

COUNTRY POLICY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Estonia



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Please note that legislation may have changed since the analysis grid was completed. Anyone using the grid should [contact the Representative Board Member](#) for more details.

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Section 1: Country priorities for education

The text below presents the main country priorities in the field of education, with special attention to the development of inclusive education.

Country priorities

Estonian education policy priorities are set in the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020.

The general goal of the Lifelong Learning Strategy is to provide all people in Estonia with learning opportunities that are tailored to their needs and capabilities throughout their whole lifespan, in order for them to maximise opportunities for dignified self-actualisation within society, in their work and in their family life.

Two of the main strategy goals target inclusive education:

- Change in the approach to learning. The goal is to implement an approach to learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, the acquisition of learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship in the work at all levels and in all types of education.
- Equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning. Equal opportunities for lifelong learning have been created for every individual.

[\(The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020\)](#).

The principle of inclusive education is laid down in the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act. According to the law, every child has the right to attend a school in their residential area or study in a mainstream school with an adapted curriculum and to receive different kinds of support.



Section 2: Analysis grid

Measure 1: To improve inclusive education and to ensure that good quality education is accessible for all

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.1 There is a clearly stated policy for the promotion of quality in inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to widen access to education and to promote full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realise their potential. Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 According to the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, everyone has the right to education (OoP p. 1).</p> <p>1.1.2 According to the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act, Estonia has an inclusive education policy and every child has the right to attend a school in their residential area or study in a mainstream school with an adapted curriculum (national curriculum for basic schools, simplified national curriculum for basic schools) and to receive different kinds of support (OoP p. 1).</p>
<p>1.2 Legislation and policy are consistent with the principles of the UNCRC and the UNCRPD.</p> <p><i>(Legislation and policy and upholds the right of all learners to full participation in school with their own local peer group.)</i></p>	<p>1.2.1 Estonia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in April 2012 (OoP p. 1).</p> <p>1.2.2 According to the disability policy of the Republic of Estonia, the right of people with special needs to pre-primary, basic, secondary and higher education must be guaranteed according to the principle of equal opportunity. People with special needs have the right to inclusive education and the state must guarantee that right (OoP, pp. 1–2).</p> <p>1.2.3 Rural municipality and city governments shall provide children with physical disabilities, speech disorders, sensory disabilities or intellectual disabilities or children who need special support or special care (hereinafter, children with special needs) with the opportunity to develop and grow in the pre-primary institution of their residence. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, p. 6)</p> <p>1.2.4 The structure of the education system, along with the national standards of education, shall</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	provide opportunities for everyone to move from one level of education to the next. (Education Act, p. 3)
<p>1.3 The concept of inclusion is clarified in education policy as an agenda that increases quality and equity for all learners.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to address underachievement of all vulnerable groups including children with disabilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.3.1 Upon the organisation of the studies of a learner with special educational needs, the principles of inclusive studies, according to which learners with special educational needs usually study in a mainstream class of their school of residence, are followed. (Basics Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act, p. 19)</p>
<p>1.4 Legislation and policy for inclusive education is cross-sectoral.</p> <p><i>(Policy outlines procedures to ensure the efficient co-ordination of services, as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities.)</i></p>	–
<p>1.5 There is a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality inclusive education at national, regional and / or organisational levels.</p>	<p>1.5.1 The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 guides the most important developments in the area of education. It is the basis on which the government will make its decisions for educational funding for the years 2014–2020 and for the development of programmes that support the achievement of necessary changes.</p> <p>1.5.2 Increasing the efficiency of the co-operation between the various institutions (local authorities, county government, ministry, Chancellor of Justice) that exercise supervision in guaranteeing the rights of the child. (Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020, in Estonian)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.6 Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.</p>	<p>1.6.1 The state and local governments shall ensure that everyone in Estonia has the opportunity to fulfil the obligation to attend school and the opportunity to engage in lifelong learning, under the conditions and pursuant to the procedure prescribed by legislation. (Republic of Estonia Education Act)</p> <p>1.6.2 Within the territory of Estonia, the state and local governments shall ensure that opportunities exist for the acquisition of education in Estonian at all levels of education in public educational institutions and universities. (Republic of Estonia Education Act)</p> <p>1.6.3 The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 considers every individual as a learner – children as well as young people and adults. Learning must become an integral part of an individual’s active approach towards life.</p>
<p>1.7 Policy has the goal of supporting all teachers to have positive attitudes towards all learners.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>1.8 Policy requires learning material to be accessible.</p>	<p>1.8.1 In order to support the objectives and the achievement of the study results outlined in the curricula, one of the ‘Digital focus’ programme priorities is to create digital learning resources for learners with special educational needs. Digital learning resources will create better opportunities to modify different levels of study materials and will help to take in consideration learners development. The objective is to create equal opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone. (‘Digital focus programme 2016–2019’, in Estonian)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.9 Policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Support structures focus on different forms of educational resource centres that are locally organised to offer support to individual or clusters of schools.)</i></p>	<p>1.9.1 Counselling and instruction from a special education teacher, social educator and psychologist must be available to pupils. If the school does not employ any such specialists, these services must be ordered from regional study counselling centres. The state-funded National Agency of Educational Support Services is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the availability of free career and study guidance services for pupils, teachers and parents; • the quality of the services; • the systematic and co-ordinated provision of educational support services at the county level. <p>Sixteen Educational Support Service Centres are established at each county level, the task of which is to counsel and support pupils, teachers and parents in organising study for children with special educational needs. (p. 7)</p> <p>1.9.2 The counselling committee has no less than five members. The counselling committee must include a special education teacher, a speech therapist, a school psychologist, a social worker and a representative of the county or city government. Where necessary, the counselling committee may involve other experts in its work. The establisher of the counselling committee will establish the rules of procedure of the committee.</p> <p>[RT I, 11.07.2013, 1 – entry into force 01.09.2014] (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>1.9.3 The Authority of the Ministry of Education and Research co-ordinates and supervises local governments and other ministries of the Republic in the organisation of education. (Republic of Estonia Education Act)</p>
<p>1.10 Policies outline a continuum of support for children and young people in schools, to meet the full diversity of</p>	<p>1.10.1 The school head appoints a person whose duty is to organise co-operation between support specialists, instructors of talented learners and teachers (hereinafter, special educational needs co-ordinator) for the purpose of supporting the teaching and development of a learner with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports and instructs a teacher in</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
learners' needs.	<p>identifying special educational needs and makes proposals to the teacher, parent and school head regarding further educational work, application of measures offered by the school in support of the development of the learner or conducting further investigations, thereby co-operating with teachers and support specialists. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>1.10.2 Local governments and pre-primary childcare institutions also use the services provided by regional counselling centres (speech therapists, special education teachers, psychological and social-pedagogical counselling) that receive state support.</p>
1.11 Policy outlines strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.	–
<p>1.12 Policy outlines the development of the role of special schools as a resource to increase the capability of mainstream schools and improve support for all learners.</p> <p><i>(The specialist knowledge and skills of special school / resource centre are maintained and further developed so as to enhance support for learners, such as those with low-incidence disabilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.12.1 Special schools for learners with hearing and visual impairments act as resource centres and provide support for teachers, learners and families in mainstream schools.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tartu Emajõe School for learners with visual impairments • Tartu Hiie School for learners with hearing impairments.

Measure 1 evaluative comments

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Measure 2: To support improved co-operation, including greater involvement of parents and local community

Agency recommendation	Findings
2.1 The full involvement of families in all educational processes is outlined in legislation and policy.	<p>2.1.1 It is up to parents to choose between the local mainstream school and a segregated special school. (p. 2)</p> <p>2.1.2 Developmental conversations with each child and their parents must take place at least once each academic year. (p. 6)</p> <p>2.1.3 The learners or their parents – and, where necessary, teachers and support specialists – are involved in drawing up an individual curriculum. (p. 8)</p> <p>2.1.4 Teachers are required to provide advice on issues of learning and teaching to the parents of children who attend the pre-primary institution and the parents of children who do not attend the pre-primary institution but who reside in the catchment area, if the parents so request. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, p. 9)</p> <p>2.1.5 In order to co-ordinate co-operation between the school and the parents, the school head calls a meeting of the parents of the learners studying in the stationary form of study, thereby giving all parents the chance to participate in the parents’ meeting at least once a year. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act, p. 22)</p>
2.2 Policy for inclusive education places learners and their families at the centre of all actions.	<p>2.2.1 All decisions that the school makes about children should be approved by parents. The recommendations of the counselling committee are mandatory for the school organising the learners’ studies and a parent must grant their approval. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>2.2.2 Upon organisation of their activities, schools act on the basis of the expectations of society expressed in national curricula and the needs and interests of learners, taking into account the proposals of the learners and parents as well as the characteristics of the region. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>2.3 Sharing information among professionals and families is a policy priority.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Healthcare professionals should advise parents and teachers on issues related to children’s health. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, p. 9)</p> <p>2.3.2 Learners and their parents have the right to receive information and explanations from the school regarding the organisation of studies and the rights and duties of learners. The school is required to grant the parents of a learner studying in the stationary form of study access to the information that is in the possession of the school regarding the learners. By a written application, a learner with active legal capacity can prohibit access to the information that is in the possession of the school regarding the learner. Parents’ access to the information about whether a learner is enrolled in the school or not may be prohibited only with good reason. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act, p. 22)</p>
<p>2.4 Policy has the goal of supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.</p>	<p>2.4.1 In order to co-ordinate co-operation between the school and the parents, the school head calls a meeting of the parents of the learners studying in the stationary form of study, thereby giving all parents the chance to participate in the parents’ meeting at least once a year. In the event of the stationary form of study, the school head is obligated, at the request of the parents of at least one-fifth of the learners in the class, to call a meeting of the parents of the learners in the class. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>2.4.2 One of the activities of the National Health Plan 2009–2020 is to increase the awareness and skills of parents to promote the health and support the development of toddlers and pre-primary children.</p>
<p>2.5 Schools are expected and supported to involve a wider range of partners and foster formal and informal networks that support their practice.</p>	<p>–</p>



Measure 2 evaluative comments

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Measure 3: To develop monitoring strategies, establishing a comprehensive accountability and evaluation framework for inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>3.1 Policy describes clear mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness and quality in inclusive education.</p>	<p>3.1.1 According to the Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act and the Vocational Educational Institutions Act, the evaluation of schooling and education is regarded as one of the obligations of the teachers' council in the educational institution. (p. 7)</p> <p>3.1.2 For each level of education (pre-primary, basic, secondary and higher education), the state establishes requirements, called national standards of education. These are set out in national curricula which determine general objectives of the respective educational level, required content, estimated length of study period, required knowledge, skills and experience. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.1.3 The organisation of external evaluation of the study results of general education institutions, standard determined tests, basic school final examinations and national examinations, are carried out through Foundation Innove. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.1.4 Thematic inspection is exercised by the county governor and is carried out on the basis of the inspection priorities established by the Ministry.</p> <p>The priority in pre-primary education and general education in 2016/2017 is taking the individual needs and abilities of children and learners into consideration when implementing study and educational activities. The purpose is to evaluate how an age-appropriate, safe, positively affecting, and evolving environment has been created for the learners to study and grow. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.1.5 The Ministry of Education and Research has set a goal that in the assessment of learners as well</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>as institutions, it is very important to find the right balance between summative and formative assessment and to develop the institution’s self-analysis and reflection skills. Assessment results are analysed in their dynamics and a differential approach is implemented: the stronger ones get recognition, while schools with weaker results are provided with the assistance they may need. The main activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating assessment tools for assessing the learners’ development in key competences. • Developing quality indicators that measure the learning and educational processes’ results, effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction. The results for all institutions are publicly available and comparable between institutions. • Developing external evaluation criteria for educational institutions. The external evaluation is connected to the institution’s self-analysis, which will have an emphasis on the learning and educating process, its effectiveness and results, as well as the results of the stakeholder satisfaction questionnaire. The external evaluation gives the educational institution competent feedback, and the application of suggested improvements outlined in the report are supported. <p>(The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020)</p> <p>3.1.6 Line of action: Supervision for guaranteeing the rights of the child</p> <p>Monitoring and regular analysis of the rights stipulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020, in Estonian)</p>
<p>3.2 Monitoring procedures ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources at regional or organisational levels are addressed.</p>	<p>–</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>3.3 Accountability measures that impact upon educational professionals' work reflect the importance of wider learner achievements.</p>	<p>3.3.1 According to the law, pre-primary childcare institutions, general education schools and vocational schools are obliged to conduct internal evaluation. An educational institution shall prepare a complete internal evaluation report on its activities at least once every three academic years. The internal evaluation report is based on criteria which define the fields to be evaluated. The criteria, as well as data on the institution's activities, include quality indicators on special needs education. (p. 7)</p> <p>3.3.2 The objective of internal evaluation is to ensure conditions for child development and consistent development of the educational institution. This is done by identifying the institution's strengths and areas for improvement. Based on that, an action plan for implementing the development plan is established. During the internal evaluation, the educative activities and administration are analysed and their effectiveness is evaluated. Internal evaluation is linked to the development plan of the institution. Firstly, it analyses its performance and then prepares a development plan. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.3.3 The criteria of internal evaluation (leadership and administration, personnel management, co-operation with interest groups, resource management, the education and schooling process; results related to a child/learner, personnel and interest groups and statistics of the educational institution) are advisory to the educational institutions. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.3.4 The internal evaluation report points out the strengths of an educational institution and the areas that need improvement. Educational institutions use the results in their development plans. All educational institutions submit data to the Estonian Education Information System about the internal evaluation reports and the time of the composition of the adviser's feedback reports. Thus, the Ministry can review whether internal evaluations have been conducted in an educational institution and whether it has received advisory services. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.3.5 The results of internal evaluations are public, but their publication on the website of the educational institution is not mandatory. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
3.4 Policy outlines common standards for service and provision evaluation for use across health, education and social services.	–
3.5 Policy outlines how to involve families in the process of evaluating quality of services.	3.5.1 The Estonian Education Information System provides everyone with an opportunity to review the performance indicators of educational institutions. Data established by the minister's regulation are available for each educational institution.
3.6 Policy describes mechanisms to evaluate demand for services.	3.6.1 A counselling committee is competent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recommend an integrated or special group for a learner with special needs;• assign a suitable curriculum for a learner with special needs;• suggest that a learner with special needs goes to a school or class for learners with special needs, with the consent of a parent;• recommend that the learning outcomes prescribed in the national curriculum for basic schools be replaced or decreased or exemption be given from studying a compulsory subject;• recommend study focusing on one learner;• give recommendations on creating the conditions necessary for inclusive study at school and for implementing such study. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act) (p. 4) 3.6.2 The counselling committee can also recommend the implementation of individual curricula with replaced or reduced learning outcomes, as prescribed in the national curriculum for basic schools, or exempt a learner from studying a compulsory subject. (p. 4)



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>3.7 Policy supports opportunities for school teams to evaluate their practice through involvement in research and development activities.</p>	<p>3.7.1 The administration of an educational institution is responsible for carrying out internal evaluations. The entire school staff participates in internal evaluation. An internal evaluation report is discussed by the school staff council and approved by the board of trustees and the owner. The procedure of internal evaluation is imposed by the head teacher. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p> <p>3.7.2 The goal of performance indicators is to provide educational institutions with an opportunity to monitor their indicators as a trend, e.g. compare the indicators of the last three years as well as compare them with average indicators of educational institutions of the same type. As performance indicators of educational institutions are publicly available, they also provide information about educational institutions to learners, parents, owners of educational institutions, and other interest groups. (The Inspectorate of Education of Estonia)</p>

Measure 3 evaluative comments

For example, the following information is available concerning general education institutions:

- support for learners with special educational needs;
- the ratio of learners repeating a class course;
- the results of final examinations in basic schools and state examinations in secondary schools by subject;
- the number of teachers with the required qualifications;
- the average amount of in-service training of teachers (in hours);
- the age profile of teachers;
- the proportion of teachers who left the school during the academic year out of the total number of teachers;



- the percentage of female teachers out of the total number of school teachers;
- the learner-to-teacher ratio;
- the average size of classes;
- the number of learners per computer;
- the number of teachers per computer.

Measure 4: To improve the cost-effectiveness of the education system, combining efficiency, effectiveness, equity and inclusion

Agency recommendation	Findings
4.1 National level inclusive education strategies are linked to long-term financial support.	<p>4.1.1 The state budget covers all the expenses of state schools. Most special schools are state-owned (p. 3)</p> <p>4.1.2 Municipal education institutions (pre-primary childcare institutions and schools) are financed by the state and from local budgets. In addition, revenue from foundations, donations and income received from paid services, etc., may be considered both in the case of state and municipal schools. (p. 3)</p> <p>4.1.3 The management body and the state cover private education institutions' expenses (p. 3)</p> <p>4.1.4 The management of the financial affairs of educational institutions shall be separate from pedagogical supervision and control. (Education Act)</p>
4.2 Funding policies and structures provide flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion.	<p>4.2.1 Upon allocation of a subsidy, no financial distinction is made based on whether the pupil with special educational needs (SEN) is in a mainstream class or a segregated special class – this will be decided by the school and by parents (p. 3)</p> <p>4.2.2 The allocated state educational subsidy for pupils with SEN considers pupils' specific character and needs and supports the implementation of inclusive education. (p. 3)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>4.2.3 Capitation fees arise in the case of pupils with SEN who are legally eligible to receive special education that differs from the national basic school curriculum. These facilitate flexible organisation of instruction while the pupil is still involved in a mainstream class. (p. 3)</p> <p>4.2.4 Local government is responsible for creating a study environment in line with the needs of pupils with SEN. (p. 3)</p>
<p>4.3 There are long-term funding commitments to support collaborative initiatives between various school-based, resource centre and research teams.</p>	<p>4.3.1 The state ensures the availability of special teachers, speech therapists and psychological and social pedagogical counselling services free of charge for all schools. Local government ensures the availability of support specialists at the school level. (p. 3)</p>
<p>4.4 Policy outlines mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure and implementation that informs cost-effectiveness issues.</p>	<p>4.4.1 Each year, educational institutions' performance indicators are published online. (p. 7)</p> <p>4.4.2 The Estonian Education Information System creates the possibility for everyone to inspect the performance indicators of pre-primary childcare institutions, basic schools, upper-secondary schools, vocational educational institutions and continuing education institutions. (Education Act)</p>

Measure 4 evaluative comments

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Measure 5: To increase participation in good quality inclusive early childhood education and care and enrolment rates in pre-school education

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>5.1 Policy clearly respects the rights and the needs of children and their families.</p>	<p>5.1.1 A pre-primary institution for children with special needs is generally a mainstream nursery school and, in certain cases, a special pre-primary institution (there are only three of these). (p. 5)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>5.1.2 According to the Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, schooling and education in pre-primary childcare institutions should be based upon the study programmes of childcare institutions, which comply with the general study programmes for pre-primary education. Each child has the right to teacher assistance in order to reach the goals set by the curricula. The principles and arrangements for supporting learners with special needs are established in the curriculum of a children's institution. (p. 7)</p> <p>5.1.3 Children acquiring pre-primary education in a pre-primary institution have the right to a mentally and physically healthy environment and to a daily schedule, activities which support self-confidence and mental alertness and the all-round assistance and support of teachers. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, p. 7)</p> <p>5.1.4 After parental leave, it is possible for all children from 1.5 to 7 years old to attend a pre-primary childcare institution. For children with special needs, conditions will be created for learning in integration groups together with other children. If there are no possibilities to establish an integration group in a local children's institution, the local municipality or city government creates special groups or establishes special pre-schools. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act)</p> <p>5.1.5 The curriculum of a pre-primary institution is the source document for schooling and education in the pre-primary institution. Pre-primary institutions shall prepare their curricula based on the national curriculum. The curriculum of a pre-primary institution shall be prepared and developed with the participation of the childcare institution's teachers and by involving the parents. The following shall be set out in the curriculum of a childcare institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the principles for and the organisation of analysis and assessment of the development of children;• the principles for and the organisation of fostering the development of children with special needs;



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principles for and the organisation of co-operation with parents. <p>Promotion of a child’s development, including inclusive education, is teamwork for which the head of the childcare institution shall be responsible (National curriculum for pre-primary childcare institutions, in Estonian).</p> <p>5.1.6 Taking into account each child’s age, sex and individual needs and characteristics, the main function of a pre-primary institution is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create possibilities and conditions for the formation of a healthy personality and a child who is socially and mentally alert, self-confident, considerate of others and who values the environment; • maintain and strengthen the child’s health of and to promote their emotional, moral, social, mental and physical development. <p>(Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act)</p>
<p>5.2 Support is available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child.</p> <p><i>(Support focuses upon and what is in the child’s best interests.)</i></p>	<p>5.2.1 Co-operation between teachers and personnel and the inclusion of parents are important factors in the work of a pre-primary childcare institution. Both contribute to the creation of a study environment which supports the child’s development. The responsibility of teachers and parents has grown with regard to assessment and supporting a child’s development (e.g. holding development interviews with children). (National curriculum for pre-primary childcare institutions, in Estonian)</p> <p>5.2.2 If necessary, the teachers of the group, in co-operation with a speech therapist/special education teacher, other specialists and the child’s parents, shall prepare an individual development plan at the beginning of the academic year. At least once an academic year, a summary shall be made of the implementation of the individual development plan, the suitability of the environment for development and the future needs of the child. (National curriculum for pre-primary childcare institutions, in Estonian)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>5.2.3 The Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020 sets a goal to improve the quality and accessibility of counselling and therapy services. Its main activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mapping the counselling needs of parents of children with special needs; • creating a family counselling system in the case of births of children with special needs or later manifestation of special needs; • standardisation and legalisation of psychological help; • analysing the opportunities to improve the accessibility of psychological help and making the required changes.
<p>5.3 Policy outlines how ECI services should be provided for children and families as early as possible and as quickly as possible, following identification of need.</p>	<p>5.3.2 In order to ensure the availability of pedagogical and psychological counselling, the national European Social Fund programme, ‘Developing an Educational Counselling System’, has been implemented. It aims to ensure early childhood intervention in all regions, improve the counselling system and train service providers. The <i>Rajaleidja keskused</i> counselling centres established as a result of the programme will be used to improve collaboration in the fields of education, social affairs and healthcare for identifying the particular needs of children with special needs and their families and providing them with support. (www.innove.ee/et/haridustugiteenused/oppenoustamisteenused)</p> <p>5.3.3 The Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020, drafted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, establishes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a system for evaluating a child’s developmental needs and early intervention; • development of guidelines and provision of training for specialists who work with small children; • organising the provision of information to a broader target group that helps to identify a child’s developmental needs;



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community-based development of a system for early detection and intervention for at-risk children. <p>Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020</p>
<p>5.4 Policy states that in risk situations, the child’s rights should come first.</p>	<p>5.4.1 According to the Republic of Estonia Child Protection Act, child protection based on the principle that of the child’s best interests shall be a primary consideration at all times and in all cases. (Child Protection Act)</p> <p>For all decisions affecting a child and in choosing between different options upon planning a decision (hereinafter, deciding together), the child’s best interests shall be ascertained and shall be the primary consideration in making decisions. (Child Protection Act)</p> <p>5.4.2 Upon ensuring the rights and well-being of children, the following principles provided for in the convention shall be based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has the inherent right to life, survival and development. • Every child has the right to equal treatment without any discrimination. • In all actions concerning children, the child’s best interests shall be a primary consideration. • Every child has the right to an independent opinion in all matters affecting the child and the right to express their views. <p>(Child Protection Act)</p>
<p>5.5 Policy measures and guidelines clearly define quality standards for early childhood services and provision.</p>	<p>5.5.1 According to the national curriculum for pre-primary childcare institutions, the common objective and standards for teaching and education is versatile and consistent development of children in co-operation between home and pre-primary childcare institutions. (National curriculum for pre-primary childcare institutions, in Estonian)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>5.5.2 The National Health Plan 2009–2020 (Ministry of Social Affairs) sets the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capacity of pre-primary childcare institutions in promoting children’s health, supporting children’s readiness for school, ensuring inter alia high-quality age-appropriate health education of pre-primary children and teaching of social skills according to the national curriculum. <p>Recommended activities to be applied at the level of local governments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create possibilities for ensuring the availability of pre-primary education and free pre-teaching to all pre-primary children. • Increase the availability of support services (speech therapy, psychological help, special needs education) for children with special developmental and educational needs, if necessary, in co-operation with county counselling centres. • Determine the risks of injury and poisoning among children and young people and apply relevant prevention measures.
<p>5.6 Early childhood guidance is developed jointly by departments of health, education and social services.</p>	<p>5.6.1 At the end of 2015, the Minister of Education and Research adopted the new concept of early childhood education and care. Its purpose is to ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and care for all children between 1.5 and 7 years old and to establish an integrated approach, instead of two parallel systems (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act and Social Welfare Act) that exist today. The planned changes will give local governments more flexibility in organising the provision of early childhood education and care possibilities based on the needs of children and families.</p> <p>https://edhs.hm.ee/dhs/Active/layouts/RM/ViewDocument.aspx?ID=693513&Source=https%3a%2f%2ffp-veeb.hm.ee%2fdhs%2fActive%2fdocumentList.aspx%3fViewName=Registreeritud+dokumendid%26ViewId=0DBEDE2F-7FC6-4D56-AA8F-E2E12CCFF849)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
5.7 Policy for early childhood services supports cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary working at regional and local levels.	5.7.1 Local governments and pre-primary childcare institutions use the services provided by regional counselling centres (speech therapists, special education teachers, psychological and social-pedagogical counselling). www.innove.ee/UserFiles/Karjääriteenused/Õppenõustamisteenused/Programm_Oppenou_sus_aren_damine_programmdokument_27.06.11.pdf
5.8 Policy ensures there are pre-school places offered to children coming from ECI services/provision.	5.8.1 A rural municipality or city government shall, at the request of the parents, provide all children from eighteen months to seven years of age, whose residence is in the territory of the given rural municipality or city and whose residence coincides with the residence of at least one parent, the opportunity to attend a pre-primary institution in the catchment area. A rural municipality or city government may, with the parent's consent, substitute the place of a child from eighteen months to three years of age in a pre-primary institution with a childcare service, the financing of which shall be based on the provisions of subsections 27 (3) and (4) of this Act. (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act, p. 5)
5.9 Policy outlines how cost-free services/provision are made available for families.	5.9.1 Fees in all early childhood education and care settings are regulated and range from Purchasing Power Standard (PPS) 0 to 78, with an average of PPS 35 monthly (food is an additional PPS 2 per day, which makes PPS 82 monthly). The maximum fees cannot exceed 20% of the minimum salary (PPS 1 = EUR 0.739836). (Pre-Primary Childcare Institutions Act)
5.10 Policy ensures the same quality of service irrespective of differences in geographical location. <i>(Such as isolated or rural areas).</i>	5.10.1 Support specialists and study guidance services are available to schools regardless of the region or the school's size (p. 7)



Measure 5 evaluative comments

According to the 2014/2015 data from the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), such support systems are made available to 11,090 children – nearly 16% of children – attending mainstream pre-primary childcare institutions.

Regional counselling centres provide cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary services at regional and local levels. They are financially supported by the state.

Measure 6: To improve student-focused measures such as mentoring, personalised learning approaches and improved guidance

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>6.1 High expectations for all learners' achievements underpin policy for inclusive education.</p>	<p>6.1.1 The general objectives for the education of learners with special needs are the same as the general objectives of the corresponding education for other learners and do not vary according to whether education takes place within the mainstream system or in special groups (schools or classes). (OoP p. 1)</p> <p>6.1.2 In basic schools and upper-secondary schools, the national curriculum is also valid as the framework curriculum for learners with special needs. (OoP p. 7)</p> <p>6.1.3 General education schools support the mental, physical, ethical, social and emotional development of learners. Conditions for the balanced development of the abilities and self-realisation of learners and for the materialisation of their research-based worldview are created. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.1.4 The function of basic schools is to provide learners with a learning and teaching environment that corresponds to the age of learners, is secure, has a positive impact and develops learners, supports the development of their interest in learning, learning skills, self-reflection, critical thinking, knowledge and will-based characteristics, their creative self-expression and the development of their social and cultural identity. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.1.5 The main aspiration of teaching and education in upper-secondary schools is that learners find a</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>field of activity that interests them and corresponds to their abilities in order to continue their studies in the field. The function of upper-secondary schools is to create conditions where learners acquire the knowledge, skills and values that allow them to continue their studies in a higher education institution or vocational educational institution without any impediments.</p> <p>(Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>
<p>6.2 Policy outlines that learners' voices should be listened to in decision-making that affects them.</p>	<p>6.2.1 Developmental conversations with each learner and their parents must take place at least once each academic year for the purpose of supporting the learner's development. Further study and development goals are agreed on the basis thereof. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary School Act)</p> <p>6.2.3 The learner, class teacher and, if the learner has limited active legal capacity, a parent participate in a developmental conversation. If the school has been unable to contact a parent required to attend school in order to agree on the time of a developmental conversation or has failed to attend the developmental conversation for the second time, the school will inform the rural municipality or city government of the learners' residence. The latter will, where necessary, organise measures to be taken to protect the learner's rights. Where necessary, the parent of a learner with active legal capacity, provided that the learner has granted consent thereto, as well as other school employees, support specialists and representatives of the rural municipality or city government of the learner's residence will be involved. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary School Act)</p> <p>6.2.4 The learner or, if the learner has limited active legal capacity, their parent and, where necessary, teachers and support specialists will be involved in drawing up an individual curriculum. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary School Act)</p> <p>6.2.5 With the approval of the learner or, if the learner has limited active legal capacity, a parent, one-to-one teaching is applied to learners who, due to their health status, require constant supervision or assistance at school. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary School Act)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>6.3 Teaching, support and guidance has the goal of empowering all learners.</p>	<p>6.3.1 Teachers observe learners' development and coping at school and, where necessary, adjust studies according to the needs of learners. For the purpose of developing the abilities and talents of learners, their individual study needs will be identified, suitable teaching methods will be chosen and, where necessary, differentiated teaching will be carried out. Schools will provide learners who temporarily fall behind in attaining the presumable learning outcomes with additional pedagogical guidance outside lessons. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary School Act)</p> <p>6.3.2 If necessary, the basic school shall provide consultation to the pupil's parent in supporting the development of the pupil and in learning at home.</p> <p>(National Curricula for Basic Schools)</p>
<p>6.4 Appropriate educational support is available as necessary and is fit for purpose in meeting personal learning needs.</p>	<p>6.4.1 It is also possible to offer classes for learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools. (p. 1)</p> <p>6.4.2 If needed, pupils with severe and multiple disorders are given opportunities to study in a segregated special class or school. (p. 2)</p> <p>6.4.3 Instruction in a mainstream school presumes the existence of an adapted learning environment and the availability of support services and required equipment. (p. 2)</p> <p>6.4.4 By an agreement between the school head or a teacher authorised by the school head and a learner or, where a learner has limited active legal capacity, a parent, the school may consider studies or activities falling outside the school's curriculum, including studies in another general education school, as part of the teaching carried out by the school, provided that it allows the learner to achieve the learning outcomes specified in the school curriculum or in the learner's individual curriculum. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.5 A school may have boarding school facilities that constitute a structural unit of the school under the statutes of the school. Extra-curricular activities ensuring the learning, living and education</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>conditions that comply with the needs and interests of learners, as well as with the safety and health protection requirements, are organised in boarding school facilities. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.6 ... teach the learners on the basis of the simplified national curriculum, transfer the learners to a class of learners with special educational needs specified in clauses 51 (1) (5) to (12) of this Act, organise studies pursuant to the simplified national curriculum for basic schools, apply home educating or one-to-one teaching based on the health status, replace or reduce the learning outcomes prescribed in the national curriculum for basic schools, or release from learning a compulsory subject. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.7 Upon organisation of studies and application of measures pursuant to the recommendations of the counselling committee, observance of the learners' development and coping will continue. Upon expiry of the term set by the counselling committee, or at least once per academic year, the special educational needs co-ordinator assesses, in co-operation with teachers and support specialists, the impact of the organisation of studies or application of measures recommended by the counselling committee on the learners' development and coping and on the basis thereof makes proposals for further activities, including for conducting additional examinations or addressing the counselling committee for the purpose of obtaining new recommendations. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.8 Groups and classes of learners with special educational needs:</p> <p>For the purpose of better organisation of the studies of learners with special educational needs, the following groups and classes may be formed in schools in order to create the required support services for learners for whom these cannot be ensured in a mainstream class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• remedial instruction groups for learners acquiring basic education for provision of special education or speech therapy assistance;• classes for learners with speech, hearing and visual impairments, physical disabilities, learning



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>difficulties, emotional and behavioural disorders, multiple disorders. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.10 Home educating and in-hospital teaching due to health status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home educating means the organisation of education in a learner’s home or in another place outside the school premises agreed with the learner or, if the learner has limited active legal capacity, a parent of the learner. Home educating is applied to a learner with special educational needs based on the learner’s health status.• In-hospital teaching means the teaching of a hospitalised learner acquiring basic or general secondary education.• The minister responsible for the field will establish the conditions of and procedure for home educating and in-hospital teaching. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act) <p>6.4.9 Additional studies for learners who have graduated from basic school under simplified national curriculum for basic schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By a decision of the owner of a school, additional studies may be organised in a basic school for learners who have graduated from basic school under the simplified national curriculum for basic schools in order to provide additional preparation and support for the smooth continuance of studies or entry into the labour market.• The duration of additional studies is one academic year. Persons attending additional studies are provided with instructed studies up to 1,050 lessons, including 525 lessons of general education studies and 525 lessons of vocational training and development of social and personal skills. Vocational training is carried out in co-operation with a relevant vocational educational institution or employer. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act) <p>6.4.10 A school will organise language and cultural teaching for learners acquiring basic education</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>whose native language is not the language of instruction or who communicate at home in a language different from the language of instruction, which is the native language of at least one parent, provided that no fewer than 10 learners with the same native language or with the same language of household communication request it. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.11 Persons of 17 years of age or older can acquire basic education in the non-stationary studies. Based on a recommendation of the counselling committee, persons subject to the duty to attend school can acquire basic education in the non-stationary studies if they have special educational needs or another reason that makes the acquisition of education difficult in the stationary studies. In non-stationary studies, the school guarantees the learners a workload of at least 24 lessons per week of a quarter of the academic year. In a class of up to 10 learners, the school guarantees the learners a workload of at least 15 lessons per week of a quarter of the academic year. Upon consent of the learners, the workload may be reduced. The workload of learners is specified in the daily schedule of the school or, where necessary, in an individual curriculum. Single subjects can also be studied in the non-stationary studies. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.4.12 Learners will be provided with the services of at least a special education teacher (including a speech therapist), psychologist and social educator (hereinafter, support specialists). The owners of the schools will create and the heads of school will organise the opportunities for implementing the services of support specialists.</p>
<p>6.5 The learning process is based on flexible curricula based on learner centred approaches and the development and implementation of individual learning plans as necessary.</p>	<p>6.5.1 The simplified national curriculum has been adopted by the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Research, establishing the basic education standard for learners with severe and multiple disorders who, based on the recommendation of the counselling committee and upon agreement of parents, undergo simplified, coping or nursing study. An individual curriculum may be compiled for learners with special needs according to their abilities. (p. 7)</p> <p>6.5.2 If the individual curriculum drawn up for a learner with special educational needs stipulates reduction or replacement of the learning outcomes provided for in the national curriculum or</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>exemption from learning a compulsory subject, the individual curriculum may be implemented on the basis of a counselling committee recommendation. (p. 7)</p> <p>6.5.3 The curriculum of a school will be established by the head of the school. The curriculum of the school and amendments thereto will be submitted to the board of trustees, learners' council and teachers' council for the expression of an opinion before establishment. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.4 When teaching a learner, a school may change or adjust the time, contents, process and environment of study. If the changes or adjustments substantially increase or decrease the weekly workload or intensity of studies in comparison with the school curriculum or reduce or replace the learning outcomes provided for in the national curricula, an individual curriculum will be drawn up for the learner under the conditions provided for in the national curricula (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.5 If the individual curriculum drawn up for a learner with special educational needs lays down reduction or replacement of the learning outcomes provided for in the national curriculum or exemption from learning a compulsory subject, the individual curriculum may be implemented on the basis of a recommendation of the counselling committee. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.6 An individual curriculum will be drawn up for all learners with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.7 If the special educational needs of a learner arise from their talent, the implementation of an individual curriculum and, where necessary, additional instruction by subject teachers or other specialists in the respective field, will be ensured through educational programmes or other educational institution subjects laid down for each academic year in an individual curriculum. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.8 Each learner has the right to teacher assistance in order to reach the goals set by the curricula.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>The principles and arrangements for supporting learners with special needs are established in the curriculum of a children’s institution. (p. 7)</p> <p>6.5.9 On the basis of national curricula, the school will draw up a curriculum (hereinafter, school curriculum) that is the underlying document of study in the school and sets out, above all, the choices within national curricula, which arise from the unique characteristics of the school. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.10 The principles of organisation of studies for learners with special educational needs will be laid down in the school curriculum. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.11 The needs and interests of learners are taken into account upon designing the curricula of schools and implementing individual curricula. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>6.5.12 One-to-one teaching is applied to learners who, due to their health status, require constant supervision or assistance at school. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>

Measure 6 evaluative comments

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Measure 7: To improve the school ethos (such as the creation of supportive learning environments, adapting learning environments to specific learning needs)

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>7.1 Policy supports school leaders to value diversity among staff as well as learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation.</p>	<p>7.1.1 The programme ‘Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019’ sets the goal that the head of the school will motivate the teachers to approach each learner individually, to participate in the development work of the school and in various forms of teacher training.</p> <p>Programme activities will concentrate on implementing inclusive education principles among teachers and school leaders.</p>
<p>7.2 Policy outlines the responsibility of school leaders to effectively communicate their vision for inclusive education to the school teaching team and wider school community.</p>	<p>7.2.1 All schools have to describe the special educational needs (SEN) policy and the organisation of instruction for pupils with SEN in their own school curricula. This document should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common values and principles; • the co-ordination system and responsibilities of teachers, school leaders, other staff, etc.; • the system of identifying SEN, support measures, data collection and evaluation; • co-operation and participation (parents, all learners at school, all teachers, other schools, community, external institutions, etc.). (p. 6) <p>7.2.2 In assessing a teacher’s work, school leaders play a key role. Their role is to discuss and apply the rules governing the period of work time and compensation with the staff, give teachers regular feedback on their contribution and competence, and support the teachers’ professional and individual development. (The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020)</p> <p>7.2.3 The head of a school is responsible for the organisation and effectiveness of teaching and education, other activities carried out in the school, and the overall condition and development of the school.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>The school head will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be responsible for drawing up and implementing the development plan of the school; • approve the school curriculum. <p>(Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>7.2.4 The head of the school motivates the teachers to approach each learner individually and to participate in the development work of the school and in various forms of teacher training. (The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020)</p>
<p>7.3 Policy aims to ensure the recruitment of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>7.4 Policy supports schools to ensure teaching staff are able to meet diverse learning needs.</p> <p><i>(Teaching staff have competence and expertise to develop individual plans, implement learner-centred approaches and support learners in personalised learning.)</i></p>	<p>7.4.1 The person responsible for co-ordinating the schooling of a learner with special educational needs supports and instructs the teacher in identifying special educational needs and makes proposals to the teacher, parents and school head regarding further educational work, the application of measures offered by the school in support of the learner’s development or conducting further investigations, thereby co-operating with teachers and support specialists. (p. 4)</p> <p>7.4.2 The Authority of the Ministry of Education and Research ensures a system whereby methodological services are provided to public educational institutions and teachers, co-ordinate the operations of methodology institutions and co-ordinate the training and in-service training system of education personnel. (Republic of Estonia Education Act)</p>
<p>7.5 The school ethos and culture is guided by school strategic plans that have high</p>	<p>–</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
expectations for the academic and social achievements of all learners.	
7.6 School strategic plans describe how universal design for learning approaches are used to provide individualised learning tools and opportunities.	–
7.7 School strategic plans stipulate that all learners are entitled to be active participants in the life of the school and community.	–
7.8 School strategic plans have clear statements on the value of diversity.	–
7.9 School strategic plans describe mechanisms for shared leadership, teamwork and collaborative problem solving.	–

Measure 7 evaluative comments

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Measure 8: To reduce the negative effects of early tracking (the early streaming of pupils by ability into different types of provision or schools) and to reduce the extensive use of grade retention¹

Agency recommendation	Findings
8.1 Legislation across relevant public sectors has the goal of ensuring educational services enhance developments and processes working towards equity in inclusive education.	<p>8.1.1 According to the disability policy of the Republic of Estonia, the right of people with special needs to pre-primary, basic, secondary and higher education must be guaranteed according to the principle of equal opportunity (p. 1)</p> <p>8.1.2 Upon organisation of studies, the state, owners of schools and schools adhere to the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General education of good quality is equally available to all persons regardless of their social and economic background, nationality, gender, place of residence or special educational needs; (basic) the needs and interests of learners are taken into account upon designing the curricula of schools and implementing individual curricula. <p>(Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.1.3 Upon managing a basic school, the owner of the school will ensure the existence of qualified teachers required for the implementation of the national curriculum for basic schools, the existence of a learning and teaching environment that complies with the safety, health protection and curriculum requirements, and the opportunities for supporting the development of learners. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.1.4 The rural municipality or city of residence of a person subject to the duty to attend school supports, where necessary and possible, the person subject to the duty to attend school, the parents and the school, creating the conditions for the performance of the duty to attend school within the</p>

¹ Early tracking means the early streaming of pupils by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools.

The extensive use of grade retention means holding students back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible individual support.



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>limits of its competence. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">organises attendance for persons subject to the duty to attend school, identifies the reasons for failing to perform the duty to attend school and takes measures with regard to persons who do not perform the duty to attend school, appointing a position or structural unit entrusted with these functions;where possible, organises training for parents whose children do not perform the duty to attend school, in order to support them in creating conditions for the performance of the duty to attend school;in accordance with the Juvenile Sanctions Act, submits applications to the Juvenile Committee for discussing cases of offences committed by minors. <p>(Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.1.5 Upon the consent of the board of trustees and on the conditions and pursuant to the procedure provided for in national curricula, the list of subjects provided for in this section may be amended for the purpose of using integrated subject and language teaching, carrying out vocational training and taking into account the Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act, regional characteristics or the unique characteristics of the school. Based on non-stationary studies or the special educational needs of learners, the standard period of study and the academic workload may, on the conditions provided for in national curricula, differ from those provided for in this Act. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.1.6 A basic school is required to admit all persons subject to the duty to attend school who have expressed such desire and for whom the school is the school of residence. Parents are free to choose a school for a person subject to the duty to attend school, if the desired school has vacant pupil places. A person who needs special treatment due to behavioural problems is admitted to school on the basis of a respective court judgment or ruling. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>8.2 Policy outlines how support structures that impact upon inclusive education are diverse and easily available.</p> <p><i>(Support structures prevent early tracking and streaming of pupils at an early age).</i></p>	<p>8.2.1 The school head may commission the services of the support specialists from the Ministry of Education and Research or, in the event specified in subsection (22) of this section, from a state-owned foundation that provides schools with the services of a special education teacher and psychologist at least in each county. The service prices must be cost-based and they will be established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the field specified in subsection (21) of this section. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.2.2 The description of the services of the support specialists, the scope and conditions of provision of the service by the state, and the prices of the services will be established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the field. For the performance of the function specified in subsection (2) of this section, the minister responsible for the field may conclude a public law contract with a state-owned foundation. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>
<p>8.3 Assessment mechanisms are in place to identify the support needs of learners at an early stage.</p>	<p>8.3.1 A person who, due to their state of health, has not achieved the readiness for school required for commencement of studies by the time of reaching the age of compulsory school attendance, may, on the basis of a recommendation of the counselling committee, commence the performance of the duty to attend school in the next academic year. A parent will submit to the counselling committee an application for the postponement of the commencement of performance of the duty to attend school. The minister responsible for the field will establish the conditions of and procedure for the postponement of performance of the duty to attend school. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.3.2 Teachers observe learners' development and coping at school and, where necessary, adjust studies according to the needs of learners. For the purpose of developing the abilities and talents of learners, their individual study needs will be identified, suitable teaching methods will be chosen and, where necessary, differentiated teaching will be carried out. Schools will provide learners who temporarily fall behind in attaining the presumable learning outcomes with additional pedagogical guidance outside lessons. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>8.3.3 A special educational need is identified using pedagogical-psychological assessment, repeat and more accurate observation of the behaviour of a learner in different conditions, gathering information about the learners and the environment of their upbringing, and medical and speech therapy examinations of the learners. Talented learners are also identified on the basis of the results of standardised tests carried out by licensed specialists, achievement of very good results in national or international subject Olympics, contests or competitions, and assessments of field experts. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.3.4 The special educational needs co-ordinator supports and instructs a teacher in identifying special educational needs and makes proposals to the teacher, parent and school head regarding further educational work, application of measures offered by the school in support of the development of the learners or conducting further investigations, thereby co-operating with teachers and support specialists. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.3.5 Upon making recommendations regarding a person with special educational needs, the counselling committee relies on the results of a prior pedagogical and psychological and, where necessary, medical examination of the person, which have been submitted to the committee. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>8.3.6 For the purpose of assessment of the effectiveness of the application of the measures, all the teachers and support specialists who participated in the application of the measures will describe the learners' development and coping and make their recommendations at least once per academic year. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>
8.4 Data is available relating to learners' rights to age appropriate education.	8.4.1 Data is available in the Estonian Education Information System .



Measure 8 evaluative comments

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Measure 9: To support improvement in schools with lower educational outcomes

Agency recommendation	Findings
9.1 Clear mechanisms exist to identify schools with lower educational outcomes. ²	–
<p>9.2 Policy outlines how methods of assessment, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to school improvement processes.</p> <p><i>(Accountability measures support inclusive practice and inform further improvement of provision for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>9.2.1 The Ministry of Education and Research shall ensure compliance with the national standard of education through supervision and the availability of high-quality education in the whole territory of the state. (Education Act)</p> <p>9.2.2 At school level, at the end of the period of application of the measures, the special educational needs co-ordinator will assess the effectiveness of the measures in co-operation with teachers and support specialists and make proposals to the parents and, where necessary, to the school head for further activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • termination of the application of the measures; • continuance of the application of the measures in the same or an improved manner; • replacement of a measure or addition of another measure; • conducting further investigations;

² This recommendation does not directly come from the Agency work covered in the CPRA activities. A number of project recommendations have implicitly, but not explicitly referred to this issue. However, the piloting work and detailed discussions with PG countries showed it is necessary to have this explicit recommendation linked to this measure.



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommending that the learners see a specialist doctor, a specialist of a particular field or the consulting committee. <p>The results of the pedagogical-psychological assessment carried out for the identification of special educational needs, additional observations and recommendations of teachers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of a learner, recommendations of the support specialists of the school, test and examination results, and the recommendations of the counselling committee regarding organisation of studies and the measures applied to the learners on the basis thereof will be documented in a learner development observance chart drawn up for the purpose of observing the development and coping of learners with special educational needs. The school head will appoint the persons in charge of drawing up and filling in the individual development observance. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>
<p>9.3 Policy aims to increase the capacity of all schools to meet a greater diversity of needs and support learners within their local communities.</p> <p><i>(Schools are supported to use innovative teaching methods, practical learning approaches and individual plans, focusing on learners' capabilities.)</i></p>	<p>9.3.1 The person responsible for co-ordinating the schooling of a learner with special educational needs supports and instructs the teacher in identifying special educational needs and makes proposals to the teacher, parents and school head regarding further educational work, the application of measures offered by the school in support of the learner's development or conducting further investigations, thereby co-operating with teachers and support specialists (p. 4)</p> <p>9.3.2 If the measures applied do not achieve results, then the school – with the parents' approval – can apply for additional support from the counselling centre or medical specialists. (p. 4)</p> <p>9.3.3 If a learner needs additional support besides the class or subject teacher, then a development observance chart must be drawn up and additional support shall be provided. (p. 5)</p> <p>9.3.4 Support specialists and study guidance services are available to schools regardless of the region or the school's size. (p. 5)</p> <p>9.3.5 The school head appoints a person whose duty is to organise co-operation between support specialists, instructors of talented learners and teachers for the purpose of supporting the teaching</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>and development of a learner with special educational needs. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>9.3.6 The Authority of the Ministry of Education and Research directs and organises the preparation of study plans, study modules for public educational institutions (except universities) and study materials for learners with special needs and establishes the requirements for educational literature in order to ensure conformity with the national curriculum. (Republic of Estonia Education Act)</p>
<p>9.4 Policy outlines clear incentives for schools to take all learners from their local community.</p>	<p>9.4.1 The rural municipality or the city will provide children subject to the duty to attend school who reside in the territory of the rural municipality or the city with the opportunity to perform the duty to attend school and acquire basic education in compliance with the national curriculum for basic schools, where necessary, involving the owner of a private school in accordance with the procedure established by the local authority. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>9.4.2 At least 80% of the learners for whom a basic school is the school of residence will not spend more than 60 minutes travelling to school. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p>
<p>9.5 Policy requires school strategic plans to outline preventive educational action against dropouts.</p> <p><i>(Including necessary measures so that learners who become disengaged find new educational alternatives.)</i></p>	<p>–</p>

Measure 9 evaluative comments

At the moment, we are working out the criteria to identify schools with lower educational outcomes.



Measure 10: To improve the quality of school staff, focusing on the quality of teachers, quality in continuing professional development, developing teacher competences and reinforcing school leadership

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>10.1 Policy outlines how all school staff develops the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners.</p> <p><i>(Appropriate training and professional development is provided to all school staff including teachers, support and administrative staff, counsellors, etc.).</i></p>	<p>10.1.1 In the course of initial teacher training, all teachers receive training modules to prepare them for working with pupils with special educational needs (SEN). (p. 9)</p> <p>10.1.2 National in-service training programmes organise courses for teachers on how to deal with learners with SEN in the inclusive classroom. (p. 9)</p> <p>10.1.3 For implementing the Lifelong Learning Strategy, the Ministry of Education and Research has compiled a programme ‘Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019’.</p> <p>Within the framework of the programme’s measures and activities, models of co-operation and learning together are implemented. The aim is to support teachers and other school staff members. In educational discussions, schools also include members of the local community. To support teachers in problem-solving and to improve their prevention work, support specialists are included in team training. Extra attention is paid to different kinds of network development.</p> <p>(‘Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019’ programme, in Estonian)</p>
<p>10.2 Policy supports the development of high quality and appropriately trained teacher educators.</p> <p><i>(With improvements in recruitment, induction and continuing professional development.)</i></p>	<p>10.2.1 Higher education institutions work together to develop the principles for assessing the results of their teaching staff. In assessing the work of the teaching staff in universities (including during the recruitment process), the quality of teaching work is taken into account, including the international aspect. This includes having work and teaching experience in foreign universities, participation in international development programmes, development of curricula, teacher effectiveness and learners’ feedback, the teacher’s self-development, etc. This also includes the results of academic research carried out by the staff. (‘Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019’ programme, in Estonian)</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>10.3 Policy supports flexible training opportunities in initial and continuing professional development, for all teachers.</p> <p><i>(Schools and teacher education institutions will work together to ensure good models in practice schools and appropriate placements for teaching practice.)</i></p>	<p>10.3.1 National in-service training programmes organise courses for teachers on how to deal with learners with SEN in the inclusive classroom. (p. 9)</p> <p>10.3.2 General schools, in co-operation with universities, conduct projects to create equal opportunities in education, thereby launching and implementing common development and research projects. Centralised in-service training is co-ordinated in teachers' and school leaders' training centres. All topics of in-service training proceed in order of priority, which is pre-arranged among partners. These topics then are given to the universities as the basis for creating their new in-service training curricula. ('Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019' programme, in Estonian)</p>
<p>10.4 All teaching staff are supported and develop a clear understanding of effective learning strategies.</p> <p><i>(Such as learning to learn and active learning approaches.)</i></p>	<p>10.4.1 Competence centres of universities support and guide on how to implement new curricula, and current approaches to learning and inclusive education. The competence centres provide training for the implementation of new methodology and support and give advice to teachers. ('Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019' programme, in Estonian)</p>
<p>10.5 Policy supports schools to develop strategic plans of staff training in inclusive education.</p>	<p>10.5.1 One of the main priority topics of in-service training for teachers, school leaders and school members is inclusive education. ('Competent and motivated teachers and school leaders 2016–2019' programme, in Estonian)</p>
<p>10.6 Policy outlines the specialised training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education.</p>	<p>10.6.1 Training of support specialist is organised within the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy sub-programme 'Study and career counselling 2016–2019'. The main aim of the activities carried out is to educate the support specialists who are providing those services in being competent and using modern methodology and evaluation tools. All provided services must meet established quality criteria.</p> <p>Gaining occupational qualification and launching training is provided by activities of this sub-</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>programme. Supported activities include co-operation between local specialists, creating and implementing new networks, mentorship systems, summer schools, supervision, etc.</p> <p>To provide high-quality services there are organised different kind of events, self-development days, network meetings and training for specialists from all counties. In co-operation with different organisations and institutions countrywide seminars are organised. Methodical, instructional and informational materials are composed for counselling specialists. In-service training courses for support specialists are organised in co-operation with universities.</p> <p>(Study and career counselling 2016–2019, in Estonian)</p>
<p>10.7 Policy supports research into the effectiveness of different routes into teaching.</p> <p><i>(Including course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.)</i></p>	–

Measure 10 evaluative comments

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Measure 11: To improve transition from education to work by increasing the coherence between employment incentives, education and VET; improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships; promoting cross-sector co-operation; simplifying the systems of qualifications

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.1 Policy ensures that VET programmes should address labour market skill requirements.</p>	<p>11.1.1 The main acts which regulate vocational education and training are the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (VEIA) and the Vocational Education Standard and Professions Act.</p> <p>The Vocational Education Standard and Professions Act regulates the system of generating and applying professional standards and sets the Estonian Qualifications Framework. The descriptions of levels of the Qualifications Framework determine general requirements for the education system’s learning outcomes and for professional levels of the professional qualifications system. The world of work (professional councils) gives input and is responsible of compiling professional standards which also serve as an essential input for vocational education programmes. Vocational education study programmes are set in between levels 2 and 5 on the Qualifications Framework. At the end of a vocational education programme, a professional examination has to be taken. It is conducted by the world of work (by bodies that award professions), which oversees the quality of acquired skills at national level and gives further input to vocational curriculum development.</p> <p>11.1.2 As a state policy, we have launched a programme (2016–2019) to improve the connection between the expectations of the world of work and education. Within this programme, sectoral analysis (in Estonian, OSKA) will be conducted to specify skills needs within the next 10 years. The sectoral reports will serve as an input into state financing of vocational education and training and as input into curriculum change, etc. ‘Work and skills 2025’ is an OSKA general report on changes in labour requirements, labour market developments and the dominant trends.</p> <p>(OSKA/European Social Fund programme)</p>
<p>11.2 Policy aims at matching labour market skill requirements and learners’ skills, wishes and expectations.</p>	<p>–</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.3 Policy outlines the development of partnerships and networking structures.</p> <p><i>(Partnerships with a pool of local employers to ensure close co-operation with regard to learners' supervised practical training and finding employment after graduation.)</i></p>	<p>11.3.1 Partnerships which are regulated at state level include the work of school council and advisory bodies.</p> <p>The highest collegial decision-making body of the school is the council, the function of which is to organise the activities and plan the development of the school.</p> <p>The procedure for formation of the council and the rules of procedure shall be provided for in the statutes of the school.</p> <p>The council shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school head; • deputies of the school head; • heads of structural units of the school and employees responsible for broad groups of studies; • representative of the learners' body; • trustee of the employees or, in the absence thereof, the representative elected by the employees. <p>The advisory body is a body of advisors connecting the school and society. Its function is to advise the school and school manager on planning the development and organisation of teaching and education and economic activities.</p> <p>The advisory body shall have at least seven members and it shall be formed by the school manager for five years.</p> <p>The advisory body shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make proposals to the school head and the council on issues related to the directions of development, activity, assets, budget, management and amendment of statutes of the school;



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide assessment on the co-operation of the school with state authorities, local governments and businesses upon achievement of the objectives established in the school’s development programme; • express an opinion on the application for the right to provide instruction in a new curriculum group; • provide assessment on the organisation of work practice in school, institutions and businesses; • appoint a representative to the membership of the committee formed for the conduct of competition organised to fill the vacant position of a school head; • express an opinion on the annual report of the school. <p>The representative of the advisory body shall have the right to participate in the sessions of the council of the school.</p> <p>The procedure for formation and activity of the advisory body shall be established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research.</p> <p>(VEIA, sections 17,18)</p> <p>11.3.2 According to the legislation regulating the support for learners with SEN, constant co-operation is expected to support learners’ studies and transition into the world of work, e.g. the school has to engage with local municipalities, the social sector, employers and other supporting personnel in accordance with the learners’ needs. (Conditions and procedure for studying at a vocational school for people with special needs)</p>
11.4 Policy outlines how transition from education to employment is supported by adequate provision.	–



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.5 Policy supports the availability of meaningful VET options for learners to choose from.</p>	<p>11.5.1 VET programmes are, without exception, based on vocational standards and hence meet the current needs of the world of work. All learners can choose from among the types of VET programmes, which are on four different levels, provided either in school-based training or apprenticeship mode (VEIA, section 28) and either in full-time study or non-stationary study form. Also, the VET institution is responsible for advising learners about the most suitable curriculum. (Vocational Education Standard and Professions Act)</p>
<p>11.6 Policy supports the availability of supervised practical training.</p>	<p>11.6.1 Work practice is part of the curriculum during the course of which a pupil performs work and study assignments with specific study objectives in the working environment under the supervision of an instructor.</p> <p>Work practice and practical work performed in the study environment make up at least one half of the volume of a curriculum and are generally divided equally. In justified cases, the school may amend the division of practical work and work practice.</p> <p>Upon organisation of the work practice of pupils, relations between the school, the pupil or their legal representative and the person or institution conducting the work practice shall be regulated by a contract that they enter into before commencement of the work practice, setting out the specific organisation of work practice and the rights and obligations of the parties to the work practice contract. A school head appoints an instructor who supervises the learner’s practical training.</p> <p>The conditions and procedure for the organisation and conduct of work practice shall be established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research.</p> <p>(VEIA, section 30)</p>
<p>11.7 Policy outlines how sustainable employment opportunities are supported through the availability of appropriate, on-</p>	<p>11.7.1 To support individual pathways, the Vocational Educational Institutions Act states specifications for organisation of studies.</p> <p>In order to account for the individuality of pupils, a school may make amendments or adjustments in</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>going support.</p>	<p>the time of study, content and organisation of studies and study environment by preparing an individual curriculum for the pupil on the basis of the school curriculum. Thereby the learning outcomes of an individual curriculum must comply with the ones described in the school curriculum. Individual curricula shall be approved by the school head.</p> <p>(VEIA)</p> <p>11.7.2 According to the regulation, the transition plan for facilitating entry to the workforce has been seen as one supportive measure. (Conditions and procedure for studying at a vocational school for people with special needs)</p>
<p>11.8 Policy outlines how VET programmes are reviewed periodically.</p> <p><i>(Both internally and/or externally in order to adapt to current and future skill needs.)</i></p>	<p>11.8.1 Each curriculum goes through an approval procedure at the Ministry of Education and Research, where a commission for the exercising revising function has been established. (VEIA)</p> <p>11.8.2 In order to receive the right to provide instruction upon the establishment of a school, the school manager shall submit an application to the Ministry of Education and Research no later than six months before the planned commencement of studies.</p> <p>Also, a national accreditation system has been introduced to regularly oversee the quality of VET programmes.</p> <p>(VEIA)</p> <p>11.8.3 Upon the extension of the right to provide instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance and sustainability of teaching and education, leading and management, human resources management, co-operation with interest groups and management of resources shall be evaluated. • The relevant curriculum group shall be accredited. Accreditation means the external evaluation of curricula groups at schools, based on internal evaluation, and conducted by external



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>independent assessors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school shall apply to the authority organising accreditation no later than twelve months before the expiry of the right to provide instruction in the relevant curriculum group. <p>(VEIA)</p> <p>11.8.4 The conditions and procedure for accreditation shall be established by a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research.</p> <p>The Minister of Education and Research shall form an assessment council which shall approve the accreditation decision and make a proposal on the extension of the right to provide instruction. An assessment council shall have up to 13 members.</p> <p>(VEIA)</p>

Measure 11 evaluative comments

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Measure 12: To improve educational and career guidance across all phases of inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>12.1 Policy outlines the mechanisms for ensuring effective transition across educational sectors and phases.</p> <p><i>(There are well-organised transition processes among services to ensure</i></p>	<p>12.1.1 A transition plan is drawn up for each learner, specifying the subject matter and daily schedule of their studies. The learner’s knowledge and skills, the requests and needs of the learner and their parent(s), and the school’s facilities are considered when drawing up the transition plan. (Basic Schools and Upper-Secondary Schools Act)</p> <p>12.1.2 The structure of the education system, along with the national standards of education, shall</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p><i>continuity in the support required when learners move from one form of provision to another.)</i></p>	<p>provide opportunities for everyone to move from one level of education to the next. (Education Act)</p>
<p>12.2 Policy outlines how career counsellors/officers support learners and employers regarding employment possibilities.</p> <p><i>(Support is provided with job applications, inform and support employers and facilitate contact between both parties.)</i></p>	<p>12.2.1 In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Research developed and endorsed a Career Counselling Programme (co-financed by the European Social Fund).</p> <p>The programme regulates the provision of study counselling and career counselling services for young people. Study counselling (special education guidance, speech therapy, social pedagogical and psychological counselling) is provided to pre-primary children and to learners in primary, general and/or vocational education. Career services (counselling and information) are provided to children and young people up to the age of 26. Special attention is paid to transition from one educational level to another and to early school leavers. Through a county-based network of career and counselling study centres called <i>Rajaleidja</i> ('Pathfinder Centres'; there are 16 in total), the programme envisages an integrated approach to counselling services and an improvement in the quality and availability of services. (Study and career counselling 2016–2019, in Estonian)</p> <p>12.2.2 Guidance in education</p> <p>In the education sector, guidance is principally provided in the context of formal education. In particular, guidance is integrated within the national curricula across all levels of education (both general and vocational) in Estonia. It is provided by public and private education institutions (such as pre-primary study institutions, basic and upper-secondary schools and universities) with a view to supporting learners in the process of their career planning. On top of this, more personalised career guidance and information services, as well as psychological, socio-pedagogical, special education counselling and speech therapy services, are provided through the public regional Pathfinder Centres, which have been established and operate in all Estonian counties, under the responsibility and co-ordination of Foundation Innove's Agency for Lifelong Guidance. Finally, in addition to formal education and the Pathfinder Centres, guidance for individuals in the education sector is also offered</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>in the context of youth work in order to promote the diverse development of young people. (Study and career counselling 2016–2019, in Estonian)</p> <p>1.12.3 Guidance in employment</p> <p>Career information, counselling and guidance services are organised and provided in the employment sector by the regional offices of the national public employment service, namely the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. Moreover, there are also private recruitment companies which provide support services for job seekers (such as career information and training) and recruitment services for businesses. There are also consulting companies that offer career counselling, coaching and competency assessment services targeted at businesses and their human resources.</p> <p>(Increasing the availability of career counselling, in Estonian)</p>

Measure 12 evaluative comments

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