



**Development of a set of indicators**  
– for inclusive education in Europe



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## Lifelong Learning Programme

This report was edited by Mary Kyriazopoulou and Harald Weber, Agency Project Managers, on the basis of contributions from the Agency's Representative Board members, National Co-ordinators and nominated National Experts in the field of indicators. For contact details please see the list of contributors at the end of this document.

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## 1. PREFACE

This report presents the main findings of a project conducted by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, at the request of the Representative Board members, upon the topic of ‘Development of a set of indicators – for inclusive education<sup>1</sup> in Europe’. The project has received funding from the European Community’s Lifelong Learning Programme, provided by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

The representatives from the ministries of education involved in Agency work expressed their interest in the development of a set of indicators in the area of inclusive education, to be used as a tool for monitoring their own developments in country based policy and practice. In addition, a set of indicators could also provide a tool at the European level for Agency data collection on selected country developments.

In total 23 countries – Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French speaking communities), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland) – were involved in the project activities with the nomination of 32 national experts for the project. Experts’ contact details are available at the end of the report, see page 43. Their input, alongside those of Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators, are greatly appreciated. All of their contributions have ensured the success of the Agency project.

This report presents the framework and rationale, the aims and objectives, but also the methodology used and an initial set of indicators in three areas (legislation, participation, financing) of inclusive education. Follow up work is now scheduled for this initial set of indicators to be made operational by developing specific

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report the concept of inclusive education is used in line with the Salamanca Statement (1994) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). That is, inclusive education is a goal all countries are working towards. It is acknowledged that inclusive education is an ongoing process – not an end result – and countries’ policies and practice are at different stages in this process of development.



indicators and thereby enabling monitoring at national and European levels.

More information about the project activities is available from the project web area: [www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/indicators-for-inclusive-education](http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/indicators-for-inclusive-education)

**Cor Meijer**

Director

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## 2. INTRODUCTION

The intention of this report is to present the main outcomes, the framework and rationale, the aims and objectives, as well as the methodology used in the project conducted by the Agency examining the topic of the 'Development of a set of indicators – for inclusive education in Europe'.

The aim of the project, as agreed upon by the Agency country representatives, was to develop a methodology that would lead to a set of indicators at the national level, yet applicable at the European level, with a clear focus on policy conditions that may support, or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools. Several European and international institutions have undertaken the task of developing indicators in specific policy areas. The project has built upon these experiences to develop indicators in the field of inclusive education. The project consequently has two major outcomes: firstly, the development and implementation of a bottom-up approach to identifying relevant indicators based on the consensus of experts from Agency member countries. Secondly, an initial set of indicators in this field with indications on how to make them measurable (i.e. suitable for monitoring).

In total, 23 countries nominated 32 experts to participate in the project work. With their expertise and competence they contributed valuable input to the reflections and discussions of the project meetings and working groups, as well as to the development of the methodology and the main project outcomes. Without their contributions, the development of the project would not have been possible.

This report is organised as follows: after the preface in section 1 and this introduction (section 2), section 3 gives an overview of the framework and rationale that worked towards the goal of the project, followed by section 4 that presents the aims and objectives. Section 5 presents the main concepts and definitions used throughout the project. Section 6 gives examples of other indicators developed at the European/international levels in the field of special needs education. The framework and methodology used to develop indicators for the conditions of inclusive education within the project are explained in section 7, including the set of indicators in three key areas of inclusive education: legislation, participation and financing.





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Section 8 explains how the approach taken in the project corresponds with previous and future Agency work with regards to thematic projects and their outcomes. The last section deals with the question of which further steps are required to apply the set of indicators within the context of monitoring.

This report has different target groups. It is structured so that a reader interested in the concepts behind and process of developing indicators can read the sections in their natural order. Those readers who are mainly interested in the set of indicators are referred directly to section 7. Sections 8 and 9 show how the work presented fits into current Agency activities and which further steps are required in the process of developing operational indicators.



### 3. FRAMEWORK AND RATIONALE

Inclusive education is not a static phenomenon. It has been developing in different ways and it continues to develop. In other aspects of Agency work (for example Watkins, 2007) it is clearly stated that '*Conceptions of, policies for, and practice in inclusive education are constantly undergoing change in all countries.*' (p.20) Many countries are in the process of reviewing and changing their policies and legislation for inclusive education, based either upon knowledge and experiences from on-going pilot projects, or by introducing new financing strategies for special needs education (SNE), or by implementing new policies/laws regarding quality systems and monitoring for education. Processes of change, however, require tools for monitoring respective developments.

Monitoring tools are often based on a set of indicators that are periodically measured to check whether intended targets have been met or not. However, currently there are very few qualitative or quantitative indicators available in the area of SNE and inclusive education at the European level. The need for such a monitoring tool is reflected in the outcomes of a European-wide survey, conducted in 2006 by the Agency. The survey aimed to collect Agency member country input regarding current, emerging and future issues and trends that should be investigated in the field of special needs education. The issues and trends identified in the survey were selected in the light of individual national priorities for special needs education, as well as the European level priorities for education identified by the European Council (2000). The ministries of education from 22 European countries participated in the survey. From the outcomes, there was a clear indication that countries were particularly interested in the development of indicators in the area of inclusive education.

This outcome is in line with the document 'Education and training in Europe: diverse systems, shared goals for 2010: The work programme on the future objectives of education and training systems' (European Commission, 2002) that clearly mentions what needs to be done in order to achieve the second strategic objective raised by the Member states: *Facilitating the access of all to education and training systems*. Objective 2.3. Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion: '*Education and*



*training systems play an important role in sustaining democratic societies in Europe. A basic principle that needs to be reinforced is that all citizens should have equal access to education and training. This entails that in Member states special attention is paid to supporting vulnerable groups and individuals, particularly those with disabilities or learning difficulties.’ (p.25)*

This project is designed as a first step to giving countries the missing information on indicators in this field as a basis for monitoring developments in their countries. In addition, information linked to indicators is also an area receiving increasing interest from external bodies and organisations – such as the European Commission.

The project does not provide information regarding inclusion as such, but attempts to present a procedure for developing indicators using a ‘bottom-up’ approach and an agreed proposal for an initial set of indicators.



## 4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project – as discussed and agreed upon by the Agency member countries and the project experts – was the development of a set of indicators at national level, yet applicable at European level, with a clear focus on policy conditions that may support or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools.

In particular, the project has aimed to develop:

- A framework and methodology for developing indicators for this project as well as future Agency thematic projects in the field of inclusive education;
- An initial set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for the policy conditions of inclusive education to be used at national level;
- A smaller set of key quantitative and qualitative indicators relating to policy conditions for inclusive education to be used at the European level.

The set of indicators developed in the project:

- Is based on the main outcomes of previous Agency project work in the field of inclusive education;
- Has used the outcomes of a European Hearing of young people with special educational needs (*Young Voices: Meeting Diversity in Education*, Lisbon Declaration, 2007; Soriano et al., 2008);
- Has been developed using a bottom-up approach at the European level to ensure applicability to the diverse systems of education across Europe.

The further objectives of the project and outcomes have been to use these indicators for the conditions of inclusive education to:

- Provide a tool for countries to monitor their own developments in country based policy and practice;
- Provide an in-depth coverage of the three selected key areas of inclusive education: legislation, financing and participation;
- Identify key areas in the field of inclusive education where further work needs to be done;



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- Provide a tool at the European level for the Agency to consider in collecting selected data on country developments.

The intention was that the project should establish the basis for the development of an agreed set of qualitative and quantitative indicators, each one accepted by the participating countries. Equipped with suitable indicators, the field of inclusive education can be opened up for constructive comparison and mutual learning from good (i.e. effective and successful) approaches. It was also the intention that the project would provide each individual country with a tool to monitor developments in their own policy and practice. Whilst similar tools based upon indicators may exist in a few countries, there is no set of indicators available that is agreed among countries to facilitate the above-mentioned comparison and learning process. This joint development of indicators at the European level is considered to give European added value to the project.



## 5. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 Inclusion

The interpretation of terms such as special needs education, inclusive education or inclusive schools varies greatly across Europe so it was considered important and useful at the beginning of the project to discuss, clarify and agree upon a number of concepts and their respective definitions developed and employed in other aspects of Agency work that could support the development of the indicators project.

The focus of Agency work is clearly stated upon developments in special needs education. Whilst recognising that special needs education and special educational needs are two sides of the same coin, the Agency's work is *focussed upon systems and provision* and not upon specific types or categories of needs.

Definitions and understandings of what is meant by special needs education vary greatly within countries. There is no agreed interpretation of terms such as *handicap*, *special need* or *disability* across the countries. In other aspects of Agency work (for example Meijer, 2003) it is clearly stated that: '*These differences are linked to administrative, financial and procedural regulations rather than reflecting variations in the incidence and the types of special educational needs in countries.*' (p.126)

From the work of the Agency to date, it is evident that the current tendency in Europe is to develop policy aimed at inclusion of pupils/students in need of special educational support in mainstream schools, providing teachers with varying degrees of support in terms of supplementary staff, materials, in-service training and equipment.

Experience in many countries demonstrates that the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs is best achieved within inclusive schools that serve (almost) all children within a community. It is within this context that those with special educational needs can achieve the fullest educational progress and social inclusion.

Agreements on what settings are considered 'inclusive' are not so clear. In other aspects of Agency work (for example Meijer, 2003) an operational definition of inclusive settings has been employed: '*... those educational settings where pupils with special needs follow the*



*largest part of the curriculum in the mainstream class alongside peers without special educational needs.'* (p.9)

However, the range of settings and types of provision evident in countries emphasises the enormous difficulties in comparing situations across Europe. All countries are at *'different points of the journey to inclusion signposted by the Salamanca statement'* (Peacey, 2006). The term 'inclusion' has itself been on a journey since it was initially introduced within an educational context. In other aspects of Agency work (for example Watkins, 2007) an argument on the development has been provided: *'... it is now understood to concern a far wider range of pupils vulnerable to exclusion than those identified as having SEN.'* (p.16). Inclusion can be seen as an attempt to move ideas of education for all beyond 'mainstreaming' where pupils may be integrated – that is be in the same physical location – but not necessarily share an educational experience with their peers. Inclusion implies pupils with SEN have 'access to the curriculum' in the best way to meet their needs.

In this and other Agency projects, the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) regarding inclusive education has been the guiding principle: *'Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.'* (p.8)

## **5.2 Policy indicators**

In the following section, the input-process-outcome model, adapted to the field of education, is applied.

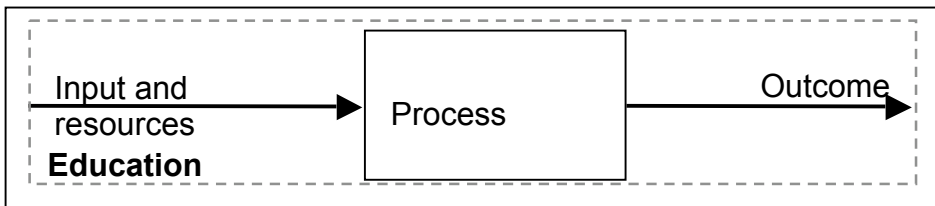
At the end of this report a glossary of key terms used in this text is presented in order to further explain and define some of the technical terms used in the following sections.

The system – presented in Figure 1 – consists of three elements:

*Input and resources* denote all aspects provided to the system to achieve a certain outcome. In the field of education, inputs and resources could not only be for example, financial resources, or legislation related to education, but also the qualification level of teachers or any infrastructural issues. Education processes transform

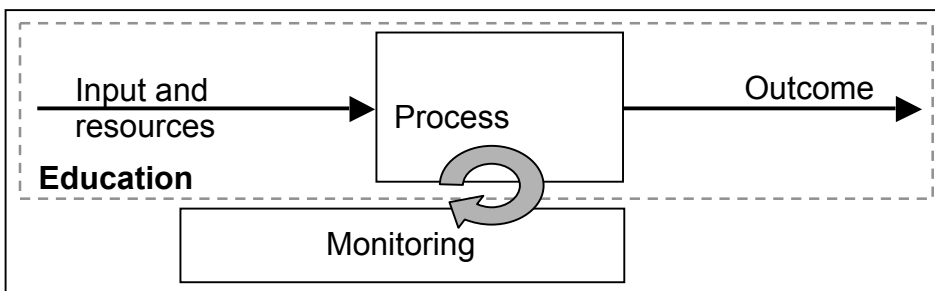


these inputs and resources into *outputs and outcomes*. While outputs describe efficiency measures such as participation rates or curricular achievements, this report highlights the relevance of outcome aspects that emphasise the effects, impact or consequences of input and processes, e.g. academic and functional literacy, independence, or citizenship. *Process* finally refers to all educational activities including procedures, state/school/district practice, or classroom instructional practice.



**Figure 1: Input-process-outcome model for education**

*Monitoring* denotes a systematic process of periodic or continuous surveillance or testing to determine the level or value of indicators with quality goals or target values. Monitoring is an essential activity in any process of continuous improvement. It provides a link back from (intermediate) outcomes to input/resource provision and to process (re-)design (see Figure 2). Monitoring can be applied at different levels; e.g. in a de-centralised educational system monitoring can take place on a regional, or even on a school level. Furthermore, monitoring outcomes may be accessible to all audiences or restricted to those users who are directly involved in the management of educational processes.



**Figure 2: Monitoring in input-process-outcome models**





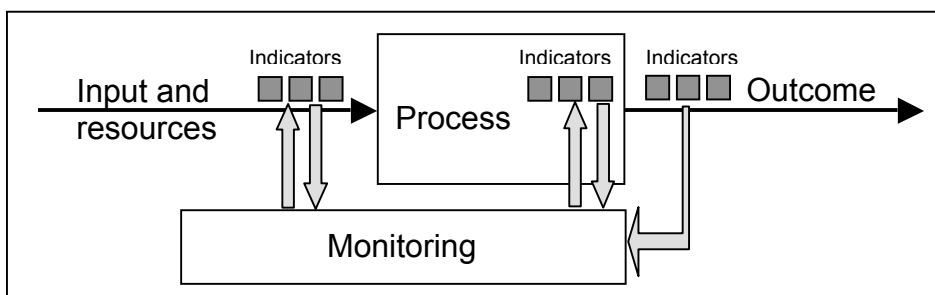
Indicators in the context of this project can be considered as ‘sensors’ that are designed and placed in such a way that they can detect any relevant changes. In the context of a monitoring system, indicators help the users to focus on areas that need attention.

Consequently, indicators need to:

- Cover all relevant areas (i.e. should not have ‘blind spots’ where changes remain undetected);
- Be sensitive enough to detect changes when they occur;
- Be informative, i.e. provide evidence about the reason for a change.

While it is often the case that indicators are primarily outcome orientated (e.g. indicators and benchmarks on the monitoring of progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education), there is sometimes a lack of indicators related to input/resources and the process side that would lead to an understanding of why outcomes do, or do not change.

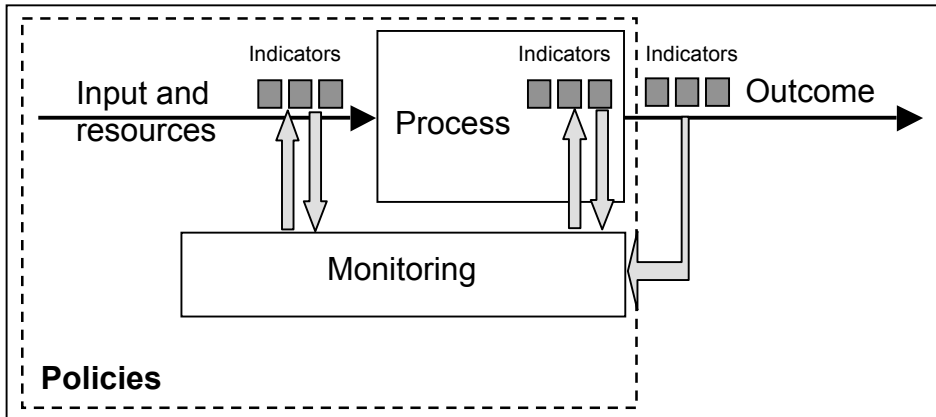
The reasons for this are due to the fact that in most cases outcome indicators cannot be *directly* influenced when the monitoring detects discrepancies between outcome indicator values and scheduled values. Changes in the resource provision or input as well as changes in processes are used to (*indirectly*) modify the outcome side. Therefore it is important to monitor indicators in these other two areas as well (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Indicator distribution in monitoring**

Public policies can be defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action and funding priorities. In this instance, *legislation* is part of a policy. The law in a particular area includes specific legislation embedded in constitutional and international law. Figure 4 presents how this definition fits into the input-process-outcome model. It should be emphasised that the existence of a

monitoring system on local/regional/national level should also be seen as a part of the policy framework.



**Figure 4: Monitoring system with focus on policies**

*Legislation* can also be understood as the system that unites more specific policies in a coherent way to ensure that the individual policy goals can actually be reached once the policy is implemented into practice. The focus is therefore more on the inter-relatedness of policies, the consistency of different policy initiatives and the sustainability of policy initiatives. As indicated before, in the above-mentioned model, legislation is considered an input/resources aspect in education.

Due to the focus of the project upon policy conditions, outcome indicators are only remotely dealt with in this report. However, as Figures 3 and 4 highlight outcome indicators are essential sources of information in monitoring systems. In consequence, the project aimed at developing a set of indicators from the areas of input/resources and from processes to be compatible with other national, European or international outcome indicators. In fact, each country that makes use of the indicators described later in this project report can add their own outcome related indicators to complete the set of monitoring indicators.



## 6. INDICATORS FOR SNE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In order to have an overview of the state of the art in the area of indicators for SNE and inclusive education, the project experts were requested to review and identify some relevant examples of indicators developed at European and international level. From this review, it appears that some research work and studies have been conducted in the area of indicators for SNE and inclusion, aiming at supporting and improving the quality of education in inclusive settings. The different sets of indicators developed for SNE and inclusion cover the aspects of *input*, *process* and *output* as well as the *macro* (legislation, political and administrative framework), *meso* (school, community services), *micro* (classroom) and *person* (teachers, students) levels. A few indicative examples are mentioned in the following.

### *Index for Inclusion*

Booth and Ainscow (2002) have developed a number of indicators to support the inclusive development of schools. The index offers schools a supportive process of self-review and development, which draws on the views of staff, pupils/students and parents, as well as other members of the surrounding communities. It involves a detailed examination of how barriers to learning and participation can be reduced for any pupil/student. The indicators cover 3 dimensions:

- *Creating inclusive cultures* (building community, establishing inclusive values);
- *Producing inclusive policies* (developing the school for all, organising support for diversity);
- *Evolving inclusive practice* (orchestrating learning, mobilising resources).

### *Quality Indicators in SNE*

Hollenweger and Haskell (2002) have developed a number of quality indicators covering the aspects of educational inputs and resources, processes and results:

- *Educational inputs and resources*: policies, community characteristics, resources, personnel, students' characteristics, family characteristics;



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- *Educational processes*: state/school district practice, school building – level practice, classroom instructional practice, student oriented domains;

- *Educational results for systems and individuals*: academic and functional literacy, physical health, responsibility and independence, citizenship, personal and social well being, satisfaction.

### *Disability Rights in Education Model*

Peters, Johnstone and Ferguson (2005) applied the Disability Rights in Education Model (DREM), based on the main principles of inclusive education, to provide a multilevel framework for evaluating educational inclusion of students with SEN at local/school, national and international levels. The DREM is a tool for use by educational policy makers, educators, community members and disabled people's organisations. The DREM demonstrates the dynamic interrelationship of outcomes, resources, contexts and inputs.

For each of the three levels (local, national, international) there are a number of inter-related outcomes and a number of enabling outcomes, used as catalysts for ensuring that the educational process of teaching and learning results in the expected individual and social benefits that are represented as main outcomes of the model. Resources, contexts and other inputs provide the material and social conditions for the system of enabling outcomes and educational processes to be enacted.

This does not present an exhaustive review, but a few indicative examples of the work done on developing indicators in the area of special needs education and inclusive education, at European and international level, collected by the project experts. The aim of the review was to identify to what extent the existing sets of indicators are suited to be used in the context of the Agency project.

Beside the European/international level, the project experts were requested to review what is already available at national level regarding qualitative and quantitative indicators for the policy conditions of inclusive education. Participants have suggested that in many countries the issue of 'indicators' is high on the political agenda and they have developed or are in the process of developing indicators in the area of inclusive education at different levels (e.g. school, classroom, etc).



In many countries and at European and international level there are a number of indicators developed to monitor SNE/inclusive education at different levels, mainly at school and classroom level. However, the project experts have acknowledged that none of the existing sets of indicators are suited to transfer and use in other national educational contexts or at the European level.

There are different reasons for this, such as their focus (e.g. school, classroom level), or the coverage of the area of inclusive education (the key aspects constituting the field of inclusive education), etc. In addition, none of the sets of indicators reviewed by the project experts are used to monitor policy conditions of inclusive education at the national level.



## 7. DEVELOPING INDICATORS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

This project aimed at presenting a mixture of indicators from all quality dimensions, i.e. mainly from input/resources and process, and where appropriate also from outputs/outcomes. For this reason the project implemented a bottom-up approach, aimed at covering the field of inclusive education in its breadth.

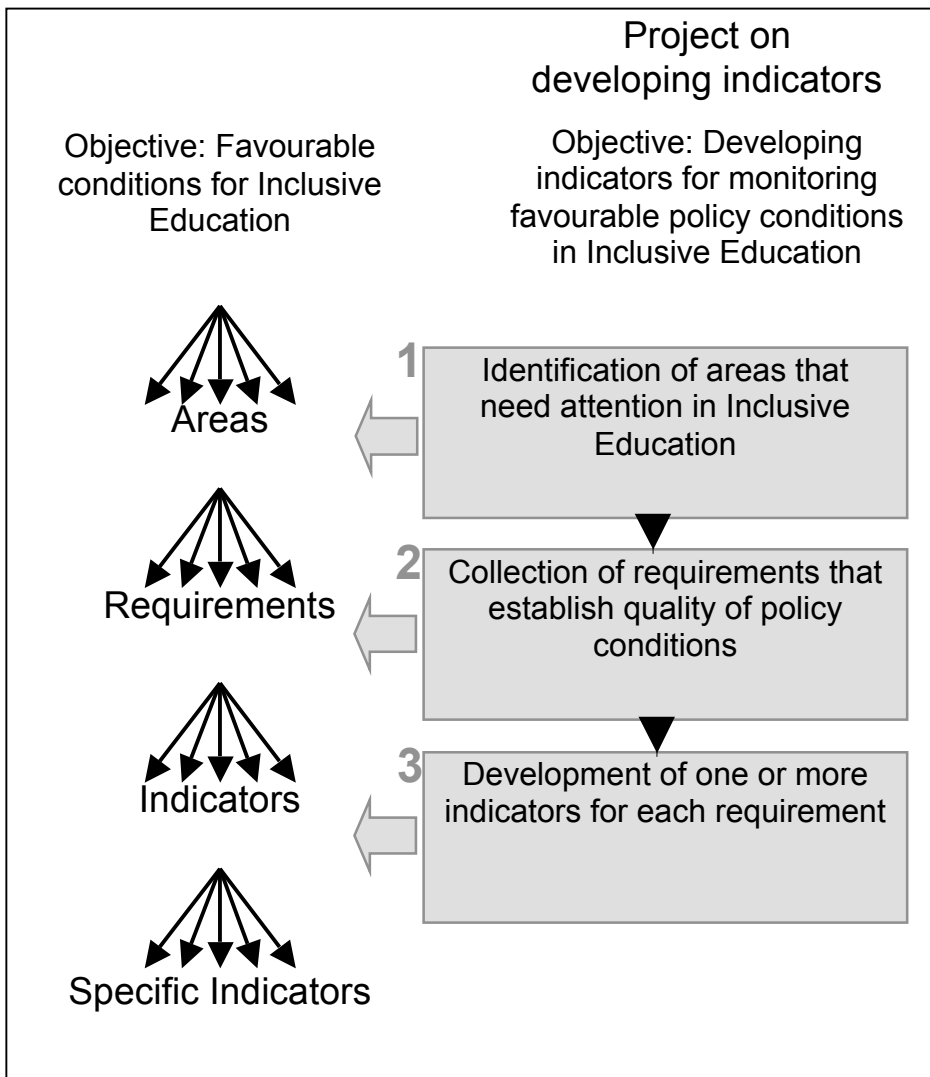


Figure 5: Development of indicators



Based upon the project goal of providing a set of indicators for monitoring policy conditions in the Agency, the project experts identified as a first step all *areas* that need further attention during the process of indicator development. Each area was then divided into relevant *requirements* that essentially represent quality of policy in the respective area. Finally, *indicators* were developed that help to identify favourable policy conditions for inclusive education. A final step – which was not planned to take place within the context of the project, but in scheduled follow-up work – is to identify one or more *specific indicators* per indicator, facilitating measurements and comparisons either with earlier measurements, or the data from other countries.

The breakdown of the field of education into areas, requirements, indicators and specific indicators as well as the development approach within this project are visualised in Figure 5. In the following these hierarchical levels are further explained.

### *Areas*

During the working group meetings, participants identified a number of areas – based upon the discussion among experts – that were considered important in the field of inclusive education and should be taken into account. The key areas identified cover the main aspects of inclusive education and provide the content framework to identifying and defining policy requirements that may support or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools. The identified areas are listed in section 7.1.

Taking into account the time limits of the project, as well as the fact that based on the Agency's multi-annual work programme other thematic projects and project updates already scheduled will deal with some of these topics, it was decided to give priority and focus to a subset of these areas. The decision was based upon perceived relevance by the participating experts and was influenced by the Agency plans for future project activities. Participants agreed to focus upon the areas of *legislation*, *participation*, and *financing*.

### *Requirements*

Requirements describe the conditions essential to inclusive education. The way requirements are phrased expresses the level of quality also required – for example: *full consistency* of national legislation on education with international agreements. The project



experts met twice during the project's lifetime and identified sets of requirements for the three selected areas. The resulting sets of requirements were finally reviewed by the Project Advisory Group and restructured to avoid overlaps or contradictions. All requirements identified are listed in section 7.2.

Obviously, there are many ways of fulfilling the collected requirements. The project aimed also at – where possible within the available time – collecting alternative ways of implementing most of these requirements.

### *Indicators*

Indicators point out aspects that represent one or more constituents of the requirement (e.g. consistency with international agreements). They do not contain a quality statement, nor do they pre-determine whether the specific indicators for measurement are of a qualitative or quantitative nature. However, indicators identify/name the particular aspect that needs to be assessed and monitored (e.g. the consistency). Several indicators can be associated with each requirement. The list of indicators is provided in section 7.3.

### *Specific indicators*

Specific indicators make the respective indicator operational. Each indicator may have one or more specific indicators, each being either a qualitative or a quantitative measure.

Specific indicators that are of a qualitative nature (e.g. level of consistency) require a process to make them operational based on a total pre-order of scale values (i.e. ordinal scale). The scale values to be defined have a total order, e.g. by using labels like 'poor', 'medium' or 'good' to express the order as well as the level of quality. Minimal qualitative scales contain just two values, e.g. 'exists' and 'does not exist', or 'yes' and 'no'. Lists of specific indicators that just make use of minimal qualitative scales can also be seen as checklists.

Quantitative specific indicators are always designed as a proportion between two quantifiable factors – this makes the specific indicator independent of the size of the population being looked at in the indicator.

The outcome in itself does not immediately provide information on whether the achieved and observed value is to be considered good






or not. Rather, the comparison with other values facilitates the assessment of the quantitative specific indicator. Comparison can be done either with values of the same country measured at different times (e.g. in the context of a trend analysis) to determine whether a certain situation develops in the intended direction, or with values of other countries to facilitate benchmarking and mutual learning.

Due to the immense efforts required to develop specific indicators of a sufficient level of quality, coverage of this issue was not scheduled for this one-year project.

## **7.1 Areas**

The list below identifies a selection of areas considered relevant for inclusive education at the policy level. This does not aim to represent a complete list nor necessarily contain all aspects of the same nature, relevance or level. Nevertheless, all key aspects discussed among the 32 experts in the course of the project fit under these headings:

1. Legislation and balance/consistency between inclusive education and other policy initiatives.
2. Clear national policy on inclusive education:
  - Acceptable national position about the educational concept of tracking;
  - Connection between general and special provision; prevention of the emergence of special needs.
3. Value statements underlying the curriculum as a point of reference:
  - Curriculum;
  - Certification.
4. Inclusive assessment systems:
  - Identification of SEN by using e.g. formative/on-going assessment for learning approaches with all learners.
5. Participation of pupils/students and parents in decision-making.
6. Connection between inclusive education and lifelong learning/early childhood intervention.

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7. Incentives in resources and support allocation; pre-resourcing of schools versus resourcing based upon diagnosis of needs.
  8. Financing and processes linked to funding mechanisms.
  9. Inter-sectoral co-operation.
  10. Inter-disciplinary support systems.
  11. Teacher training/training of professionals (including use of information and communication technology – ICT).
  12. Systems/cultures that encourage collaboration and teamwork among teachers.
  13. Differentiation, diversity and multi-cultural education in the classroom.
  14. Systems for accountability.

Within the framework of this project, 3 areas out of the 14 areas listed above were selected for further examination: legislation, participation and financing.

## **7.2 Requirements**

Presented below are the sets of requirements developed by the project experts, linked to the three key areas of policy conditions (legislation, participation, financing) that appear to be favourable for inclusive education at national level.

### *Requirements in the area of legislation*

Within this area, the balance and consistency between inclusive education and other policy initiatives is to be assessed. This requires the fulfilment of the following:

1. Full consistency of national legislation on education with international agreements.
2. Full consistency across different national laws.
3. Legislation on education covers all educational levels.
4. Legislation on education addresses the quality of training and professionalisation of teachers, psychologists, non-educational personnel, etc. with special regard to dealing with diversity.



5. Legislation on education fully addresses issues of flexibility, diversity and equity in all educational institutions for all pupils/students.
6. Legislation on education fully addresses the issues of monitoring and accountability for all educational institutions and pupils/students.

#### *Requirements in the area of participation*

Within this area, school admission and choice policies as well as the issues of curriculum, identification of educational needs and assessment are to be assessed. This requires the fulfilment of the following:

1. Admission policies promote access into mainstream school for all pupils/students.
2. National curriculum guidelines, if present, fully facilitate the inclusion of all pupils/students.
3. National testing systems, where present, fully follow the principles of inclusive assessment and do not act as a barrier to participation in assessment procedures or learning.
4. The identification of educational needs and assessment systems fully promote and support inclusion.

#### *Requirements in the area of financing*

Within this area financing and processes linked to funding mechanisms as well as incentives in resourcing and support allocation issues are to be assessed. This requires the fulfilment of the following:

1. Policy on financing fully supports inclusive education.
2. Policy on financing is fully based on educational needs.
3. Policy on financing fully facilitates flexible, effective and efficient responses to pupils/students' needs.
4. Policy on financing fully promotes support from related services and necessary inter-sectoral collaboration.



## 7.3 Indicators

### *Indicators in the area of legislation*

#### Indicator for requirement 1:

Full consistency of national legislation on education with international agreements:

- 1.1 Consistency of national legislation on education with international agreements (e.g. Salamanca statement, UN Conventions, etc.).

#### Indicator for requirement 2:

Full consistency across different national laws:

- 2.1 Consistency across different national laws (e.g. anti-discrimination law, education law, disability laws, children's rights law, etc.).

#### Indicators for requirement 3:

- 3.1 Legislation on education covers all educational levels.
- 3.2 Established procedures for early identification of SEN in relation to pupils/students, teachers and other professionals and different levels of education (e.g. pre-school, compulsory education, higher education, continuing education, lifelong learning).
- 3.3 Established procedures for as early as possible identification and assessment of SEN.
- 3.4 Sufficient resources for the early identification and assessment of SEN.
- 3.5 Support to pupils/students with SEN starts from the moment the needs are identified and is governed by the principles of inclusion.
- 3.6 Anti-discrimination legislation facilitates entrance to training, further and higher education.
- 3.7 Longitudinal data on transition and destinations (work, further and higher education, training) for different groups of pupils/students is collected by government or other agencies.
- 3.8 Established procedures for access, continuing attendance and progress of all pupils/students in all stages of education (pre-



school, compulsory education, higher and continuing education).

- 3.9 The institutions providing vocational training develop flexible curricula that may be adapted to suit the needs and expectations of all pupils/students.
- 3.10 Established procedures for the necessary support, reinforcement measures and instruments to facilitate information and guidance for pupils/students with SEN.

#### Indicator for requirement 4:


Legislation on education addresses the quality of training for teachers, psychologists, non-educational personnel, etc. with special regard to dealing with diversity:

- 4.1 Initial teacher training and in-service teacher training programmes include special education or inclusion related issues.
- 4.2 Teachers and other staff are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding inclusion so they are prepared to meet all pupils/students' needs in mainstream teaching.
- 4.3 Courses and professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills are available.
- 4.4 Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.
- 4.5 Dedicated resources are set aside for appropriate professional development related to meeting special needs in inclusive education.

#### Indicators for requirement 5:

Legislation on education fully addresses issues of flexibility, diversity and equity in all educational institutions for all pupils/students:

- 5.1 Rules/processes are established for inter-sector co-operation between the education, health, social sectors, etc.
- 5.2 Rules/processes are established for co-operation between the formal education system and non-statutory providers of education.

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- 5.3 Rules/processes are established to respect equal opportunities, equal treatment and non-discrimination against all pupils/students without any exceptions.
  - 5.4 Rules/processes are established for human and material resources to match all pupils'/students' needs.
  - 5.5 Rules/processes are established for flexible adaptations of curricula and Individual Educational Plans.
  - 5.6 Rules/processes are established for every pupil/student to receive a certificate when schooling is finished.
  - 5.7 Established procedures for consultation of non-statutory organisations and informal education systems.
  - 5.8 Rules/processes are established for pupils/students/parents/professionals with regard to participation in decision-making.
  - 5.9 Established procedures to settle disputes.
  - 5.10 Rules/processes are set out for flexibility, providing opportunities for amendments to suit the needs and expectations of all pupils/students, teachers, parents, in the different stages of the education system.

#### Indicators for requirement 6:

Legislation on education fully addresses the issues of monitoring and accountability for all educational institutions and pupils/students:

- 6.1 Established rules for systems to monitor the effectiveness of provision (such as self-evaluation, inspection, provision mapping).
- 6.2 Established rules for systems to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning support.
- 6.3 Established rules for systems to monitor levels of participation (enrolment, completion rates, drop out and exclusion rates) for different groups of pupils/students.

#### *Indicators in the area of participation*

#### Indicators for requirement 1:

Admission policies promote access into mainstream school for all pupils/students:



- 1.1 Established rules for schools to provide learning opportunities for all pupils/students regardless of background or learning abilities.
- 1.2 Established rules for adapted transport facilities.
- 1.3 Established rules for accessibility issues in the construction of buildings, equipment, infrastructure.
- 1.4 Established rules for technical tools to be in place for all pupils/students according to their individual needs.
- 1.5 Pupils'/students' views on their learning environment are taken into account.
- 1.6 Numbers and percentages of pupils/students with SEN in mainstream classes, units in mainstream schools, segregated learning institutions, excluded from the education system, are collected and monitored at different levels of the system.
- 1.7 Numbers and percentages of pupils/students with SEN educated under the responsibility of health, social welfare (children in care) or youth justice, children at home, are collected and monitored at different levels of the system.

#### Indicators for requirement 2:


National curriculum guidelines, if present, fully facilitate the inclusion of all pupils/students:

- 2.1 Established rules for flexibility in the curriculum to meet individual educational needs.
- 2.2 Established rules for curricula to be related to real life needs of pupils/students and not only to academic learning.

#### Indicators for requirement 3:

National testing systems, where present, fully follow the principles of inclusive assessment and do not act as a barrier to participation in assessment procedures or learning:

- 3.1 Established rules for a wide range of learning outcomes to be valued.
- 3.2 Established rules for assessment to include and encourage the achievements of all pupils/students.

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- 3.3 Established rules for the range of assessments used to allow all pupils/students to display their skills.
  - 3.4 Established rules for accommodation and modification of testing methods and tools to be available when necessary.

Indicators for requirement 4:

The identification of educational needs and assessment systems fully promote and support inclusion:

- 4.1 Procedures are non-discriminatory and based on best practice approaches.
- 4.2 Initial identification of a pupil's/student's needs is conducted from a holistic and primarily needs based view that links into not only teaching and learning, but also IEP development and review procedures.
- 4.3 Established rules for the system of identification of needs to be geared towards each pupil's/student's educational experiences.

*Indicators in the area of financing*

Indicators for requirement 1:

Policy on financing fully supports inclusive education:

- 1.1 Basic funding allocated to schools to allow them to respond to the needs of all pupils/students with minimal recourse to additional funding for specific needs.
- 1.2 Essential and adequate funding for full access to inclusive education for all pupils/students is provided by governments and does not depend on voluntary/charitable organisations.
- 1.3 Funding supports the provision of inclusive education to all pupils/students based on needs, abilities, strengths and interests.
- 1.4 Established rules for eligibility criteria for levels of additional allocation of funding, starting with systems level (local area/schools) and only then at individual pupil/student needs level (to avoid unhelpful labelling).

Indicators for requirement 2:

Policy on financing is fully based on educational needs:





- 2.1 Policy is based (primarily) on the identification of required provision rather than category/labels of pupil/student difficulties.
- 2.2 The educational system adapts to the needs of the pupil/student and not vice versa.
- 2.3 A clear definition of 'educational needs' is adopted in relevant legislation.
- 2.4 Requirements for inter-sectoral co-operation are addressed.
- 2.5 Funds are available for early identification of SEN and early intervention in response to pupils/students identified with SEN ('early' refers to the age of the pupil/student and/or to early signs of difficulties in learning at any age).
- 2.6 The parents and the pupil/student concerned have a significant influence on the identification/description of the pupil's/student's needs and necessary provision.
- 2.7 Appropriate funding is allocated to identify and respond to needs across the life stages (from pre-school to primary school to secondary school and university) and to support transition from one stage to another.
- 2.8 The availability and effective use of assistive technologies is supported, including new and emerging technologies, to assist in meeting pupils'/students' identified needs and promoting independence/autonomy.
- 2.9 Pupils/students with SEN are treated equitably, taking into account gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, socio-economic status and area of residence.

### Indicators for requirement 3:

Policy on financing fully facilitates flexible, effective and efficient responses to needs:

- 3.1 Rules and procedures related to the allocation of resources are easily understood by professionals, parents and the general public/citizens.
- 3.2 Resources can be managed flexibly at school and local levels (while ensuring sufficient centralised oversight and co-ordination to avoid unnecessary duplication).



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- 3.3 Funds are allocated on a timely basis for early identification and prevention.
  - 3.4 Rules are established taking into account the optimal solution in each field, in terms of: effectiveness, efficiency, competence, quality, etc.

Indicators to requirement 4:

Policy on financing fully promotes support from related services and necessary inter-sectoral collaboration:

- 4.1 Availability of a well-developed support service with an adequate level of professional expertise in the field of inclusive education.
- 4.2 Efficient and effective co-operation among institutions (government departments, schools, health and social services).
- 4.3 Professionals (psychologists, doctors, teachers, social workers and administrators, whether they are SEN specialists or not) work together.
- 4.4 Adequate funding is allocated to cover the necessary professional networking activities.



## 8. PROCEDURAL LINK TO THEMATIC PROJECTS

In section 7, the areas, requirements and indicators for education, as well as the link with specific indicators was introduced. The strength of this approach can be underlined by explaining how it fits into the procedures used in content-related projects that usually deliver recommendations relating to a particular thematic area.

Within Agency thematic projects, the first step is always the identification of areas within the field of education that need further attention. The Agency has two approaches for this identification. The first approach is to always allow for procedures designed to meet current needs of the Agency member countries that cannot be foreseen and planned. The second approach is a collection of Agency country input regarding those current, emerging and future needs that need be investigated. These needs are selected in the light of National priorities for special needs education as well as of European level priorities for education raised by the Council of Education Ministers. These needs are consolidated in Agency thematic projects.

The second step for thematic projects is – beyond reviewing the relevant international scientific literature in the selected area – to collect empirical evidence from experts across Europe. Various methods are applied for this collection (including case studies and field visits).

In the third step, an inductive reasoning process is applied and generalisations are made based on individual instances. These generalisations are phrased as recommendations. These recommendations express actions to achieve favourable conditions for inclusive education in the selected area.

Recommendations can be easily transcribed into requirements by not focusing on the actions required, but on the outcomes of these actions as favourable conditions for inclusive education.

Figure 6 below visualizes the different steps followed by the Agency thematic projects.

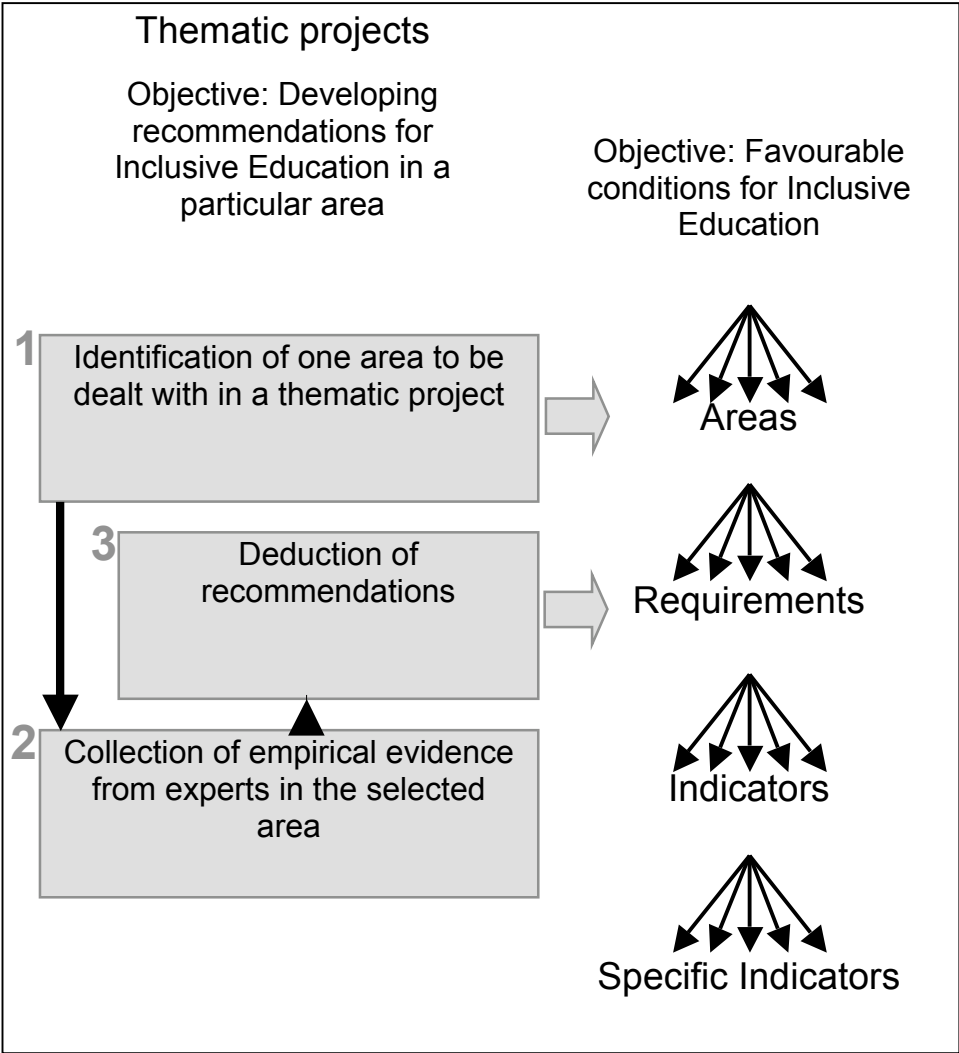


Figure 6: Procedural link to thematic projects



## 9. FURTHER STEPS

The objective of the project was to develop a set of indicators at national level, yet applicable at the European level that allows the review of conditions in each country that may support or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools. It has also provided a framework and a methodology to support countries to develop indicators at the national level in the areas they consider relevant for them. The following reflections are intended to provide a proposal to make the indicators operational by developing specific indicators and to make them applicable for monitoring and cross-country comparison.

### *Analysis of general requirements across the three areas*

There are indications that it might be possible to identify general requirements across the three areas and to develop indicators for each of the areas. For instance, a requirement such as 'consistency with international standards on inclusive education' can be translated to individual indicators in legislation, participation and financing. Such an approach could lead to a more coherent and comprehensive list of indicators and might be used in 'generating' indicators for where the current list has gaps.

### *Selection of a smaller set of indicators*

A subset of the indicators will provide countries with a tool to compare their own achievements with those of other countries. This smaller set of indicators should be selected by policy makers (i.e. the Representative Board Members of the Agency) on the basis of perceived relevance for mutual comparison at the European level. Based on this smaller set of indicators, a follow-up project could develop specific indicators to make the indicators measurable.

### *Definition of specific indicators*

The aim of this step would be that each specific indicator would provide evidence that a certain condition exists, or certain results have or have not been achieved. These specific indicators would enable decision-makers to assess progress towards the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, goals, and objectives of policies or programmes (monitoring). Indicators as described in section 7 can both include a specification of quantifiable targets and measures of



quality. Both qualitative and quantitative aspects provide useful information and are necessary when presenting a balanced and reasonable picture of movement towards achievement of goals and objectives. However, keeping the target group in mind, all specific indicators should also, among other things, produce simple information that is communicable and easily understood by both the provider and the user of the information. Specific indicators may then be one factor – among many – that can be used in making decisions about policy directions and priorities.

As described in section 7, specific indicators make the respective indicator operational. To achieve this aim, specific indicators can be developed along one or more of the following lines:

- The specific indicator quantifies a particular aspect of the respective indicator;
- The specific indicator denotes whether a certain aspect of the indicator is existent or not (e.g. as a checkpoint);
- The specific indicator defines the extent to which the indicator's quality attribute can be observed (level of quality);
- The specific indicator details the extent to which implemented policies differ or agree with written legislation or agreements (level of coherence);
- The specific indicator assesses the extent to which the system ensures that the quality condition (expressed in the indicator) is given in all cases (level of coverage).

Each specific indicator should be equipped with a short, but unambiguously phrased definition and rationale.

#### *Creating suitable scales for the specific indicators*

In a subsequent step, scales need to be developed for each specific indicator. With regard to qualitative specific indicators, potential scales might range from a bi-polar type (e.g. 'exists/does not exist') up to ordinal scales with a suitable number of values, each clearly distinguishable and mutually distinct (e.g. 'consistent/minor inconsistencies/major inconsistencies/not consistent at all'). Quantitative specific indicators need to be expressed as proportions (i.e. 1 in 4).



For quantitative specific indicators, the calculation method needs to be elaborated upon and sources and quality of data need to be defined. For qualitative specific indicators, guidelines are required to reduce the subjectivity of scales by detailing in which situations which value should be chosen, and what level should be chosen in case of doubt or ambiguity.

### *Identifying the group of evaluators*


Particularly in the field of qualitative measures, the subjective view of the evaluator influences the choice of the scale values. For instance, if a specific indicator intends to measure the level of participation of parents in decision-making processes, the parents' point of view might differ from that of professionals. Consequently, a further step would be to investigate which groups should be involved, so that the outcomes of evaluation provide a realistic view of the particular policy aspect.

### *Increasing inter-rater agreement*

As specific indicators are intended in the first instance as a tool for countries, the set of indicators would be designed to be used within a self-evaluation procedure. However, the subjectivity of scales (see previous paragraph) as well as poor inter-rater agreement are potential risks that come with approaches that are not neutral assessments provided by a single assessment authority. Making measurements comparable across countries requires complete independence of the people taking the measurements (i.e. the rater). Inter-rater agreement, also known as inter-rater reliability or concordance, is the degree of agreement among different raters regarding the same item to be judged. The higher the inter-rater agreement is, the better the homogeneity or consensus in the ratings given by different judges. Clearly, each rating instrument should feature a sufficient degree of this quality characteristic. If different raters do not agree sufficiently, measures are required to improve the degree of agreement, which can be achieved by reworking the scales or an improved training of raters.

### *Data aggregation, disaggregation and interpretation*

For certain specific indicators it might be necessary to describe how data aggregation from local via regional up to a national level should take place, and how qualitative scale values have to be handled in this aggregation procedure. At the same time the dimensions along



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which a disaggregation on national level is suitable should be discussed and decided for each specific indicator. For instance, some specific indicators might be disaggregated by level of education, by level of administration (e.g. local, regional, national), by gender or age, by geographical location or by type of institution.

Finally, the way in which outcomes of each specific indicator should be interpreted should be described. Linking this guidance to interpretation of the definitions of each specific indicator prevents – or at least minimises – the risk of misinterpretations by laypersons that make use of the set of indicators.

### *Process design*

In the final step it is necessary to reflect on the essential procedures both on a national and on the European level to manage the process of data collection, interpretation and feedback. Periods when data collection takes place need to be defined. People responsible for the collection of data need to be appointed and instructed. At the European level, procedures for the reporting of outcomes need to be agreed and established.

### *Future work*

Due to limited resources, some restrictions had already been made in the context of this project. As described in section 7, from the list of areas for inclusive education, three had been selected for closer review but other areas also need to be covered in the future. In the development of future indicators all these areas will need to be reflected upon, or the indicator set will not be complete (i.e. not covering inclusive education in its breadth). Not surprisingly, the list of areas contains some topics that have been addressed in the past or are being addressed at present in other Agency projects. Outcomes (e.g. recommendations) derived from project work might be a good basis for developing indicators in that specific area (see section 8 for an explanation of how recommendations correspond to the approach taken in this report). The list can also be read as an agenda of forthcoming topics to be covered, either by projects, seminars, conferences, or other events, both on a national as well as on the European level.





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## GLOSSARY

*Consistency/level of consistency* – the degree of uniformity, standardisation and freedom from contradiction among the parts of a system or component.

*Data aggregation* – any process in which information is gathered and expressed in a summary form, for purposes such as statistical analysis.

*Disaggregation* – to separate or break data down into component parts (and the opposite of aggregation).

*Indicator* – an indicator is defined as parameter, or a value derived from parameters, which aims to provide information about the state of a phenomenon.

*Inter-rater agreement* – the degree of agreement among raters. It gives a score of how much consensus there is in the ratings given by them.

*Measurable* – something capable of being numerically measured in some way.

*Monitoring* – the act of observing something (and sometimes keeping a record of it).

*Operational* – a process or series of actions for achieving a result.

*Operational indicator* – an indicator that has been defined in a way so that it can be measured.

*[The] Rater* – a person who provides a rating or assessment.

*Sensor* – the part of a measuring instrument that responds directly to changes in the environment.



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Development of a set of indicators – for inclusive education in Europe presents the main findings of an Agency project involving 23 European countries.

The aim of the project was to develop a methodology that would lead to a set of indicators suitable for monitoring developments at the national level, but that could also be applied at the European level. Such a set of indicators requires a clear focus on the policy conditions that may support or hinder the development of inclusive education within schools. Several European and international institutions have undertaken work in developing indicators in specific policy areas and this project has built upon those experiences to develop indicators in the field of inclusive education.

The project led to two major outcomes:

- Firstly, the development and implementation of a bottom-up approach to identifying relevant indicators. This approach was based on the consensus of the project experts;
- Secondly, specifying an initial set of indicators in three key areas for inclusive education – legislation, participation and financing.

Overall, it has been the intention of the project to develop suitable indicators that support constructive comparisons and mutual learning from good – that is effective and successful – approaches to inclusive education.

This report presents the framework, rationale, aims and objectives of the project, as well as the methodology used to develop the set of indicators for monitoring developments in inclusive education.

