant given the dynamic and evolving nature of social protection systems.

Nonetheless, synthesizing the literature reveals a consistent pattern; while social protection programmes have expanded globally and in Nigeria, their effectiveness is constrained by governance inefficiencies and weak institutional learning systems. The literature emphasizes coordination and administrative capacity, while policy feedback theory highlights the importance of learning mechanisms. However, these strands of literature have not been sufficiently integrated in the context of Nigeria's NSIP. The key gap this study addresses is the lack of an integrated analytical framework that links governance structures, implementation challenges, and policy feedback dynamics. This integration is essential for advancing both theoretical understanding and practical policy reform in social protection governance.

Theoretical Explications

This study is anchored primarily on policy feedback theory and supported by institutional theory to explain how governance structures and learning mechanisms shape the performance of Nigeria's National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). The integration of these theories provides a multidimensional lens for understanding not only how policies are implemented, but also how they reshape institutions, influence political behaviour, and generate either improvement or stagnation over time. This is particularly relevant for complex social protection systems in developing contexts where administrative capacity, accountability, and coordination are often uneven.

Policy feedback theory provides the central explanatory framework for this study. The core proposition of the theory is that public policies are not merely outputs of political processes; they also reshape future political behaviour, institutional arrangements, and policy trajectories (Pierson, 2022). In other words, policies are generative because they create new structures of incentives, participation, and administrative capacity that influence subsequent governance outcomes.

A key construct of this theory is the distinction between positive and negative feedback effects. Positive feedback occurs when policies reinforce themselves over time by building institutional capacity, creating beneficiary constituencies, and improving administrative learning. For instance, a well-functioning social protection programme may generate reliable data systems, strengthen bureaucratic routines, and increase public trust, thereby improving future implementation cycles. Conversely, negative feedback arises when policies produce inefficiencies, distort incentives, or weaken institutional capacity, thereby undermining future policy effectiveness.

In the context of NSIP, policy feedback theory is particularly relevant because the programme is designed to operate as a large-scale social intervention with multiple components requiring continuous learning and adaptation. However, where feedback loops are weak, implementation errors are likely to persist rather than be corrected. Empirical studies on social protection systems in developing countries show that weak feedback mechanisms often lead to repeated targeting errors, inefficiencies in beneficiary selection, and poor programme adjustment over time (World Bank, 2023).

The strength of this theory lies in its temporal and dynamic explanatory power. Unlike static governance models, it explains how policies evolve over time and how early design choices shape long-term outcomes. It is particularly useful in analysing programmes like NSIP, where implementation is iterative and dependent on continuous administrative learning. However, the theory has limitations. One major weakness is that it often assumes a relatively stable institutional environment in which feedback loops can operate effectively. In contexts like Nigeria, where administrative systems are fragmented and politically influenced, feedback mechanisms may be disrupted or distorted. This limits the extent to which policy feedback can function as a self-correcting mechanism.

Despite this limitation, the theory is highly applicable to this study because it provides a framework for examining whether NSIP generates learning-oriented governance or reproduces inefficiencies through weak feedback systems. Policy feedback theory provides a critical lens for understanding how policies influence future governance processes. At its core, policy feedback refers to the idea that existing policies reshape political behavior, institutional capacity, and future policy development (Pierson, 2022). Feedback mechanisms can be positive, reinforcing policy stability and institutional learning, or negative, generating resistance, inefficiency, or policy reversal.

Positive feedback loops occur when policies create constituencies, institutional capacity, and administrative routines that strengthen implementation over time. For example, well-designed social

protection systems can generate administrative learning and improve targeting accuracy. In contrast, negative feedback loops arise when policies create inefficiencies, distrust, or bureaucratic overload, thereby weakening institutional performance. Recent empirical studies highlight that effective policy feedback systems depend on robust data infrastructures, administrative learning mechanisms, and citizen engagement channels (Fischer & Miller, 2022). However, in many developing contexts, these conditions are weak or absent, leading to fragmented learning processes and limited policy adaptation.

Institutional Theory complements Policy Feedback Theory by explaining how formal and informal institutions shape policy implementation outcomes. Institutions are understood as the “rules of the game” that structure political and administrative behaviour, including laws, procedures, norms, and organisational practices (Peters, 2022).

A key construct of Institutional Theory is institutional fragmentation, which refers to the dispersion of authority and responsibilities across multiple agencies without effective coordination. In the case of NSIP, fragmentation is evident in the involvement of multiple ministries and agencies with overlapping mandates. This often results in duplication of efforts, inconsistent data systems, and weak accountability structures. Another important construct is informal institutional influence, which includes patronage networks, bureaucratic culture, and informal decision-making practices. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, informal institutions often shape implementation outcomes as much as formal rules do. These informal dynamics can either reinforce or undermine formal policy objectives, depending on how they interact with administrative structures.

The strength of Institutional Theory lies in its ability to explain structural constraints on policy implementation. It highlights why well-designed policies may fail when institutional capacity is weak or fragmented. It is particularly useful for understanding why NSIP faces coordination challenges despite its comprehensive design. However, the most visible limitation of this theory lies in its tendencies to underemphasize agency and learning dynamics. While it explains structural rigidity, it is less effective in explaining how institutions evolve through feedback mechanisms or how actors adapt within constraints.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine governance challenges and policy feedback dynamics in Nigeria’s National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). The qualitative case study approach is particularly appropriate for exploring complex governance phenomena, as it allows for in-depth analysis of institutional processes, actor behaviour, and contextual conditions shaping policy implementation outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The NSIP was selected as the focal case study due to its status as Nigeria’s flagship social protection initiative with nationwide coverage and multi-sectoral interventions. The programme’s scale, institutional complexity, and policy relevance make it an ideal case for examining governance performance and feedback mechanisms in a developing-country context. Its implementation across federal, state, and local levels further provides a useful framework for analysing multi-level governance dynamics and coordination challenges (World Bank, 2023).

Data for the study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data include semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders such as policymakers, programme managers, implementing officials, and selected beneficiaries. These interviews provided experiential and institutional insights into how the NSIP is implemented and how feedback is generated and utilised. Secondary data consist of government reports, programme evaluation documents, and donor or development partner assessments, which provided contextual and performance-related information.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, which facilitates the identification of recurring patterns related to governance challenges, implementation bottlenecks, and feedback mechanisms. In addition, process tracing was employed to reconstruct implementation cycles and identify causal mechanisms linking governance structures to policy outcomes. Similarly, ethical considerations were strictly observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and secure data handling, particularly given the sensitivity of governance and programme performance discussions. However, the study is limited by restricted access to certain official data sources and the political sensitivity surrounding evaluation of government programmes, which may affect the openness of some respondents and the availability of detailed administrative records.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) reveals a complex interplay between institutional design, administrative capacity, and political incentives that collectively shape its implementation outcomes. Across the empirical material reviewed, a consistent pattern emerges: while the NSIP represents one of Nigeria's most ambitious social protection frameworks, its effectiveness is significantly constrained by governance inefficiencies, weak feedback systems, and uneven institutional capacity across levels of government. These findings are presented and discussed in accordance with thematic analysis of the data generated for the study.

Governance Challenges in NSIP

A central finding of the study is the prevalence of bureaucratic delays and weak coordination among implementing agencies. The NSIP operates through multiple institutions, including federal ministries, subnational structures, and programme-specific delivery units. However, rather than functioning as an integrated system, these agencies often operate in silos with overlapping mandates and poorly defined coordination protocols (Field Study, 2026). This results in delays in fund disbursement, duplication of administrative functions, and inefficiencies in programme execution. Similar findings have been documented in broader studies on Nigerian policy environment, where fragmented bureaucratic structures are identified as a major constraint to policy implementation (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2023).

Closely related is the issue of fragmented institutional responsibilities, which undermines accountability and policy coherence. The NSIP's multi-agency structure, while designed to enhance reach and inclusivity, has inadvertently created ambiguity in roles and responsibilities (Field Study, 2026). This fragmentation makes it difficult to assign accountability for performance outcomes, thereby weakening enforcement mechanisms. In comparative governance literature, such fragmentation is often associated with reduced policy effectiveness in multi-level governance systems, particularly in developing countries with weak administrative coordination mechanisms (Peters & Pierre, 2022).

From an evaluative perspective, while decentralised implementation structures can enhance local responsiveness, the absence of strong coordination frameworks significantly reduces their effectiveness. The NSIP case demonstrates that decentralisation without robust institutional integration tends to produce inefficiency rather than improved service delivery.

Policy Feedback Dynamics

A key analytical focus of this study is the role of policy feedback mechanisms, or rather the lack thereof, in shaping NSIP outcomes. The findings indicate that there are limited mechanisms for integrating beneficiary feedback into programme design and implementation. Although various data collection tools exist within the NSIP architecture, such as monitoring dashboards and periodic evaluation reports, these instruments are often underutilised or disconnected from decision-making processes (Field Study, 2026).

This weak integration of feedback undermines the programme's ability to adapt to implementation challenges. For instance, issues related to targeting errors, payment delays, and beneficiary exclusion are frequently reported but are not systematically incorporated into programme redesign (Field Study, 2026). This aligns with broader literature on social protection systems in developing countries, which highlights the absence of structured feedback loops as a key barrier to adaptive governance (UNICEF, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

In terms of institutional learning, the study finds that the NSIP demonstrates limited capacity to translate implementation experience into policy improvement. Rather than functioning as a learning-oriented system, the programme exhibits static implementation patterns, where similar challenges persist across implementation cycles (Field Study, 2026). This suggests a breakdown in the policy feedback process, where information from the field fails to influence institutional adaptation. From a theoretical standpoint, this finding supports policy feedback theory, particularly the argument that weak or negative feedback loops can entrench inefficiencies rather than correct them. In the NSIP context, the absence of effective feedback mechanisms contributes to the reproduction of implementation errors, thereby limiting programme effectiveness over time.

Implementation Performance

The study identifies significant challenges in programme targeting and coverage, which vary across states and regions. Targeting inefficiencies result in the inclusion of ineligible beneficiaries in some cases and the exclusion of intended beneficiaries in others (Field Study, 2026). This inconsistency reflects weaknesses in data management systems and beneficiary identification processes, which are critical components of effective social protection delivery systems. In addition, there is evidence of uneven programme coverage across regions, with some states demonstrating stronger implementation performance than others. These variations are largely attributed to differences in administrative capacity, infrastructure availability, and governance quality at the subnational level (Field Study, 2026). States with more developed administrative systems tend to achieve better targeting accuracy and faster implementation timelines, while less capacitated states lag behind.

Another critical issue identified is resource leakage and administrative inefficiencies, which undermine the efficiency of programme delivery. These inefficiencies manifest in delayed payments, misallocation of resources, and weak financial tracking systems (Field Study, 2026). Such challenges are consistent with broader governance literature that links weak public financial management systems to reduced effectiveness in social policy implementation (OECD, 2023).

Institutional and Political Drivers

The findings also highlight the significant role of political interference in programme execution. Political actors at both federal and subnational levels often influence beneficiary selection, resource allocation, and implementation priorities (Field Study, 2026). While such involvement may be intended to enhance political responsiveness, it frequently undermines technical efficiency and contributes to distortions in programme targeting.

Closely related are capacity constraints at both federal and subnational levels. Many implementing agencies lack adequate technical expertise, data management systems, and logistical infrastructure required for effective programme delivery (Field Study, 2026). These capacity gaps limit the ability of institutions to implement policies efficiently and to generate reliable feedback for decision-making.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that NSIP performance is shaped by the interaction of institutional fragmentation, weak feedback systems, and political interference. These factors collectively undermine programme efficiency, limit adaptive learning, and contribute to uneven outcomes across regions. The analysis suggests that improving NSIP effectiveness requires not only technical reforms but also deeper institutional and governance restructuring aimed at strengthening coordination, accountability, and feedback integration.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine governance challenges and policy feedback dynamics within Nigeria's National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), with particular attention to how institutional arrangements shape implementation outcomes. The findings demonstrate a consistent pattern of governance inefficiencies characterized by bureaucratic delays, fragmented institutional responsibilities, and weak inter-agency coordination. Across federal and subnational levels, these structural weaknesses undermine programme coherence and reduce the effectiveness of service delivery. Rather than operating as an integrated social protection system, the NSIP functions as a loosely connected network of agencies with overlapping mandates and limited coordination capacity.

A central finding of the study is that policy feedback mechanisms within the NSIP remain weak and underdeveloped. Although the programme generates substantial implementation data through monitoring systems and periodic evaluations, this information is not systematically integrated into decision-making processes. As a result, the NSIP exhibits limited institutional learning, with similar implementation challenges recurring across policy cycles. This reinforces the argument that programme inefficiencies are not merely operational but are structurally embedded in weak feedback systems that fail to support adaptation and improvement over time. The study further shows that institutional fragmentation and weak governance coordination significantly constrain the effectiveness of social policy implementation in Nigeria. The absence of strong coordination frameworks across implementing agencies leads to duplication of efforts, inconsistent targeting, and administrative inefficiencies.

From a broader perspective, these findings have important implications for social policy governance in Nigeria. They suggest that improving programme effectiveness requires more than increased funding or expanded coverage; it demands deep institutional reforms aimed at strengthening coordination, accountability, and feedback integration. Without such reforms, social investment programmes risk remaining fragmented and inefficient, with limited impact on poverty reduction and human capital development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and theoretical insights of this study, several interrelated recommendations are proposed to improving the effectiveness, accountability, and adaptive capacity of Nigeria's National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). A central finding of the study is that NSIP implementation is constrained by weak monitoring, limited feedback integration, and fragmented coordination across implementing agencies. Moving forward, therefore, requires the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems within the NSIP framework. Current M&E structures are largely compliance-oriented rather than learning-oriented, meaning they generate data without systematically feeding it back into decision-making processes. Strengthening M&E requires the development of integrated performance indicators, standardized reporting templates, and real-time data dashboards that enable policymakers to track implementation progress across states and programme components. Evidence from social protection systems in other developing contexts shows that robust M&E systems significantly improve targeting accuracy and reduce inefficiencies when properly institutionalized (World Bank, 2023).

Closely related to this is the need to institutionalize structured beneficiary feedback mechanisms. The study found that beneficiary voices are often weakly integrated into programme design and adjustment processes. Establishing formal feedback channels such as digital complaint platforms, periodic beneficiary surveys, and community-based monitoring committees would enhance responsiveness and improve policy adaptation. Similarly, there is the need for improvement of coordination across implementing agencies. The NSIP currently operates through multiple ministries, departments, and agencies with overlapping mandates and limited coordination. Establishing a centralized coordination unit with clear authority over data integration, programme harmonization, and inter-agency communication would reduce duplication and improve efficiency. Coordination frameworks should also include formal inter-agency performance agreements to clarify responsibilities and timelines.

In addition, there is a need to strengthen accountability frameworks and audit systems. Weak accountability was identified as a major factor contributing to inefficiencies such as resource leakage, inconsistent targeting, and delayed disbursements. Strengthening internal and external audit mechanisms, including independent oversight bodies, would enhance transparency and reduce opportunities for mismanagement. Another important reform should be the strengthening of legislative oversight of social investment programmes. Parliamentary committees responsible for social development and budget oversight should be more actively involved in monitoring NSIP implementation. Regular legislative reviews, public hearings, and performance audits would enhance accountability and ensure that programme objectives are being met. Strong legislative oversight is a key component of effective democratic governance and helps reduce

In essence, the recommendations presented above highlight the need for a comprehensive reform agenda that addresses both technical inefficiencies and structural governance weaknesses within the NSIP. Strengthening monitoring systems, institutionalizing feedback mechanisms, improving coordination, and enhancing accountability are essential for improving programme effectiveness. Ultimately, these reforms are aimed at transforming NSIP into a more responsive, efficient, and learning-oriented social protection system capable of delivering meaningful development outcomes in Nigeria.

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