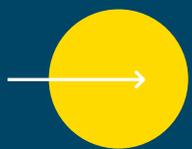


EDITION 04
Case Studies in Digital Social Protection



SIUBEN'S ROLE IN PUBLIC POLICY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



A case study on the
Unified System of Beneficiaries





Our special thanks go to SIUBEN’s former and current Executive Directors, Jefrey Lizardo and Augusto de los Santos. Their openness and support made this study possible. We would also like to thank Annalisa Staffa, Director of SIUBEN’s Socioeconomic Data Analysis Department, for her valuable technical contributions; Hamlet Durán Sánchez, Director of SIUBEN’s Planning and Development Department, for coordinating the field visit to collect information; and the interviewees for sharing their perspectives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last two decades, the Unified System of Beneficiaries (*Sistema Único de Beneficiarios*, SIUBEN) of the government of the Dominican Republic has undergone a profound transformation.

Created in 2004 in the wake of a severe economic and social crisis, the institution was initially tasked with building a database to make social program targeting more equitable and efficient. In the years since, SIUBEN has evolved from a tool used solely for allocating cash transfers to become a key platform for identifying and classifying vulnerable households. As a result, the social information system is now more dynamic, cross-cutting, and strategic than ever. This major shift tracks with the government's commitment to making social protection universal, resilient, and adaptive so systems can coordinate their prevention, preparedness, and response efforts for economic, environmental, and health shocks. If done right, this will protect household income, assets, and food security, especially in a context of growing climate vulnerability.

The SIUBEN+ Strategy has led to a radical overhaul of the system's IT architecture to create a Unified Database (*Base de Datos Única*, BDU) for all surveys carried out since 2004, meaning the data is no longer scattered across different locations. As of December 2023, this database contained information on 8.3 million people and 2.8 million households, covering 78.5% of the population found in the Universal Social Registry of Households (*Registro Social Universal de Hogares*, RSUH). In parallel, efforts are underway to develop a Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (*Registro Único de Beneficiarios*, RUB) to centralize data from different social programs. At the operational level, the government has moved away from relying on costly census sweeps to a new approach that diversifies data collection sources and methods. These include a call center, which has proven more efficient and cost-effective; self-registration through a website, mobile apps, and partner institutions; and

targeted sweeps that use AI-powered satellite maps to prioritize territories and classify unregistered households.

Interoperability with administrative records is a must to ensure that SIUBEN data stays up to date in the most efficient and sustainable way possible. With SDEE providers, PostgreSQL databases, and the Kong Enterprise platform, the system's robust IT infrastructure facilitates this data exchange. In addition, it is migrating to the X-Road ecosystem, which Dominican government entities have adopted to facilitate interoperability. This modular and scalable environment allows those designing and managing social policies to integrate data from health, education, cash transfer programs, and other relevant sources.

SIUBEN has represented a major step forward at both the technical and institutional levels. First, its database—complemented by the Quality of Life Index (*Índice de Calidad de Vida*, ICV) and the new Income Index—identifies households eligible for resource allocation with greater accuracy, reducing inclusion and exclusion errors. In addition, it has strengthened its adaptive social protection mechanisms through tools such as the Climate Shocks Vulnerability Index (*Índice de Vulnerabilidad ante Choques Climáticos*, IVACC), and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for rapid emergency response. SIUBEN data is used to both design new policies and evaluate existing programs' impact, including the impact of microsimulation exercises. SIUBEN has also boosted public access to socioeconomic data through open platforms like SIUBEN Data and interactive dashboards in Power BI, making it easier for institutions, academia, and citizens to make decisions based on evidence.

SIUBEN has also played a key role in emergencies, coordinating actions with the Emergency Operations Center (*Centro de Operaciones de*

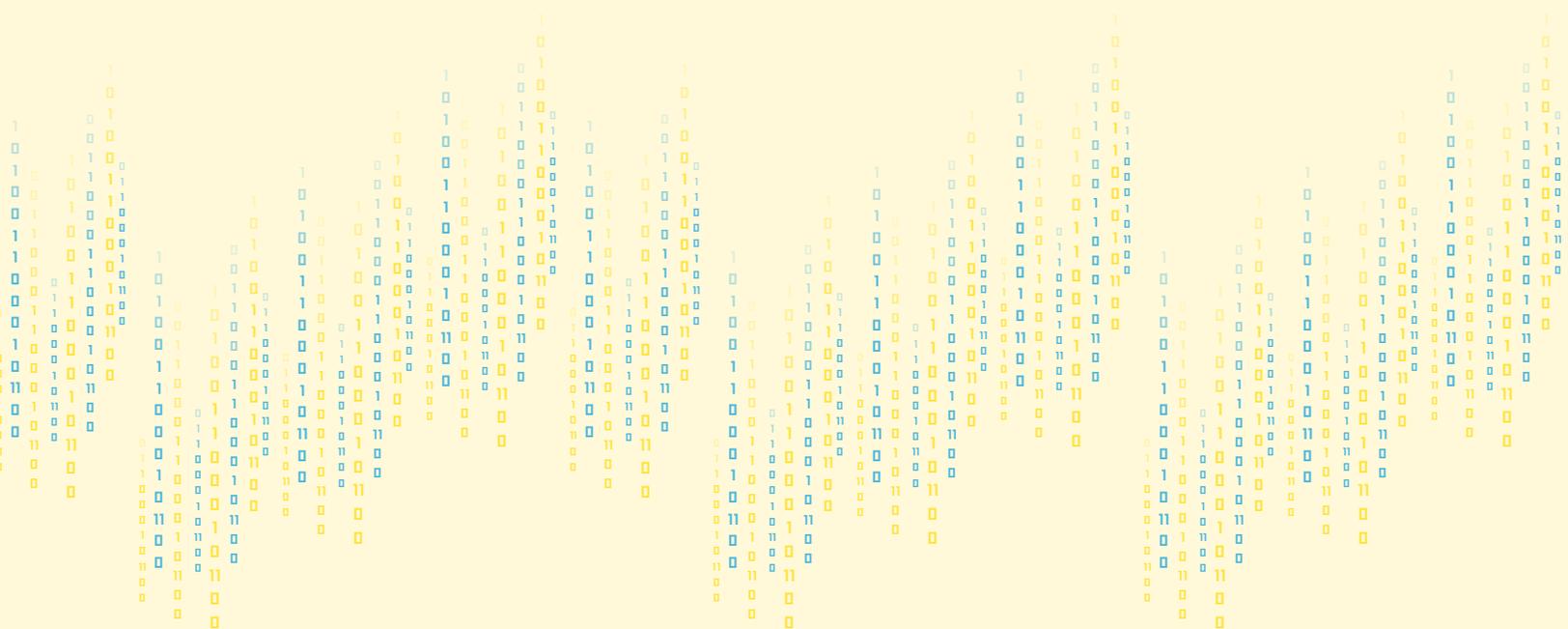
Emergencia, COE) through use of the Basic Emergency Profile (*Ficha Básica de Emergencia*, FIBE), as well as technology like drones to assess disaster impacts.

Despite these achievements, SIUBEN faces significant challenges in its mission to solidify its transformation. First, its dependence on decrees and the lack of a robust legal framework leave it vulnerable to political changes and hinder cooperation between institutions. A law defining its purview, requiring institutions to use it, and formalizing its data exchange mechanisms is urgently needed. A second challenge is improving its coverage and interoperability when institutions use different technologies and political and technical resistance can be an issue. Moreover, SIUBEN's budget largely depends on resources from multilateral projects, limiting its autonomy and underscoring the need to ensure its long-term financial sustainability with national funding. In light of SIUBEN's transfer to the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development (*Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo*, MEPyD), it is important to clarify its operational objectives,

responsibilities, and powers in this new framework. Finally, it needs to enhance its analytical and cybersecurity capabilities to anticipate risks, protect sensitive information, and use data more efficiently.

In sum, SIUBEN has moved on from its initial role as a targeting tool to become a strategic platform for making social protection smarter, more integrated, and more resilient. Its future as a pillar of the Dominican social protection system will depend on how well it can navigate institutional, operational, and financial challenges so it can continue leveraging its technical expertise, robust database, and technological innovations to make people's lives better.

This case study documents SIUBEN's institutional, operational, and technological evolution. Using relevant documents and interviews with key stakeholders (see [table of interviewees](#)), we analyze factors that contributed to its success, implementation challenges and institutional solutions for overcoming them, and lessons learned for making social policy more cohesive, adaptive, and inclusive.



INTERVIEWEES FOR THE CASE STUDY

Name	Title
Alejandro Noriega Campero	Co-Founder and Director, PROSPERiA
Antonio Morillo	Administrator, SIUBEN (helped create its indexes)
Ángel Serafín Cuello	Sector Coordinator, Office of Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy Analysis (Dirección de Análisis de Pobreza, Desigualdad y Cultura Democrática)
Annalisa Staffa	Director of Socioeconomic Data Analysis, SIUBEN
Augusto de los Santos Almánzar	Director, SIUBEN (2024–)
Jefrey Lizardo	Director, SIUBEN (2020–2024)
Edgar Santana	Head of Social Protection, CONADIS
Hamlet Durán	Head of Planning and Development, SIUBEN
Maureen Tejeda	Operations Liaison, Advance (<i>Supérate</i>) program
Pedro Alcántara	Director of Old Age, Disability and Survivors Insurance Policies, National Social Security Council (Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Social)
Raymer Díaz	Sector Coordinator, Office of Economic and Social Analysis (Viceministerio de Análisis Económico y Social)
Raymundo Rodríguez	Head of Planning and Development, Advance program
Sócrates Barinas	Senior Economist, UNDP in the Dominican Republic (participated in the early days of SIUBEN)
Tirsis Quezada	Consultant, SIUBEN and SIUBEN+ Strategy leader
Wilfredo Soto	Director of Information Technology, SIUBEN

INTRODUCTION



In the early 2000s, a severe economic and social crisis in the Dominican Republic caused its currency to devalue, its banking system to collapse, and poverty levels to rise significantly. As part of its response, the government created the Unified System of Beneficiaries (*Sistema Único de Beneficiarios, SIUBEN*). In August 2004, the government issued Decree 1073-04, declaring that the country would benefit from a system for identifying households eligible to receive subsidies and social benefits, at a time when social assistance was highly fragmented, politicized, and devoid of technical criteria.

The government tasked the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (*Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia*), the National Statistics Office (*Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas*), and the Social Policy Coordination Office (*Gabinete de Coordinación de la Política Social*) with designing the new system. Specifically, SIUBEN was to serve as a tool for targeting social programs, part of a broader institutional reform to make public spending more efficient and transparent. In its reform efforts, the government also separated the activities of beneficiary identification (now assigned to SIUBEN), program management (the Solidarity program), and payments (ADESS).

Since that time, SIUBEN has evolved significantly. It began with the First Socioeconomic Household Survey (*Primer Estudio Socioeconómico de Hogares, ESH-2004*), which the government subsequently used to build the Eligible Households Registry (*Padrón de Hogares Elegibles*) based on Quality of Life Index (*Índice de Calidad de Vida, ICV*) scores and implement flagship programs such as Solidarity (*Solidaridad*). The government also leaned on this

data to target its Bonogas-Households and Bonoluz programs when reforming LPG and electricity subsidies, which yielded significant savings.

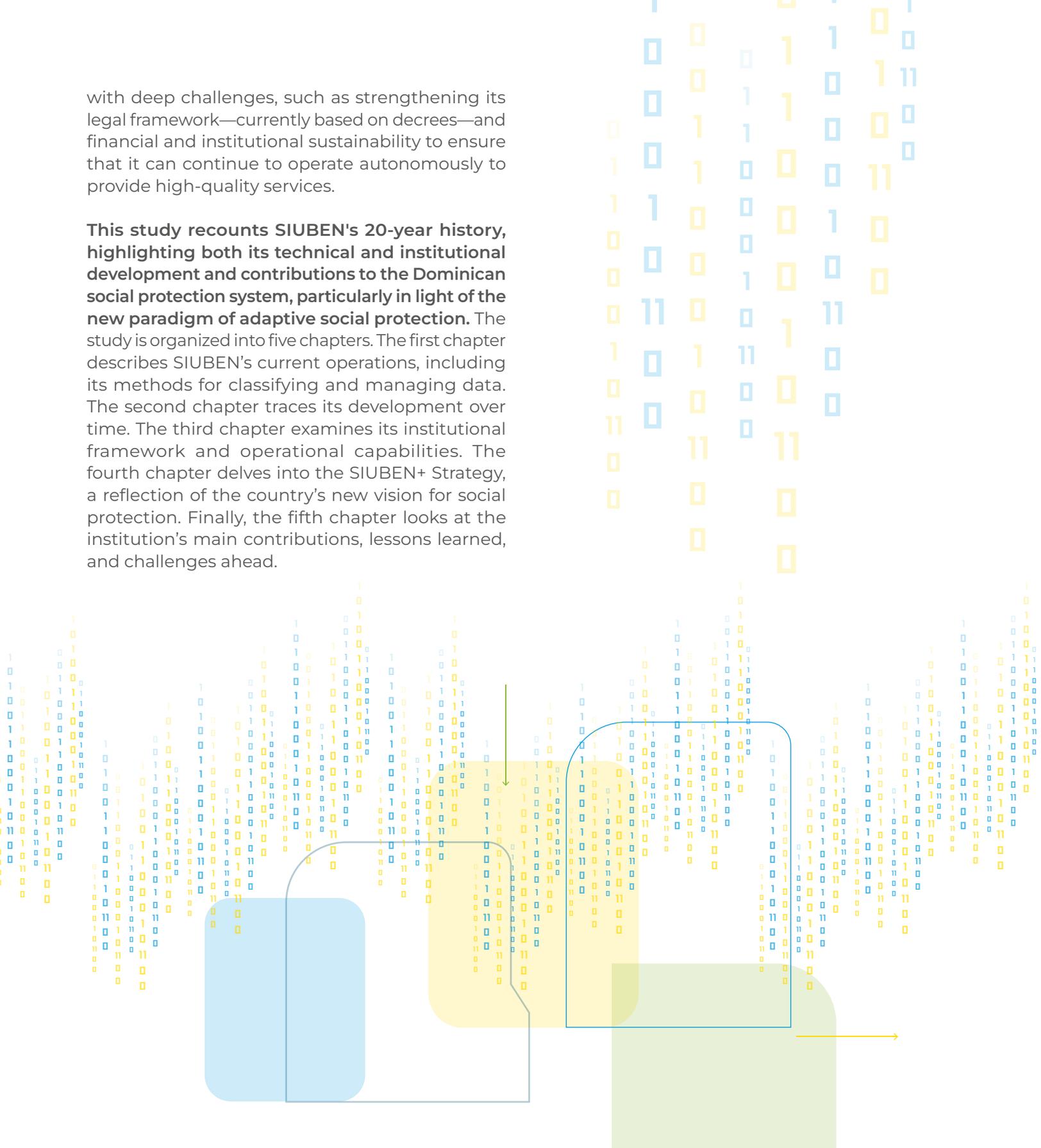
SIUBEN has only strengthened its technical capabilities in recent years. Between 2011 and 2012, the institution carried out a second national survey (ESH-2012) and developed a new household classification model (SIUBEN 2) to measure poverty more precisely. It has also incorporated innovative tools such as the Climate Shocks Vulnerability Index (*Índice de Vulnerabilidad ante Choques Climáticos, IVACC*) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to manage emergencies and respond to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

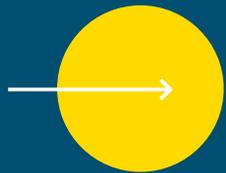
SIUBEN's transformation has also extended to how it operates as an institution. While it used to rely exclusively on census sweeps, it has since adopted more agile mechanisms for updating data such as self-registration, telephone calls, and interoperability with administrative records. This evolution has made the system more dynamic, although various technical and legal limitations still make it difficult for public institutions to exchange data effectively.

SIUBEN is currently working to position itself as a universal social registry by incorporating technologies like satellite images and artificial intelligence to identify more areas of poverty. Its recent transfer to the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development (*Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo, MEPyD*) reinforces its role as a cross-cutting platform for strategic information, poised to provide information to sectors like health, education, employment, and risk management. Despite these advances, SIUBEN still contends

with deep challenges, such as strengthening its legal framework—currently based on decrees—and financial and institutional sustainability to ensure that it can continue to operate autonomously to provide high-quality services.

This study recounts SIUBEN's 20-year history, highlighting both its technical and institutional development and contributions to the Dominican social protection system, particularly in light of the new paradigm of adaptive social protection. The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter describes SIUBEN's current operations, including its methods for classifying and managing data. The second chapter traces its development over time. The third chapter examines its institutional framework and operational capabilities. The fourth chapter delves into the SIUBEN+ Strategy, a reflection of the country's new vision for social protection. Finally, the fifth chapter looks at the institution's main contributions, lessons learned, and challenges ahead.





1. THE UNIFIED SYSTEM OF BENEFICIARIES (SIUBEN)



1. The Unified System of Beneficiaries (*Sistema Único de Beneficiarios, SIUBEN*)

SIUBEN is a **social information system** and, at the same time, a **public entity**. Initially, its main objective was to provide information for targeting and prioritizing resources for social protection programs in the Dominican Republic. It has broadened its scope over time, though, to shape public policy design, monitoring, and evaluation in a more comprehensive way.

1.1. What does SIUBEN do?

Generally speaking, SIUBEN gathers household information through different survey and data collection methods. This information is stored in a database called the **Universal Social Registry of Households (*Registro Social Universal de Hogares, RSUH*)**, which contains socioeconomic, demographic, and other information that SIUBEN uses to calculate different indexes and levels of vulnerability. It also collects data from other institutions and sources to build the **Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (*Registro Único de Beneficiarios, RUB*)**, used to determine what

payments, services, cash transfers, and other subsidies families in the country receive.

SIUBEN data is used by public and private institutions, international organizations, and universities, among others, for:

- targeting and prioritizing payment allocation, transfers, and services
- designing policies and programs
- prioritizing interventions
- monitoring and evaluating programs and public policies
- identifying risks early
- supporting response efforts to incidents affecting the population, such as accidents, natural disasters, and health and economic crises ([Figure 1](#)).

FIGURE 1.

Key elements of SIUBEN's work



Source: adapted from Resultados SIUBEN 2020–2021.

The functions legally assigned to SIUBEN can be found in Decree 426-07, which formalizes its creation, and in Decree 396-22, which transfers it from the Social Policy Coordination Office to the MEPyD. (See [Box 3](#) of Annex 1).

1.2. Where does SIUBEN's information come from?

At the beginning, SIUBEN obtained its information through census surveys or “sweeps” of households located in geographic areas identified on maps as having high concentrations of poverty. During surveys, workers helped respondents fill out a form called the Household Socioeconomic Information Questionnaire (*Cuestionario de Información Socioeconómica del Hogar*, CISEH). Over time, SIUBEN has added new ways of gathering and updating information, leveraging new information and communications technologies (ICT) in the country.

SIUBEN uses the following tools to compile the RSUH:

- 1. Data collection via sweep** in areas prioritized based on the Information Prioritization and Updating Index (*Índice de Priorización de Información y Actualización*, IPIA). The IPIA is an internal tool that helps identify—down to the neighborhood level—and prioritize areas in the Dominican Republic that SIUBEN needs to evaluate. This index is based on a number of dimensions, supporting data-driven decisions in line with national planning. In its two decades of existence, SIUBEN has conducted three major surveys of this type—in 2004, 2012, and 2018—which it called Socioeconomic Household Surveys (*Estudios Socioeconómicos de Hogares*).
- 2. Self-registration online**, for citizens to update their data through digital platforms.

3. **Registration with institutions**, allowing individuals to register with institutions that work with the most vulnerable populations and in remote locations.
4. **Data collection over the phone** through a call center.
5. **A mobile app is being developed** through the government's **Citizen File (Carpeta Ciudadana)** initiative, which will let users update their information directly without visiting an official office or agency.
6. **Interoperability with administrative records** from different public institutions to validate, complement, and update household-reported information. It is hoped that interoperability will make it possible to know and systematize the benefits households receive from different programs and institutions, their duration, and estimate of their effects. Interoperability efforts are currently underway and SIUBEN plans to begin with care network institutions, given their prioritized status in national public policy. More about this topic can be found in [Chapter 3](#).

In addition to its usual program activities, SIUBEN collects information requested by institutions for their own initiatives. This data also feeds into its RSUH database.

For this purpose, it obtains data by means of:

1. **Population-specific data surveys for specific public initiatives**, such as determining the potential demand for care in households in a given area or evaluating a housing program.

2. **Data collection after a national emergency**, using the **Basic Emergency Profile (Ficha Básica de Emergencia, FIBE)**¹ to evaluate the damages and effects of a shock (climatic, economic, accident, etc.) and determine who should be prioritized for an **Emergency Transfer (Bono de Emergencia)**.

1.3. How does SIUBEN store information?

SIUBEN databases are hosted on local SQL servers, with a backup center to ensure the data's continuity.

SIUBEN originally created a **static household registry** following each census sweep. The sweeps were supposed to be carried out every four years and cover areas prioritized on a poverty map.

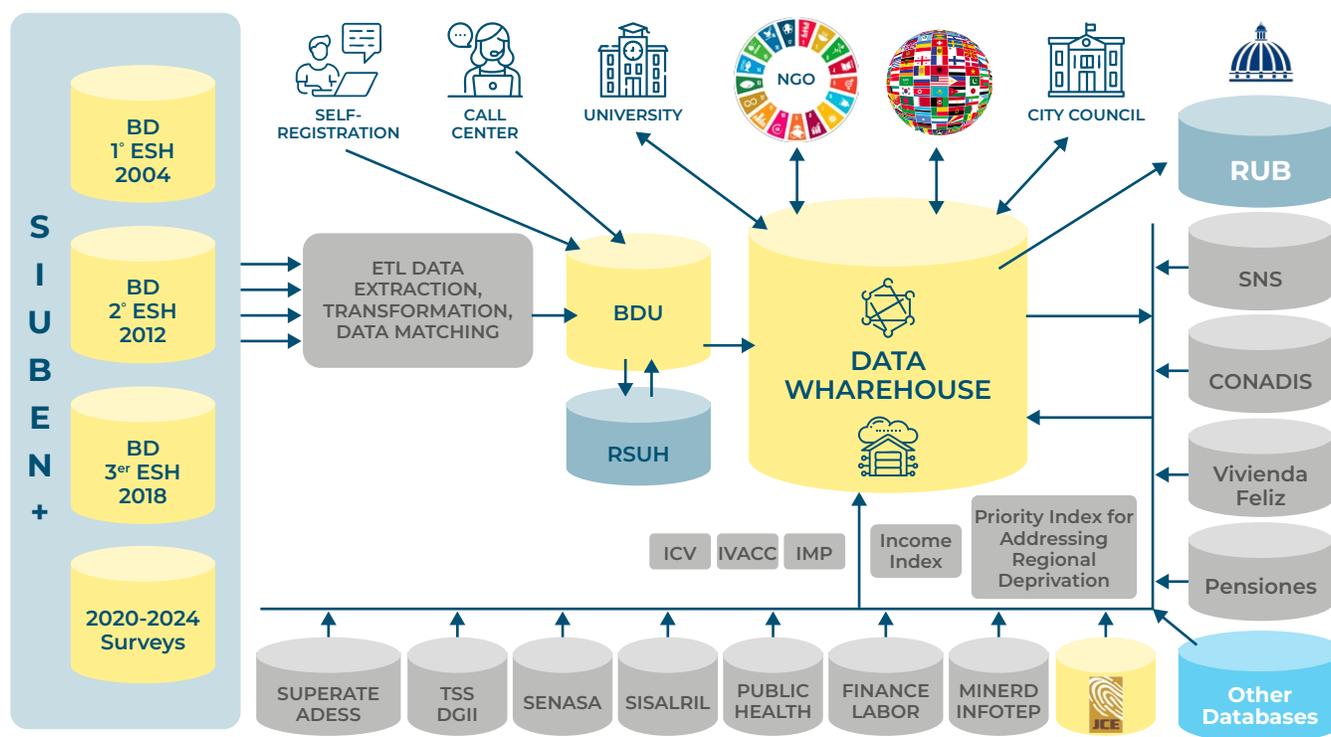
SIUBEN has since evolved to become a consolidated and dynamic database. The information from the census sweeps was consolidated through a data matching process, leading to a **Unified Database (Base de Datos Única, BDU)**. While the database is more dynamic—due to the mechanisms mentioned in section 1.3 (online self-registration, call center, etc.)—and is used for the RSUH,² the system still relies on sweeps to close coverage gaps. Given how quickly data becomes outdated, SIUBEN needs more cost-effective and powerful processes for updating information.

¹ SIUBEN first used the FIBE in October 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together with the Third Socioeconomic Household Survey (*Tercer Estudio Socioeconómico de Hogares, 3ESH*) form, the questionnaire was used to update quality of life information for La Yuca area residents following Tropical Storm Laura and the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have both used the FIBE on various occasions. Starting in 2021, WFP, FAO, and SIUBEN agreed to use it to support vulnerable populations during the pandemic. It has since been modified and used to collect information on the human impact of various shocks.

² As will be seen below, the RSUH is an expanded version of the Social Registry of Households, thanks to a unified database created to integrate all survey data. The updated database features new data collection mechanisms, such as a call center, self-registration, and interoperability with administrative records from different institutions.

FIGURE 2.

SIUBEN+ data storage model



Source: SIUBEN interoperability presentation, Office of ICT, May 2024.

In addition to the RSUH, SIUBEN has a **Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (Registro Único de Beneficiarios, RUB)**, which is currently being expanded to include all benefits received by individuals and households. This database pulls information from government institutions (Vivienda Feliz program, Supérate program, Pensiones, CONADIS, SENASA, etc.) and other organizations (Figure 2).

1.4. How does SIUBEN classify and prioritize people?

SIUBEN uses different indexes and statistical instruments to classify households by level of poverty and/or vulnerability. At first, it used only the Quality of Life Index (*Índice de Calidad de Vida*,

ICV) for this purpose, but it now uses multiple tools to help public institutions and programs classify people.

The indexes it uses are:

1. Quality of Life Index (ICV)
2. Climate Shocks Vulnerability Index (IVACC)
3. Multidimensional Poverty Index of the Dominican Republic (MPI-DR)
4. Income Index
5. Regional Deprivation Index (IPT)

Each index is described below:

Quality of Life Index (ICV)

The **ICV** has been used by SIUBEN since its founding. The ICV uses a scale of 0 to 100 to measure households' quality of life and structural poverty, with lower scores indicating a lower quality of life.

The index classifies households into one of four groups according to their socioeconomic status:

- **ICV-1 Extreme poverty**
- **ICV-2 Moderate poverty**
- **ICV-3 Middle socioeconomic status**
- **ICV-4 High socioeconomic status**

The ICV is in its fourth version, known as the SIUBEN 3 model, based on data from the National Continuous Labor Force Survey (*Encuesta Nacional Continua de la Fuerza de Trabajo*) (ENCFT-2019).³

The ICV is a **proxy means test** calculated using principal component analysis (Morillo-Pérez, n.d.). It contains information on **5 dimensions and 22 variables related to poverty:**

- 1. Dwelling materials dimension:** materials of the floor, roof, and walls; sanitation; drinking water; waste disposal.
- 2. Home comfort and conveniences dimension:** dwelling type, family structure, overcrowding, electricity, cooking fuel.
- 3. Human capital dimension:** educational attainment of head of household, average educational attainment and literacy of household members.

4. Social vulnerability dimension: family life cycle, household type, proportion of people not working or in school, and elderly people in the household.

5. Digital divide dimension: home computers, tablets, landline telephones, and cell phones.

As of the publication of this case study, the institutions and programs that use SIUBEN information to target their resources use the ICV more than any other index.

Climate Shocks Vulnerability Index (IVACC)

The IVACC is the first climate vulnerability index globally to identify households exposed to environmental risks (hurricanes, tropical storms, and floods).

Its estimates are produced using a logistic model that determines households' likely vulnerability to extreme weather events. The IVACC considers both socioeconomic and environmental factors when calculating the probability of a household being affected by climate shocks. The variables it includes are: a. the dwelling's physical structure (roof and wall materials, which indicate how solidly it is built); b. the household's income, an estimate based on the household's average working income, which indicates its ability to recover from shocks (its resilience); and c. the household's proximity to water sources such as rivers, streams, and creeks. The IVACC ranges between 0 and 1, with households closer to 0 being the least vulnerable and those closer to 1 being the most vulnerable (Lizardo et al., 2020).

The IVACC is calculated using the SIUBEN household database, which is fed by different data sources.

³ The ENCFT-2019 "is a survey conducted in a normal year and covers all the variables used in the SIUBEN 2 model, as well as income data for estimating and evaluating the household per capita income model. The advantage of the ENCFT is its continuous application since 2014, allowing for more systematic follow-up of future model updates."

The IVACC is an important tool for adaptive social protection, helping public institutions make progress on their risk management capabilities. By identifying the households most vulnerable to extreme natural events ([Box 1](#)), institutions can implement mitigation measures to reduce these households' vulnerability, help them prepare better for possible extreme weather events, and respond more quickly to disasters. The National Emergency Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Emergencias*), the Inter-Institutional Geospatial Information Team (*Equipo Interinstitucional de la Información Geoespacial*), the Civil Defense (*Defensa Civil*), international cooperation agencies, the Advance (Supérate) program, and the Social Policy Coordination Office are some of the major institutions that use the IVACC for their planning and response efforts.

Multidimensional Poverty Index of the Dominican Republic (MPI-DR)

The MPI-DR provides a way to determine household deprivation by considering more dimensions than traditional poverty measures and by incorporating decisive factors. The index covers six dimensions and 21 indicators,⁴ including health, education and care, household livelihoods, housing and environment, services (sanitation, water, fuel, electricity, waste disposal), the digital divide, and possession of identity documents (Morillo-Pérez).

The MPI-DR is calculated using the Alkire-Foster methodology (2007, 2011, and 2015) and uses information from surveys conducted in 2015 and 2019 in approximately 4,000 households (*id.*).

The poverty threshold or multidimensional poverty line ("k") indicates the percentage of deprivation that a household must have to be considered multidimensionally poor. In the Dominican MPI targeting model, "k" was determined using the weighted number of deprivations from households that perceive themselves to be lower class. Based on data from the MPI-2019 Survey, the resulting "k" is 0.36, meaning that households with at least 36% deprivation are considered multidimensionally poor (*id.*).

The MPI-DR offers an additional and complementary measure to the indexes SIUBEN calculates to classify the population. This results in a multidimensional perspective that is useful for designing public policies and interventions tailored to each household's specific deprivation level.

Income Index

The Income Index (*Índice de Ingresos*) estimates the per capita income of households so they can be ranked with an accurate monetary measure. It incorporates information on both labor and non-labor variables, and its estimation models were adjusted using data from the ENCFT-2019.

BOX 1.

Vulnerability of households and municipalities to climate shocks

Of the total population registered with SIUBEN, 1,468,132 people were identified as having a high level of vulnerability, which is 17.6% of the population (RSUH, as of January 2025). The IVACC was calculated for the Dominican Republic's 387 municipal districts, providing municipal governments with information on how vulnerable their residents are to climate shocks. Of the total, 14 have a high average vulnerability level, 226 have a medium level, and 147 have a low average IVACC.

Source: (SIUBEN and RSUH, 2025).

⁴ A weight of 1/6 is assigned to each dimension, and within each dimension, a weight of 1/6/n is used for each indicator (n = the number of indicators in the dimension).

The estimation was performed using nominal quantile regression models.

Two types of models were estimated: one for official income and one for targeting income. Official income is the well-being indicator used in the Dominican Republic to measure monetary poverty. Targeting income is used to identify households eligible for conditional cash transfer programs. This income is obtained by taking official income and subtracting per capita labor income of children under 15 years of age, income from government transfers, and the imputed value of households that do not pay rent (*id.*).

To estimate the models, variables related to housing and basic services, comfort and convenience in the home, education and human capital, social vulnerability, the digital divide, and the labor market were considered (*id.*). The model's results for 2019 show that 46.7% of the population is classified as vulnerable according to the targeting income model with occupational variables (RCNO), while 36.99% is classified as middle class.

Regional Deprivation Index (IPT)

The IPT identifies the regions and population groups with deprivations that affect their well-being and quality of life. It prioritizes those that need access to the benefits of public policies aimed at eliminating such deprivations.

The IPT is calculated based on two types of indicators:

- a. **The incidence of a specific deprivation**, which measures how many households in a region face this deprivation out of the total number of households
- b. **The relative magnitude of deprivation**, which indicates the magnitude of the problem in the region compared to deprivation at the national level

These two indicators are weighted for the IPT calculation, resulting in a value between 0 and 1. A value of 0 means no one in the region experiences that particular deprivation, while a value of 1 means all the people in the country with this deprivation live in the region being analyzed and all its inhabitants experience it (i.e., both incidence and magnitude = 1).

The IPT is useful for identifying regions and population groups in need of public policy interventions to reduce certain deprivations (Lizardo *et al.*, 2024).

Using these indexes, SIUBEN can differentiate its targeting, in collaboration with the different programs it supports, to determine which form is most effective in each case. Some programs such as Advance (and its predecessors, PROSOLI and the Solidarity Program), the Subsidized Health System (*Régimen Subsidiado de Salud*), and the Solidarity Pension Regime (*Régimen de Pensiones Solidarias*) (Decree 381-13) are required to use SIUBEN data. Other programs receive information from SIUBEN about the target population but are free to choose their own beneficiaries. Some programs seem reluctant to use the information provided by SIUBEN, which has been partially attributed to a lack of knowledge about how SIUBEN operates and its value. Other programs prefer to use their own eligibility criteria for identifying beneficiaries.

1.5. How can people access SIUBEN information?

The general public and policymakers can consult SIUBEN data through the following channels:

- **Public Access Records Office (*Oficina de Acceso a la Información Pública*):** RSUH data can be requested from this office.
- **Queries for public officials, universities, and institutions with signed agreements:** Officials requesting access to registry data can receive information within 15 days of approval.



1.6. How is SIUBEN organized and financed?

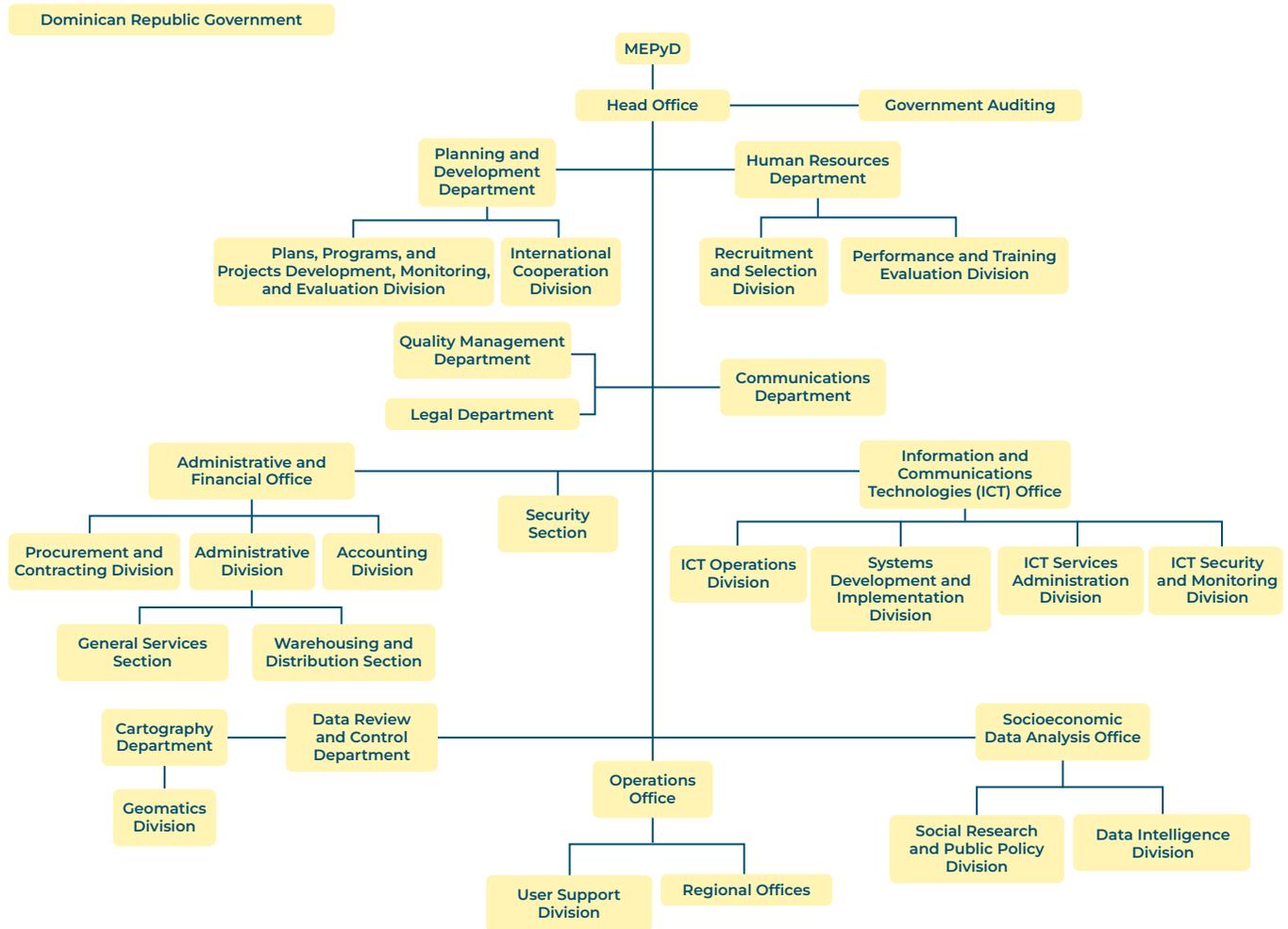
Since 2023, SIUBEN has operated as a decentralized entity under the authority of the MEPyD. According to 2025 data, it has 230 people on its staff—including its general director, appointed by decree by the president of the Dominican Republic—and 10 regional offices.

Since its creation, SIUBEN's funding has been allocated annually in the Revenue Budget and Public Expenditure Law (*Presupuesto de Ingresos y Ley de Gastos Públicos*). According to SIUBEN, between 2015 and 2024, the average budget executed with domestic funds was an estimated US\$5.3 million per year.

In addition to regular government funding, SIUBEN receives international cooperation resources for

FIGURE 3.

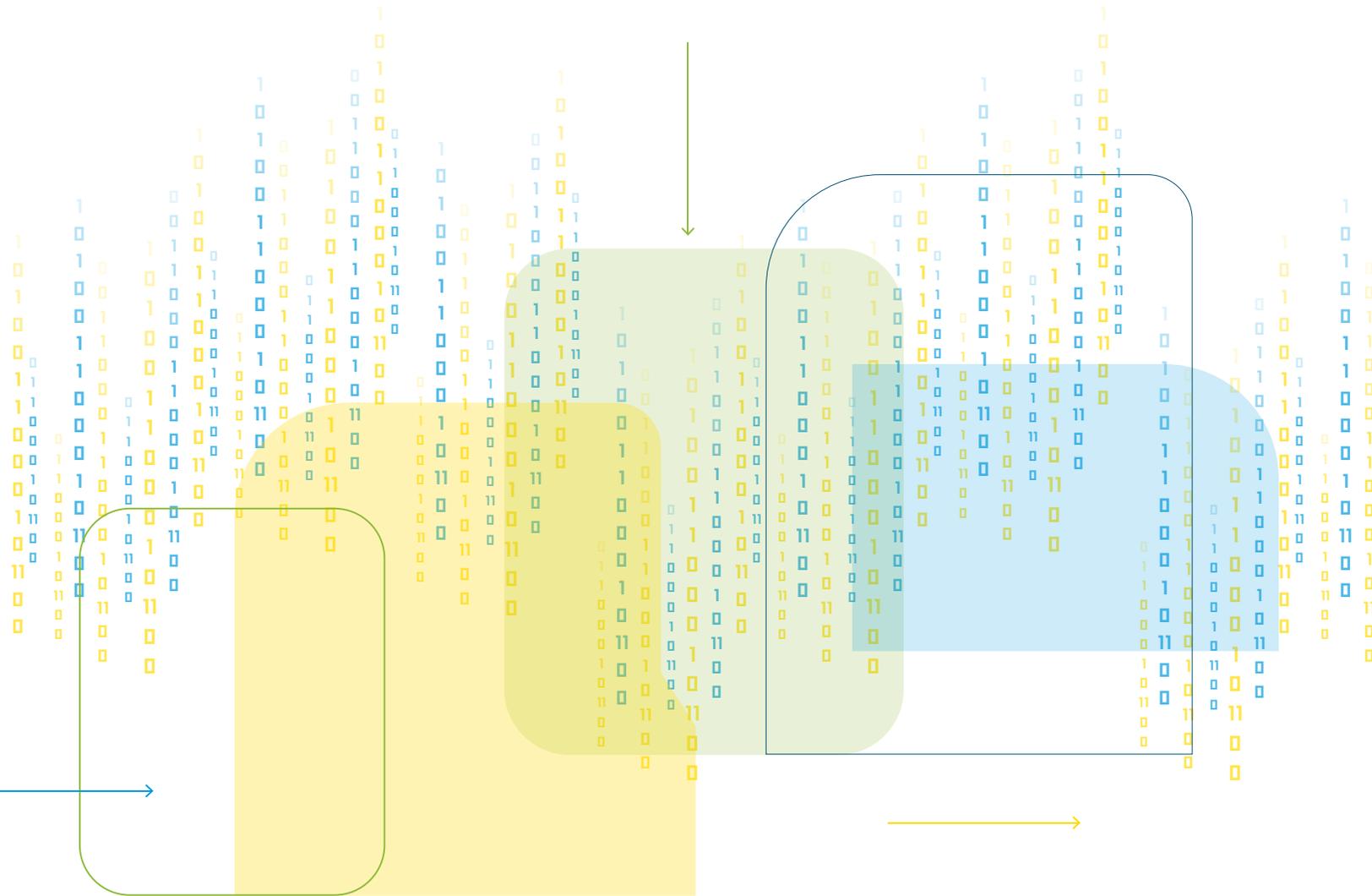
SIUBEN organizational chart

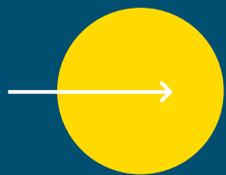


Source: SIUBEN.

specific projects. For example, between 2017 and 2018, it received approximately \$US8 million from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Bank (WB), and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to carry out the Third Socioeconomic Household Survey. The Dominican government contributed nearly US\$5 million in special funds for this study.

SIUBEN reports funds from international resources totaling US\$12.7 million between 2021 and 2025, with contributions from the IDB, WB, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Fund for Agricultural Development, and French Development Agency. **This means that 57% of SIUBEN’s funding in the last five years has come from international cooperation agencies.**





2. SIUBEN'S CREATION AND EARLY YEARS (2004–2016)



2. The creation and early years of SIUBEN (2004-2016)

This chapter traces SIUBEN's development over time, from its conception to its formation as an information system used to guide social policies in the Dominican Republic.

2.1. The inception of an information system for targeting social protection

The idea for an information system for targeting public resources aimed at combating poverty in the Dominican Republic was first mentioned in the 1995 National Social Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Social*), with the goal of setting priorities for spending on the poor. The proposal involved a two-stage targeting system: the first stage would identify the poorest regions (achieved in 1997 with the first poverty map), and the second stage would collect household data. However, a lack of resources and political priority put its implementation on hold (Morillo, 2024).

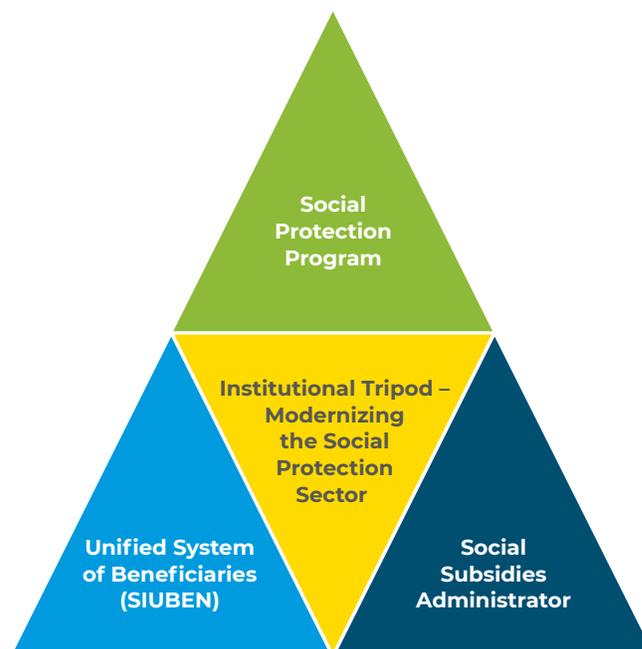
There was a renewed call to redesign the subsidy scheme following the banking and social crises of the early 2000s, which was compounded by the peso's depreciation and increased spending on energy subsidies. In response, SIUBEN was created in 2004 through Decree 1073-04 to serve as an instrument for targeting social programs and public subsidies. The government put the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, National Statistics Office, and Social Policy Coordination Office in charge of designing the new system (Presidency-DR, 2004b).

SIUBEN was eventually integrated into the government's greater reform agenda, centered

on streamlining social spending and making institutions more efficient (Presidency-DR, 2004a). Within this framework, officials recommended looking to international best practices to design the system. The innovative design they proposed would separate the activities of beneficiary identification, program management, and benefit payment, resulting in an “institutional tripod” (Barinas, 2024) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4.

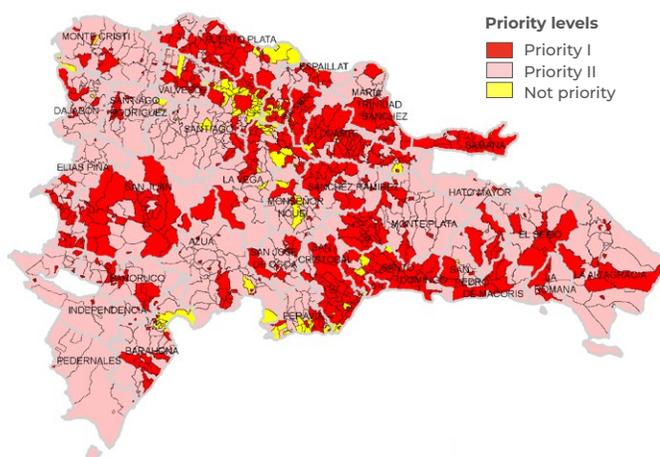
Institutional tripod of the social protection sector reform



Source: Own work.

FIGURE 6.

Dominican Republic urban areas and sections by priority level — 2004



Source: Morillo-Pérez, et al., 2005.

SIUBEN made it possible to target households by poverty level by calculating their Quality of Life Index (ICV) score.¹⁰ Households classified as extremely or moderately poor were then included in the Eligible Households Registry, which qualified them to receive cash transfers from ADESS (Barinas, 2024).

While SIUBEN organized the information needed to identify beneficiaries, ADESS implemented the mechanism for distributing subsidies through the Solidarity Card, backed by Visa and used since 2005 with local support. By the end of 2016, 216,152 cards had been distributed. To encourage their use, officials created a network of neighborhood

stores and businesses where the Solidarity Card could be used. In 2006, there were 1,233 stores in the network (IBRD, 2017).

Initially, SIUBEN supported the targeting of the Eating Comes First program, which distributed food and was later integrated into the Solidarity program (Barinas, 2024).

Gradually, new programs began to use SIUBEN data, and, in 2005, Decree 143-05 expanded its application by requiring that it be used to determine beneficiary eligibility for the Subsidized Health System.

2.3. From database to public entity

In 2007, SIUBEN was transformed into an entity under the Social Policy Coordination Office,¹¹ part of the Executive Branch (Decree 436-07). It was tasked with identifying, classifying, registering, and prioritizing families living in poverty, as well as updating the Eligible Households Registry every four years and promoting its use by public institutions (Presidency-Dominican Republic, 2007).

To fulfill its mandate, it had to conduct an informational sweep of households on the poverty map and, when needed, in other areas as well. The decree also stated that the methods for calculating the ICV and selecting beneficiaries should be evaluated every two years to assess the targeting results (Presidency-Dominican Republic, 2007). However, as seen below, this frequency proved to be unattainable, largely because of high implementation costs, and evaluations were instead performed at intervals of more than four years.

¹⁰ The first ICV was carried out with the SIUBEN 0 model in 1997 with data from the 1996 Demographic and Health Survey (*Encuesta Demografía y Salud*) (ENDESA-96), followed by an update based on the SIUBEN 1 model, which used data from ENDESA 2002 and the 2002 census. Subsequently, between 2004 and 2006, SIUBEN conducted its First Socioeconomic Household Survey (ESH-2004), which classified households using the SIUBEN 1 model.

¹¹ The institutions forming the Social Policy Coordination Office were SIUBEN, ADESS, and the Solidarity program. (SIUBEN. 2011). *Strategic Plan 2011*. Government of the Dominican Republic.

2.4. SIUBEN's usefulness during subsidy reforms

In 2008, the economic crisis provoked by soaring international oil prices prompted the government to eliminate the universal LPG subsidy and pivot to a RD\$228 monthly subsidy intended for the poorest 40% of the population. **This subsidy was known as Bonogas-Households** (*Bonogas-Hogares*). (IBRD, 2017).

The government created a separate subsidy, Bonogas-Drivers (*Bonogas-Hogares*), to help cushion the blow of the reform on drivers, whose livelihoods depended on transportation. These subsidies made for a smoother reform process and helped mitigate any negative impacts, especially for the most vulnerable groups (IBRD, 2017).

ADESS's subsidy distribution system used SIUBEN's targeting mechanisms to identify beneficiary households and drivers. After eliminating the universal subsidy, monthly spending fell by 71% during the first year post-implementation (IBRD, 2017).

In 2009, the government also eliminated universal electricity subsidies, which led to a 12% rise in consumer rates. To blunt this impact, the government created the Bonoluz subsidy for low-income households to cover the first 100 kilowatt-hours consumed each month (IBRD, 2017).

SIUBEN identified 200,000 households living in poverty in the areas where the geographically targeted program was implemented, as well as another 600,000 outside these zones. This resulted in significant economic advantages (a 45% reduction in spending) and more efficient resource allocation (IBRD, 2017).

The experiences of both **Bonogas and Bonoluz confirmed the value of SIUBEN and ADESS for targeting subsidies to the poorest families, yielding savings for the government.**

2.5. The second data survey (2011–2012)

As required in its founding decree, **between 2011 and 2012, SIUBEN carried out its second data survey, called the Second SIUBEN Socioeconomic Household Survey** (ESH-2012), to update its information on poor households. It began by preparing a new Socioeconomic Classification Profile (*Ficha de Caracterización Socioeconómica*), which led to a revised Eligible Households Registry for families living in extreme and moderate poverty. In 2012, the registry listed 642,082 households, with a total of 2,110,554 people residing in them (SIUBEN, 2012).

The previous Quality of Life Index model (SIUBEN 1) was outdated and produced inclusion and exclusion errors, so SIUBEN worked with the IDB and WB to convene a panel of experts to develop a new ICV classification model (SIUBEN 2). This new model used 2011–2012 survey data and identified poverty more accurately than the previous model (SIUBEN, 2013).

Committees of national and international experts oversaw subsequent updates to the ICV¹² and data collection forms, ensuring a high level of technical rigor in SIUBEN's work. See [Box 4](#) in Annex 2 for more on how the ICV has evolved over time.

To support the second collection of data, officials developed a new system that allowed users to upload scanned images and control the quality of new variables (SIUBEN, 2012). Data collected with personal digital assistants was integrated with data processed optically, and all households registered in the surveys between 2004 and 2011 were cross-checked (id.).

New applications were also developed to optimize feedback collection from regional logistics managers. Due to the profusion of applications at

¹² El ajuste del ICV utiliza los datos de la Encuesta Nacional Continua de Fuerza de Trabajo (ENCFT), que se calcula cada año desde 2014.

the time, in 2012, SIUBEN added web components that became the sole means of accessing the database, along with a single access portal and a comprehensive security plan. In parallel, the institution updated the workstations' operating systems and implemented tools to manage a new security system (*id.*).

2.6. Incorporating the IVACC and MPI

The Dominican Republic is highly exposed to extreme natural events.¹³ This reality led SIUBEN, with the support of the UNDP, to call for an index to measure Dominicans' vulnerability to climate shocks. Following intersectoral meetings, SIUBEN constructed the collection instruments and in 2013 conducted a pilot with 273 households affected by the flooding of Lake Enriquillo (SIUBEN, 2012, 2013). That same year, an inter-institutional group was formed to design the new model, which culminated in the Climate Shocks Vulnerability Index (*Índice de Vulnerabilidad ante Choques Climáticos, IVACC*) (SIUBEN, 2012, 2013). (See [section 1.5](#) of Chapter 1). This index has proven to be a key tool for prevention and response to extreme weather events. This could be seen in the context of Hurricane Fiona when the index helped identify the localities most likely to be affected, making it easier to target resources and collect data on the storm's human impact.

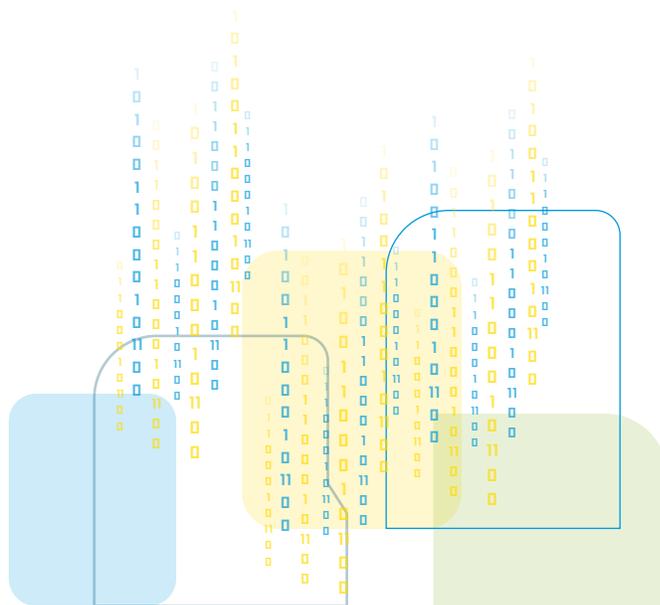
In parallel, SIUBEN partnered with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) of Oxford University to design and construct the first Multidimensional Poverty Index for the Dominican Republic, based on a pilot survey of 4,100 households (SIUBEN, 2015). The MPI complemented the ICV by providing information on deprivation and determinants of the population living in poverty and vulnerability.

During the pandemic, the MPI was useful for estimating impacts of containment measures and identifying groups at high risk of COVID-19 exposure (SIUBEN, 2020).

2.7. On-demand data collection and analysis

In its 2011–2014 Strategic Plan (Plan Estratégico), SIUBEN proposed expanding its services to other institutions—beyond conditional cash transfer programs—to help the country achieve its social policy objectives (SIUBEN, 2011). Setting this idea in motion, SIUBEN built new partnerships with public institutions and began collaborating with other social sector organizations to learn how it could meet their information needs, as shown in [Table 1](#).

SIUBEN ended up supporting a number of public programs and initiatives, earning a reputation as an ally with the ability to provide useful information for designing and targeting social policies and programs.



¹³ The Dominican Republic has been a hotspot for extreme natural events such as hurricanes, cyclones, and tropical storms and depressions, such as Hurricane Georges in 1998; Tropical Storm Odette in 2003; Hurricane Ivan in 2004; Tropical Storms Fay, Gustav, and Hanna in 2008; Hurricane Tomas in 2010; Tropical Storm Emily in 2011; Hurricane Irene in 2011; and Hurricane Isaac in 2012 (Campos, N. [September 7, 2017]. "La República Dominicana ha sido azotada por 24 fenómenos atmosféricos en 20 años." *Diario Libre*. <https://www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/medioambiente/la-republica-dominicana-ha-sido-azotada-por-24-fenomenos-atmosfericos-en-20-anos-KM8097927>. These events have had very negative impacts on the population, especially those living in poverty.

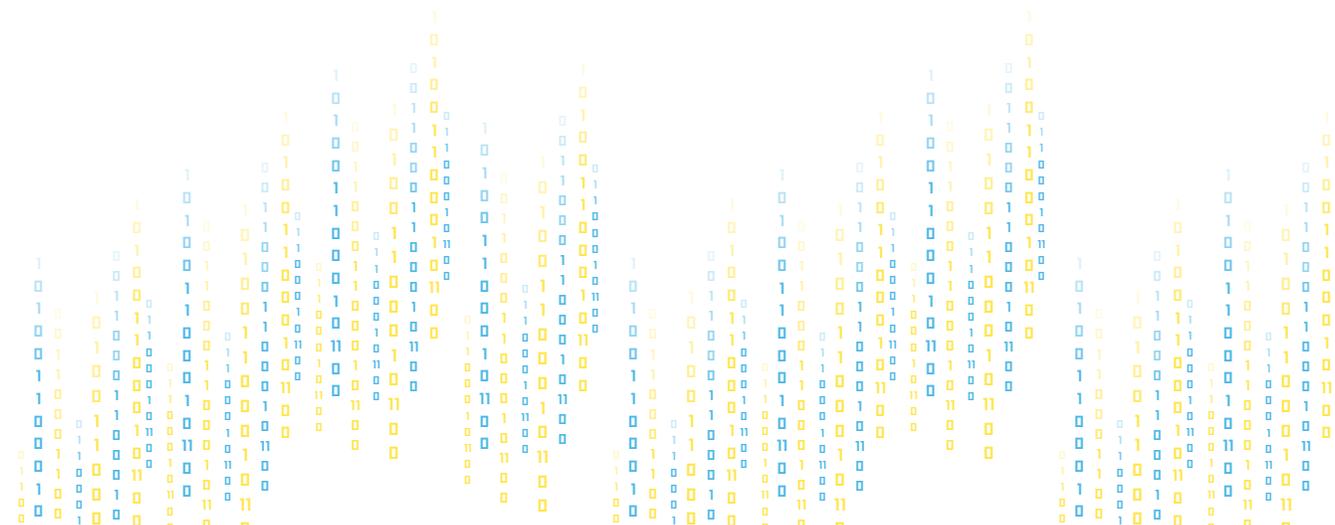


TABLE 1.

Request-based survey and information analysis support provided by SIUBEN to different programs and institutions (2013–2019)

YEAR	PROGRAM/INSTITUTION	Sisbén III
2013	ADESS	Survey of commercial establishments in the Social Supply Network (<i>Red de Abastecimiento Social</i>), which is responsible for providing services to members of the Progressing with Solidarity program (<i>Progresando con Solidaridad</i> , PROSOLI).
2013	Community Technology Centers (Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios, CTC) ¹⁴	Pilot test to geo-reference CTCs and profile their users. CTCs wanted to make it easier for remote locations to access computers and the internet.
2015	Progressing Together (Progresando Unidos) ¹⁵	Identified and located 180,000 poor families for referral to the program.
2015	National Institute of Student Welfare (<i>Instituto Nacional de Bienestar Estudiantil</i>)	Collected and processed data on families in its intervention areas for use in the Comprehensive Early Childhood Care Centers (<i>Centros de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia</i>) and Family and Child Care Centers (<i>Centros de Atención Familiar e Infantil</i>).
2016	Comprehensive Women’s Healthcare Center (<i>Centro de Atención Integral a la Mujer</i>)	Multisite data analysis to assess suitability for building Ciudad Mujer’s physical space.
2016	Permanent Commission on State Land Titling (<i>Comisión Permanente de Titulación de Terrenos del Estado</i>)	Selected households to be granted property deeds for the land where their homes are located and for defining their geographic boundaries.

Source: SIUBEN Reports 2013-2016.



¹⁴ CTCs were created to facilitate computer and internet access in remote locations.

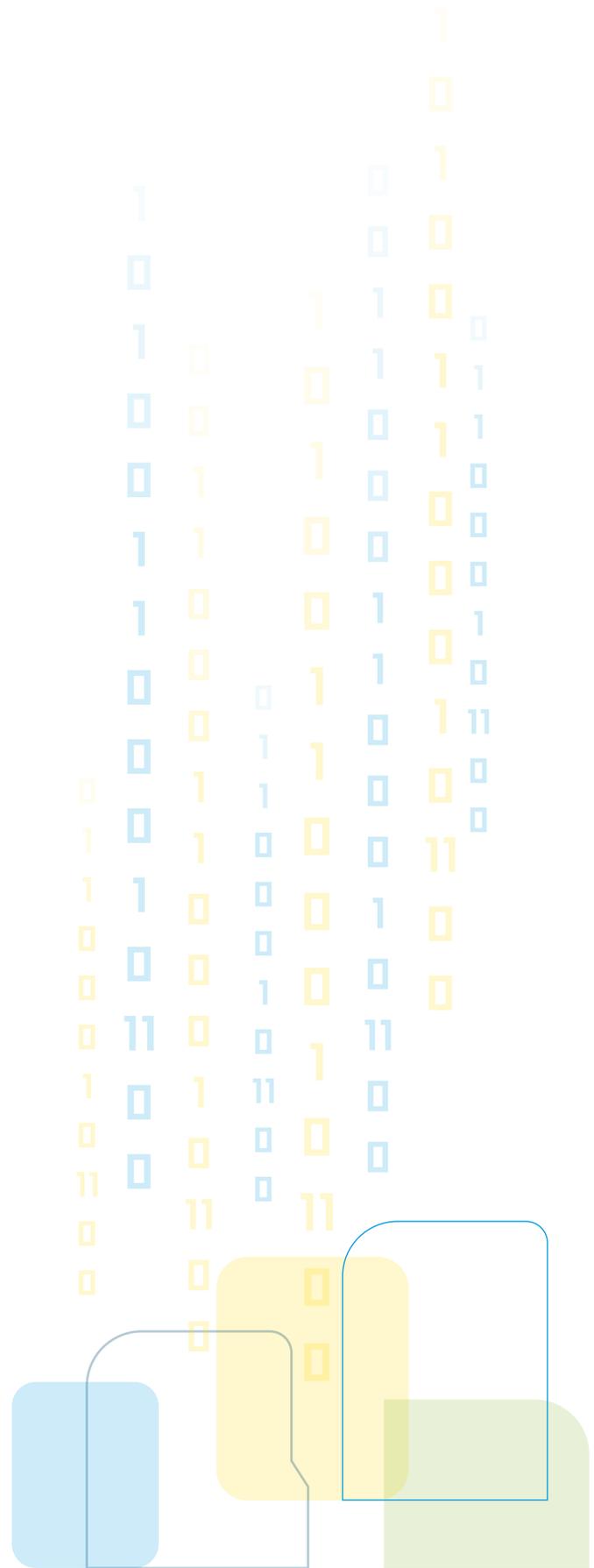
¹⁵ The Progressing Together program sought to provide families living in extreme poverty with a comprehensive package of social protection and promotion services in selected territories. These included forming human capital, improving housing conditions, and boosting employability through workforce development services and business creation. (*SIUBEN 2015 Institutional Report*).

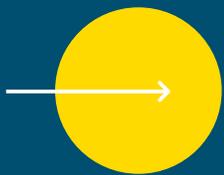
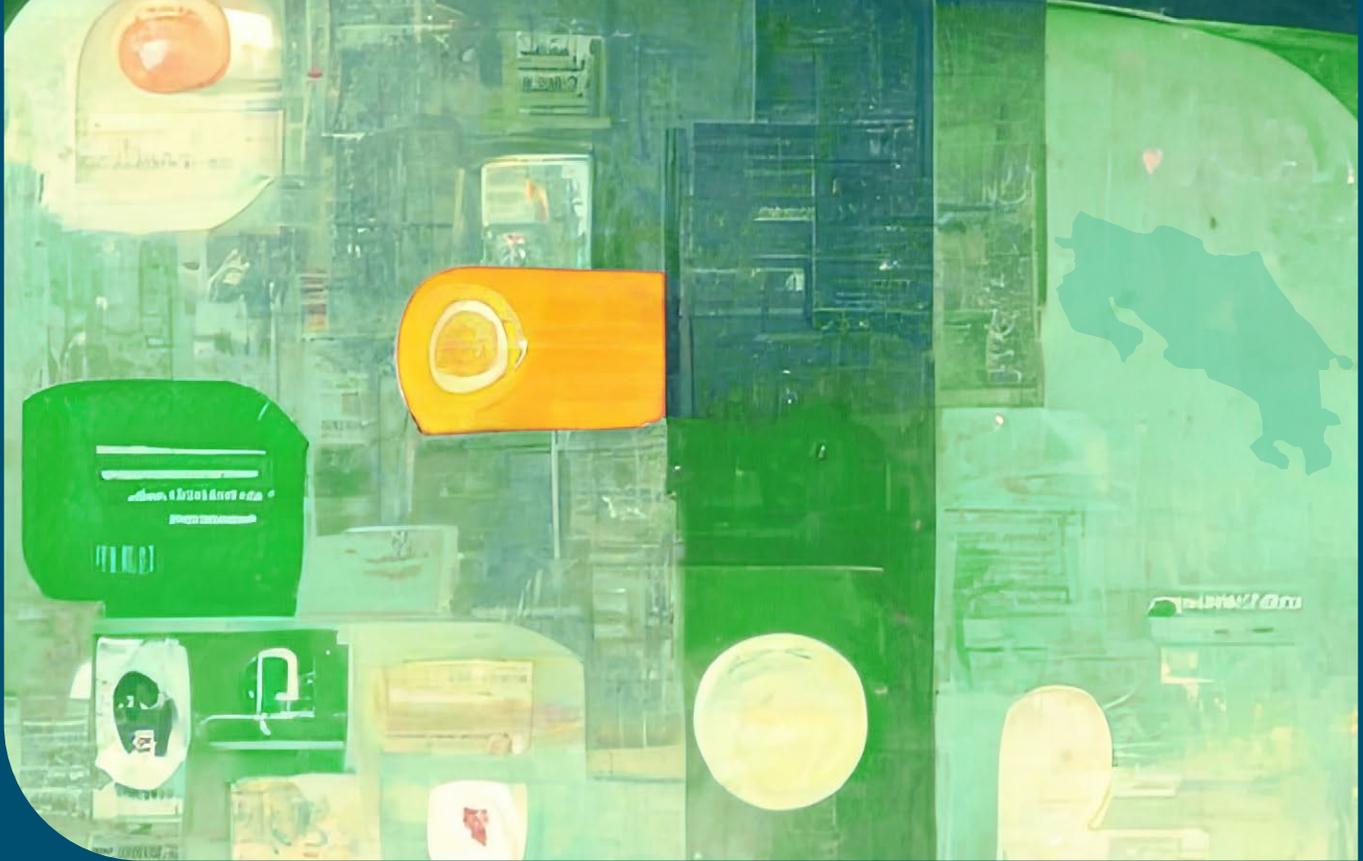
2.8. SIUBEN's path to becoming more citizen-centric

During its first decade, SIUBEN strengthened its relationship with the public through its User Support Office (*Oficina de Atención al Usuario*), which receives referrals from institutions such as SENASA, ADESS, LOTERIA NACIONAL, SISRIL, and DIDA so it can contact, evaluate, and update the socioeconomic status of unregistered households (SIUBEN, 2012).

In 2014, SIUBEN added the Solidarity Point (*Punto Solidario*) initiative, which offered one-stop shops for citizens to access services from Social Office institutions (PROSOLI, ADESS, and SIUBEN). That year, SIUBEN served a total of 154,534 people, 50% of whom were referred through Solidarity Point (SIUBEN, 2014).

As part of its communications strategy, in 2015, the entity launched the SIUBEN Close to Your Community (*SIUBEN Junto a tu Comunidad*) project and hosted 43 public forums in key areas of the country. In 2016, it presented its Citizen's Charter (*Carta Compromiso al Ciudadano*), with information on its services and how to access them (SIUBEN, 2016). SIUBEN also launched a self-service data platform to facilitate access to disaggregated socioeconomic data. More than 3,000 users have used it to date. **By opening up its services and data to the public, institutions, and relevant sectors through these initiatives, SIUBEN has enhanced its role as a source of public information.**





3. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (2017–2020)



3. Technological innovations and emergency response (2017–2020)

3.1. The third data survey and technological innovations

In 2017 and 2018, SIUBEN conducted its Third Socioeconomic Household Survey in selected geographic areas, gathering socioeconomic data on 2,096,681 households (SIUBEN, 2019).

The operation did more than just improve the system's coverage—it also integrated new technologies that transformed the surveyors' fieldwork. One innovation was mobile devices, which were used to capture geographic coordinates and take pictures of the households. Another was machine learning algorithms that automated quality control, making the information more reliable (SIUBEN, 2017).

Other innovative technologies SIUBEN incorporated during this period include the SIUBEN locator to optimize survey routes in the data collection process (SIUBEN, 2020); the data validation platform, developed with ADESS and PROSOLI,¹⁶ to streamline data transfer to third parties; an assistant app for government officials; and an open system of individual-level data to improve information accessibility (SIUBEN, 2020).

Meanwhile, the Social Gap (*Gap Social*) mobile app gave citizens a more efficient and accessible way to check the status of their processes related to Social Policy Coordination Office programs. SIUBEN's Business Intelligence System—composed of applications, infrastructure, and tools—facilitates multidimensional evolutionary analysis of the SIUBEN database, providing visualizations of

longitudinal and prospective information and simulations of disaster impact scenarios. Also on the list of innovations are expanded interoperability, a public cloud, an extranet, web services, and VPN for exchanging electronic data with other institutions (SIUBEN, 2020).

All these innovations were accompanied by quality certifications, with ISO 9001:2015 (information security), ISO 27001:2013, and various NORTIC certifications (A2, A3, A4, A5, A7, and E1) awarded by the Presidential Office of Information and Communications Technologies (*Oficina Presidencial de Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación*). As a result, SIUBEN scored 96.57 on the government's ICT Use and Digital Government Implementation Index (*Índice de Uso de las TIC e Implementación de Gobierno Digital en el Estado Dominicano*) (SIUBEN, 2019).

3.2. The Basic Emergency Profile (FIBE)

In the aftermath of Hurricane Laura in 2020, SIUBEN conducted a small data survey in the La Yuca area to update information on residents' quality of life. This survey incorporated the data collection form used in the Third Socioeconomic Household Survey (*Tercer Estudio Socioeconómico de Hogares, 3ESH*) and the Basic Emergency Profile (*Ficha Básica de Emergencia, FIBE*) used by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Survey workers used the FIBE to collect

¹⁶ SIUBEN created this platform for automating data delivery to third parties. It provides external clients with an interface for accessing certified data sets as they become available, as established through inter-institutional agreements and/or formal access requests approved by senior management. The tool aims to provide effective and rapid solutions to external clients who need specific information from SIUBEN, bypassing the need to involve an internal user. It includes an internal user management module and a query management module (SIUBEN, 2020).

information on damage to homes, appliances, livelihoods, and people (physical injuries). This data revealed the levels of vulnerability of residents, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with chronic diseases, which aided the government in responding more effectively to emergencies (SIUBEN Report 2020).

3.3. Information for designing and targeting emergency programs

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SIUBEN was responsible for providing information to various programs so they could give priority to the populations most in need of assistance. Its data also helped identify households in situations of poverty and vulnerability, according to the Quality of Life Index (ICV). ICV-1 is used for extreme poverty, and ICV-2 indicates moderate poverty. SIUBEN also began to include households with a score of ICV-3 (middle socioeconomic status) in its reports to expand eligibility for social services to more people. This was done because many households with higher socioeconomic status were seen to need support during the crisis (SIUBEN, 2020).

SIUBEN collaborated with the following programs during the pandemic:

- **Stay Home (*Quédate en Casa*) program:** This program provided a monthly stipend of \$RD5,000 (approximately USD 85) to people in vulnerable economic situations, including informal workers, heads of household over age 60, and people with health conditions such as HIV and tuberculosis. SIUBEN helped the government select beneficiaries and provided specific data on their geographic distribution and socio-demographic profiles, which helped officials design complementary social protection interventions (SIUBEN, 2020).

- **National Council on Disability (*Consejo Nacional de Discapacidad, CONADIS*):** SIUBEN worked with CONADIS on a **coverage study** to identify people with disabilities who received support from the Stay Home program and others who did not, in order to define care strategies for people not receiving benefits (SIUBEN, 2020).
- **I Study with You Financial Aid Grant (*Bono Estudio Contigo*) program:** To help college students who had dropped out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SIUBEN used the ICV to classify vulnerable students. Students then received one-time emergency financial aid grants so they could resume their studies (SIUBEN, 2020).
- **Food rations allocation and distribution system:** SIUBEN helped develop a unified registration system for allocating food rations distributed by governmental social protection institutions. Thanks to this system, officials could easily map the places in the country that received rations (SIUBEN, 2020).
- **Dominican Institute of Telecommunications (*Instituto Dominicano de las Telecomunicaciones, INDOTEL*):** Under an agreement with INDOTEL, SIUBEN shared files to create a database for the National Broadband Plan (*Plan Nacional de Banda Ancha*) and improve vulnerable populations' access to ICTs and telecommunications.¹⁷ Since the public was asked to stay at home during the pandemic, access to ICTs became crucial for allowing people to communicate, study, and, in some cases, work (SIUBEN, 2020).

¹⁷ In Decree 539-20, the president of the Dominican Republic declared high-speed internet access and ICT-driven productivity to be high national priorities. Subsequently, the government devised the National Broadband Plan and Biannual Project Plan (*Plan Bianaual de Proyectos*) and invested in expanding access to ICTs. In 2021, the State launched a national fiber optic network—its largest-ever infrastructure investment—to bring high-speed internet to areas that previously lacked access to this technology. In 2022, INDOTEL implemented connectivity projects in unserved areas to bridge access gaps. In addition, together with the Advance program, INDOTEL launched the Digital/Social Package (*Canasta Digital Social*) pilot project, which provides 2,000 female heads of household with a connectivity subsidy, a smartphone, and ICT skills training.



SIUBEN also took part in research projects and monitored and evaluated pandemic response programs, helping to assess and inform the government of these programs' impact on the public. It did so in collaboration with Oxford University's Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), analyzing different scenarios that showed possible effects of the pandemic on household deprivation and multidimensional poverty. In these analyses, researchers studied impacts on aspects like family livelihood, access to education, grade retention, health insurance, disease prevalence, and food security. Furthermore, they used the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to identify groups with increased exposure risks and vulnerability to high levels of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 (SIUBEN, 2020).

In 2020, in partnership with UNDP, SIUBEN conducted the Action Network Survey (*Encuesta Red Actúa*) (COVID-19) to measure the pandemic's impact on household well-being (SIUBEN, 2020). There were six rounds of surveys between 2020 and 2022, with results on income, health, food, social cohesion, and gender, among other data, published in an interactive data portal.

With a similar objective, SIUBEN worked with the WFP and UNICEF to update the FIBE for the pandemic. At a later point, they developed the FIBE App to assess families' socioeconomic situation in the wake of the pandemic (SIUBEN, 2020).

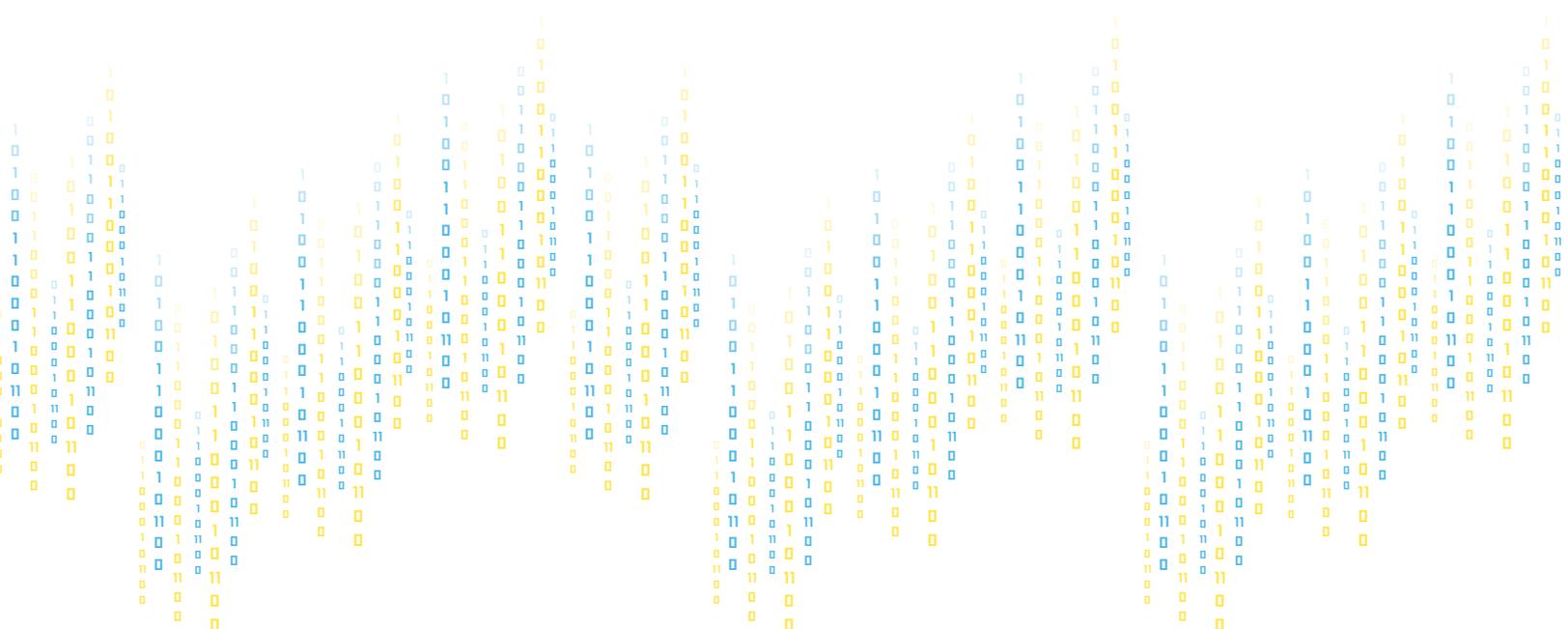
SIUBEN joined with the World Bank to estimate COVID-19's impact on monetary poverty levels

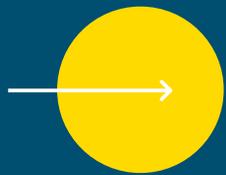
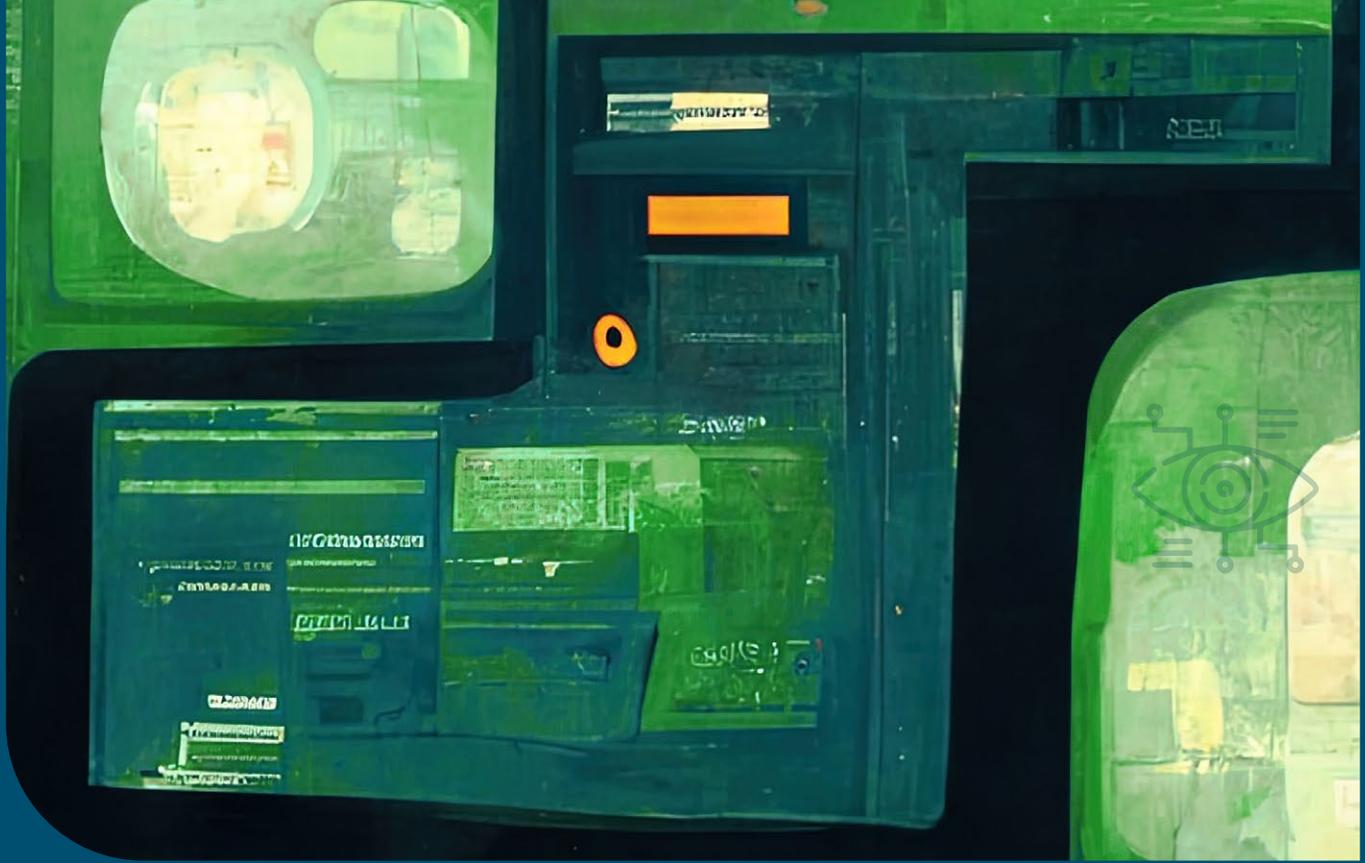
using the National Continuous Labor Force Survey (*Encuesta Nacional Continua de la Fuerza de Trabajo*, ENCFT), the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares*), and its ICV classification model. The objective was for the WB to propose sending resources to mitigate the socioeconomic crisis that emerged from the pandemic (SIUBEN, 2020).

In partnership with UNDP, SIUBEN conducted a digital survey in Andrés (Boca Chica municipality) and Batey Bienvenido (Manoguayabo sector) to quantify COVID-19's impact on health, education, and income and then evaluate pandemic response strategies (SIUBEN, 2020).

SIUBEN also collaborated with the Dominican Institute for Educational Quality Evaluation and Research (*Instituto Dominicano de Evaluación e Investigación de la Calidad Educativa*) to research and evaluate education policy from a social policy perspective. The goal of this research was to supplement the educational system's databases with demographic and socioeconomic information. With this data in hand, policymakers would be better equipped to evaluate and research how effectively education policies and services for vulnerable individuals have been designed.

In summary, SIUBEN made clear that it can meet programs' need for information—in both routine and emergency contexts—to guide the design, targeting, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs.





4. SIUBEN+, A NEW CONCEPTION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION, (2021–2024)



4. SIUBEN+ A new conception of social protection, (2021–2024)

Following the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dominican government created a commission in 2020 to review and restructure its social and protection policies and programs¹⁸ (SIUBEN, 2021b).

In 2021, the General Plan for Reforming and Modernizing the Public Administration (*Plan General para la Reforma y Modernización de la Administración Pública*) was introduced through Decree 149-21, with the aim of strengthening transparency, optimizing administrative spending, and improving public service quality. In this context, SIUBEN developed the 2021–2024 Institutional Strategic Plan (*Plan Estratégico Institucional*, PEI 2021–2024), which embraced this renewed vision for social protection and laid out the transformative role that social information systems can play.

This fresh vision reflects a global shift away from welfarist policies and toward universal, resilient, and adaptive social protection systems. Such systems should coordinate contributory and non-contributory programs to protect the entire population from economic, environmental, and health shocks. Drawing lessons from the pandemic—when many sectors needed government support—this vision integrates an adaptive social protection approach: developing capacities to prevent, prepare for, and respond in a coordinated manner to crises, protecting household incomes, assets, and food security in the process. The increased frequency of extreme weather events linked to climate change makes this vision all the more important. This reality calls for a system that guarantees minimum income; promotes high-quality employment; and combines social assistance, social security, and care policies (SIUBEN, 2021b).

4.1. Institutional Repositioning for SIUBEN

The need for a more robust and far-reaching information system led officials to rethink SIUBEN's positioning within the Social Policy Coordination Office, whose approach has been key to synchronizing the country's targeted social protection programs. In order to maximize its usefulness to a broader spectrum of social policy, in January 2023 SIUBEN was transferred to the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (*Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo*, MEPyD) via Decree 396-22. This repositioning underscores its role as a cross-cutting technical platform, furthering its capacity to generate strategic information for multiple sectors like health, education, employment, and emergency management.

However, some uncertainty remains regarding the operational and functional ramifications of this re-assignment. The decree—which is still pending approval by both houses of Congress—establishes the new MEPyD structure but only implicitly refers to SIUBEN's functions, without specifying any mechanisms or regulatory instruments for implementing it. In light of this situation, SIUBEN's mandate within the new institutional architecture urgently needs to be defined and formalized to ensure that its strategic function and operating capacity are aligned (De los Santos, 2025).

¹⁸ This commission was made up of the government ministers of Public Administration; the Presidency; and Economy, Planning, and Development; the Legal Advisor to the Executive Branch; the Coordinator of the Social Policies Office (who also coordinated the Commission); the Director of the Social Assistance Plan of the Presidency, the Director of PROSOLI; and the General Director for Budget.

4.2. The need for SIUBEN+

SIUBEN+ was created to align SIUBEN's activities with the new vision of the PEI 2021–2024, and it shows the social information system's technical evolution in the Dominican Republic. It also incorporates the World Bank's recommendations under the new paradigm for social protection. These recommendations call for the country to develop a multidimensional targeting system to identify beneficiaries, transform SIUBEN into a social system that integrates contributory and non-contributory benefits, strengthen administrative records to improve interoperability, and establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system (SIUBEN, 2021b).

SIUBEN+ addresses the need for a universal, interoperable system that brings together data on both contributory and non-contributory benefits, develops a multidimensional targeting model to capture various dimensions of vulnerability, and allows for early risk identification. The SIUBEN+ Strategy also seeks to make administrative records more interoperable and implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, unlocking key information for making decisions, improving programs, and making the sector more resilient to future shocks.

The data it produces is also valuable input for programming and managing international cooperation resources. It can guide the design of consulting services, the acquisition of equipment, and the development of interoperability, self-registration, and self-reporting tools, as well as strengthen national alliances to accelerate the implementation of SIUBEN+ strategy (SIUBEN, 2021b).

In sum, **SIUBEN+ envisions a universal, interoperable, and flexible system that provides information for anticipating risks and strengthening programs' resilience to shocks**, contributing to more informed and effective decisions.

4.3. The SIUBEN+ Strategy

To forge ahead with SIUBEN's transformation—prompted by the new vision for social protection—in 2022, SIUBEN's Head Office issued Resolution 003/2022, which **states that creating the Social Information System (*Sistema de Información Social, SIS*) is an institutional priority**. This system is intended to provide technical support for the State's social investment decisions, facilitating different programs' beneficiary selection and prioritization processes (Lizardo, 2022).

SIS's initial phase includes creating the Universal Social Registry of Households (*Registro Social Universal de Hogares, RSUH*), which expands the existing Social Registry of Households and strengthens the Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (*Registro Único de Beneficiarios, RUB*) by including additional information on benefits. The SIUBEN+ Strategy is committed to outfitting the system with new technological, methodological, and conceptual architecture to improve its interoperability, analyses, and response capacity. It will also redesign its operating model, introducing New Operation (*Nueva Operativa*) to integrate ethics, a gender perspective, and data quality. This holistic approach will guide every step of the information flow, from data capture and updating, to processing, monitoring, and evaluating vulnerable populations (Quezada-Aliff, 2023).

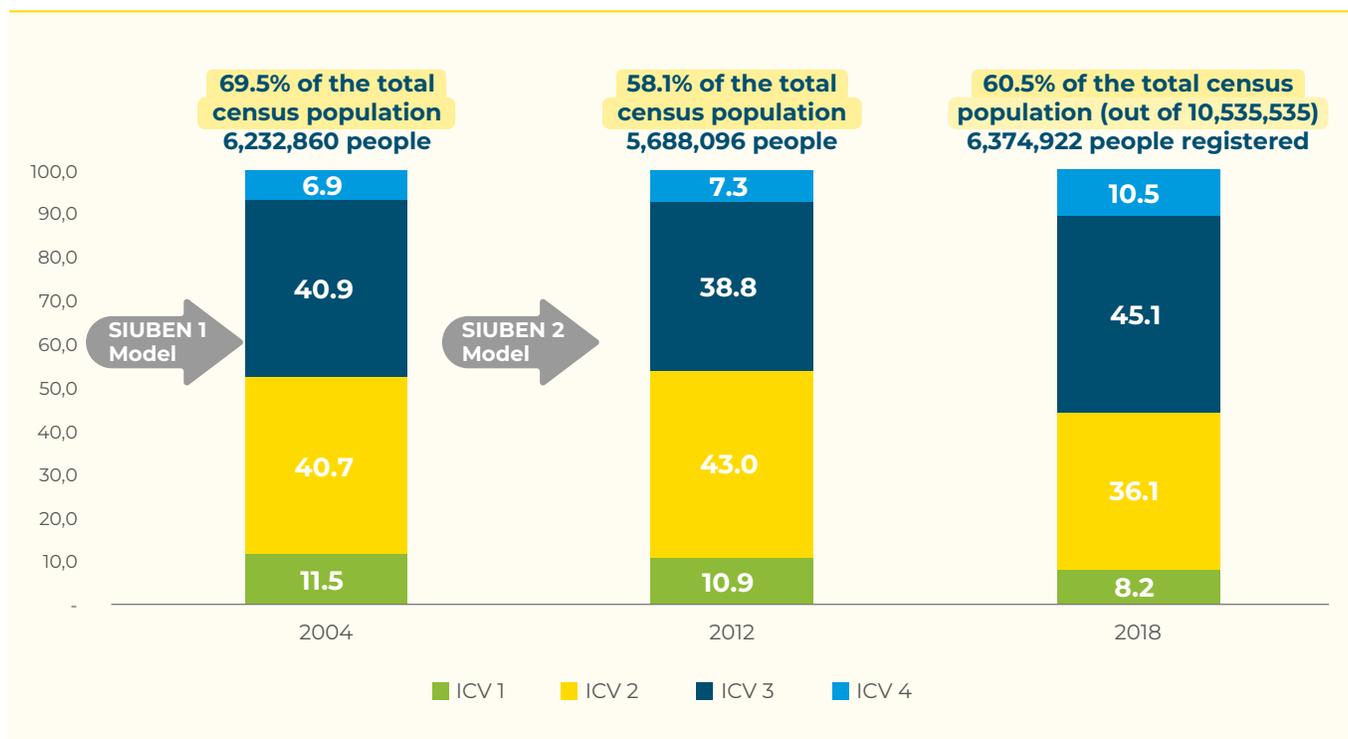
The following sections describe in detail the elements of this Strategy.

4.3.1. The new database architecture

Until 2018, data collection focused on sweeps of geographic areas with high poverty rates. This method covered 69.5% of the population in 2004, 58.1% in 2012, and 60.5% in the third sweep in 2018 ([Figure 7](#)) (Lizardo, 2023).

FIGURE 7.

Scope of the three informational sweeps and household classification by ICV score



Source: Presentation of the SIUBEN+ Strategy to universalize the social registry of households (December 4, 2023).

Prior to 2023, SIUBEN generated a database after each survey, but lacked a unified database of previous sweeps. This fragmentation long thwarted efforts to create a Universal Social Registry of Households.

Between June and November 2023, the SIUBEN team carried out an exhaustive data matching and extraction process. This allowed them to consolidate the separate databases into a Unified Database (*Base de Datos Única*, BDU) that integrated information from all the different sweeps. By December 2023, SIUBEN had merged its databases into one that included the registries from the second and third sweep surveys, in addition to new surveys carried out since 2020. This database feeds into the Universal Social Registry of Households (*Registro*

Social Universal de Hogares, RSUH) and contains 8,357,592 people and 2,870,685 households, which equates to 78.5% coverage. With these figures, SIUBEN is close to reaching its goal of 85% coverage of the nation's households in the RSUH (Source: RSUH, as of January 2025).

By December 2023, SIUBEN had also made progress on developing the Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (*Registro Único de Beneficiarios*, RUB). This registry was created by unifying the databases of the first three Socioeconomic Household Survey sweeps (consolidating data based on citizens' identity card numbers) and surveys conducted after 2020. At this time, SIUBEN was also making headway on validating data to ensure its consistency (Quezada-Aliff, 2023).

4.3.2. New update mechanisms and New Operation

Prior to the SIUBEN+ Strategy, most information updates were handled at physical locations: **Solidarity Points**. Here, citizens could request that their household information be included or updated in SIUBEN. At a later point, SIUBEN would carry out field visits to record and update this information in the Social Registry of Households. In addition, benefits programs drew up lists of potential beneficiaries who were unregistered, which also required home visits by SIUBEN to classify their households.

The SIUBEN+ Strategy transformed this process by incorporating new mechanisms for updating data. The goal was to make the updating process more dynamic and, at the same time, cut down on the high costs of home visits. As detailed in [Figure 8](#), the new mechanisms include a call center, self-registration modules, and interoperability with other public institutions' administrative databases.

Fulfilling the purpose it was created for, **New Operation** works...

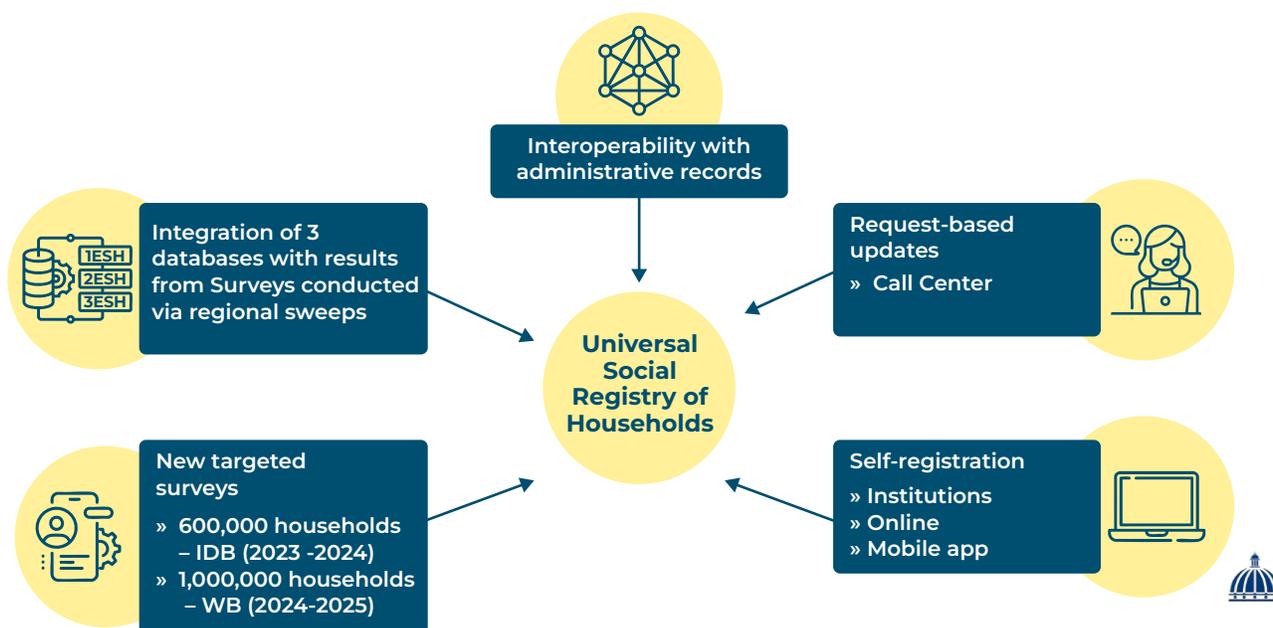
“”

...as a more agile internal pipeline for information flows. The use of new capture mechanisms ensures data verification, quality, and improved response times, enabling timely analysis and simplifying the process of generating new indexes. Its structure also allows households to be tracked over time.

(SIUBEN+ presentation, 2023).

FIGURE 8.

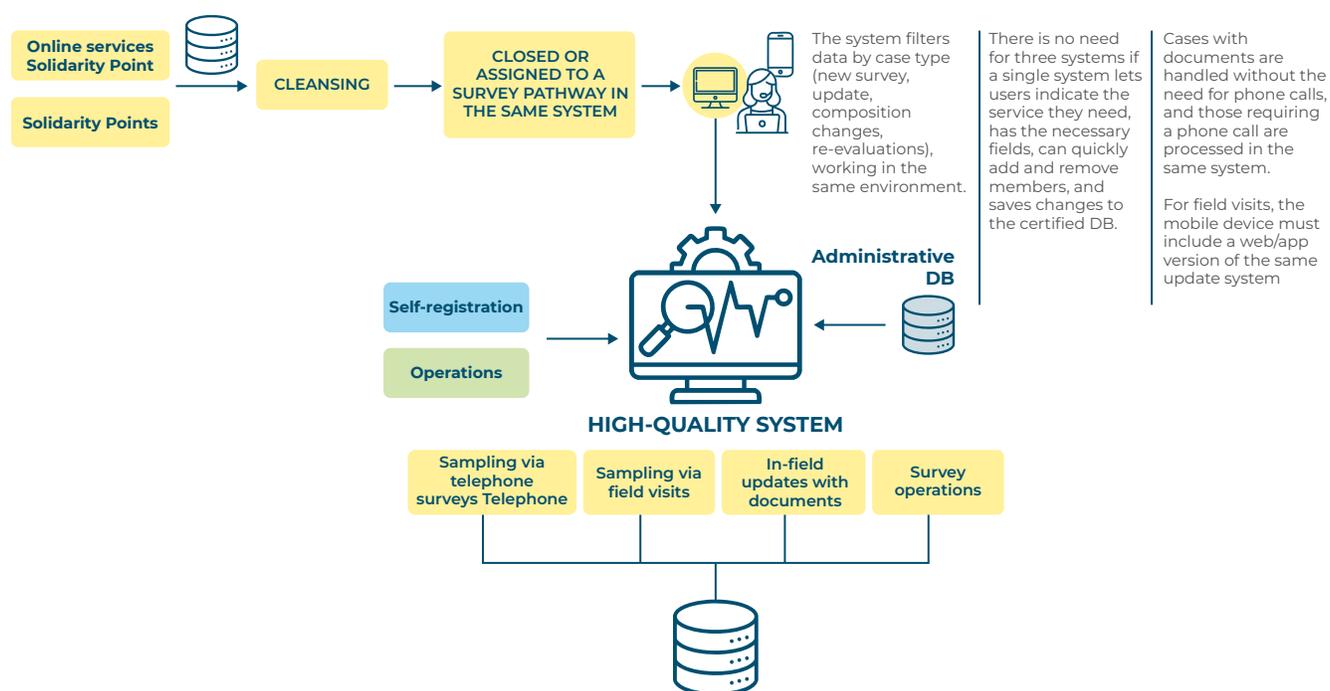
SIUBEN's 2023 data update strategy



Source: Presentation of the SIUBEN+ Strategy to universalize the social registry of households (December 4, 2023).

FIGURE 9.

New Operation diagram



Source: Institutional Report, 2022.

New Operation uses the BDU, which is fed by multiple updating mechanisms. The BDU is a longitudinal database that allows household data to be entered at different points in time. As shown in [Figure 9](#), when SIUBEN receives a request to add or update data through a Solidarity Point or online, it selects the most suitable collection method. This information is then supplemented by data from administrative databases, self-registration, and specific operational processes. Data quality is controlled through telephone surveys and home visits of sample subsets, in-field updates supported by documents, and survey operations. **These practices result in a dynamic, ever-growing database with national coverage to feed the RSUH.** At the end of each day, information is updated and the ICV for all households is automatically recalculated.

Integrating all data collection sources into a single database streamlines the review, certification, and integration processes into just one step via

the Solidarity Points system. And thanks to the New Operation initiative, updating data no longer requires fieldwork for all cases, which saves time and money.

4.3.2.1 Updating data through the Call Center

One of the mechanisms SIUBEN+ introduced for updating information was a **Call Center (Centro de Atención Telefónica, CAT)**. This strategy was piloted between March 2022 and September 2023, with 120,526 telephone surveys conducted and mostly positive results.

In the pilot, average interview times fell from 35 to 17 minutes, allowing staff to go from 7 to 15 interviews daily. The method also reduced the cost per completed survey to only US\$1.75, compared to an estimated cost of US\$6 to US\$9 using traditional methods (Lizardo, 2023). Furthermore, monitoring and recording the interviews helped improve their quality.

The pilot also included quality control measures to verify data through telephone calls, field visits, and re-interviews with households selected through simple random sampling. The results showed an 86% match in responses about verifiable variables (type of dwelling; materials of the floor, roof, and walls) (*id.*).

The pilot also helped identify opportunities for improvement and key challenges:

- a. Improve the quality of telephone records**, as only 18% to 27% of results were valid.
- b. Reduce the refusal rates** (3%) in cases where the person had not requested the assessment.
- c. Validate key indicators** by using administrative data (e.g., one-person households, reported address, household composition, assets, etc.).
- d. Strengthen the accuracy and timeliness** of random field visits and telephone re-interviews.

Interestingly, this data update mechanism led to increased coverage of interviewees of high economic status compared to the traditional sweeps. Similar results were seen with people in extreme poverty, although people in moderate poverty were reached as well (see [Table 2](#)) (*id.*).

4.3.2.2 Data updating through self-registration

Another data update mechanism featured in the SIUBEN+ strategy is on-demand updating through self-registration, which can be done online, through partner institutions (such as social programs) or through a mobile app.

In 2023, SIUBEN implemented its new online data collection system for the first time, giving technical staff the ability to update the information reported by households through the Household Socioeconomic Information Questionnaire (*Cuestionario de Información Socioeconómica del Hogar*, CISEH). Forms can now be submitted remotely and from internet-connected devices. This has made processes significantly more accessible and efficient, allowing more new households to be added and enhancing ICV reassessments (SIUBEN, 2023).

TABLE 2.

ICV scores of the population, according to information from the Call Center pilot and sweeps

Quality of Life Index Group	Sweep survey			CAT pilot
	2004	2012	2018	March 2022-Sept. 2023
ICV-1 Extreme poverty	12%	11%	8%	10%
ICV-2 Moderate poverty	41%	43%	36%	20%
ICV-3 Middle socioeconomic status	41%	39%	45%	30%
ICV-4 High socioeconomic status	7%	7%	11%	40%

Source: Prepared by the authors based on information in the presentation, Challenges of new methods for collecting household information (*Desafíos en los nuevos métodos de recolección de información de los hogares*) (Lizardo 2023).

4.3.2.3 Targeted survey sweeps

SIUBEN continues to carry out sweeps, but they are now more targeted and actively search for the most vulnerable households. For example, they target areas of high vulnerability with low coverage in registries, as well as areas with recent growth. SIUBEN has begun to use new technologies to aid in this search, such as drones to capture high-quality data in affected areas and AI tools that leverage satellite imagery to prioritize areas vulnerable to climate shocks. The cost per completed survey ranges from US\$6 to US\$9 (Quezada-Aliff, 2023).

The sweep uses the CISEH questionnaire, whose contents can be seen in [Figure 10](#).

4.3.2.4 Interoperability with administrative records

SIUBEN has diversified its data capture and updating methods, taking advantage of the interoperability with administrative databases that allow it to expand coverage efficiently, sustainably, and at a low cost. The SIUBEN+ strategy promotes this interoperability with multiple objectives: to update socioeconomic profiles by using information from the health sector, with 85% of the variables of the Family Health Profile (Ficha Familiar de Salud) coinciding with SIUBEN's questionnaire; to update household data more easily by using school records; to improve digital follow-up with families receiving cash transfers, quickly identifying compliance with

FIGURE 10.

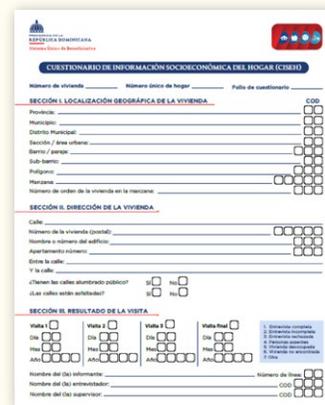
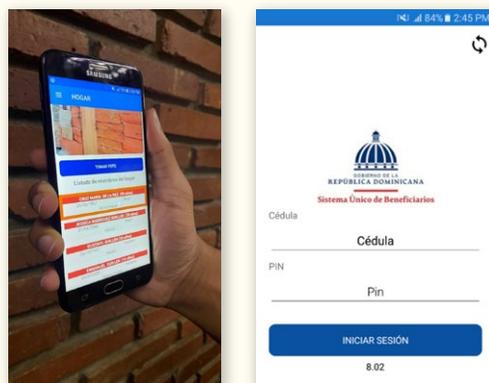
New Household Socioeconomic Information Questionnaire (CISEH), with adaptive ad-hoc sections

66 questions

- » Dwelling characteristics
- » Address and location
- » Utilities
- » Equipment
- » Environmental conditions
- » Composition and characteristics of household members
- » Health and care
- » Childcare
- » Education
- » Employment
- » Digital divide
- » Adolescent pregnancy
- » Citizen security

Ad-hoc sections

- » Current circumstances
- » Food security
- » Care needs
- » Immigration



Source: SIUBEN+ Strategy Advances (Quezada, 2023).



program rules; and to generate exclusion alerts based on tax, banking, and ownership information. (Quezada-Aliff, 2023). In 2021, SIUBEN had agreements with 10 out of 25 target institutions and was making progress on protocols, master databases, and traceability mechanisms to bolster interoperability and ensure reliable and timely information flows (SIUBEN, 2021a).

Figure 11 shows SIUBEN’s interoperability roadmap through May 2024 (Figure 11).

In 2022, the institution finalized its interoperability protocol for managing the necessary infrastructure. Figure 12 shows the current interoperability components, established in 2024.

FIGURE 11.

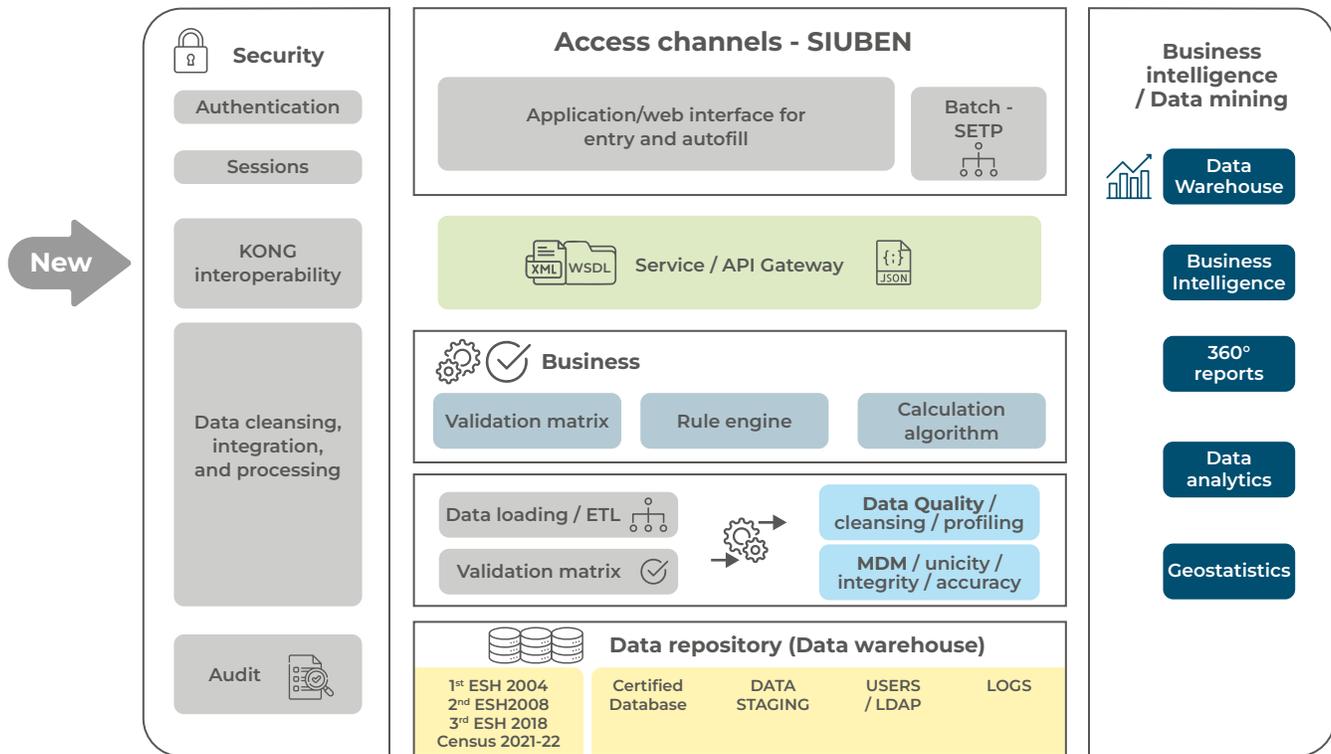
SIUBEN interoperability roadmap



Source: SIUBEN interoperability model presentation, May 2024.

FIGURE 12.

SIUBEN interoperability architecture



Source: SIUBEN interoperability model presentation, May 2024.

In 2022, SIUBEN built a testing and development platform essential for interoperability. Its robust data exchange infrastructure included SDEE providers, open source PostgreSQL databases, Kong Enterprise, and necessary libraries. In parallel, a Windows server was configured with IIS, SQL Server 2016, access policies, and a VPN, essential for environmental testing. Performing these tests validated the optimal configuration for achieving interoperability (SIUBEN, 2022).

The interoperability framework—which uses the Kong application programming interface (API) gateway service (Figure 13)—is currently being modified and routed to X-Road, the interoperability ecosystem managed by the Governmental Office of Information and Communications Technologies (*Oficina Gubernamental de Tecnología de la Información y Comunicación*, OGTIC).

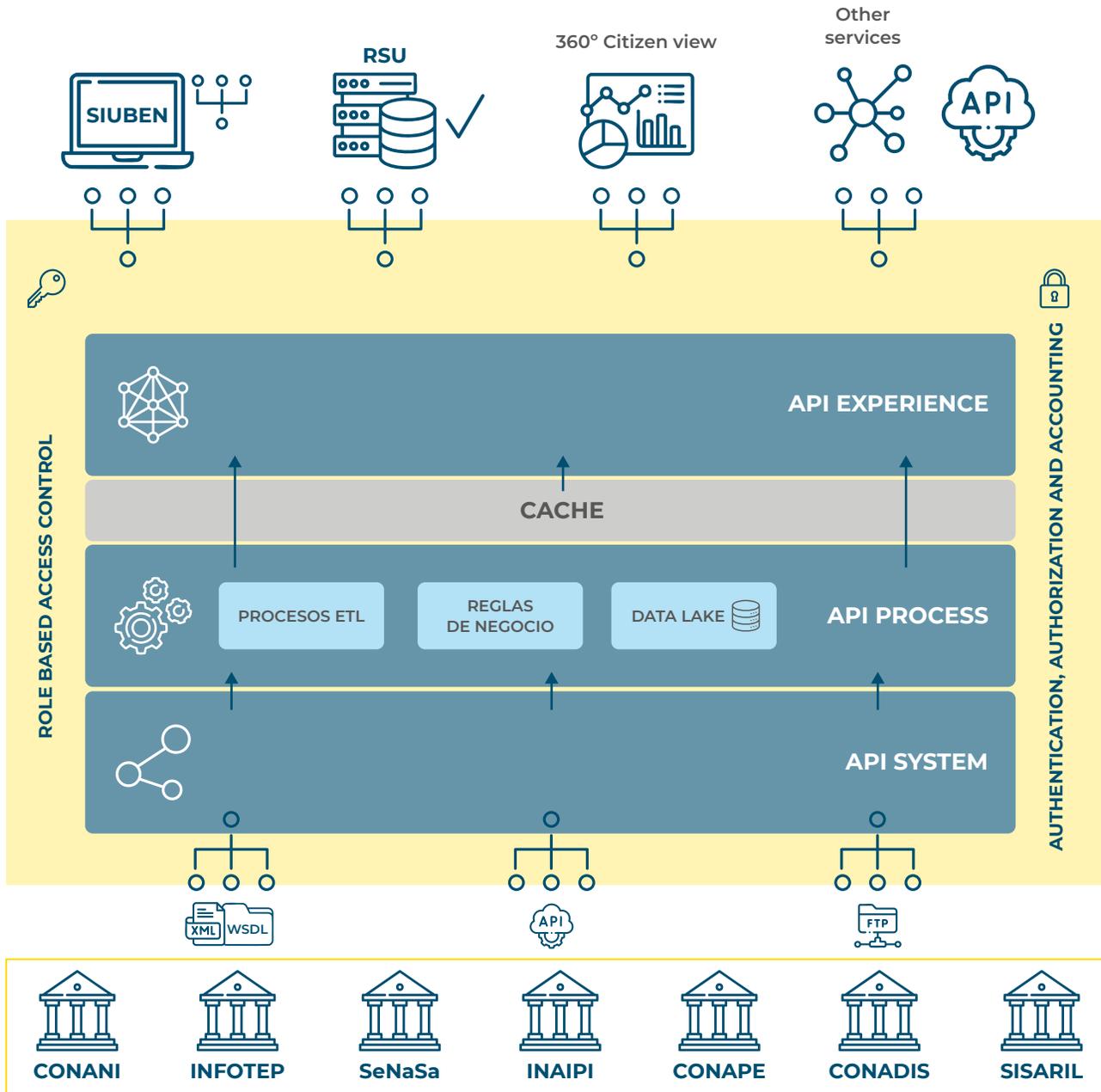
Figure 14 shows this new framework.

The interoperability framework has the following features:

- **Modular and scalable:** designed for horizontal scaling by adding more machines
- **Multi-format:** able to receive different format types (CSV, TXT, XML, REST)
- **Adaptable to any infrastructure:** can run in the cloud or in local environments (on premises)
- **Configurable:** configuration performed through the API

FIGURE 13.

Interoperability framework through the Kong API gateway service



Care circuit

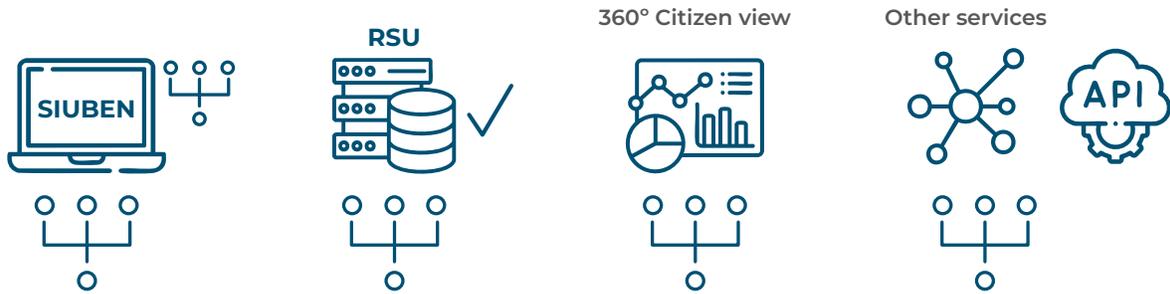
Source: SIUBEN interoperability model presentation, May 2024.

- **Integration:** microservices and APIs can be connected in a scalable, flexible way
- **Speeds up service times:** reduces latency, while adapting to the needs of monolithic architecture, microservices, multiple APIs, or Serverless

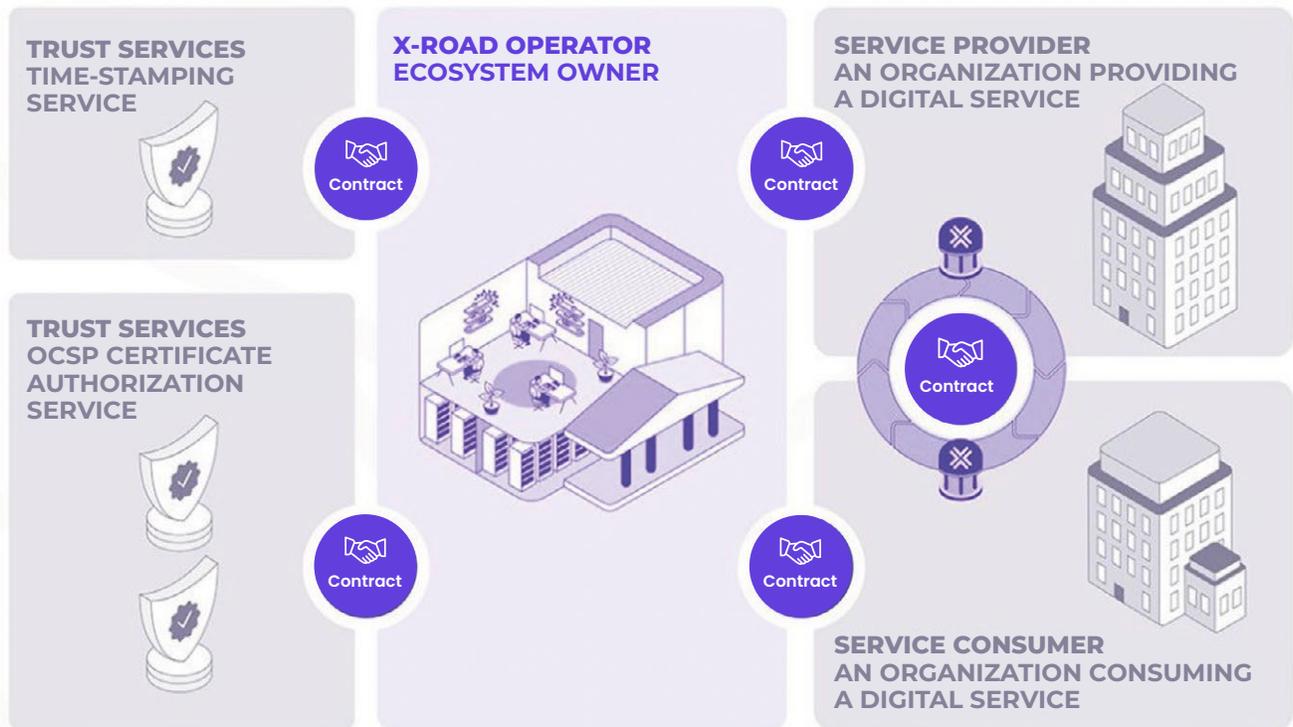


FIGURE 14.

Interoperability framework of the Dominican government



X-ROAD ECOSYSTEM



Care circuit

Source: SIUBEN interoperability model presentation, May 2024.



Given the government's interest in interoperability, SIUBEN made it a priority and began the process with the country's care circuit institutions (INFOTEP, CONAPE, INAIPI, SISALRIL, CONADIS, and SENASA). It made strides with SENASA and started the process with CONAPE. SIUBEN entered agreements and created protocols with six institutions in 2023, paving the way for interoperability (SIUBEN, 2023) (Figure 15).

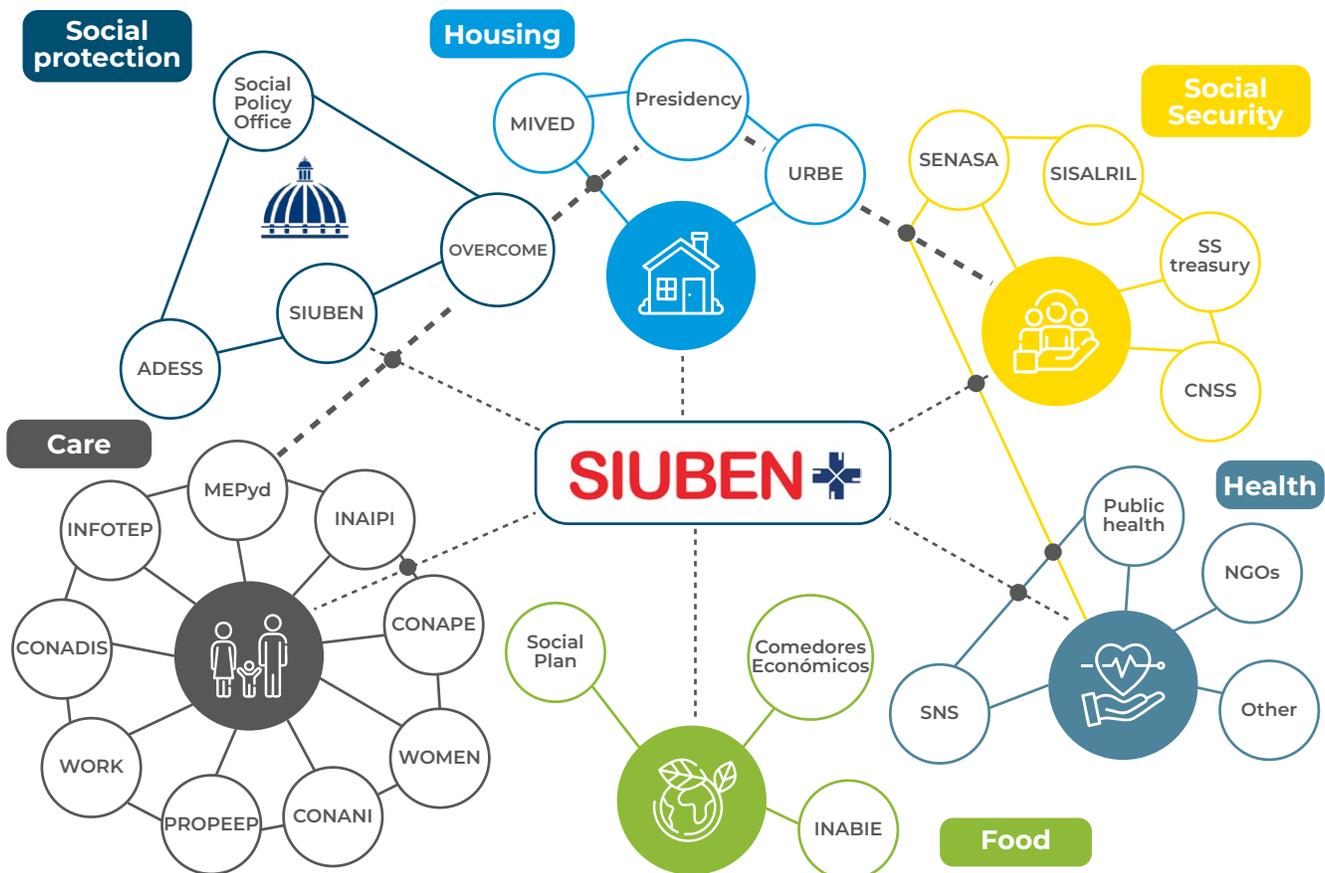
have a medium level, and two have a low level. The high-level institutions have a dictionary of variables, an agreement with SIUBEN, information systems that are interoperable with other systems, and some progress made using web services (WS)/API services. Meanwhile, institutions with a low level of maturity do not have information systems, which hinders their ability to achieve interoperability with SIUBEN's.

SIUBEN currently has 18 institutions in the diagnostic phase that are defining variables for harmonization with SIUBEN's database, having already mapped out the conditions needed for interoperability. Of the seven institutions evaluated so far, three have a high level of maturity for interoperability, two

In addition to technology barriers, some institutions showed little interest in interoperability. According to several interviewees, bureaucratic foot-dragging is seen as a major obstacle to making progress in this area.

FIGURE 15.

Interoperability plan centered on six circuits: non-contributory social protection, care, housing, food, social security, and health



Source: Siuben+ strategy.

4.3.3. Upgrading IT infrastructure

SIUBEN+ seeks to upgrade and adapt its technological infrastructure to improve data capacity, security, and backup. For its New Operation, SIUBEN was forced to redesign its communications and server infrastructure to host the new systems and databases. This new architecture runs on state-of-the-art equipment whose greater speeds and storage capacity will support SIUBEN+'s initial implementation stage. They will also make it possible to incorporate and process administrative data from other institutions (SIUBEN, 2022).

One of the remaining challenges is improving data backup and strengthening cybersecurity measures to protect systems against hacking. The main barrier to overcoming these challenges is inadequate funding (Quezada-Aliff, 2023).

4.3.4. Institutional strengthening

Institutional strengthening is a pillar of SIUBEN+, one that SIUBEN is gaining ground on by incorporating ethical and gender perspectives in data management, and through organizational review and restructuring. Its efforts to create policies promoting ethical data management and integration of a gender perspective have not gone unnoticed, and in 2023 the UNDP awarded SIUBEN its Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions with Gold distinction (Quezada-Aliff, 2023).

However, there are still structural challenges. SIUBEN's legal basis comes from decrees, making it vulnerable to political whims. Its lack of a legal framework to require institutions to use its socioeconomic classification system further weakens its coordinating role. Its recent transfer to the MEPyD comes with opportunities for strategic integration, but also uncertainty regarding its powers and instruments. SIUBEN needs Congress to delimit the scope of these powers and instruments so it can cement its role within the social protection ecosystem (De los Santos, 2025).

4.4. Updating and incorporating indexes

Beyond the SIUBEN+ measures, officials have continued refining tools for classifying population data in order to steer adaptive social protection toward a universal approach.

4.4.1. La actualización del ICV

In 2021, with the aim of updating its indexes, SIUBEN formed a technical roundtable involving national and international institutions with experience in combating poverty and promoting human development, including the Inter-American Development Bank; the World Bank; the United Nations Development Program; the World Food Programme; the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development; the Advance program; and UNICEF.

As a result of these efforts, SIUBEN updated the Quality of Life Index with data from the Third Socioeconomic Household Survey from 2012 and 2018. This fourth update (SIUBEN 2A) gave way to the ICV-SIUBEN 3 model, which incorporates variables about social vulnerability and the digital divide to better reflect households' living conditions (SIUBEN, 2021a).

4.4.2. Creating an Income Index

To improve household classification, new nominal quantile models were developed in 2022 to complement the ICV-SIUBEN 3. The goal was to identify and select households eligible for social programs, especially cash transfer programs. These models make it possible to estimate extreme monetary poverty, income stratum—vulnerable, middle class, or all others—and the Gini inequality coefficient, improving covariate adjustment and reducing inclusion and exclusion errors (SIUBEN, 2022).

SIUBEN also created its Income Index to provide more tools for calculating monetary poverty. This index seeks to better identify people who are eligible for social programs, looking at characteristics beyond structural poverty. This would allow the government to strengthen its response capacity to households affected by extreme events, such as pandemics and natural disasters (SIUBEN, 2021a).

4.4.3. Updating the IVACC

To more effectively address the effects of climate change, such as heavier rainfall and prolonged periods of drought, the IVACC got an update. SIUBEN formed a new panel of experts, who updated the index to include the effects of droughts in the model (SIUBEN, 2021a). Administrative records on disaster exposure and machine learning techniques were also integrated into the data analysis for training the model, using satellite images to improve its accuracy (SIUBEN, 2022).

4.4.4. A streamlined version of the MPI

In 2021, SIUBEN created a streamlined version of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to better identify households eligible for social programs focused on eradicating specific problems related to human welfare, in the areas of health, education, care, and housing, among others. The IPM-RD 2019 Survey was used for this version (SIUBEN, 2021a).

With all these changes, SIUBEN has strengthened its capacity to guide social policy by combining various sources of data on threats, risks, and vulnerabilities, and by using multiple indexes that offer more accurate and dynamic tools for identifying changes in the social and economic context. This has improved its ability to inform public policy and potentially build a more adaptive social protection system. That said, it has been a challenge to get some government institutions to fully recognize its value and move toward a comprehensive vision of the social information system (De los Santos, 2025).

4.5. Research and consulting

SIUBEN provides research and consulting services that strengthen the value of its data and shape public policy. It evaluates social programs such as Advance, analyzes impacts on education, and designs policies using social protection microsimulations. The institution collects data for pilot initiatives, such as the Care Policy (*Pólítica de Cuidados*), and studies issues like citizen satisfaction, child marriage, disability costs, and gender gaps in employment, integrating information with the Social Security Treasury (*Tesorería de la Seguridad Social*) to improve targeting. It also monitors the impacts of crises such as COVID-19 through surveys and seminars that promote public policy analysis. These efforts have established SIUBEN as a leader in evidence-based social policy (SIUBEN, 2021a).

4.6. SIUBEN emergency support

SIUBEN plays several roles in emergencies such as floods, hurricanes, fires, crises, and other events.

SIUBEN joined with Advance and ADESS to form the Advance Emergency Committee (*Comité de Emergencia Supérate*, CES), which is responsible for determining the feasibility, characteristics, and criteria for allocating the Emergency Transfer (*Bono de Emergencia*) in the event of natural disasters, health emergencies, economic crises, or contingencies.

After a natural disaster, the CES coordinates with the crisis room of the Emergency Operations Center (*Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia*, COE) and with the provincial and municipal disaster prevention, mitigation, and response committees, which are part of the National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation, and Response System (*Sistema Nacional de Prevención, Mitigación y Respuesta ante Desastres*). The CES can also be convened by presidential mandate in the face of an economic crisis, health emergency, or societal collapse. If the Committee determines that the event has had a strong impact on the population and warrants special support measures, Emergency Transfers are activated (see [Box 2](#)).

BOX 2.

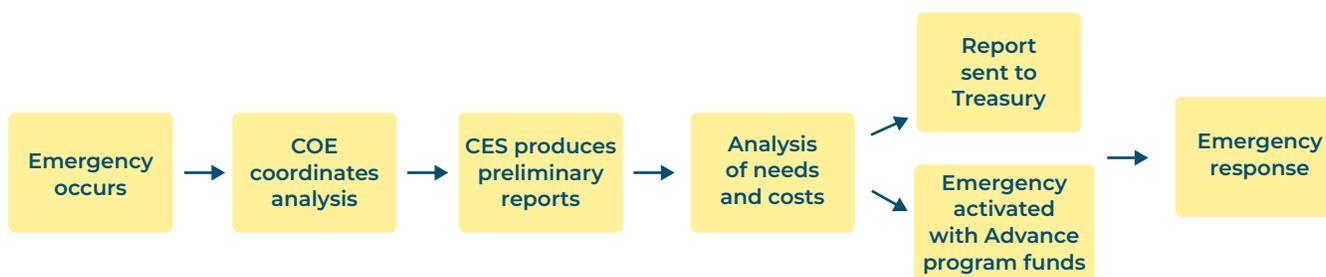
Activation of the Emergency Bonus

Sequence for activating Emergency Transfers

- 1. The CES monitors the event through the Situation Reports** issued by the COE and, based on this information, decides whether to activate the Emergency Transfer and determines its characteristics.
- 2. The CES prepares preliminary reports using various sources of information**, including SIUBEN's IVACC, the number of Advance beneficiaries, and preliminary data from the Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (*Evaluación de Daños y Análisis de Necesidades*, EDAN) of the National Emergency Commission (*Comisión Nacional de Emergencias*, CNE) and Civil Defense (*Defensa Civil*, DC). After identifying needs, the CES estimates response costs and takes preparatory actions, including gathering information through the FIBE and obtaining approval to create and distribute the payment instrument to be used for the transfers.
- 3. The source of data needed to plan and make the transfers will depend on the disaster type, the area affected, and the number of households and persons who were impacted.** The exchange of information between authorities—primarily the Integrated National Information System (*Sistema Integrado Nacional de Información*, SINI), COE, CNE/DC, and SIUBEN—is essential for coordinating the response. The main tools used for this exchange include the FIBE, IVACC, the census, data managed by SINI, and other disaster risk information systems.
- 4. Once the CES analyzes the COE information and decides to activate the Emergency Transfer, it asks the Ministry of Finance to allocate the corresponding resources** through a report with the estimated target population, targeting criteria, amount and number of payments, duration, and total cost to the state, among other details.

FIGURE 16.

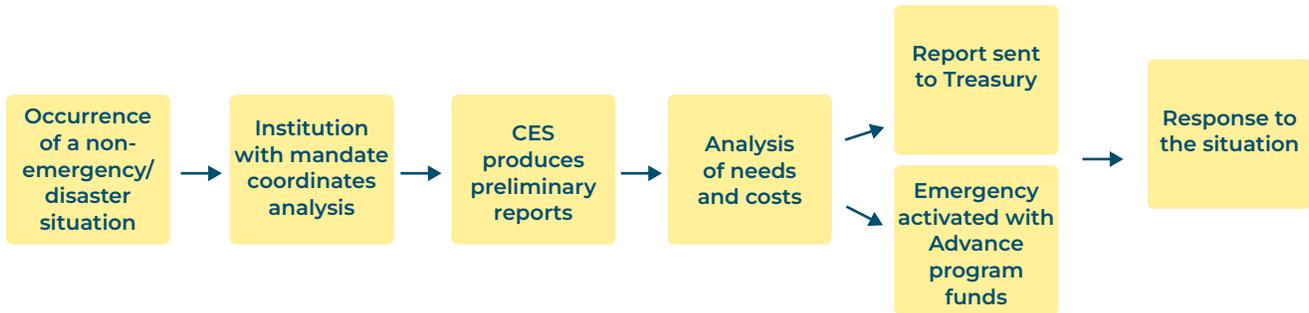
Flowchart of activation and coordination actions in emergency and disaster situations caused by natural events



Source: Emergency Transfers Technical Guide (Advance).

FIGURE 17.

Flowchart of activation actions in other types of crises



Source: Emergency Transfers Technical Guide (Advance).

When the emergency affects a large area, SIUBEN uses the IVACC to decide how to gather information on the emergency's impact on the population. The IVACC can identify areas with the highest concentration of vulnerable households, which is useful for prioritizing the areas that may have been the most affected.

Once the areas have been prioritized, SIUBEN sends out teams to collect information using the FIBE. As described previously, this profile is used to identify damage to homes, appliances, livelihoods, and persons (physical injuries). New questions added recently also measure psychological and emotional effects in order to provide people with the support they need.

After determining the extent of the impact on each family, Emergency Transfers are distributed according to the level of damage and the budget available for the emergency.

For example, FIBE was used in 2022 to assess Hurricane Fiona's impact on 42,250 households, generating information to support families in their recovery, with backing from the government, WFP, UNICEF, ADESS, and the Advance program (SIUBEN, 2022).

In addition to information collected through home visits, SIUBEN uses drones to evaluate the impact of emergencies.

For example, in 2022, after Hurricane Fiona, SIUBEN used maps from the National Statistics Office (*Oficina Nacional de Estadística*) and conducted photogrammetric flights with drones to process the images and generate orthophotos. These were then used in flood simulations (SIUBEN, 2022).

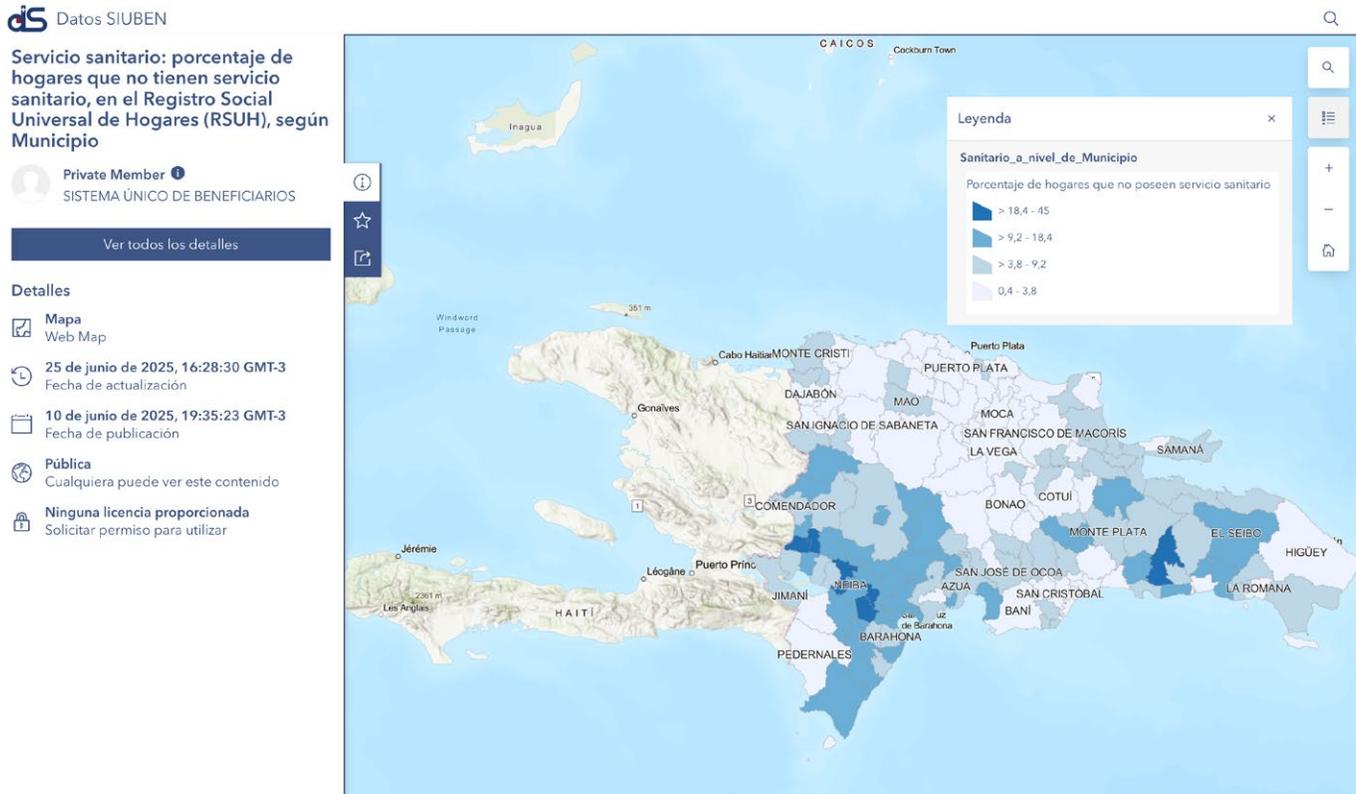
4.7. Online maps and information boards

In 2021, SIUBEN launched a Web Mapping Service (*Servicio de Mapas en Línea*) project with the support of the WFP. First, SIUBEN acquired the ArcGIS Online platform to configure interactive maps that incorporate socioeconomic information (SIUBEN, 2021a). In 2022, these maps were made available to the public through the SIUBEN Data (*Datos SIUBEN*) platform, which allows users to look up socioeconomic information by geographic area (SIUBEN, 2022). To this end, SIUBEN created a dashboard in Power BI and set up information boards on household registration and the data of those affected by Hurricane Fiona. Users can run analyses, cross-check variables, and export data (SIUBEN, 2022).

The IVACC was later used to develop an interactive map accessible to both the general public and emergency response agencies (Figure 18) (SIUBEN, 2020).

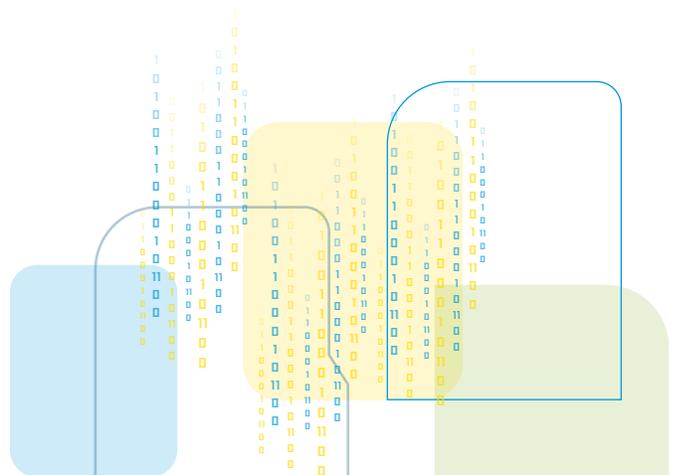
FIGURE 18.

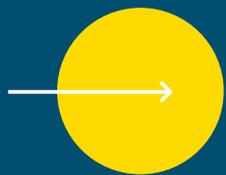
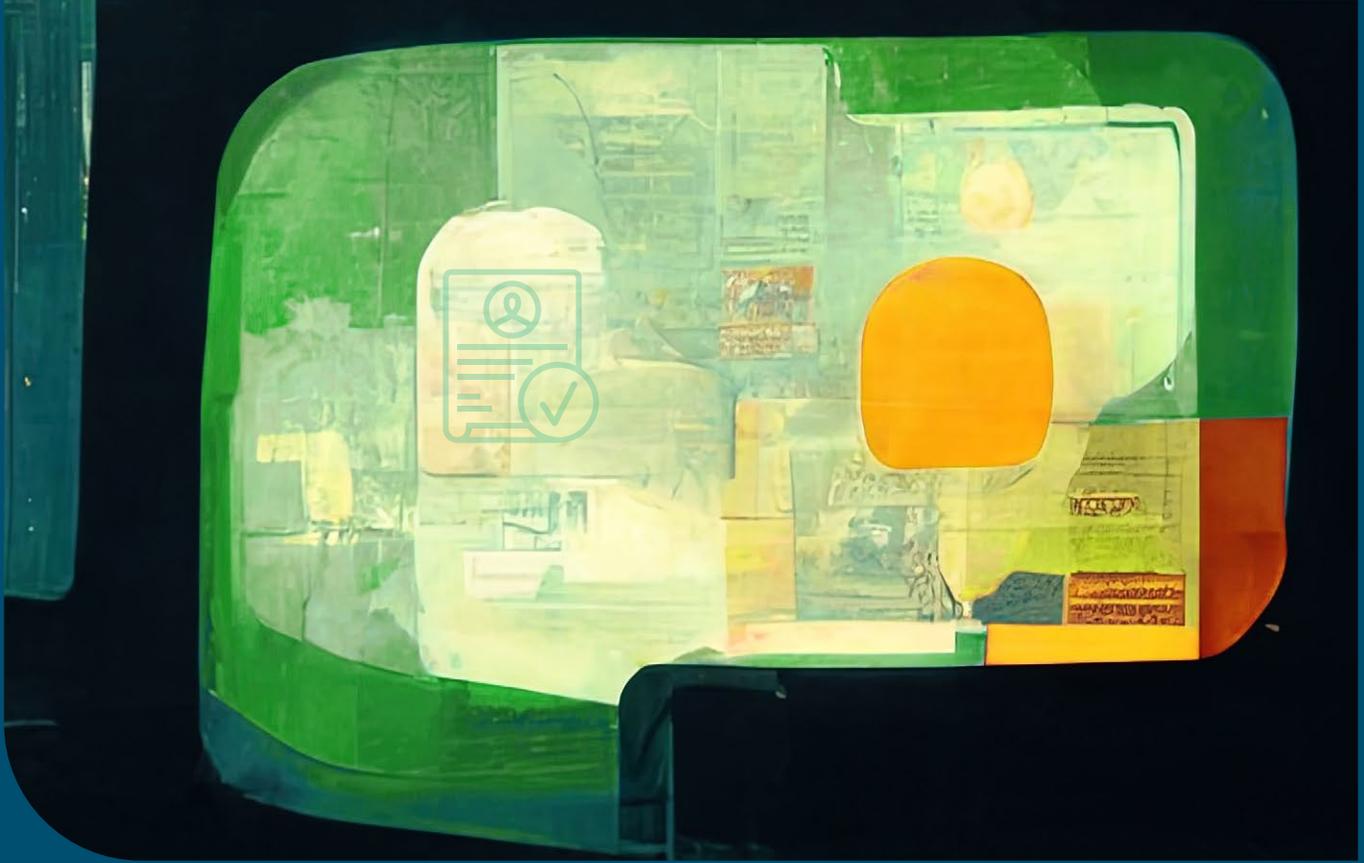
Households with basic services in municipalities



Source: SIUBEN Web Mapping Platform: <https://siuben-open-data-siuben.hub.arcgis.com/>

Also noteworthy is SIUBEN's use of the IncludIA artificial intelligence tool, implemented with the support of the IDB in coordination with the company PROSPERiA. This innovative technology uses satellite imagery and advanced algorithms to map buildings, estimate housing vulnerability, and compare geo-referenced RSUH data. The tool can thus identify areas with a high probability of poverty that have not yet been included in the registry, allowing officials to set priorities for data collection operations. Already, nearly 30,000 people have been added to the RSUH in the pilot region of Santo Domingo (Noriega, 2025; De los Santos, 2025).





5. CONTRIBUTIONS, LESSONS LEARNED, AND CHALLENGES



5. Contributions, lessons learned, and challenges

This chapter identifies SIUBEN's contributions, lessons learned, and remaining challenges after two decades of existence, based on a review of relevant documents and interviews with key stakeholders.

5.1. SIUBEN's main contributions

SIUBEN has proven to be very useful in gaining a better understanding of the socioeconomic reality of the Dominican Republic. Indeed, officials have used the information generated by SIUBEN to design social interventions, target resources, respond to emergencies, and evaluate results and impacts. SIUBEN's main contributions are described below.

5.1.1. Strategic inputs for resource targeting

Currently, SIUBEN has a robust database, various population classification indexes, and technological and analytical capabilities that enable it to support public institutions and social programs in efficiently channeling resources to the households and individuals in greatest need. These tools allow policymakers to consider vulnerability from multiple angles, making it easier for programs to select the type of targeting that best aligns with their specific objectives. This both optimizes the delivery of social assistance and reinforces the design of more effective public policies. One example is the registry of individuals eligible for cash transfer programs, currently integrated into the Advance program.

5.1.2. Enabler of adaptive social protection

SIUBEN has significantly strengthened the State's capacity to respond to emergency situations and shocks. In addition to classifying households by vulnerability level, the system prioritizes areas for damage assessment and evaluates their degree of impact. Using this timely information, the Dominican government can provide effective support to affected families. One of SIUBEN's most notable contributions has been its role in supplying information used to make decisions about Emergency Transfers.

5.1.3. Provider of valuable inputs for intervention design

SIUBEN provides rigorous technical information useful for designing evidence-based public policies. A recent example is its contribution to the country's Care Policy. In 2022, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD) and with support from the IDB, SIUBEN conducted a data survey in eastern Santo Domingo to measure the concentration and burden of care in households. Such efforts produce valuable inputs for designing more effective social program interventions that respond to the population's true needs.

5.1.4. Information and analysis for evaluating policies and programs

SIUBEN has demonstrated an invaluable capacity to provide critical inputs for evaluating and monitoring public initiatives. Its socioeconomic data repository and analytical tools make it possible to establish baselines, measure changes in beneficiaries' living conditions, and analyze the impact of various interventions.

By integrating quality of life and vulnerability indicators, SIUBEN makes it easier to observe improvements over time, offering an evidence-based perspective on social programs' effectiveness and outcomes. This capacity is fundamental for accountability and for fine-tuning public policies based on how they actually affect people's lives.¹⁹

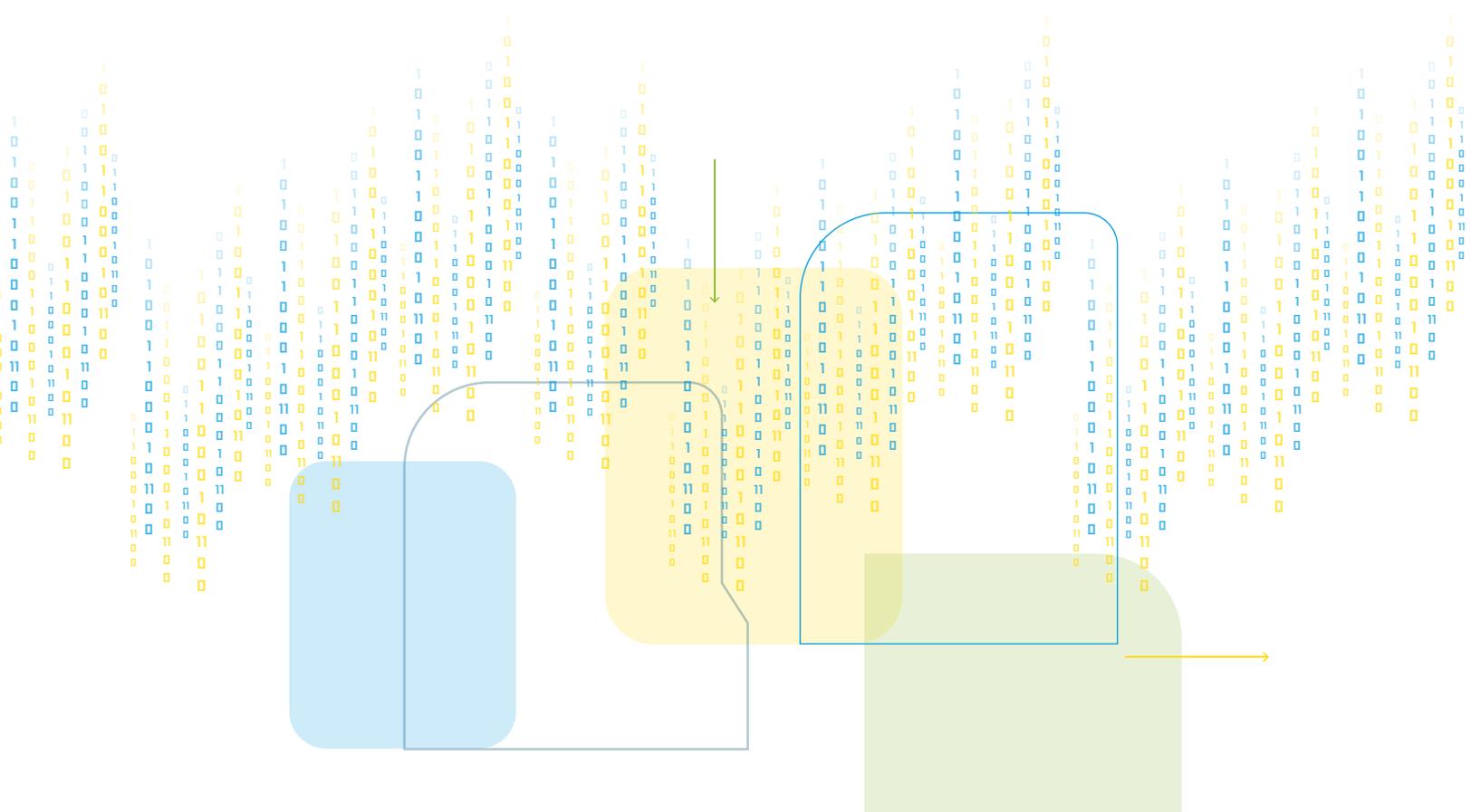
5.1.5. Key information on the country's socioeconomic reality

SIUBEN provides rigorous technical information on the socioeconomic reality of Dominicans and makes it available to national and international institutions, as well as academia. It also participates

in studies, such as the Quality of Life study, in which it has published relevant indicators on the living conditions of vulnerable populations (SIUBEN, 2019). And in its thematic maps, its detailed provincial-level socioeconomic information on households are translated into visuals (SIUBEN, 2020).²⁰

5.1.6. Institutions that use SIUBEN data for their projects, programs, and policies

At least two dozen institutions rely on SIUBEN information to target resources or support decisions related to their programs and initiatives. [Table 3](#) shows the list of institutions that use SIUBEN information.



¹⁹ SIUBEN's support to the Happy Family National Housing Plan (*Plan Nacional de Vivienda Familia Feliz*) to identify families applying for housing subsidies consisted of using the ICV to target the assistance and then combining the ICV with the IVACC to construct a baseline for beneficiaries. At a later point, SIUBEN collected new data from the families to assess changes that had occurred. After analyzing the historical data, officials identified a rise in the families' ICV scores, attributed to direct improvements in their housing conditions and an increase in family income. According to the Happy Family director, this increase is explained by greater work motivation among new members of the households, resulting from obtaining new housing that is only partially subsidized (Rodríguez, 2024).

²⁰ The Third Quality of Life Study conducted by SIUBEN and based on data from the 2018 survey can be downloaded at the following link. <https://es.scribd.com/document/722556235/Siuben-Calidad-de-Vida-2018-Digital>

TABLE 3.
**Social programs that do targeting or make extensive use of SIUBEN
(1 of 2)**

Institution	Social Programs
1. Advance (Supérate)	1. Aliméntate
	2. Aprende
	3. Avanza
	4. Bono Navideño
	5. Comunidades de Cuidados
	6. Bono Madre
	7. Bono Gas
	8. Bono Luz
	9. Supérate Mujer
	10. Bono Discapacidad
	11. Bono de Emergencia
2. Social Policy Office	12. Oportunidad 14-24
3. Communities of Care (Comunidades de Cuidado)	13. Registry design, programming, and identification (CONAPE, CONADIS)
4. National Social Security Council (CNSS)	14. Advising; on the panel for Pensiones Solidarias
5. National Council for the Elderly (CONAPE)	15. TE-AMA program
	16. Familia de Cariño program (identification) and pension management
	17. PROVEE
6. Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development (MEPyD)	18. PRORURAL project
7. Ministry of Women	19. Bono Mujer and another program being developed and designed
8. National Institute for Comprehensive Early Childhood Care (INAIFI)	20. Comprehensive Early Childhood Service Center (CAIFI)
	21. Family and Child Care Center (CAFI)
9. Ministry of Public Health	22. National Ten-Year Health Plan (PLANDES)
10. Ministry of the Presidency	23. Happy Family (Design, classification, prioritization, and monitoring)
11. Ministry of Housing and Buildings (MIVED)	24. Plan Mi Vivienda

TABLE 3.

**Social programs that do targeting or make extensive use of SIUBEN
(2 of 2)**

Institution	Social Programs
12. Social Subsidies Administrator (ADESS)	25. Bonogas-Households
	26. Bonogas-Drivers
13. Dominican Institute of Telecommunications (INDOTEL)	27. Conectar a los no conectados
14. National Health Service (SNS)	28. Emergencies and disasters program
15. Ministry of Environment	29. Climate change adaptation plans
16. OG TIC	30. Various agreements and projects. For example, Carpeta Ciudadana.
17. UNICEF	31. National Project and Plan for Early Unions
18. WPF	32. Supérate Montecristi project – preliminary actions
19. UNDP	33. Household and building damage assessment for Fiona Transfers
20. FAO	34. Support with identification and targeting with CODOPESCA
21. World Bank	35. Strengthening water and sanitation infrastructure project
22. MACROTECH	36. Identification and targeting subsidies
23. Center for Orientation and Integral Research (COIN)	37. Targeting subsidies
24. Nature Power Foundation	38. Identification, training, and targeting

Source: Staffa, n.d. Presentation of the Social Protection System – How it Works in the Dominican Republic

5.2.

Lessons learned from SIUBEN

5.2.1. Lessons on collecting and updating data

➤ Lessons on interoperability

SIUBEN has recognized the pressing need for interoperability in order to make data management more efficient and cost-effective.

Interoperability with other administrative databases has proven key to making updates more agile and efficient compared to the slow and costly census collection model. However, this strategy faces significant limitations: low levels of technological maturity or the lack of robust information systems in some institutions, added to the need to harmonize variables, definitions, and protocols, pose considerable technical barriers. Beyond technical considerations, interoperability requires firm political decisions and sustained investment. SIUBEN officials frequently ran into institutional reluctance to share information, and overcoming this barrier will require political leadership at the highest level and a legal framework to enforce it. Without strong political will, making progress on interoperability will be considerably constrained, undermining the speed and cost-effectiveness of SIUBEN's upgrade.

5.2.2. Lessons on targeting and supporting institutions

SIUBEN has learned the importance of flexible and evidence-based targeting, although challenges remain in getting institutions to fully adopt its tools.

➤ Diversifying vulnerability indexes

The creation of indexes complementary to the Quality of Life Index (ICV), such as those covering exposure to climate shocks or lack of access to basic services, has enriched the understanding of what vulnerability means. These tools facilitate more effective support to programs and beneficiaries, and thus presumably improving quality of life. However, the critical challenge is ensuring that these tools and their advanced analytical capacity are fully understood and utilized by all implementing institutions.

➤ Institutional outreach and awareness raising

One key takeaway is the need to raise awareness among other institutions about SIUBEN's role and services. Institutions' initial resistance to using SIUBEN's data—often due to misinformation or a preference for their own data—leads to duplication of work and inefficiencies. Experience has shown that emphasizing that SIUBEN merely provides information for targeting—it does not decide how benefits are allocated—and that its role is to offer support and advice helps institutions recognize its usefulness. However, continued resistance in some areas points to the need for a more robust and continuous communication and training strategy. Doing a better job of addressing these misperceptions and encouraging the forging of inter-institutional alliances could go a long way in achieving deeper and more successful integration.

5.2.3. Lessons on the role of an information system in emergencies or shocks

Emergency situations have brought the critical role of SIUBEN's services to the fore, but also revealed the system's limits and the optimal timing for intervention, underscoring the need for constant adaptation.

➤ **Vital importance of records for timely responses**

The pandemic showed the value of having robust records in order to respond quickly and effectively to crises. The Dominican Republic implemented cash transfer programs during the COVID-19 quarantine very effectively, an achievement made possible by SIUBEN's database. Given the reality of increasing climate variability, the main challenge going forward will be keeping the database updated and accessible at all times. This way, its demonstrated usefulness in emergencies will not be compromised by delays in updating its information.

➤ **Post-emergency data collection**

SIUBEN has learned that its role in post-emergency information gathering must be carefully analyzed and planned, as some damage, such as health or psychological or emotional impacts, is not immediately apparent. Furthermore, depending on the type of emergency, premature intervention could put its personnel at risk (Staffa interview, 2023). While a more cautious approach would keep staff members safe, damage assessments for determining social protection actions would take more time. It would therefore be essential to strengthen other mechanisms for shaping early responses in collaboration with other actors. This highlights the need for inter-agency coordination that is even more fluid and unified.

the risk of political patronage, reinforcing perceptions of SIUBEN as a provider of reliable services (Staffa and Lizardo Interviews, 2023).

However, this dependence on external assistance raises questions about the institution's long-term sustainability and ability to maintain its level of performance if external support or resources ever decline.

➤ **Talent management in a competitive environment**

The high demand for data management specialists leads to significant staff turnover at SIUBEN, which has to compete with the public and private sectors. To counteract this trend, SIUBEN implemented flexible hiring arrangements, supported by a resolution from the Ministry of Public Administration that recognizes the unique nature of these profiles. In addition, the institution is structured to emphasize teamwork and a sharing culture, ensuring that knowledge about critical processes is not lost when employees move on. Continuing education programs (both domestic and international) also serve as a crucial non-monetary incentive for employee retention. Despite these proactive strategies, the wage gap with the private sector remains a limiting factor, which could compromise SIUBEN's ability to attract and retain top talent in the long term, unless compensation policies are modified.

5.2.4. Lessons on administrative and operational aspects

➤ **International support and adoption of standards**

SIUBEN's specialized technical staff, combined with the ongoing support of multilateral organizations (UNDP, WFP, IDB, UNFPA, WB, and FAO) and adoption of international standards, have consolidated its reputation as a high-caliber technical entity. This combination has been vital to mitigate

5.3.

Future challenges

Today, SIUBEN faces significant challenges, both in terms of its institutional foundation and the operational changes it has proposed to make itself more dynamic, timely, and cost-effective. It also faces financial and other challenges, which are detailed below.



5.3.1. Strengthening SIUBEN's institutional framework

The main challenge for SIUBEN is to strengthen its institutional framework and legal basis to entrench its authority and clearly define its role in the context of a new vision of social protection.

This is necessary because SIUBEN's institutional framework is based on decrees rather than laws, which makes it vulnerable to political ups and downs.

In addition, it is necessary to establish a legal framework that clearly defines SIUBEN's role in adaptive social protection, with a broader scope than merely support for targeted public interventions. This legal mandate is crucial for two reasons. The first is to promote the cross-cutting use of SIUBEN's data throughout the entire social protection system, since targeted public interventions—including some social programs—still have no clear legal obligation to use its socioeconomic classification system. The second is to ensure interoperability with other administrative databases. Currently, institutional resistance—driven by misinformation, a preference for using proprietary data, or a lack of understanding about the value of integration—leads to duplication of effort, fragmentation, and inefficiencies. Surmounting these barriers, as well as the lack of political will, is essential to ensuring an efficient flow of information and consolidating SIUBEN as the backbone of a cohesive social information system.

SIUBEN's role urgently needs to be clarified, as evidenced by the widespread confusion about its relationship with other state instruments, including the National Statistics Office and the censuses.

5.3.2. Achieving interoperability and alternative mechanisms for updating the RSUH

Collecting data through census sweeps is costly and cannot be done very frequently. For this reason, SIUBEN uses alternative mechanisms for updating data such as updating through call centers, online self-registration, and mobile apps. An major challenge will be consolidating these mechanisms and ensuring the quality of the data

received from them. This way, SIUBEN can remain a reliable and up-to-date source of information. When using tools like these, it is important to keep in mind the digital divide in order to avoid excluding population groups who may lack the skills to use these technologies.

At the heart of SIUBEN's challenge to update data is the need to achieve effective interoperability with other institutions. Currently, efforts are underway to integrate SIUBEN's data with administrative data from different government entities in order to update, validate, and supplement its records. Doing so would streamline this process and reduce updating costs.

As mentioned before, one of SIUBEN's obstacles to expanding its integration efforts is the lack of digital maturity of some of the prioritized institutions. Interoperability requires that both SIUBEN and its counterpart institutions have adequate tech capabilities and robust information systems, and that they comply with certain conditions, such as harmonizing variables and information exchange protocols.

5.3.3. Establishing the RUB to facilitate comprehensive services and reduce duplication

Since its creation, SIUBEN has sought to establish a Unified Registry of Beneficiaries (Registro Único de Beneficiarios, RUB) to consolidate information on individuals who receive social benefits and services from different government programs and institutions. A single registry like the RUB would allow institutions to provide more comprehensive services and reduce potential duplication. SIUBEN has exchanged information with Advance, the cash transfer program. It also manages information for Solidarity Pensions and the Happy Home program. But in order to create a true RUB that covers most of the social program benefits available to the population, other institutions in charge of these types of programs—both universal (education, health) and targeted (cash transfers), housing, etc.)—must share their information. The main barriers to this are the refusal of some institutions to share their data, the lack of a definitive legal framework, and the lack of high-level political commitment to this goal.

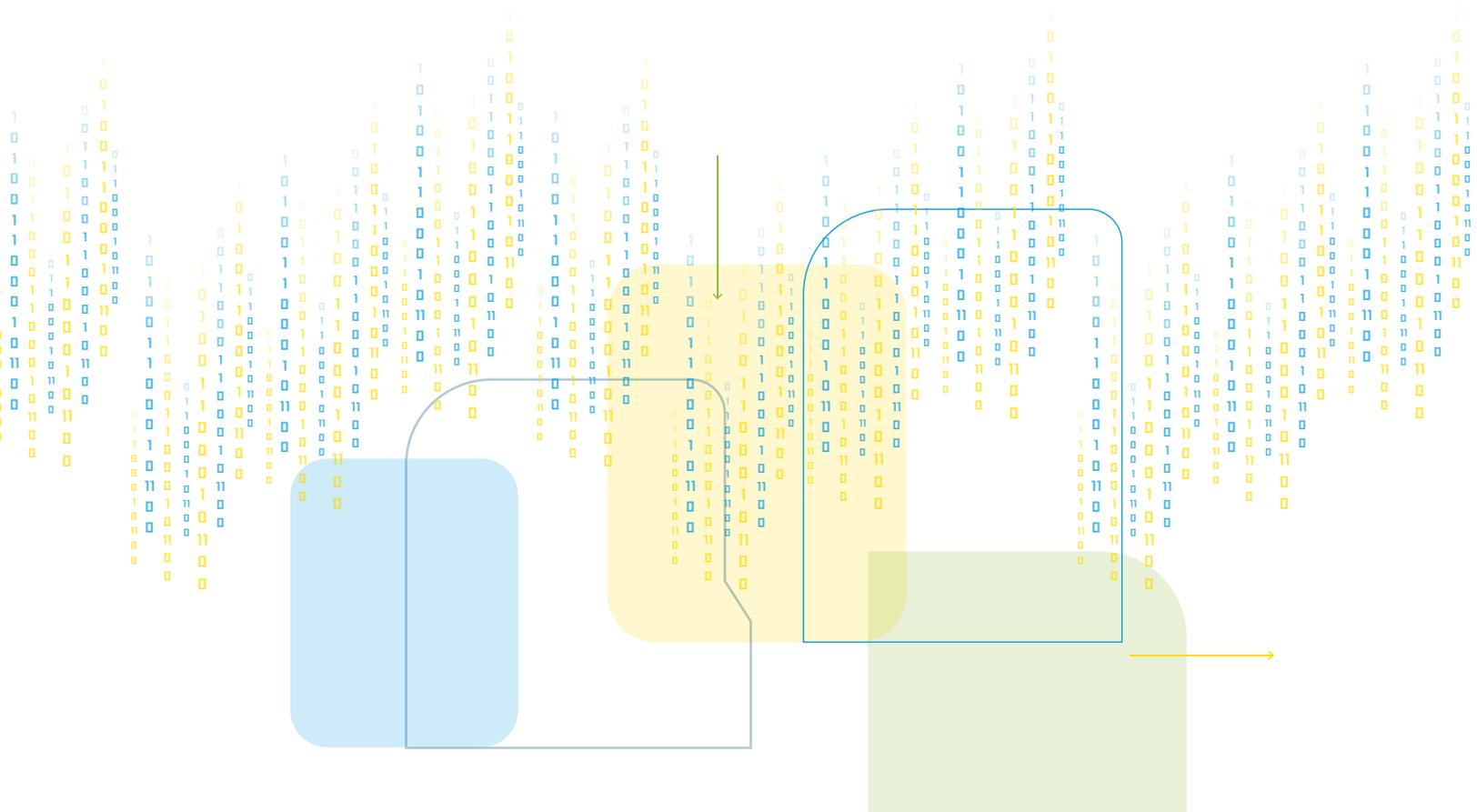
5.3.4. Strengthening data analytics

Over time, SIUBEN has added new indexes and analytical services to support social programs and public institutions. One ever-present challenge is strengthening its team's data analysis skills to continue supporting public policies, especially in early risk identification, so institutions can act before an extreme event occurs and improve household resilience to potential shocks. In addition, data analytics must be improved in order to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and impact of public policies. It is also essential to continue making strides on targeting based on different indexes, in order to respond better to the needs of the population over time.

As demand from different programs and institutions grows for SIUBEN services and support, the workload has been on the rise. In order to respond to these demands in a timely manner, SIUBEN must have human resources specialized in managing big data for this type and volume of work.

5.3.5. Strengthening SIUBEN's finances

Ensuring SIUBEN's financial sustainability is a key challenge in strengthening its institutional autonomy and ability to adapt to the demands of a constantly changing environment. Currently, a significant portion of its budget comes from projects financed by multilateral organizations. While this has allowed SIUBEN to make significant progress, it also makes it dependent on external sources. In the long term, consolidating its own financing mechanisms would enable SIUBEN to maintain the quality and innovation of its processes, continue pursuing its strategic priorities, and strengthen its role as the coordinating hub of the Dominican social information system.



ANNEX 1



BOX 3.

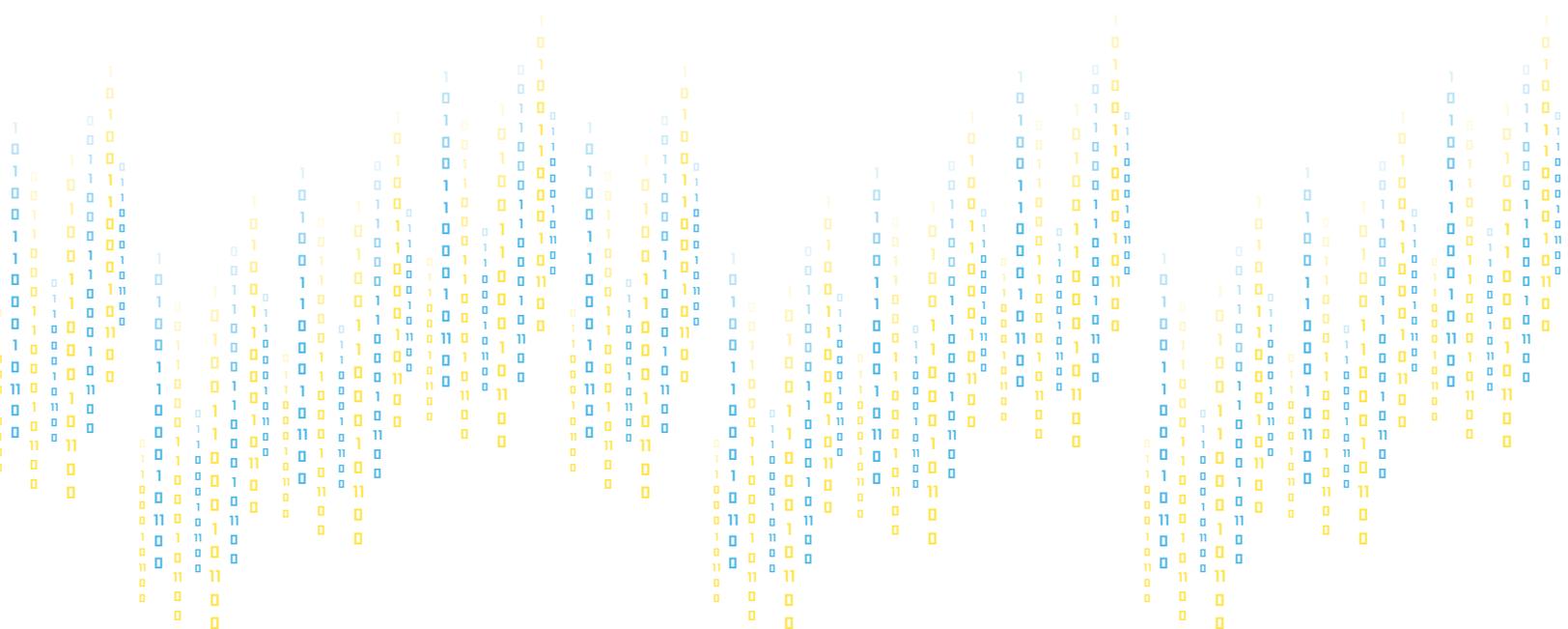
SIUBEN's functions according to its legal framework

Decrees 426-07 and 396-22 establish that SIUBEN's core functions are identifying, classifying, registering, and prioritizing families living in poverty, with the aim of guiding public policy.

Decree 426-07 of 2007 provides further details on SIUBEN's functions as a public entity. In 2022, Decree 396-22 expanded these functions, permitting SIUBEN to also identify, classify, register, and prioritize families outside the poverty map if doing so was in the interest of public policy. However, this expansion is general and does not alter the specific wording of the functions established in 2007. **These functions are listed below:**

- a. "Administer the socioeconomic classification profile to households considered a priority, as a result of geographic targeting, as established in the Poverty Map.
- b. Perform continuous surveys on demand to identify poor households located in regions not identified in the Poverty Map, and which may be in the interest of social policy.
- c. Conduct household classification analyses and prepare the Eligible Households Registry, according to poverty levels.
- d. Perform cartographic updating and segmentation of census areas.
- e. Coordinate with civil society and public and private institutions to receive requests for inclusion and/or exclusion of households.
- f. Create and maintain the database of eligible households, generated from information collected in priority areas and areas marginalized due to poverty.
- g. Ensure a flow of up-to-date information on the socioeconomic conditions of households, for the knowledge and use of social programs that use the database.
- h. Manage the Eligible Households Registry and produce periodic reports to update the Households Registry, which is used by various social programs in accordance with their requirements.

- i.** Verify and direct requests for inclusion and exclusion of households from institutions and social groups.
- j.** Periodically evaluate and/or review the information collection instrument and the poverty classification methodology and make the adjustments required by the country's social dynamics.
- k.** Safeguard information, ensure system security, and adopt proven information and communications technologies for the networked development of operational processes carried out by the regional offices.
- l.** Provide information to social, public, and private institutions, in accordance with the provisions of Law 200-04, General Law of Information and Free Access to Public Information, dated July 13, 2004 and its implementing regulations.
- m.** Disseminate indicators and information derived from the analysis of the socioeconomic conditions of poor households.
- n.** Use mass media to build awareness and educate the public about the importance of providing accurate information to the Single Beneficiary System (SIUBEN).
- o.** Verify and document any new developments arising from the information reported by social programs.
- p.** Perform validation operations and document corrections and new developments.



ANNEX 2



BOX 4.

Timeline of how the ICV has evolved

● 1997

The First Poverty Targeting Study (data from ENDESA-1996 and 1993 Census) is carried out, designed with a two-stage targeting process: geographic and individual. The first Quality of Life Index (ICV) to classify households and the first poverty map are developed.

● 2004

The Second Poverty Targeting Study and poverty map (data from ENDESA-2002 and 2002 Census) are developed. A new model is generated for the ICV (**SIUBEN 1**) and targeting of individual households begins. SIUBEN is created by governmental decree.

● 2004-2006

SIUBEN conducts its First Socioeconomic Household Survey (**ESH-2004**). Households are classified using the **SIUBEN 1** model.

● 2011-2012

SIUBEN conducts its Second Socioeconomic Household Survey (**ESH-2012**). Households are subsequently classified using the **SIUBEN 2A** model.

● 2013

The **SIUBEN 2** model is created and used to generate the third poverty map based on 2010 Census data. The **SIUBEN 2A** model is created and used to classify the households in the ESH-2012 and ESH-2018.

● 2017-2018

SIUBEN conducts its Third Socioeconomic Household Survey (**ESH-2012**). Households are classified using the **SIUBEN 2A** model.

● 2021

The new **SIUBEN+** strategy and the new **SIUBEN 3** model to classify households are developed.

Source: Poverty targeting indexes in the Dominican Republic (Morillo-Pérez)



