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Elena Maltseva

**Kazakhstan's Social Policy
Response to Covid-19:
Developmentalism and
Productive Welfare**



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KAZAKHSTAN'S SOCIAL POLICY RESPONSE TO COVID-19: DEVELOPMENTALISM AND PRODUCTIVE WELFARE

Elena Maltseva*

ABSTRACT

This report reviews Kazakhstan's initial social policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting three points. First, there was obvious continuity from the pre-pandemic days in the government's policy response as it tried to guide the country through the pandemic and prepare the economy for a quick recovery in a post-pandemic world. In particular, the government firmly adhered to the principles of developmentalism, pursuing an active role in the economy, supporting the domestic private sector, promoting employment and using available resources for large infrastructure projects. Second, even during a pandemic, the Kazakhstani government remained fully committed to the idea of productive welfare, offering workers and families affected by the crisis only short-term relief measures and encouraging the poor to be entrepreneurial and not depend on government aid. Third, reminiscent of its earlier strategy to launch important reforms in times of crisis, the Kazakhstani government used the momentum to announce the onset of another cycle of economic, social and education reforms. It remains to be seen whether the announced reforms will help diversify the economy, promote sustainable economic growth and strengthen the country's education and welfare systems.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the world learned about the discovery of a new viral infection called coronavirus disease 2019 or Covid-19. The disease was first reported among visitors of a local seafood market in the city of Wuhan, China who developed signs of severe acute respiratory syndrome due to atypical pneumonia. The highly contagious virus quickly spread to other countries, leading the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the Covid-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern in January 2020 (WHO, 2020a). As the number of cases continued to rise rapidly across the world, on 11 March 2020 the WHO announced the onset of a global pandemic (WHO, 2020b). To prevent the further spread of Covid-19, most countries across the globe implemented a set of protective measures, which included mass quarantines, social distancing, and travel restrictions.

In Kazakhstan, a country of 18 million people with a per capita income of USD 9,812 as of 2019, the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in mid-March 2020 (World Bank, n.d.; Interfax, 2020a). By mid-July, the number of cases had risen to over 63,000. In addition, there were reports of an unusually high number of pneumonia cases in the first six months of the year compared to the same period the previous year (International Partnership for Human Rights [IPHR], 2020). As some experts stated, there was a strong possibility that many of the reported cases of pneumonia were actually Covid-19 and that the local authorities simply lacked the testing equipment necessary to identify it (Chen et al., 2020). The infection rate began to further rise in the summer, having reached more than 110,000 cases by the end of October 2020.

Kazakhstan's response to the spread of the pandemic can be assessed as timely. On 31 January 2020, following the WHO's announcement that Covid-19 represented an international public health emergency, the Minister of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan added the infection to the list of diseases that posed serious public health risks (Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. ҚР ДСМ-7/2020). On 15 March 2020, guided by recommendations of the WHO and in response to the

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first confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the country, the president signed decree No. 285 on the introduction of a state of national emergency for the period from 16 March 2020 to 15 April 2020. The state of emergency was accompanied by numerous restrictions aimed at limiting the freedom of movement within cities. In addition, the national borders were shut, and the entry and exit points of most cities were closed. The quarantine was lifted in early June but re-instated a month later in a less far-reaching format in response to the growing number of infections in urban areas (IPHR, 2020). The second lockdown was enforced from 5 July to 17 August 2020 and was extended until the end of August in several regions (Interfax, 2020b).

In addition to public health measures that aimed to mitigate community transmission, the government launched a series of Keynesian policies to guide the economy through the pandemic and tackle the problem of unemployment. It should be noted that the pandemic struck Kazakhstan at a particularly difficult time. Following a period of macroeconomic stability during 2019, when the country demonstrated a growth rate of 4.1% and a low level of unemployment, the beginning of 2020 was marked by low oil prices and the collapse of an OPEC+ deal on oil production limitations (Cohen, 2020). Given the country's dependence on crude exports for nearly a quarter of its gross domestic product and 60% of its government revenue, the volatility in the oil markets meant the government would need to revise its macroeconomic forecast for the year (Voloshin, 2020). Coupled with Covid-19-related trade disruptions and the stress on the country's corporate and financial sectors, the authorities were forced to intervene to support businesses and households.

The government's anti-crisis package included several monetary and macro-financial policies that aimed to restore economic growth and support banks and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The policies included the introduction of a subsidized mortgage program for households, tax incentives for agriculture and hard-hit sectors such as civil aviation and tourism as well as credit support to SMEs and manufacturing enterprises (IMF, 2021). The government also intervened in the labor market to preserve existing jobs and help the unemployed find work. It directed additional funds to support job creation and employment under the "Employment Roadmap" and "Enbek" programs and launched some large-scale infrastructure development projects. Furthermore, the government acknowledged serious flaws in the operation of the Kazakhstani healthcare and education systems and pledged to invest significant resources to improve the quality of education and healthcare services. At the same time, the authorities decided against the introduction of comprehensive long-term social measures. The level of social assistance offered by the government to workers and families affected by the crisis turned out to be limited in time and scope, as they were barely sufficient to cover basic expenses including electricity bills, food, and mortgage payments or rent (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2020).

Taken together, the promotion of and support for various economic and business initiatives as well as the promise of significant investments in the education and healthcare sectors, combined with the limited social relief measures reflected the developmentalist nature of the Kazakhstani state. In addition, the government's emphasis on employment programs suggested that the Kazakhstani authorities adhered to a productive welfare approach that encouraged the poor to be entrepreneurial and not depend on government aid (Rudra, 2007; Hudson and Kühner, 2012). It can therefore be argued that the government's anti-crisis measures fell in line with the goals outlined in the national development concept "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy" presented by President Nazarbayev on 14 December 2012, in which he called for the establishment of a society of universal labor in Kazakhstan (State of the Nation Address, 2012).

In what follows, I will outline the relevant pre-pandemic political and socioeconomic context in Kazakhstan and provide an overview of Kazakhstan's initial Covid-19 economic and social policy response between January and September 2020.

POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT

Ruled by Nursultan Nazarbayev from April 1990 until his resignation on 19 March 2019, the country remained firmly in the hands of the old elites who stayed loyal to his successor, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. With no viable political opposition existing in the country, Kazakhstan represents an example of a consolidated authoritarian regime best described as a presidential autocracy (Svolik, 2012; Freedom House, 2018; Maltseva, 2021). Kazakhstan's model of governance is characterized by a strong top-down mechanism of administrative control and organization, with decision-making concentrated in the offices of the Presidential Administration, the Prime Minister and the Ministry of National Economy (Kassen, 2016; Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Develop-

ment [OECD], n.d.). It was therefore not surprising that during the pandemic the head of state and the government exerted strong political control over the development and implementation of national anti-crisis measures, relying frequently on the use of decrees and executive orders.

In the economic realm, the government of Kazakhstan has followed a developmentalist approach, using the East Asian developmental state model as a conceptual point of reference (Ahrens and Stark, 2014). The government played an active role in the promotion of economic development while also supporting “the model of a liberal market economy open to foreign investment and trade” (Ahrens and Stark, 2014). Indeed, Kazakhstan was among the first post-Soviet states to implement liberal economic and welfare reforms and open up the economy to foreign direct investment. To generate steady economic growth, the government relied extensively on the extraction of natural resources, with oil and gas exports generating more than 70% of export earnings over the past decade (Anderson et al., 2018). At the same time, the authorities understood the need to move away from a heavy dependence on extractive resources to non-extractive sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing (Anderson et al., 2018). In fact, efforts to diversify Kazakhstan’s economy featured prominently on the national agenda in the last decade, with varying degrees of success across the country and industries (Whiteshield Partners, 2015; Anderson et al., 2018).

The strong economic growth allowed Kazakhstan to make remarkable progress in poverty reduction, with the percentage of those living below the poverty line decreasing from 46.7% in 2001 to 2.6% in 2016 (Anderson et al., 2018). In addition, Kazakhstan recorded consistently low levels of unemployment in the last decade, staying around 5% between 2011 and 2016 (Anderson et al., 2018). These numbers, however, require further scrutiny due to reports of a high level of informality on the Kazakhstani labor market. According to a study on informality conducted by the Kazakhstan Agency on Statistics, in 2014, informal workers comprised approximately 2.9 million of the 8.5 million-member workforce, and an estimated 77% of informal workers were formally employed in a registered enterprise (Mussurov et al., 2018). Moreover, agricultural workers, young people, and women were particularly prominent among informal workers (Mussurov et al., 2018). The diversification of the economy is therefore a logical response to the problem of securing sustainable economic growth, maintaining low levels of unemployment and integrating the country’s informal workers into the economy.

In the social realm, starting in the mid-1990s, the Kazakhstani government engaged in a continual restructuring of the old Soviet welfare system, gradually replacing the state-guaranteed system of universal welfare provision with contributory and means-tested programs, increasing the retirement age for women, and delegating the provision of some public and social services to the private sector. The government also pledged to improve labor market accessibility for all population groups, with the goal of establishing a society of universal labor (i.e. full employment) in which all citizens, including people with disabilities, the elderly and women, are fully integrated into the labor market (State of the Nation Address, 2012). As President Nazarbayev stated in his speech: “I am leading you to a universal labor society where the unemployed will not just receive benefits, but will master new occupations, where the disabled will be able to actively engage in creative activities and companies will ensure decent working conditions” (State of the Nation Address, 2012).

It can therefore be concluded that despite some obvious shortcomings in its political and economic systems, Kazakhstan possesses some key characteristics of the developmental state. Over the past decade, the Kazakhstani government pursued an active role in the economy, supporting the domestic private sector and preserving control over strategic extractive industries while also securing the presence of foreign investors in these industries. The government also promoted employment, invested in public goods and infrastructure, retrenched and partially privatized the country’s welfare system and engaged in modernizing the country’s education and healthcare systems. As will be shown in the next section, the developmentalist nature of the Kazakhstani state was also reflected in the government’s anti-crisis strategy during the pandemic.

— KAZAKHSTAN’S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY RESPONSE

— Economic Measures

The state issued its first response to the pandemic on 16 March 2020, when the president signed two decrees that outlined measures to maintain social and economic stability in the country (Decrees of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 286 and 287). The decrees laid out several revisions the government and other authorized

bodies were expected to implement, including changes to tax rates and payment deadlines, the introduction of special procedures for forming and executing a state budget as well as setting the maximum tariffs and prices for food and other goods. As a follow-up, by the end of March, the government presented its plan of action aimed at alleviating the pressures felt by SMEs (Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 126, 20 March 2020 and No. 141, 27 March 2020). In particular, it offered businesses access to concessional loans with low interest rates, announced wide-ranging tax breaks, ordered the temporary suspension of payments of principal debts and fees under bank loan agreements, placed a moratorium on the inspection of SMEs, and promised more funds for the realization of the Roadmap for Business in times of crisis (Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 141, 27 March 2020; No. 126, 20 March 2020; and No. 225, 20 April 2020). Also, to support SMEs, the National Bank of Kazakhstan, together with a joint-stock company, the Kazakhstan Sustainability Fund, announced its decision to provide second-tier banks with additional capitalization in the amount of KZT 600 billion (equivalent to EUR 1.2 billion as of 10 February 2021) (Resolution of the Board of the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 39, 18 March 2020). Finally, the government presented a new Roadmap for Employment to ensure stability in the labor market (Order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 55-p, 27 March 2020).

In May 2020, to stimulate the demand side of the economy and to support the construction industry, the government announced the development of a new housing program scheduled to start operating in the summer of 2020 (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 307, 20 May 2020). Building on the earlier “7-20-25” state housing program that aimed to make the purchase of housing affordable for every Kazakhstani citizen, the new program called “5-10-20” offers mortgage loans at a 5% interest rate per annum to eligible participants with a down payment of 10% for a loan period of 20 years (Decree of the Board of the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 107, 31 May 2018; Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 520, 18 August 2020). The government promised to allocate KZT 390 billion (equivalent to EUR 769 million) to support this new housing initiative and stated that more than 150,000 apartments and homes were expected to be built within the framework of this project (Kazinform, 2020b). The program is open to citizens with low but stable incomes who have registered with the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development and received the status of “being in need of housing in accordance with the Law ‘On Housing Relations’” (Kn.kz, 2020). However, it remains to be seen how accessible this program will be, especially in light of criticisms of other housing programs because of their high construction costs and lower rates of construction in the affordable housing sector (OECD, 2018; Seitz, 2021).

— Labor Market Policies

The economic measures implemented by the government were accompanied by the injection of additional funds into two state-run employment programs: the Roadmap for Employment 2020–2021 and the Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship Development Program ‘Enbek’. The goal of these programs is to tackle the problem of unemployment and to guarantee social stability during the pandemic (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 25 June 2020). The origins of the Employment Roadmap program go back to the early 2000s, when the government launched a series of state initiatives aimed at addressing the problem of poverty through productive employment programs (Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 833, 3 June 2000; No. 296, 26 March 2003; No. 68, 27 January 2005; and No. 1114, 20 November 2007). Since then, the government has introduced two Roadmaps for Employment. The first was launched in 2009 in response to the 2008–2009 economic crisis (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 274, 10 March 2009). This program proved to be an effective instrument for dealing with the problem of unemployment among socially vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups and youth (ILO, 2015). As a result, in 2015, the government developed another Roadmap for Employment for the next five years (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 162, 31 March 2015). The original goal of the Roadmap 2020 was to stimulate job creation by supporting local and regional infrastructural projects, promoting productive business start-ups, especially in rural areas, providing the participants with vocational training and facilitating the subsidized moves of the workforce to regions facing labor shortages (ILO, 2015). With the onset of the pandemic, the program was updated and mobilized to offer the participants mostly temporary and some permanent job opportunities on more than 7,000 projects, including infrastructural and construction projects aimed at

modernizing the country's transportation system and building new schools and hospitals as well as other venues of public importance in urban and rural areas (Order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 55-p, 27 March 2020). For this purpose, the government announced that the financing of the Roadmap would be increased to KZT 1 trillion (equivalent to approximately EUR 2 billion) and cover nearly 1.3 million people. Also, regional authorities were ordered to take an active part in promoting new projects in their regions and the program was advertised among the young unemployed population (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2 April 2020). To stimulate additional interest in the program, it promised a start-up lump sum payment of KZT 85,000 (equivalent to EUR 169) immediately after arrival at the place of work (Kazinform, 2020a). Mobile recruiting stations were set up across the country, with regional authorities responsible for the administrative and explanatory work, express testing for the coronavirus, and the collection and transportation of workers to the place of their employment (Alimova, 2020).

In addition, the Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship Development Program 'Enbek' was used to generate additional job opportunities during the pandemic, especially in rural areas. Similar to the Roadmap for Employment, the goal of the Enbek program, which was launched in 2017, is to improve the welfare of Kazakhstani citizens through effective employment (Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 746, 13 November 2018 and No. 189, 9 April 2020). The program offers participants access to micro-credit, grants, short-term learning and business education (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2 July 2019). The key feature of this program is its emphasis on the development of small business projects in rural areas and towns, targeting the unemployed, the self-employed and the recipients of targeted social assistance (TSA). In response to the pandemic, the government allocated additional funds for the realization of the Enbek program in 2020 in the amount of KZT 50 billion (equivalent to approximately EUR 99 million) (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 17 April 2020). This funding was earmarked for the provision of short-term vocational training as well as grants to employers who would agree to create temporary jobs as well as grants and microloans to program participants from large and low-income families, especially those living in rural areas (Eurasian Economic Commission, 2020). The program also supported the relocation of citizens from labor-surplus regions to labor-deficient areas, providing them with work and housing (Official Information Source of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 25 December 2019 and 23 July 2020). In short, the program provided a range of opportunities to those seeking employment in times of crisis or those considering starting their own business.

For those willing to learn new skills and undergo additional training, the government launched education and retraining programs with the goal of getting the unemployed back to work as quickly as possible. On 6 May 2020, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection made an announcement that it had reached an agreement with the mass online education platform *Coursera* to offer unemployed individuals who are registered with employment centers an opportunity to take courses in various subjects in an online format (Electronic Job Bank, n.d.a). Under the conditions of this project, citizens could choose from 298 courses in various disciplines, with courses running for 6 to 10 weeks. The main goal of this project is to provide professional support to Kazakhstani citizens both during the emergency period and after its completion and to improve their employment prospects. The government promised to pay the course tuition for each participant of the program, meaning that this opportunity would be provided to unemployed Kazakhstanis free of charge (Mukitanova, 2020).

— Temporary Social Relief Measures

The extensive economic and employment initiatives were accompanied by the introduction of temporary social relief measures. To maintain social stability, the government offered monthly cash transfers equivalent to one month's minimum wage – KZT 42,500 (approx. EUR 84) – to workers on unpaid leave until the end of the emergency situation as well as to those who reported themselves as self-employed or working informally. For workers who lost their jobs due to the emergency situation, the government offered compensation at 40% of their former salaries for a duration of up to six months, depending on the length of their participation in the compulsory social insurance system and their income for the last 24 months (Orders of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 110, 26 March 2020, and No. 283, 16 July 2020; HRW, 2020). Among other social initiatives was a 10% increase in state pensions and social benefit payments distributed through the TSA program, although this could also be attributed to political considerations related to a scheduled parliamentary

election on 10 January 2021 (Kazakhstan Today, 2020; Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 299, 8 April 2020; Akhmetov, 2020). The government also provided food baskets and daily non-food essentials to more than 1 million low-income and socially vulnerable people and people with disabilities (Orders of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 118, 1 April 2020 and No. 169, 8 May 2020; Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 164, 2 April 2020).

— Social, Education and Healthcare Reforms

The implementation of anti-crisis economic and social measures coincided with the onset of other more substantial social reforms, which included changes to the existing TSA system and measures to improve the socioeconomic situation of people with disabilities. Specifically, starting in January 2020, the government introduced a separate category for large families with four or more children, who could now receive TSA regardless of income. At the same time, the role and responsibilities of precinct commissions in determining the need of a family for TSA was strengthened, and the eligibility for continued TSA for all other program participants was now dependent on employment, with the possibility of the termination of payments to the whole family if an able-bodied family member refused to participate in the available employment programs (Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 246, 17 July 2001 and No. 287-VI 3PK, 26 December 2019; Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 3, 5 January 2020). As mentioned earlier, many TSA recipients are included in the Enbek State Program, through which they are provided with free training, employment, and free grants and microloans if they want to start a small business (Electronic Job Bank, n.d.b). It can therefore be argued that the connection of the TSA provision to employment reinforces an earlier argument about the efforts of Kazakhstani authorities to make citizens more self-reliant, with employment considered the most effective instrument for achieving these goals.

Furthermore, the productive welfare approach was also used to update the 2005 Law on Social Protection of People with Disabilities (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 39-III, 13 April 2005). The new measures, which were developed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, aimed to not only improve the quality of social services available to people with disabilities but also to better integrate them into the labor market (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 326, 28 May 2019). In line with this logic, on 1 January 2020, the government launched the Portal of Social Services, an automated information system that gives people with disabilities the opportunity to order different services directly from suppliers. In addition, in September 2020 the government announced its plans to develop an Atlas of Professions for people with disabilities and create an online database of program participants, which would be run through the Enbek State Program. The government also plans to build several social support centers where people with disabilities can receive assistance with developing their business projects as well as undergo professional training if necessary (Zakon.kz, 2020).

The pandemic coincided with important changes in Kazakhstan's pension, education and healthcare systems. It also revealed several shortcomings in the operation of Kazakhstan's welfare and education systems, leading the government to promise further reforms in all three areas. The first reform announcement came in January 2020 when the authorities commented on the possibility of returning to guaranteed solidarity pensions (Kursiv.kz, 2020). The reasons for this move were twofold: the failure of the current solidarity-based component to guarantee an adequate level of pension provision to many pensioners due to their insufficient work history, primarily because of gaps in their employment record during the 1990s, and the ineffectiveness of the funded pension component in compensating for the flaws in the solidarity pension pillar (Kursiv.kz, 2020). The announcement was followed by the adoption of the Roadmap for Further Development of the System of Pension Provision for 2020–2021, which laid out the timeline and the responsibilities of different departments and ministries in drafting and submitting their proposals to the government for review (Order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 61 -p, 30 April 2020). The reform is currently in its development stage, though some minor changes have already been implemented, including a 7% pension increase from 1 January 2021 and an opportunity to withdraw some portion of the accumulated pension savings early if the total savings exceed the so-called threshold of availability (Azattyq Ruhy, 2020; Regnum, 2020). The withdrawn pension savings can be used to buy an apartment or to build or repair self-owned housing (Smajyl, 2020).

Similar to the pension system, Kazakhstan's education and healthcare systems have been subject to regular updates and modernization attempts since the 1990s. The most recent attempt to modernize the country's educa-

tion system occurred on 27 December 2019, when the government adopted the State Program of Education and Science Development for 2020–2025 and passed several amendments to the existing legislative acts, regulating teachers' remuneration and workload (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 988, 27 December 2019; Laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 294-VI 3PK, 27 December 2019 and No. 293-VI 3PK, 27 December 2019). An equally important change was made to Kazakhstan's healthcare system with the adoption of the State Program of Development of Healthcare for 2020–2025 (Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 982, 26 December 2019). The reform introduced a new system of compulsory insurance in an effort to address the ever-growing demand for increased financing for medicine and to improve the quality and accessibility of the healthcare system (Altynsarina, 2019). The compulsory health insurance system took effect on 1 January 2020. The program is funded through compulsory contributions by citizens and businesses to the national Health Insurance Fund. These payments will offer program participants access to a medical services insurance package that is more comprehensive than the previous complimentary one. At the same time, those not covered by the new system will be able to visit a local therapist, take some basic tests, be examined and receive treatment for a number of diseases deemed life-threatening, and all emergency medical care will remain free (Astana Times, 2020). In essence, the new model of healthcare provision is comprised of three tiers: guaranteed medical care covered by the state, an additional package covered through the Compulsory Social Health Insurance and voluntary medical insurance (Altynsarina, 2019).

In addition, in July 2020, the president signed into law a new Code on Public Health and the Healthcare System as well as the Law on Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts on Healthcare Issues, which outlined the structure of the new healthcare system, addressed some of the pressing issues and laid the foundation for future reforms (Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 360-VI 3PK, 7 July 2020; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 361-VI 3PK, 7 July 2020). The work on this code continued for several years and resulted in a document that strengthened legal protection for medical workers, introduced a differentiated approach to medical errors, redefined citizens' rights in vaccination matters, outlined preventive measures that aimed to improve the nation's health, expanded the powers of chief state sanitary doctors in introducing restrictive measures and quarantines, increased the salaries of health professionals, and vested the Ministry of Healthcare with the competence to determine the procedures needed to organize the provision of medical care during a state of emergency (Yergaliyeva, 2020).

As it turned out, this was just the beginning of the reform process, as the pandemic revealed serious flaws in the operation of Kazakhstan's education and healthcare systems. Several issues were identified in both spheres, including an underdeveloped system of online education and the lack of an operational online platform for distance learning; a rural-urban gap in education and healthcare provision; the low salaries of both teachers and health professionals; a mismatch between the education and labor market; shortages of public sports and pre-school facilities; an underdeveloped domestic pharmaceutical industry and decaying medical infrastructure; ineffective and inaccessible primary healthcare, especially in rural areas; a shortage of hospital beds; insufficient numbers of qualified teachers and health professionals; and several others. President Tokayev acknowledged these problems in his state-of-the-nation address on 1 September 2020 and announced the launch of additional education and healthcare reforms as well as an injection of extra funds into both state programs, although it remains to be seen if the proposed measures will be successfully realized (Tokayev, 2020). For example, he promised significant salary increases for both teachers and health professionals over the course of the next three years; the construction of new childcare facilities, schools, hospitals and medical centers; and large investments in science, research and technological development and the pharmaceutical industry. In the education sector, the president announced several policy changes to better regulate and monitor the quality of the higher education system and suggested mechanisms for improving the quality of early childhood, primary and secondary education, including the introduction of school vouchers and the attraction of private capital (Tokayev, 2020). Furthermore, the president promised that a new Concept of Lifelong Education would be developed to ensure the availability of alternative education options and discussed measures to improve the connection between the current education system and the labor market (Tokayev, 2020). In the healthcare sector, changes to the current structure of primary healthcare were announced, with the goal of making it more mobile and accessible to a wide range of the population, including those living in the countryside (Tokayev, 2020). Of note, most of these proposals had been included in the Comprehensive Plan to Restore Economic Growth by the End of 2020 that was passed by the government on 20 May 2020 and updated on 10 August 2020 (Resolution No. 307). This

plan requires the various departments to submit drafts of their legislative proposals regarding the modernization of the current education and healthcare systems to the government by the end of 2020.

In conclusion, the anti-crisis strategy adopted by the government of Kazakhstan included a range of economic and labor policies used to inject additional funds into several state-run programs and, by doing so, stimulate the national economy and provide employment to all those seeking employment or considering starting their own business. The government also launched education and retraining programs to give the unemployed an opportunity to improve their job prospects in the post-pandemic world. In addition, the authorities launched reforms in the education and healthcare sectors and announced more reforms in the foreseeable future. At the same time, these extensive initiatives were accompanied by modest short-term social relief measures, which many observers described as inadequate, calling on the government to expand and extend social assistance measures (HRW, 2020).

CONCLUSION

While speaking at the Industrial Forum in Astana in July 2012, President Nazarbayev used the experience of East Asian developmental states as a reference model for Kazakhstan, calling for the establishment of a universal labor society. "All economic and cultural wealth is created by human beings, not financial institutions. That's why productive labor must be a basis of our social policy. Utopian ideas of liberal and socialistic orientation are in the past," Nazarbayev said (Kazinform, 2012). Since then, the Strategy Kazakhstan 2050 has become the main document laying out the country's national economic and social strategy. As the current report suggested, even in a time of a global health crisis, the Kazakhstani authorities adhered to developmentalist logic and relied on productive welfare measures to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment. The anti-crisis package developed by the government in the spring and summer of 2020 contained several economic and social measures. Most of the measures were aimed at supporting the economy and SMEs and keeping the level of unemployment under control. With the help of two state-run programs, the government managed to provide employment to those in need and also used these workers for the construction of critical public infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and roads, echoing the American New Deal program, which employed millions of job seekers in public works projects. Some temporary social measures were also implemented, including cash payments to individuals who had lost their jobs or were on unpaid leave due to the quarantine, the provision of food baskets and non-food essentials to vulnerable populations and an increase in pension and social benefits. By and large, however, even in the time of a pandemic the government stayed true to the goal of creating a "universal labor society" in which productive labor provides the foundation for social policy.

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**APPENDIX 1: SOCIAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 BY POLICY AREA
(KAZAKHSTAN, JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 2020)**

	Policy Area	Pensions	Healthcare	Long-term care and disability	Labor market	Education
(1)	Have there been any significant legislative reforms in the indicated policy area during the indicated time period?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(2)	If (1) yes, have any of these reforms been explicit responses to the Covid-19 pandemic?	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
(3)	If (2) yes, has there been significant regional variation in the implementation of these reforms?	N/A	No	N/A	Yes	No
(4)	Have subnational governments enacted any significant legislative reforms in the indicated policy area during the indicated time period?	No	No	No	No	No
	Policy Area	Family benefits	Housing	Social assistance	Other*	
(1)	Have there been any significant legislative reforms in the indicated policy area during the indicated time period?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
(2)	If (1) yes, have any of these reforms been explicit responses to the Covid-19 pandemic?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
(3)	If (2) yes, has there been significant regional variation in the implementation of these reforms?	No	No	No	No	
(4)	Have subnational governments enacted any significant legislative reforms in the indicated policy area during the indicated time period?	No	No	No	No	

* Legislative reforms in other policy areas explicitly aimed at social protection, e.g. food subsidies or tax cuts aimed at social protection.

APPENDIX 2: SOCIAL POLICY LEGISLATION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (KAZAKHSTAN, JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 2020)

Note: This appendix covers all major national social policy legislation published between 1 January 2020 and 30 September 2020.

Law 1		
(1)	Number of law	3
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменений в приказ Министра здравоохранения и социального развития Республики Казахстан от 5 мая 2015 года № 320 “Об утверждении правил назначения и выплаты государственной адресной социальной помощи”
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments to the order of the Minister of Health and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan № 320, dated 5 May 2015, “On approval of the rules of appointment and payment of state targeted social assistance”
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law’s enactment	05 January 2020
(6)	Date of law’s publication	06 January 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	No
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	No
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	No direct connection with the Covid-19 pandemic
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable
Law 1: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Social assistance
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The law outlined the structure of the targeted social assistance (TSA) program as well as the requirements and procedures for receiving TSA. It divided large families with four or more children into a separate category. These families are guaranteed social assistance irrespective of income. The government also provided a guaranteed social package to children from low-income families.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	No
(17)	If <i>fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	This law provides an overview of the eligibility criteria, the terms and conditions as well as the steps involved in the process of applying for targeted social assistance. It outlines the various types of targeted social assistance available to low-income families, including families with four and more children, and children from low-income families.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Expansion
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	If <i>fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	This is a permanent program of social assistance that provides support to families with income below subsistence level. Depending on the status of an applicant, number of children, and health conditions, the provision of social assistance can be conditional or unconditional, long-term or short-term, lasting only a couple of months.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Yes

Law 1: Component 1		
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Indefinite
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	The program is permanent, although the length of monetary and non-monetary assistance available to families varies depending on a family's situation.
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	No cuts to existing benefits
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	Not available
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	Not available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No exact data available
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	completely

Law 2		
(1)	Number of law	39
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении Программы льготного кредитования субъектов малого и среднего предпринимательства
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the Program of concessional lending to small and medium enterprises
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	None
(5)	Date of law's enactment	19 March 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	19 March 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	Shortly after the introduction of the emergency situation, President Tokayev instructed the National Bank to provide concessional loans to SMEs affected by the crisis.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 2: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Labor market
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This is an emergency measure aimed to preserve the financial and economic stability in the country and to prevent a rise in unemployment.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	This program offers no social benefits but concessional loans to SMEs for the period of one year at the annual interest rate of 8%.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable

Law 2: Component 1		
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 600 billion (equivalent to EUR 1.2 billion)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	Not Available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Law
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	Under the Program of preferential lending to SMEs, the total sum provided by the National Bank of Kazakhstan to second tier banks will amount to KZT 600 billion.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	to a large degree

Law 3		
(1)	Number of law	110
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении правил осуществления социальной выплаты участникам системы обязательного социального страхования и физическим лицам, получающим доходы по договорам гражданско-правового характера, предметом которых является выполнение работ (оказание услуг), за которых налоговыми агентами уплачены обязательные пенсионные взносы на период чрезвычайного положения
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the rules for social payments to participants in the compulsory social insurance program and individuals who receive income under civil law contracts, the subject of which is the work (provision of services), for which tax agents have paid compulsory pension contributions during the state of emergency
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	26 March 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	30 March 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This is an order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 3: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Social assistance
(14)	Brief description of reform component	In accordance with the Presidential Decree No. 286 from 16 March 2020, this Order outlines the terms under which cash payments will be paid to workers who lost income during the emergency period. Workers on unpaid leave as well as self- and informally employed were eligible for receiving temporary cash payments to the amount of KZT 42,500 (EUR 84).
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Yes
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	During the quarantine period, approx. 4 months
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Most participants received three full payments and one-half payment in August.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Expansion
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Fix-term
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	3.5 months
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	This program operated during the quarantine period.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 321.9 billion (equivalent to EUR 636 million)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	News report
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	This program is not expected to run in 2021.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	completely

Law 4		
(1)	Number of law	55-p
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении Дорожной карты занятости на 2020 - 2021 годы
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the Roadmap for Employment 2020–2021
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	27 March 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	27 March 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	Presented by the government, this Program is meant to provide employment and create additional jobs during the pandemic. Even though Covid-19 was not explicitly mentioned in the program, it was developed with the goal of alleviating the negative economic and social consequences of the quarantine and the pandemic.

Law 4		
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable
Law 4: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Labor market
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This program is meant to provide employment to workers affected by the crisis and to develop regional infrastructure. The Roadmap offers work in the following areas: 1) Repairs, reconstruction and construction of social, sports and cultural facilities; 2) Repairs and reconstruction of housing and communal facilities (water supply, sewerage, gas, heat and power supply systems, apartment buildings); 3) Repairs, reconstruction and construction of engineering and transport infrastructure (urban roads, countryside roads, access roads, sidewalks, dams and bridges, canals, water facilities and structures); 4) Construction of community amenities (yard improvements, lighting and landscaping of streets, parks, squares, demolition of abandoned facilities, fencing, playgrounds and sports facilities for children).
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	The program offers different employment contracts.
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Some of the projects are long-term with longer employment contracts, whereas other projects offer only temporary employment.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	No information
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 1 trillion (equivalent to EUR 2 billion)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	Not Available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Law
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	The budget for this program has reached KZT 1 trillion (EUR 2 billion) in 2020. No information about 2021 is available at this point. The critics point out that the biggest weakness of this employment program is that most of the jobs are temporary and hence no permanent full-time employment is available to the majority of job seekers.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially

Law 5		
(1)	Number of law	118
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменения в приказ Министра труда и социальной защиты населения Республики Казахстан от 25 марта 2020 года № 109 “О некоторых вопросах оказания государственных услуг в социально-трудовой сфере и обеспечения продуктивно-бытовым набором некоторых категорий населения на период чрезвычайного положения”
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments to the Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan № 109, dated 25 March 2020, “On some issues of public service provision in the social and labor spheres and the provision of food and household services to certain categories of the population during the state of emergency”
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law’s enactment	01 April 2020
(6)	Date of law’s publication	07 April 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This Order regulates the provision of social assistance during the state of emergency, by transferring some of the procedures online.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 5: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Social assistance
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This Order outlines the provision of different types of social assistance to program participants during the state of emergency. It allows for the electronic submission of the application package. It also regulates the provision of food and household items to certain categories of the population.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Maintenance
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	No changes to the existing coverage
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Maintenance
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	If fix-term, duration in months	This order is in force for the period of the pandemic.
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	See above
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	If fix-term, duration in months	Nor Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	No information
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No data
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No data
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element

Law 5: Component 1		
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No data
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	Not Applicable

Law 6		
(1)	Number of law	189
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменений и дополнений в постановления Правительства Республики Казахстан от 23 августа 2018 года № 513 “Об утверждении Правил предоставления государственных грантов для реализации новых бизнес-идей участникам Государственной программы развития продуктивной занятости и массового предпринимательства на 2017 – 2021 годы Еңбек” и от 13 ноября 2018 года № 746 “Об утверждении Государственной программы развития продуктивной занятости и массового предпринимательства на 2017 – 2021 годы Еңбек”
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments and additions to the Decrees of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 513, dated 23 August 2018, “On approval of the rules for issuing state grants for the implementation of new business ideas by the participants of the state program Еңбек, focused on the development of productive employment and mass entrepreneurship in 2017-2021”, and No. 746, dated 13 November 2018, “On Approval of the state program Еңбек, focused on the development of productive employment and mass entrepreneurship in 2017-2021”
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not available
(5)	Date of law’s enactment	09 April 2020
(6)	Date of law’s publication	14 April 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	No
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	No
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	No significant revisions to the terms and conditions of the Enbek program were made. The proposed changes allowed for the provision of various services in an online format.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not applicable

Law 6: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Labor market
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The Enbek program is a state-run program launched in 2017 and aimed to develop small business projects in rural areas and towns, targeting the unemployed, self-employed and the recipients of targeted social assistance (TSA). The program offers the participants access to microcredit, grants, short-term learning and business training.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Maintenance
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	If <i>fix-term</i> , duration in months	This program offers different timelines for different groups.

Law 6: Component 1		
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	This program offered access to microcredits, grants and loans, and education opportunities to different population groups, including the unemployed, but also entrepreneurs. The duration of individual participation in the program varies from case to case.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Maintenance
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	No fundamental changes to the terms and conditions of participation in the program were made, but the funding of the program was increased to accommodate the growing size of the unemployed population.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	No information
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 176 billion (equivalent to EUR 347 million)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	Not Available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	News report
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	The funding of the Enbek program for 2020 was increased by KZT 50 billion (EUR 99 million) because of the pandemic.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	to a large degree

Law 7		
(1)	Number of law	61-p
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении Дорожной карты по дальнейшему развитию системы пенсионного обеспечения на 2020-2021 годы
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the Roadmap for further development of the pension system in 2020-2021
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	30 April 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	30 April 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	While there is no clear indication that the pandemic determined the government's decision to launch another pension reform, it probably was one of the contributing factors, along with economic and social pressures. With this Roadmap, the government sets into motion another wave of pension reform. The Roadmap states that the goal of this initiative is to draft and introduce further measures to improve the current Concept of Pension System Modernization until 2030, approved by the Decree No. 841 of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 18 June 2014.

Law 7		
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 7: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Pensions
14)	Brief description of reform component	The Roadmap proposes changes in at least five areas of the current pension system, including (1) measures to improve the system of minimum pension guarantees; (2) measures to develop and implement a mechanism allowing an early withdrawal of some portion of pension savings; (3) measures to simplify the mechanism of mandatory social payments; (4) measures for the phased consolidation of the ENPF and the State Social Insurance Fund; and (5) measures to increase the income of the population and expand the coverage of the working population with mandatory social coverage. To clarify, the reform is currently in its drafting stage.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Not Applicable
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No data available yet
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No data available yet
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No information
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	hardly at all

Law 8		
(1)	Number of law	169
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменений в приказ Министра труда и социальной защиты населения Республики Казахстан от 25 марта 2020 года № 109 "О некоторых вопросах оказания государственных услуг в социально-трудовой сфере и обеспечения продуктивно-бытовым набором некоторых категорий населения на период чрезвычайного положения"
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments to the Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 109, dated 25 March 2020, "On some issues concerning public service provision in the social and labor spheres and the provision of food and household items to certain population groups during the state of emergency"
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available

Law 8		
(5)	Date of law's enactment	08 May 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	11 May 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This is an Order of the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 8: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Social assistance
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This order outlines the terms and conditions for applying for social payments by applicants who missed application deadlines. To receive social payments, applicants can submit an application within the three months after the end of the quarantine period. Also, the government provided food baskets and social allowance for the period of state emergency to children from low-income families between the ages of six and eighteen, children with disabilities under the age of sixteen, and persons with disabilities in the first, second and third categories.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Yes
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Unclear, but most likely 3.5 months
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Covers the emergency period
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Expansion
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Fix-term
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Unclear, but most likely 3.5 months
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Applicants are given an opportunity to apply for social assistance retroactively. The Order also extended the provision of food and household allowances to children for the entire period of the state of emergency.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	No information
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No information available
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	I was not able to find the information regarding the costs of this program.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	to a large degree

Law 9		
(1)	Number of law	307
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении Комплексного Плана по восстановлению экономического роста до конца 2020 года
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the Comprehensive Plan to restore economic growth by the end of 2020
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	20 May 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	20 May 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	Passed by the government on 20 May 2020, this Plan of Action outlines the government's measures in different sectors of the economy aimed to restore economic growth by the end of 2020.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	Not Applicable
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable
Law 9: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Housing
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The government ordered its ministries to develop a program of affordable housing "5-10-20" and submit the proposal to the government by July 2020. Also, several ministries were asked to develop a mechanism that would allow for some portion of pension assets to be used for the purpose of improving housing conditions.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Yes
(17)	If fix-term, duration in months	No information
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	The program "5-10-20" was just launched. So, it remains to be seen how effective it is.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	This program offers families with low but stable income the opportunity to buy housing.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 1.3897 trillion (equivalent to EUR 2.7 billion)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	KZT 992.7 billion (equivalent to approximately EUR 2 billion)
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Law
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	The cost of this program is preliminary and may be subject to change.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially

Law 9: Component 2		
(13)	Policy Area	Labor market
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The government assigned different departments with the task of drafting proposals on how to improve the situation on the labor market, the employment conditions and social assistance available to workers affected by the crisis. It ordered the regional authorities to monitor the implementation of the Roadmap for Employment and submit reports to the government on a regular basis. Also, the government launched a program that offers online education opportunities to the unemployed. Finally, it asked the ministries to work on the digitalization of both employment programs.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Not Applicable
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No cost estimates available yet, although it is known that KZT 1 trillion (equivalent to EUR 2 billion) was allocated for the implementation of the Employment Program.
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information available
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	News report
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No information
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially

Law 9: Component 3		
(13)	Policy Area	Education
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The government ordered the ministries to develop proposals on how to strengthen the digital knowledge of the teachers, embed the principles of "blended learning" into the current education model, and speed up the digitalization of learning materials for schools and universities. It also prescribed the ministries to develop programs that would offer teachers an opportunity for further learning. Finally, the government asked for proposals on the establishment and monitoring of private schools.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Not Applicable
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term, duration in months</i>	Not Applicable

Law 9: Component 3		
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No data available at this point
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	The various aspects of this reform are still in the drafting stage.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially

Law 9: Component 4		
(13)	Policy Area	Healthcare
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The government assigned the departments the task of drafting legislative proposals in the following areas: increasing the wages of health professionals, strengthening the national sanitary-epidemiological services, investment in medical research, improving the training and increasing the supply of healthcare professionals, introduction of digital technologies and online consultation in the healthcare sector, investment in the national pharmaceutical industry.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	No information, several of these proposals are still in the drafting stage.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No precise information is available at this point.
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No information
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially

Law 10		
(1)	Number of law	№ 360-VI ЗПК
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О ЗДОРОВЬЕ НАРОДА И СИСТЕМЕ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
(3)	Name of law (English)	Code of Public Health and Healthcare System
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	07 July 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	07 July 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	No
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	No
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	The work on this Code had been ongoing for several years before the onset of the pandemic. At the same time, the Code addresses some of the issues which became particularly important during the pandemic. For example, it elaborates on the powers of chief state sanitary doctors and their right to impose restrictive measures and quarantine, and empowers the Ministry of Health to determine the procedure for the provision of medical care for the period of a state of emergency.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 10: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Healthcare
(14)	Brief description of reform component	The Code strengthened the legal protection of medical workers, introduced a differentiated approach to medical errors, redefined citizen's rights in vaccination matters, outlined the preventive measures aimed to improve the nation's health, expanded the powers of chief state sanitary doctors in introducing restrictive measures and quarantines, increased salaries of health professionals, and vested the Ministry of Healthcare with the power to organize the provision of medical care during the period of a state of emergency.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	The Code is a major document regulating the various aspects of Kazakhstan's healthcare system.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	No information
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No data available yet
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No data available yet
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398

Law 10: Component 1		
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No information
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	hardly at all

Law 11		
(1)	Number of law	№ 361-VI ЗРК
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменений и дополнений в некоторые законодательные акты Республики Казахстан по вопросам здравоохранения
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on health issues
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	07 July 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	07 July 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	No
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This law introduces changes to several legislative acts, regulating the work of health professionals and the rights and responsibilities of medical personnel and patients.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 11: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Healthcare
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This law was drafted with the purpose of regulating the various aspects of healthcare provision in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The law strengthened the legal protection of medical workers and redefined the rights of health professionals and patients, etc.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Not Applicable
(17)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	Not Applicable
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Not Applicable
(21)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	Not Applicable
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable

Law 11: Component 1		
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	No information
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Click and choose an element
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	No information
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	Not Applicable

Law 12		
(1)	Number of law	283
(2)	Name of law (original language)	Об утверждении правил осуществления единовременной социальной выплаты на случай потери дохода в связи с введением ограничительных мероприятий
(3)	Name of law (English)	On approval of the rules for a one-time social payment in case of loss of income due to the introduction of restrictive measures
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law's enactment	16 July 2020
(6)	Date of law's publication	17 July 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	Yes
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This is an Order passed by the Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 12: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Social assistance
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This order outlines the eligibility criteria for receiving a cash payment to the amount of one minimum monthly wage (KZT 42,500, or EUR 84). It was paid in full in July and half of this amount in August of 2020 – to workers on unpaid leave, self-employed and informally employed.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Yes
(17)	If fix-term, duration in months	1.5 months
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	The program offered a 1.5 social payment for the period of July and half of August.
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Expansion
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Fix-term
(21)	If fix-term, duration in months	1.5 months
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	The program offers a 1.5 social payment for the period of July and half of August.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No

Law 12: Component 1		
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	If fix-term, duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	No
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 321.9 billion (equivalent to EUR 636 million), but this number is not final
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	No information
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	News report
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	More information on the cost of this program should be available by the end of the year.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	completely

Law 13		
(1)	Number of law	520
(2)	Name of law (original language)	О внесении изменений и дополнений в постановление Правительства Республики Казахстан от 31 декабря 2019 года № 1054 “Об утверждении Государственной программы жилищно-коммунального развития “Нұрлы жер” на 2020 - 2025 годы”
(3)	Name of law (English)	On amendments and additions to the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1054, dated 31 December 2019, “On approval of the State program on housing and communal development Нұрлы жер for 2020-2025”
(4)	Date of first parliamentary motion	Not Available
(5)	Date of law’s enactment	18 August 2020
(6)	Date of law’s publication	18 August 2020
(7)	Is the Covid-19 pandemic explicitly mentioned as a motivation in the law or any accompanying text?	No
(8)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for the initial parliamentary motion for this law?	Not Applicable
(9)	Was the Covid-19 pandemic a motivation for a significant revision of the legislative project after the initial parliamentary motion?	Not Applicable
(10)	Note on (7)-(9)	This is a pilot project that offers families with low but stable income an opportunity to buy an apartment.
(11)	Was this law a legislative package that contained multiple social reform components?	No
(12)	If (11) yes, how many distinct social reform components did it contain?	Not Applicable

Law 13: Component 1		
(13)	Policy Area	Housing
(14)	Brief description of reform component	This pilot program provides loans to families with low but stable income for buying an apartment. The program is preliminary, scheduled to end in 2022. The participants must be registered as being in need of housing in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Housing Relations”. If approved, families will be offered mortgage loans at 5% interest rate for a period of 20 years.
(15)	Change in coverage of existing benefits?	Expansion

Law 13: Component 1		
(16)	Duration of coverage change?	Yes
(17)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	This pilot project is scheduled to run for 24 months, with the possibility of extension.
(18)	Note on (15)-(17)	See above
(19)	Change in generosity of existing benefits?	Expansion
(20)	Duration of generosity change?	Fix-term
(21)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	24 months
(22)	Note on (19)-(21)	The project is scheduled to end in 2022.
(23)	Introduction of new benefits?	No
(24)	Duration of new benefits?	Not Applicable
(25)	<i>If fix-term</i> , duration in months	Not Applicable
(26)	Note on (23)-(25)	Not Applicable
(27)	Cuts of existing benefits?	Not Applicable
(28)	Note on (27)	Not Applicable
(29)	Estimated cost of reform in 2020 (national currency)	KZT 1.3897 trillion (equivalent to EUR 2.7 billion)
(30)	Estimated cost of reform in 2021 (national currency)	KZT 992.7 billion (equivalent to approximately EUR 2 billion)
(31)	National Currency Code (ISO 4217)	KZT 398
(32)	Source of cost estimation	Law
(33)	Note (29)-(31)	These numbers are subject to change, depending on the success of the program.
(34)	If the implementation of the reform should already have started, has the reform been implemented?	partially