

Social Protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste

A review of the evidence

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Australian Government's support to social protection in the region

Partnerships for Social Protection is an Australian Government program that supports governments in Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste to strengthen their national social protection systems.

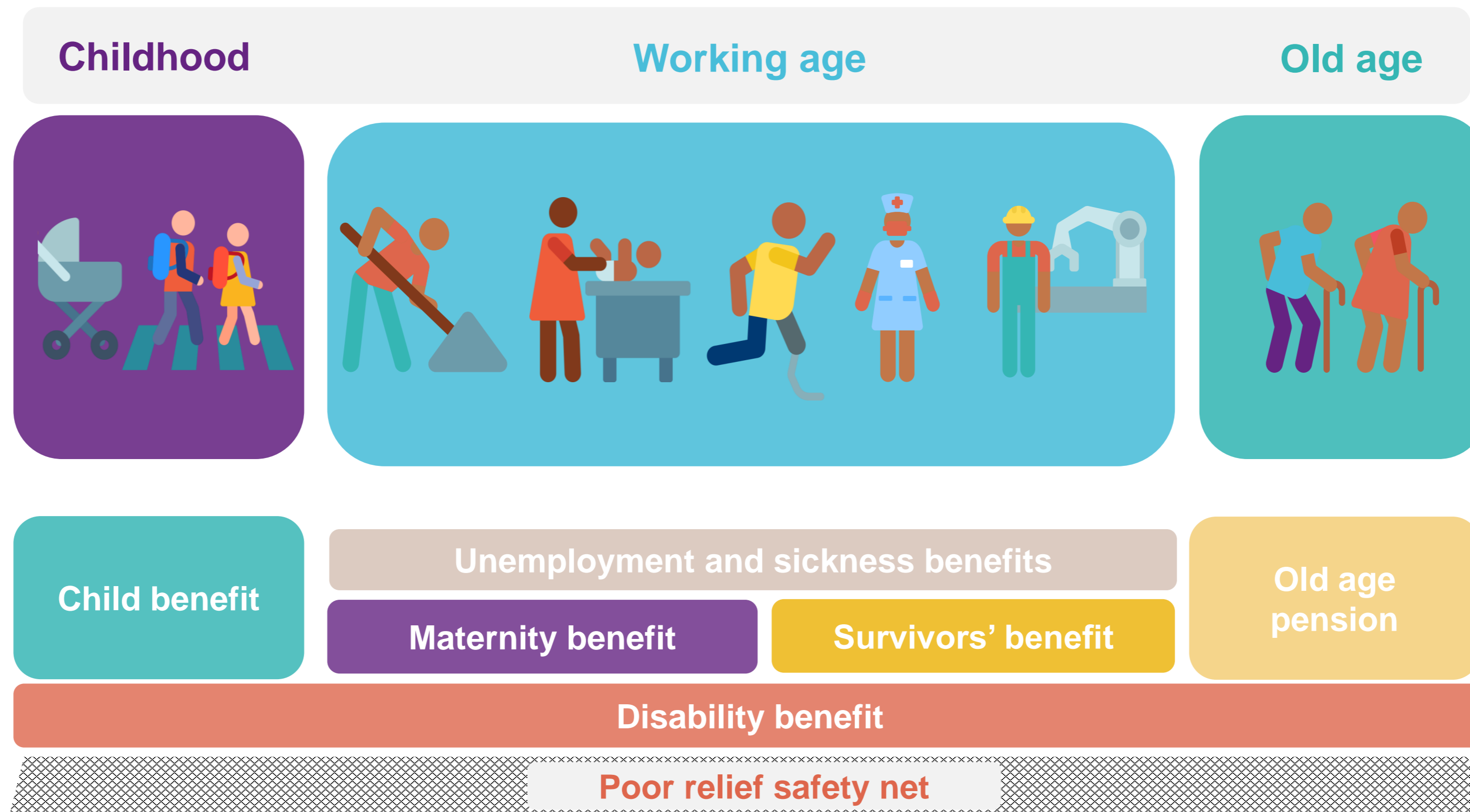
P4SP supports governments to strengthen social protection systems by:

- Deploying technical advisers to work alongside partner governments
- Providing remote specialist technical advice
- Helping design and implement operational delivery mechanisms
- Undertaking research and analysis
- Supporting partnerships, advocacy and policy dialogue
- Delivering training, learning and networking opportunities

The Australian Government also provides support more broadly, including through budget support.

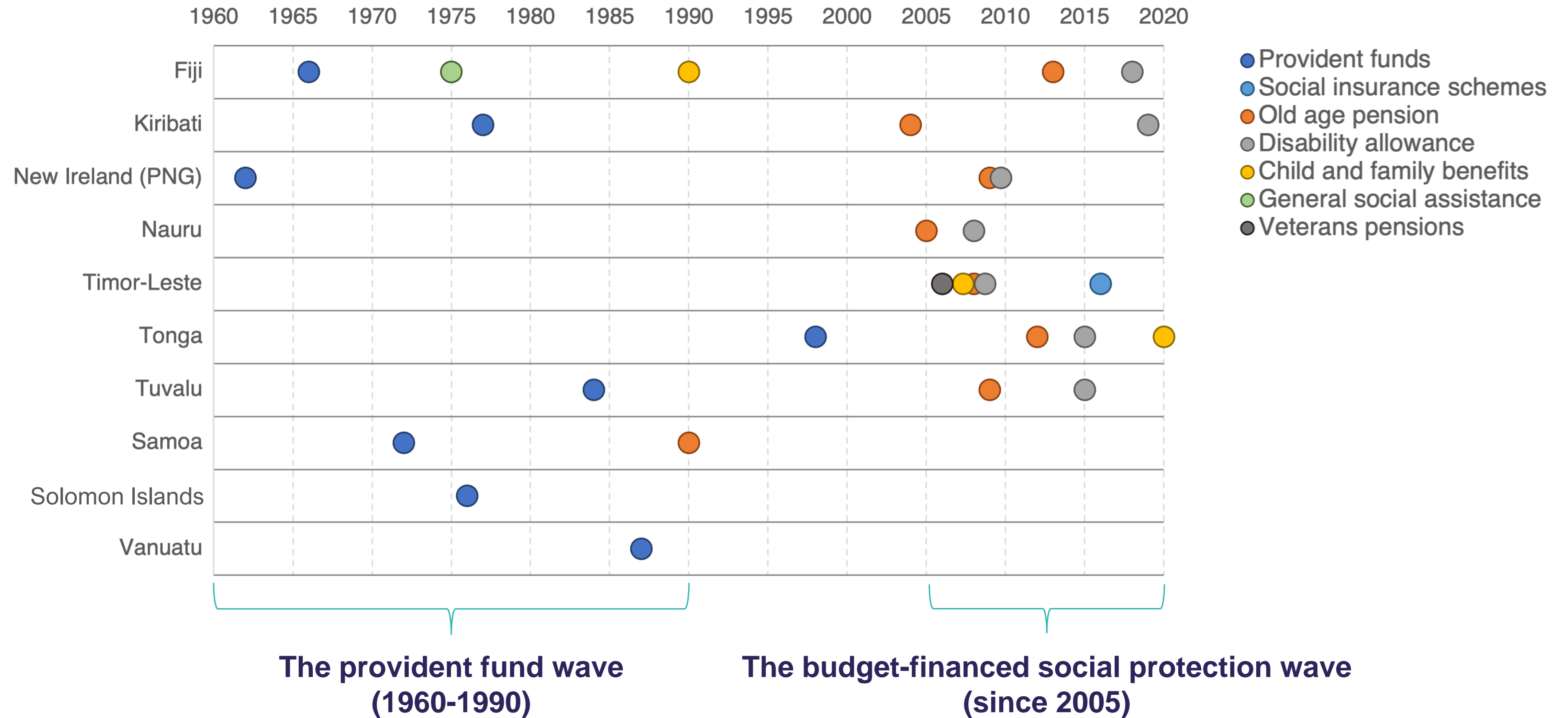
What is social protection, and what does it aim to do?

- Social protection systems seek to address risk, vulnerability, inequality and poverty through a system of transfers to people in cash, or 'in kind'.



- Strong social protection systems are also shock-responsive and can support faster and better humanitarian responses to disasters.

Social protection is growing in the Pacific and Timor-Leste



Why did we do this Evidence Review?

- Despite growing recognition of the importance of social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste, there was a perception that evidence in the region was relatively limited.
- DFAT & P4SP were interested in understanding how social protection and related concepts are being understood, communicated and discussed in the region.
- The evidence review aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the available evidence, to:
 - establish a foundation for P4SP's research agenda and inform program activities;
 - contribute to the social protection research agenda in the Pacific and Timor-Leste and globally; and
 - inform social protection policy, programming, and advocacy in the region.

Against this backdrop, Sustineo was engaged to conduct a review of the available evidence on social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Approach and Methodology

Approach and methodology

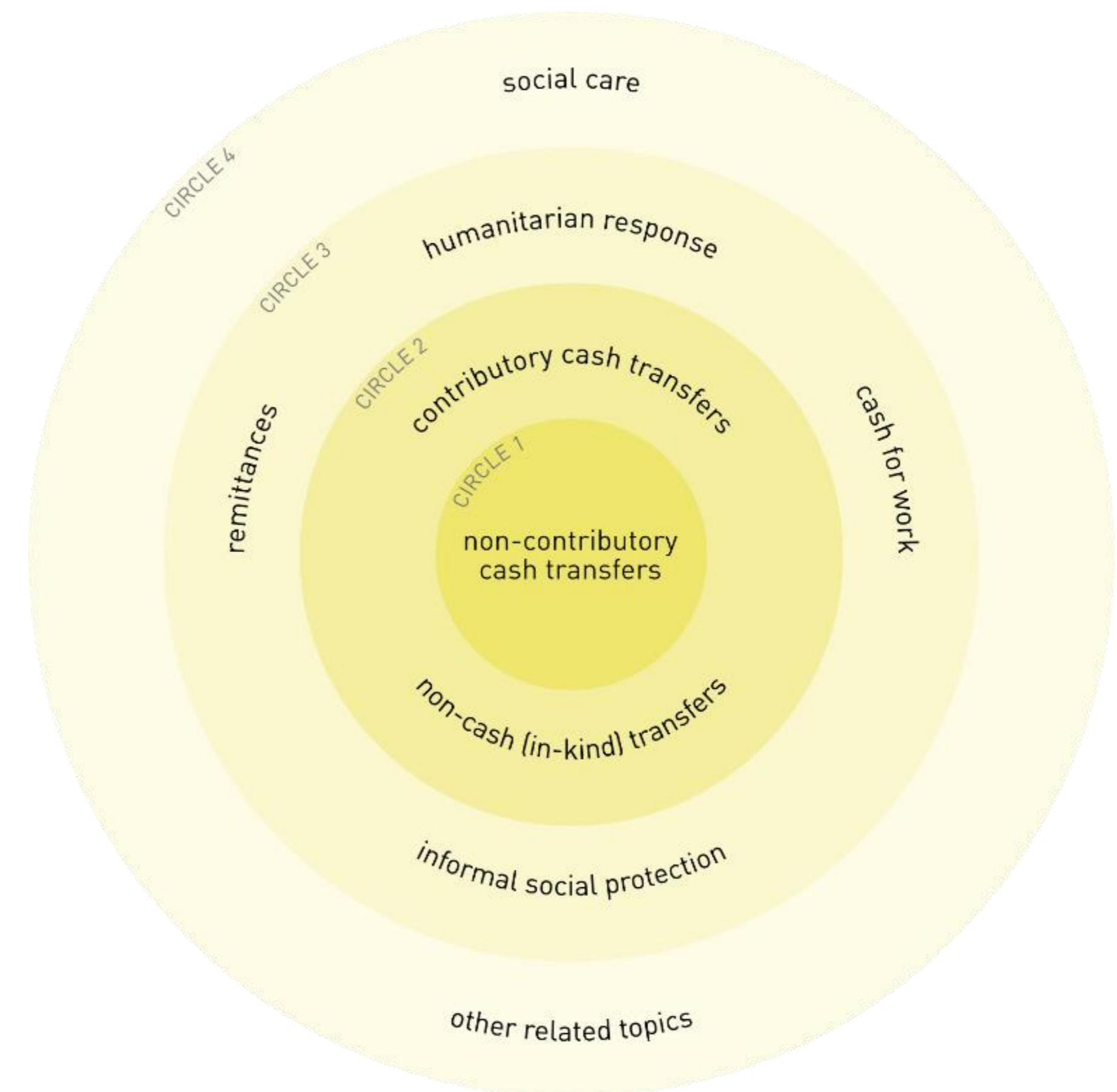
Design considerations

- Focused on comprehensive coverage of available evidence, aligned with P4SP’s geographical and thematic focus.
- Also considered cross-cutting themes including gender, disability, and social inclusion, as well as climate change and other shocks.

Literature search

- Google Scholar search
- Organisational website search
- Additional documents

Framework for search process



Approach and methodology

Screening and results

- Documents were considered eligible for inclusion if they: (1) were published by a reputable or influential source; (2) had named authors (individuals or organisations); (3) were written in English; and (4) were published from 2010 onwards.
- **7089 documents were screened**
 - **215 were included** in the Annotated Bibliography and formed the basis for the Evidence Review
- Thematic and geographical tagging system was applied, to enhance usability of the Annotated Bibliography and enable analysis and synthesis in the Evidence Review.

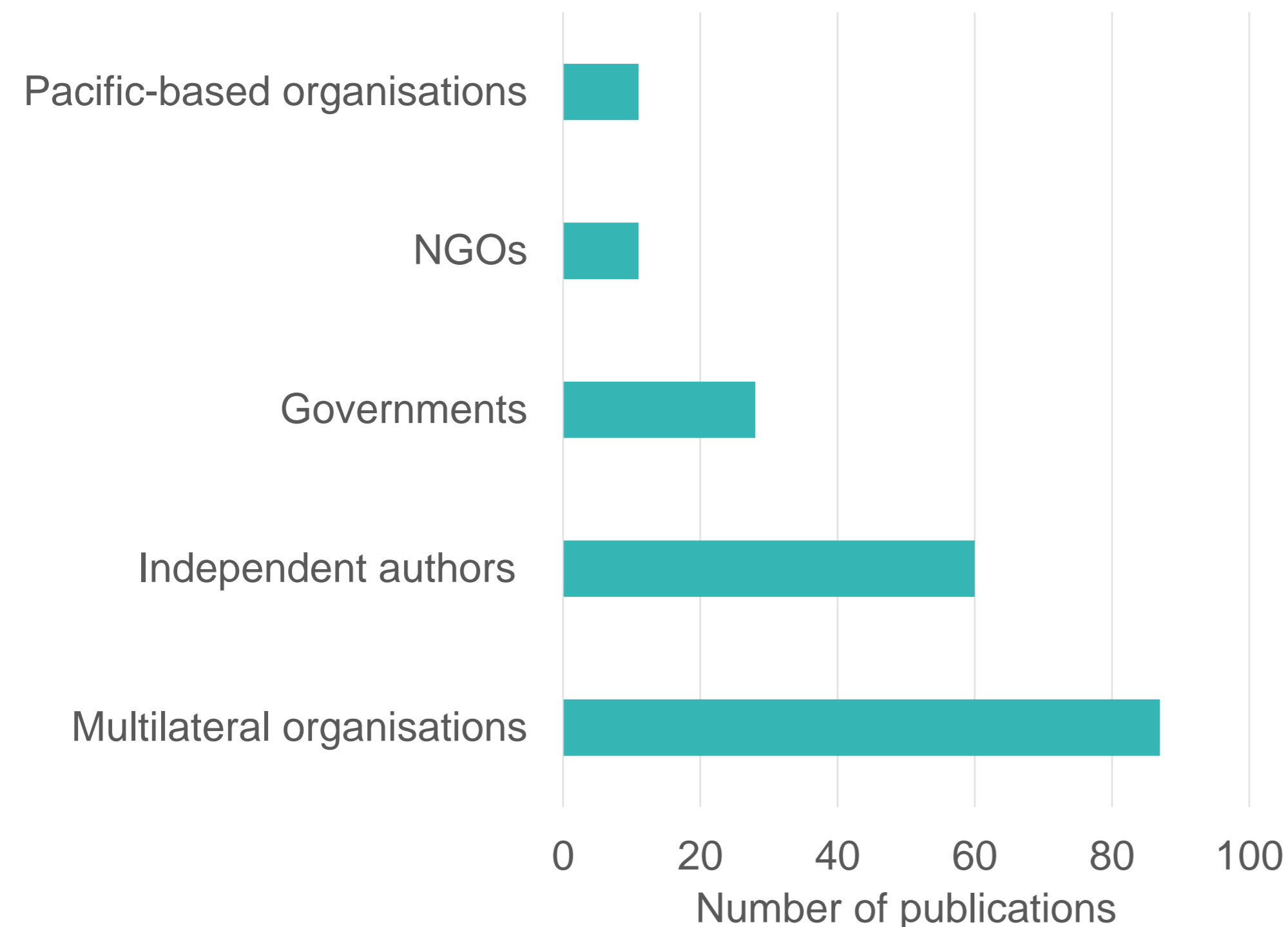
Limitations

- Comprehensive, but not exhaustive, search within resource constraints
 - Certain degree of subjectivity involved in screening decisions
- Only considers English language resources

Key Findings

Literature on social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste is dominated by “external” voices and perspectives

Number of publications in Annotated Bibliography by author type

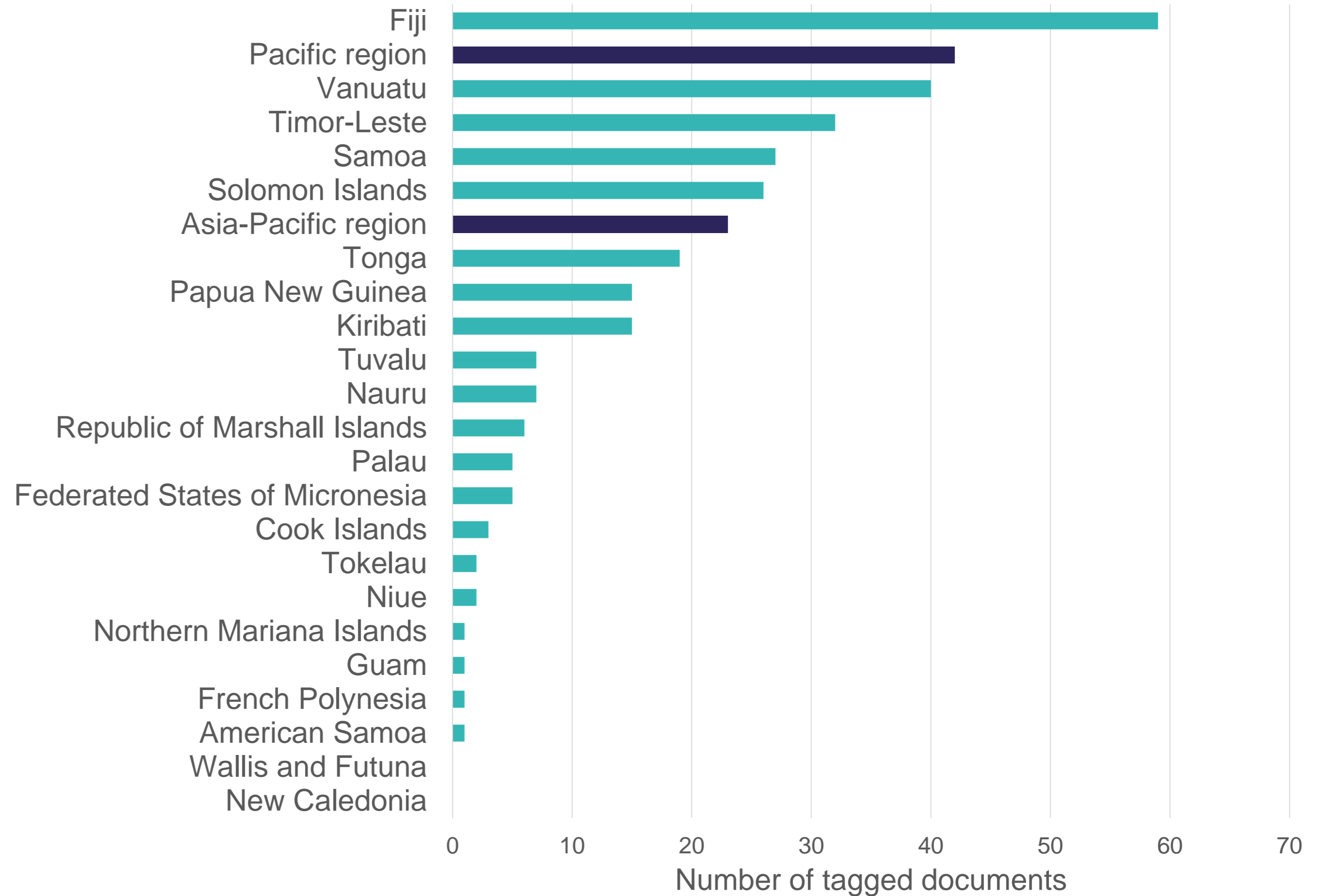


- A very small proportion of publications are authored by Pacific governments, organisations, or individuals.
- Studies from multilateral organisations are typically grounded in global norms and approaches, and broadly “Western” world views, including a strong focus on formal social protection systems.
 - Comparatively, Pacific voices have greater coverage of informal social protection.
 - DFAT stands out in terms of external organisations in discussing informal social protection.

Geographic coverage in the literature is highly variable

- Regional level analysis is common, reflecting the predominance of development partners in the published literature.
- Variation in geographic coverage may reflect several factors, including:
 - the presence of overseas development assistance (ODA) programs
 - the level of domestic focus on social protection
 - the population size of a country.

Geographic coverage of the evidence

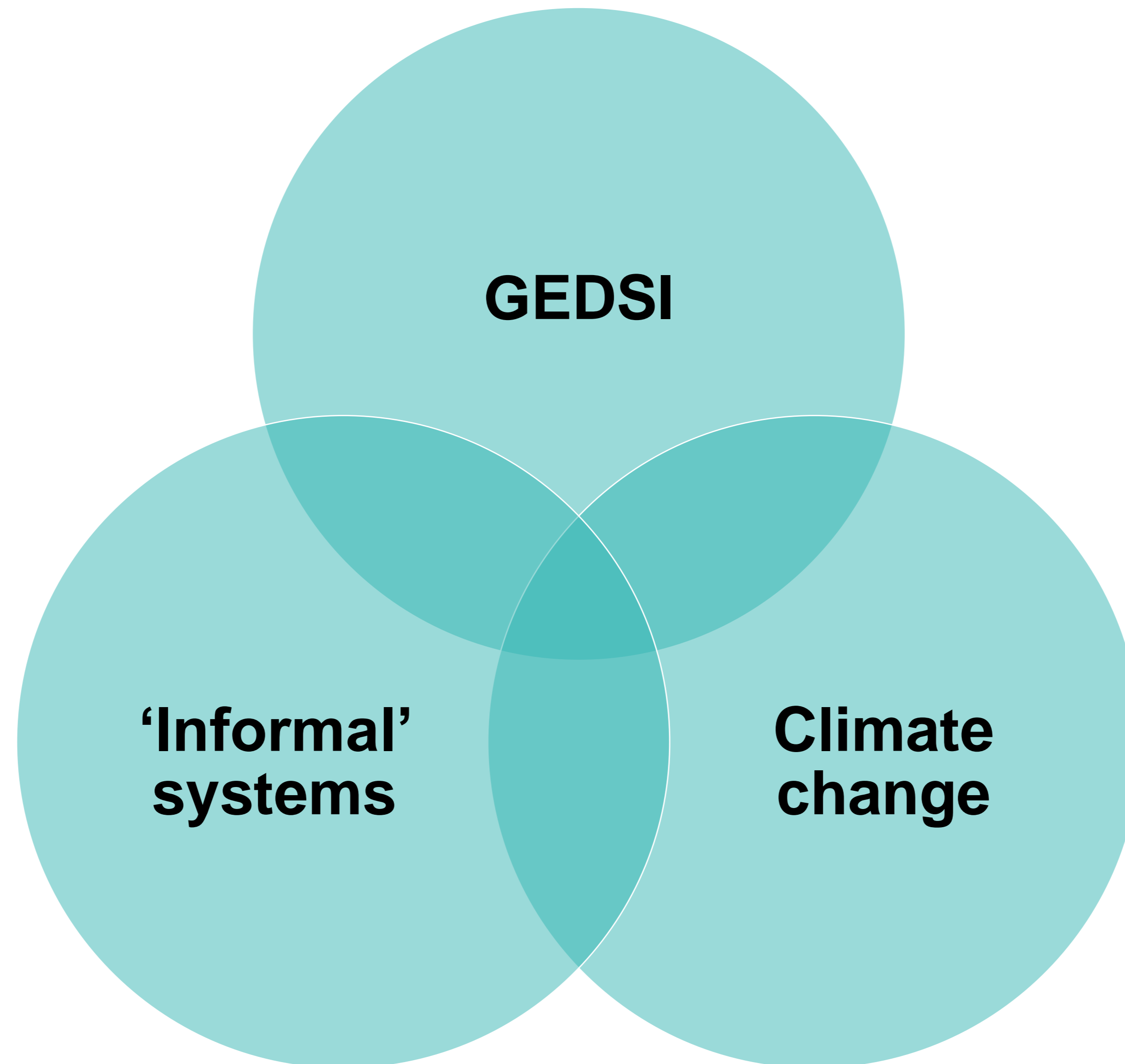


Importance of cross-cutting themes is being increasingly recognised

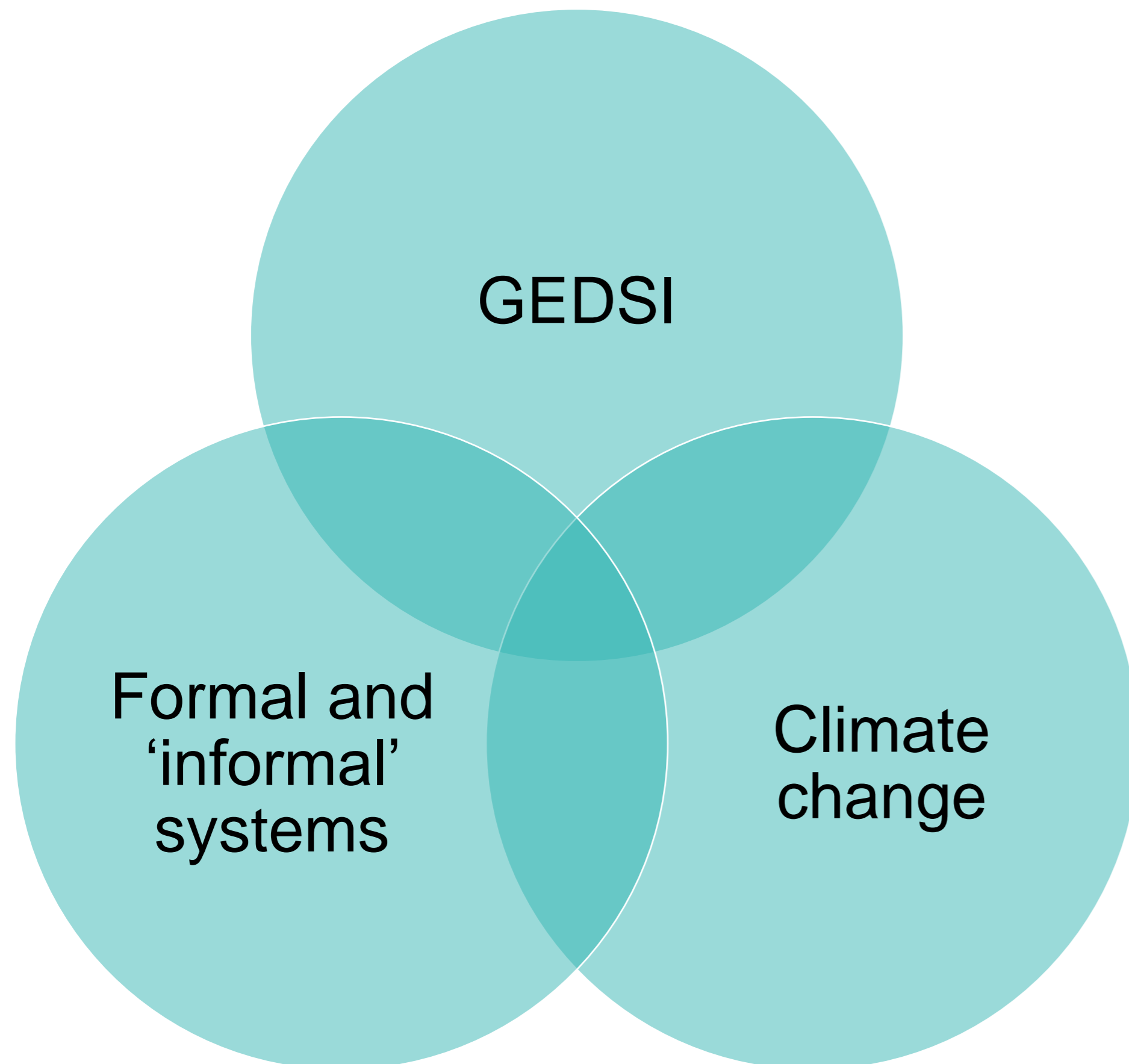
- Need for greater understanding of the intersections between formal and informal social protection systems so that greater complementarity can be achieved.
- Social protection as a shock response mechanism – it is possible that we are seeing a “tipping point” in social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.
- Relatively high coverage given to inclusive and gender-responsive social protection, as well as disaster-responsive social protection, in line with growing policy attention.
- Cross-cutting themes are often framed in terms of advocacy, rather than sharing good practice or examining existing policies.

Opportunities for Further Research

Understanding the intersections between social protection and...



A range of approaches is required



Policy and program evaluation

- Understanding what works



Economic analysis

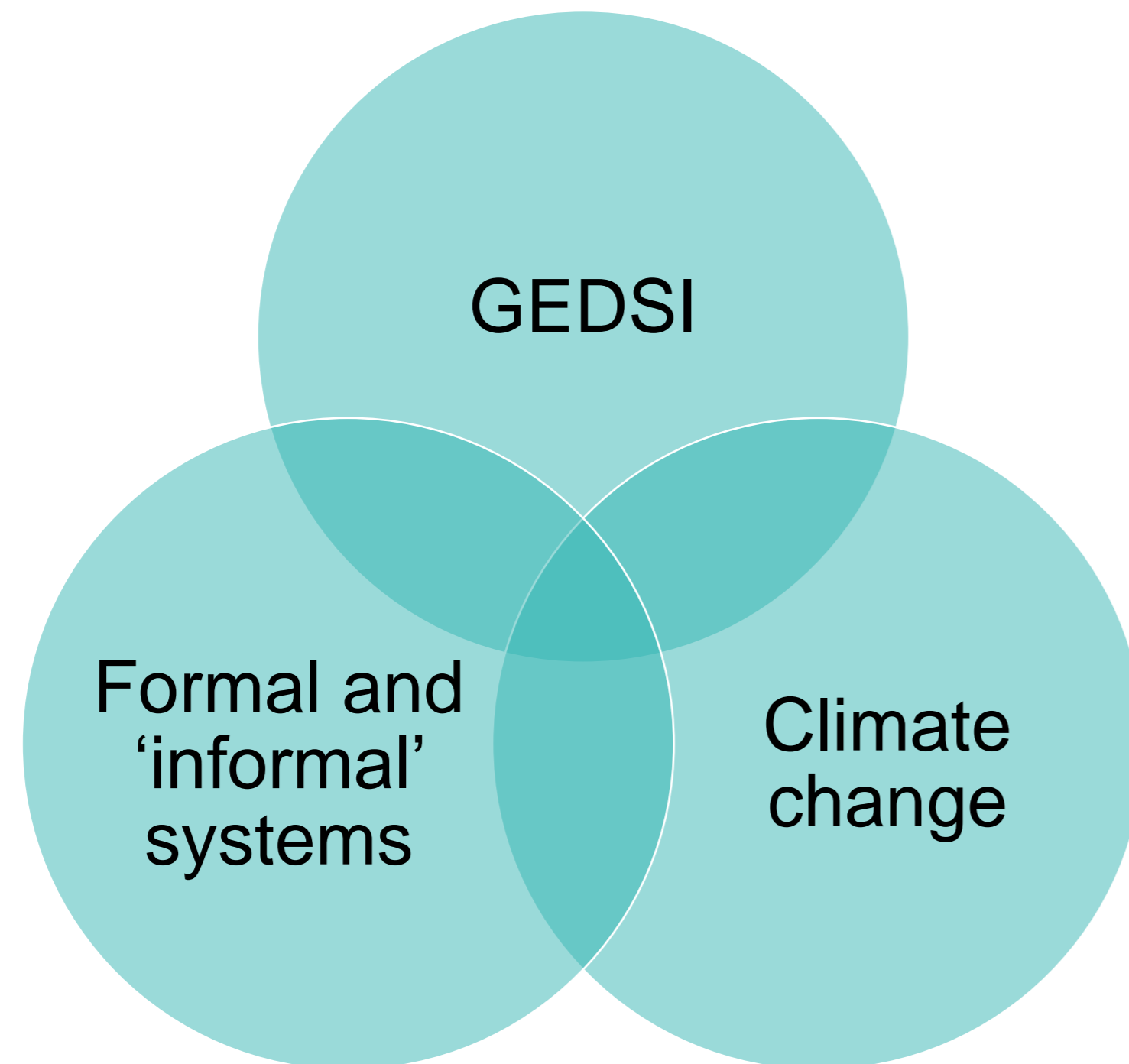
- Strengthening the economic case



Social analysis

- Enhancing inclusion

A greater balance of perspectives is important



Policy and program evaluation

- Understanding what works



Economic analysis

- Strengthening the economic case



Social analysis

- Enhancing inclusion

Pacific and Timor-Leste authors and organisations contributing to evidence and discourse on social protection in the region.

Learning between countries within the Pacific and Timor-Leste on how to enhance and support social protection systems.

Summary

- Social protection spending across the Pacific and Timor-Leste is continuing to increase.
 - **Social protection is expected to play an increasingly important role** in responding to the impacts of climate change, disasters, and other economic shocks in the region.
- **Expanding the Pacific-specific evidence base is essential** to improve social protection policy, programming, and advocacy in the region.
 - Intersections with GEDSI, climate change, and informal systems are of particular importance.
- **There is a wide range of opportunities for research on social protection in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.**
 - In particular, **there is a significant opportunity for Pacific and Timor-Leste authors and organisations** to contribute to evidence and discourse on social protection in the region.

Thank you

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