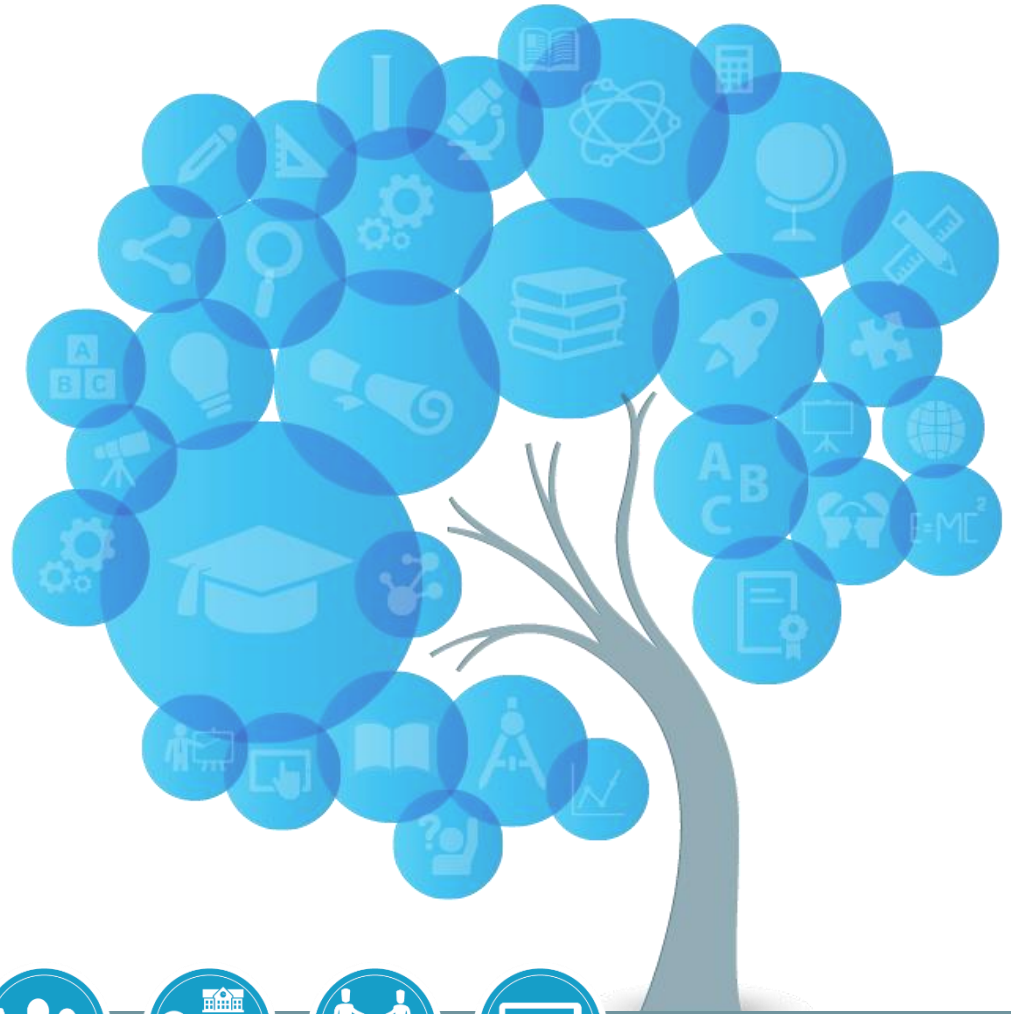European Commission

Quality assurance for school development

Guiding principles for policy development
on quality assurance in school education

Quality assurance for school development

Output of the ET2020 Working Group Schools 2016-18

Contents

1. About

ET2020 Working Group on Schools

Under its 2016-2018 mandate, the ET2020 Working Group on Schools[1] examined successful and emerging, or potential new, policy developments in Member States. These concern the governance of school education systems that can support and improve quality, inclusion and innovation. They focused on the capacity for systemic change in the four key interlinked areas: 1) quality assurance for school development; 2) continuity and transitions for learner development; 3) teachers and school leaders; and 4) networks.

Quality assurance for school development

Recent research-based recommendations point towards a need for greater coherence and synergy in quality assurance approaches – in particular, the effective interplay between internal and external mechanisms – in order to ensure that they best serve school development and innovation. This includes the Council Conclusions of 2014 on quality assurance in education and training, which called for supporting a culture of quality enhancement and trust. Conditions for effective quality assurance for school development include ensuring ownership of the process through meaningful dialogue and actions, and an opportunity for 'out of the box' thinking and creativity. The challenge for school education systems is to develop and sustain professional learning communities and cultures to support school development, with an emphasis on improvement more than quality 'control'. Whilst the focus here is on the governance of school education systems, the ultimate aim of quality assurance is to ensure that learners have the best learning opportunities possible.

This report

This report sets out eight principles developed by the ET2020 Working Group on Schools to guide policy-making related to quality assurance and, in particular, to ensure a productive synergy of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms. These principles are further illustrated with successful and emerging, or potential new, policy development examples from countries and other European stakeholder organisations. The document concludes with a general discussion of some key challenges and measures to support future policy action.

The content comes from a series of meetings held in Brussels, research (member self-reporting) exercise, and a Peer Learning Activity. The report was compiled and edited by Janet Looney (European Institute of Education and Social Policy - EIESP) and Hannah Grainger Clemson (European Commission) in January-March 2017 with review and validation by members in 2017 and 2018.

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[1] Representatives from all Member States, EFTA and Candidate countries, plus social partners and stakeholder organisations.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 Introduction to the principles

Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational programmes and processes to maintain and improve their quality, equity and efficiency. While the design of quality assurance mechanisms (tools, processes and actors) varies across national contexts, their common objective is to improve teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal to support the best outcomes for learners.

Quality assurance approaches can include mechanisms that are external and internal to schools. External mechanisms may include national or regional school evaluations and/or large-scale student assessments. Internal mechanisms may include school self-evaluation, staff appraisal and classroom-based student assessments. These mechanisms have different but complementary purposes. Ideally, they are part of a coherent, integrated system, with the different mechanisms supporting and reinforcing each other. This kind of productive synergy can ensure a clear focus on school development, providing data on aspects such as school climate and the well-being of all members of the school community, effective teaching and learning, and the impact of innovations.

Quality assurance is important for accountability as well as to support ongoing development of schools and of teaching and learning. Well-functioning systems have mechanisms to support and balance vertical and horizontal, internal and external accountability. Quality assurance that is focused on development supports schools to adapt to the changing needs of learners. The focus is not only on improvement but also innovation – that is, the development or experimental testing of approaches in different contexts -- to support quality, equity and efficiency. Approaches to quality assurance may need to be adapted over time to better meet needs for feedback and decision-making across systems.

2.2 The eight guiding principles

1. **COHERENCE:** Systems should strive over time to achieve balance and coherence across different mechanisms that have been developed to meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders working within schools and in the wider school education system.

2. **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Quality assurance policies should support professional learning communities to make best use of quality assurance data for school and system development with the ultimate goal of ensuring the best learning opportunities for all learners.

3. **TRUST AND SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY:** Trust and respect between and among internal and external actors are fundamental for effective evaluation and school development.

4. **SUPPORT INNOVATION:** Schools leaders and teachers need opportunities to take considered risks in order to innovate and develop. Careful attention to data on the impact of innovations, including potential unintended outcomes, is essential.

5. **SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND DIALOGUE:** Quality assurance approaches should support the development of a common language and shared understanding among internal and external actors that the fundamental purpose of evaluation is to support school development.

6. **NETWORKS:** Networks between schools and with local and wider communities can support collective engagement, build social and intellectual capital and spark new synergies across school systems.

7. **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DATA:** Investments in building capacity of key actors to generate, interpret and use data, are crucial.

8. **DIFFERENT DATA FOR BALANCED VIEW:** Different types of data - both quantitative and qualitative, and gathered over time - are necessary for a balanced understanding of school development and learner progress. These data should communicate authentic narratives of schools and provide the information necessary to support decision-making both within schools and across school systems.

3. Context

3.1 Policy context – recent research

School education systems are complex and vary greatly across Europe and the same is true of the quality assurance mechanisms that are embedded in and steer them[i]. It is believed that one model of quality assurance cannot fit all systems; therefore it is more appropriate to explore the role of different stakeholders and the processes they follow at national and/or regional level. Policy makers may then learn from varied experiences of their peers in other countries. This includes exploring the interplay among the different elements of a system, given that recent research-based recommendations point toward a need for greater coherence in approaches to quality assurance.

Many countries incorporate evaluations that are external and internal to schools, which can complement and reinforce each other. It is believed that school education systems that support the synergy of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms will have more resilience for the complex process of change.

While each system is different, countries share several common policy challenges and opportunities in their approach to quality assurance. These include how to:

- set goals and measure progress for education systems and student learning;
- design quality assurance for education systems that are increasingly diverse, decentralised and multi-level;
- support and encourage dialogue and cultures of trust between and among education stakeholders;
- ensure transparency of quality assurance data while also avoiding the pressure of high stakes approaches; and
- prioritise human and financial resources.

Many countries are engaged in continuing or recent reforms, ranging from a general introduction of quality assurance mechanisms, the introduction of specific measures, the adoption of national frameworks, or the formal incorporation of PISA results.

Building evidence: the purpose of quality assurance mechanisms

Governments are increasingly concerned with assuring the quality of public services, including education. In education systems, schools are held accountable for helping all students to meet standards, and for effective and efficient use of resources. Within the context of the European and National Quality Frameworks, systems focus on learning outcomes (defined as 'statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do at the end of a learning process')[ii]. Learning outcomes are intended to ensure qualifications are transparent, and to support accountability[iii].

Decision makers may refer to quality assurance data to: ensure that schools are meeting standards set out in National Qualification Frameworks; distribute resources effectively and equitably; identify schools that are 'at risk' and in need of additional support; and to highlight and share 'good practices' more widely, with the purpose of stimulating and supporting school improvement. Both quantitative and qualitative data are important in this regard.

Increasingly, national governments are shifting greater control to the local level while maintaining responsibility for the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of the overall system. National policy mechanisms may include direct interventions, such as regulations, or indirect interventions, such as frameworks that may be adapted to local conditions[iv].

At national and regional levels, it is important to have broad indicators of overall education performance. Quantitative data may be aggregated to make system-level decisions, for example, the equitable distribution of resources across regions and schools. At the school level, disaggregated quantitative data may be used to identify areas where further investigation of student needs may be appropriate. Qualitative data also provide important context and allow a more nuanced understanding of the school's progress.

Countries are also increasingly allowing schools greater autonomy so they may better respond to local contexts and individual learner needs. Internal quality assurance mechanisms support evidence-based decision-making for internal accountability (that is, peer professional accountability) and school development.

Most European countries have created frameworks that integrate some combination of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, which may include:

- Inspectorates
- National student assessments
- School self-evaluation
- Teacher appraisal

These mechanisms generate data on the overall performance of systems as well as the quality of schools and of the teacher workforce, as measured against learning outcomes and standards defined in National Qualification Frameworks.

Ideally, a broad range of education and training stakeholders, including early childhood education and care (ECEC), general, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE) cooperate to ensure continuity of standards across the sectors[v]. At the European level, ongoing work on quality assurance is articulated across fields in education[vi],[vii].

Finally, it is important to note that quality assurance is an important complement to education research and knowledge. Quality assurance mechanisms provide data on current performance and help to identify areas of success as well as areas for system and school improvement. Education research methodologies allow a much deeper view on 'what works

best for learning'[viii], for whom, and under what circumstances. Both quality assurance and education research support reflection on effective school development.

Accountability and improvement

The different country approaches to quality assurance are apparent not only in how they integrate external and internal mechanisms, but also in how they balance their accountability and improvement functions. There are concerns that 'high stakes' approaches to accountability may undermine school development. High stakes may include denial of accreditation to schools that do not meet quality assurance standards, financial sanctions for schools, or impact on teachers' careers or salaries. Many countries publish the results of student assessments and school evaluations, which teachers may perceive as adding to stakes[ix] [2]. Reliance on a limited number of high-visibility evaluations and assessments, and government or media-generated 'league tables', may also increase stakes.

However, both accountability and improvement are important for ensuring the quality of processes as well as of outcomes. Mechanisms that include a focus on accountability typically include some kind of incentives to focus teachers' attention on central performance standards and the need to help all students succeed[3]. At the same time, a focus on improvement ensures that data are used to identify needs, adjust school strategies, and motivate improvements in instruction.

While there are concerns that high stakes may inhibit development and innovation and demotivate staff, countries have taken a variety of approaches to moderate their impact and to place greater emphasis on improvement. For example, a number of countries highlight the importance of moving away from quality assurance as 'control' to a more open and 'trust-based' approaches. Publication of a range of data on school and teacher performance may also help to lower stakes associated with a single, high-visibility assessment or school evaluation, although this might not always the perception.

The balance of accountability and improvement is also relevant to internal quality assurance. At the school-level, there is some evidence that strong teacher-to-teacher trust, a collective focus on improving instruction and learning, and teacher experience are associated with higher levels of student attainment[x]. In turn, teachers in more successful schools have stronger levels of trust, which indicates strong levels of internal control and accountability[xi]. Internal quality assurance mechanisms are most effective when they support teacher collective work and are focused on improving instruction[xii].

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[2] These include Belgium(Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland - school self-evaluation and examinations, Italy - school self-evaluation report, Ireland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - school rankings published, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain - partial results published, Portugal - results of national assessments, and Slovakia -performance indicators rather than school evaluation.
[3] It should be noted that there is ongoing debate about levels to set standards for student learning. One approach is to set high standards for all students. An alternative approach is to set standards for all students to achieve and standards to strive for. This debate relates to concerns as to how best to support all learners.

Teacher appraisal, which may be conducted externally (inspectors or local administrators) and/or internally (school management or peers), is another area where it is important to balance accountability and improvement. It is important to clearly separate appraisal that is meant to help teachers to improve classroom teaching from appraisal for high-stakes decisions related to performance awards and/or career advancement. If teachers feel that there are career consequences attached to an appraisal process, they are less likely to be open about areas where they feel they need to improve, thus missing out on an important opportunity for feedback and support[xiii]. For high-stakes decisions with career consequences, teachers should be encouraged to demonstrate their positive accomplishments.

Reviewing complex quality assurance systems – achieving coherence, adaptability and sustainability

No single internal or external quality assurance mechanism can provide all the information needed for school accountability and development. Taken together, the different mechanisms can provide important and complementary insights on school, teacher and student performance and support evidence-based decision-making.

External quality assurance mechanisms aim to provide objective, valid and reliable data on school performance. For example, school inspectors, who are *not* part of the school community, bring objective viewpoints to school climate, the quality of development strategies, and teacher performance. As inspectors visit a range of schools, they also have the unique opportunity to share ideas on effective practice among schools. A recent study concludes that inspection visits, as well as other inspection processes, appear to have direct, immediate, effects on the quality and responsiveness of school's self-evaluation processes, and therefore school effectiveness[xiv]. Importantly, inspectorates should be able to provide evidence that inspectors use the same criteria and standards to evaluate schools and teachers (inter-inspector reliability), ensuring that the approach is fair to all schools.

Policy makers may track equity of outcomes, areas for improvement, and progress over time. National (and international) student assessments provide valid and reliable data on the attainment of the general student population. However, the results of student assessments alone cannot provide the rounded perspective needed to support policy decisions related to resource allocation, programmes to support inclusion, curriculum development, and so on. Policy makers are in a position to develop strategies to address a broad range of needs if data sources are combined.

At the school and classroom level, teachers will need to gather more timely and detailed data to adjust teaching to student needs. Different types of assessments (including both summative and formative) implemented over time will provide a more rounded perspective on individual student progress and needs.

The following model was developed by members of the Working Group as a representation of typical relationships between system actors. This may provide a useful reference for reviewing the roles of stakeholders, decision-making processes, and the flow of data. Whilst

there are variations, priority-setting is often done externally and imposed on the schools and the school is accountable in return.

Figure 1: graphical representation of the relation between different elements of the system in terms of accountability, reporting and priority-setting
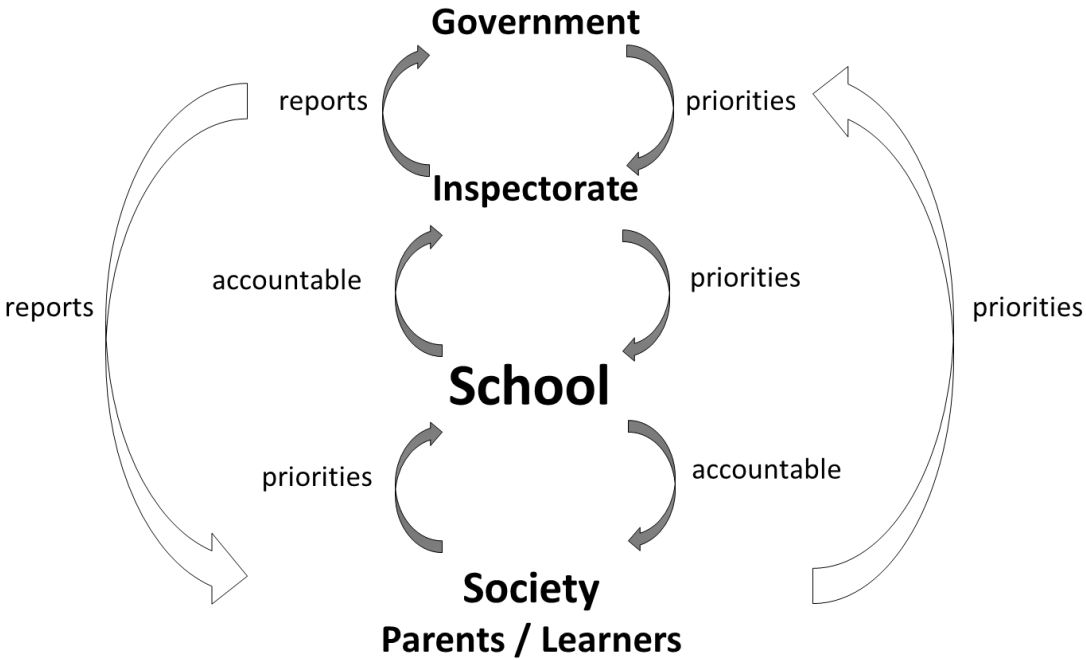
Internal quality assurance, including school self-evaluation and teacher appraisal support teachers to take collective responsibility for student learning. While schools may have access to central guidelines for school self-evaluation, staff may need to develop a consensus on goals and criteria for the evaluation. Staff may also need training on how to gather and analyse data.

Figure 2: graphical representation of school development processes and questions to consider – developed by participants at the Peer Learning Activity, Estonia 2016.

Ultimately, the synergy between external and internal mechanisms will help to ensure a healthy, dynamic quality assurance process. With this in mind, a SYNEVA declaration was made as part of a European Comenius project (2004 – 2007). The declaration, which was developed by 6 partners in 12 different countries, comprises 12 agreed-on statements on 'Quality assurance through Synergy between Internal and External Evaluation: its impacts on learning and teaching'. The main focus is on quality assurance for improvement, with the aim of ensuring that every child develops his/her talents and abilities in order to contribute to the Europe of the future. While evaluations in in classrooms, schools, regions, nationally and at a European level support and facilitate improvements in education, the declaration emphasizes that different internal and external mechanisms must become more mutually supportive and integrated. The declaration was subsequently revised in 2016 to reflect deepening of perspectives as well as changes in the context of education.

3.2 Working process

Review of existing literature

An extensive bibliography of international sources exploring quality assurance approaches across countries was shared with members to support their reflections and discussions.

Working Group meetings, Brussels

The guiding principles are based on reflections of those who participated directly in the October 2016 Peer Learning Activity (PLA - see below) as well as the input of all Working Group members who participated in the survey and at meetings. At Working Group meetings prior to and following the PLA, the members explored the topic from different perspectives in working sessions (sub-group discussion, reporting, and full group reflection) with additional input from guest experts[4].

Survey to member countries and organisations

Prior to the PLA, Working Group members completed a survey which was designed to prompt investigation and reflection by respondents into the application of quality assurance in their education systems, particularly relating to schools. Participants from 28 countries and 3 associations completed the survey, which was organised into three sections on mechanisms, accountability and coherence.

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[4] Professor Graham Donaldson, University of Glasgow, on *Recent developments in the governance of school education systems*, and Tracey Burns, OECD, on *Governing Complex Education Systems.*

Peer Learning Activity

The principles set out in this document were first developed through a participatory process of ET2020 Working Group members, at the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on 'Quality Assurance for School Development', hosted by **Estonia** (11 – 14 October 2016)[5]. This PLA focused on examining the complementarity of external mechanisms that are led at policy level (e.g. national assessments, school inspection) and internal mechanisms where schools take the lead role (e.g. continuing professional development for teachers, assessments of student attainment, school self-evaluation and development planning). The guiding principles as set out in chapter 2 of this report were originally an output of the PLA. There were ten principles with some differences in the text and these were presented to other members for discussion. The next chapter (4) of this report explores the redrafted principles with country examples and references to supporting research.

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[5] A report on this Peer Learning Activity was created for internal use by the Working Group members. It includes further discussion points, as well as forward-looking country reports by each participants.

4. Quality assurance for school development: principles in action

4.1 Coherence of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms

> Systems should strive over time to achieve balance and coherence across different mechanisms that have been developed to meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders working both within schools and in the wider school education system.

Quality assurance approaches can encompass a range of mechanisms (tools, processes and actors) to monitor overall system performance, policy implementation, school and staff effectiveness, and individual student outcomes. School systems include various layers, operate in diverse contexts, and employ staff with a range of experience and competences.

External mechanisms provide data important for policy-level decisions and resource allocation, while internal evaluations provide more detailed and timely data important for school-level development and to support teaching and learning. Schools and external institutions and actors may work together to define strategies and alternatives for school improvement. For example, in **Croatia**, school self-evaluation was initiated 15 years ago, but their opinion is that it was not really effective until external evaluation was introduced. Wider communities may also provide data or refer to the results of quality assurance. Quality assurance systems need to take this complexity into account.

> **Box 1: Using a Framework for coherence and common understanding (Slovenia)**
>
> For more than a decade, **Slovenia** has been gradually developing its quality assurance approach. The ministry (MIZŠ) is currently setting up a national framework to support fairness, quality and efficiency of education systems. The purpose is to define a common concept of quality assurance at the level of educational institutions (early years, primary and secondary schools) and, indirectly, system-level evaluation. The trans-sectoral approach and development of school leader capacity are seen as strengths.

Policy makers and practitioners will need to gather data appropriate for their level of decision-making (e.g. aggregated or macro-level data for policy level decisions, and more detailed, micro-level data for school-level decisions). Systems may also achieve greater synergies across the different mechanisms when their data help to complement and reinforce their respective areas of concern (for example, in links between inspection and school self-evaluations).

In **Iceland**, external evaluators base their analysis and judgments of school performance on data gathered as part of the Quality Indicators framework. After giving the head teacher an opportunity to make substantive comments, the evaluators send their report to the Ministry. The overall results are then made public on the Ministry's and the Directorate website. Schools have a predefined time to send the Ministry information on how they intend to respond to the results of the evaluation. Educational authorities also use the evaluation results. Municipalities are responsible for improvements at pre-primary and compulsory school levels.

Internal evaluation results are intended for use by the school to highlight and improve various aspects of its own performance and practices. These evaluation reports are also made public, for example on school websites, along with the results of the national co-ordinated examinations (for each school and region), which are only assessment for learning not high-stake exams. There is some concern, however, that media discussion about schools and regions that perform poorly can have a negative effect on the "image" of those concerned.

At the same time, approaches to quality assurance may wish to avoid narrowly defined criteria and standards as well as a tight coherence or alignment of mechanisms in order to provide room for innovative approaches that may not fit within typical measures, and/or the softer, less-quantifiable goals for learning, such as measures related to the well-being of all in the school community. This approach will also better support quality assurance in schools outside the mainstream system with alternative pedagogical approaches (for example, Montessori, Steiner-Waldorf schools and others).

In **Romania,** the national standards and procedures for internal and external evaluation were reviewed in 2016, with the aim of simplifying them and re-directing the focus on student results and children's well-being. 'The Quality Certificate', is issued after recurrent evaluation. The results, which include an 'added value index', are published. In other words, the index includes the evaluation results, after controlling for the influence of the school context and input factors (such as family background and community factors, the socio-economic background of the school, the school infrastructure, etc.). This index is intended to measure educational efficiency, and to reveal whether schools' actual results are above or below the expected norm, given their circumstances.

In **Italy**, the National System for Evaluation of schools (SNV) was first implemented in 2014-15. The key to the success of this system is ensuring that all relevant actors and stakeholders are involved. The SNV follows a three-year cycle: Each school was initially provided with a wide

set of data on its resources, processes and outcomes, and was then asked to produce a self-evaluation report identifying strengths and weaknesses, based on a standardised template from the National Agency for School Evaluation (INVALSI). Each school had to identify areas to be improved and targets to be met over the following years, to align with triennial school development plans.   Reports also included the results of the annual INVALSI standardised student examinations, published every year as a means to ensure parents have the necessary information when selecting a school.   The school self-evaluation reports, including results of school improvement processes, are published on the Ministry of Education portal, to increase transparency and accountability.   In addition, external teams, co-ordinated by an inspector, aim to visit up to 10% of all schools each year (first implemented 2015-16).

Poland has a system of 'pedagogical supervision', as referred to in the 2009 Regulation of the Ministry of Education (further amended in 2013). External evaluation is carried out by regional inspectorates and comprises two aspects: 1) evaluating school quality, and 2) checking compliance with legislation. A school is assessed over 5 days according to 9 standards (including core curriculum implementation, parents as school partners, students' activity and social sills development). School inspectors analyse documentation, meet staff, students, parents and other representatives of institutions that cooperate with school, and observe lessons.   Conclusions are discussed with staff before the school receives an official report, which is later published online.

External school evaluations in **Poland** have an advisory character and schools formulate their own action plans based on the findings. The same 2009 Regulation obliges school heads to carry out a process of internal pedagogical supervision and evaluation (which may be supported by teacher training centres). The aims are improving the quality of school work and promoting teachers' individual development. The rationale behind this regulation is to direct the school's attention to its own identified needs and not on the priorities set by the educational authorities. Therefore, it is assumed that the evaluation areas for external and internal evaluation do not need to be the same.

At present, a pilot systemic project is being developed which aims to support schools in their internal evaluation processes. Within the framework of this project, action research methods are promoted.

4.2 Professional learning communities

Quality assurance policies should support professional learning communities to make best use of quality assurance data for school and system development.

Quality assurance should support improvement in school education at all levels: local, regional and national. However, there is a consistent call for professional learning and attention to the development of human resources as part of quality assurance processes. Professional communities that use internal and external quality assurance data to track policy implementation and impact are able to identify areas for school and staff development. Where possible, these types of feedback mechanisms should be designed collaboratively.

Box 4: Participatory model for self-assessment (France)

In **France**, the 'Qualéduc' project is supported by the French Ministry of Education and Research, and is steered at national and school levels, and by academia. The aim is to develop school self-assessment so for continual improvement, to optimize a participative approach to steering, and to mobilize educational teams around shared and substantiated diagnoses and targets for improvement, to encourage student success, and to exchange best practices and experiences. The plan-do-check-act cycle (the PDCA-cycle, also known as the Deming wheel) is one of the most frequently used approaches, particularly, although not only, in vocational education and training institutions.

http://eduscol.education.fr/cid59929/qualeduc.html

Professional learning communities provide an opportunity for colleagues to define, interpret and reflect on quality assurance data, and to adjust strategies and/or practices to better meet identified needs.

Box 5: The need to engage teachers and provide feedback (Greece, Cyprus and Latvia)

As a result of the 2009 crisis, **Greece** finds that a shift to a reliance on adjunct teachers in the teacher workforce creates challenges for quality assurance. However, this challenge may be addressed by engaging all teachers in a dialogue and tap into their individual and collective motivation to make learning better for students. This might start with teachers who are stable (e.g. with civil servant status) and focus on what is working well and what might be improved in a school. The more mobile adjunct staff may also bring insights from other places where they have taught.

In **Cyprus** a new system of Teacher Professional Learning was first implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2015. Teachers are engaged in the development, implementation and evaluation of their school's annual action plan for improvement. Based

on this action plan, each school develops its overall professional learning action plan and every teacher develops an individual plan. These plans include incorporate teacher self-assessment and data on school successes as well as areas for improvement. These elements are regularly compiled, and reviewed, and a new action plan is developed based on findings.

In **Latvia**, an ongoing pilot project is supporting school teams as well as municipalities) to develop as learning organisations. Evaluation tools that may be adapted according to each school's goals and needs are also being developed. Teachers receive personalised feedback, and this has had a significant positive impact (as measured by student performance in mathematics).

These communities are most effective when focused on student learning (rather than teaching), when members have established a shared understanding of data, and when members hold themselves accountable for improvements.

Schools outside of the mainstream system (see Box 6 below) may adapt internal quality assurance mechanisms for their own professional learning needs, whilst also coordinating with external evaluators.

Box 6: Quality assurance for schools outside the mainstream system

The German Steiner-Waldorf Schools have developed mechanisms for internal quality assurance for their schools in **Germany**. It is a teacher-led model, rather than a top-down approach.

The key principles are: improving the quality of teaching by individual feedback, advice to teachers, working in teams on pedagogical issues and stimulating individual professional development (alignment with overall school development). The process is integrated into school life – it must be part of core processes and not incur "additional time", to avoid creating a burden.

The procedure balances internal and external evaluation: Structured peer group sessions are coupled with (supportive) peer group 'mutual' visits and external visits by 'coaching teachers'. Teachers are at the centre of the process: trust and respect are essential, and the model supports capacity-building as a continuous process for all involved teachers. Therefore, special trainings for the college of teachers are provided. The process as a whole has a significant impact on collaboration within the entire school community. The whole procedure is certified by a state accredited agency, which requires continuous evaluation.

Landl, et al. (2016)[xv] http://www.waldorfschule.de/waldorfpaedagogik/qualitaet/verfahren-zur-qualitaetsentwicklung/#main-content

It is equally important to reflect on the roles, attitudes and perspectives of those evaluating schools, the way they are selected and evaluated themselves, and the way they interact with schools. In **Belgium(Flanders)**, **Ireland** and **Portugal**, there are various processes to 'evaluate

the evaluator'. For example, in **Belgium(Flanders)**, inspections involve two individuals: one who safeguards the inspection, or evaluation process and the other who undertakes the school inspection.

Box 7: Shifting to internal appraisal of teachers (Ireland, Italy and Latvia)

In **Ireland**, a system for school appraisal of newly-qualified teachers, called *Droichead*, has been introduced to the education system. Previously, to register with the Teaching Council, newly qualified primary teachers had to have their work deemed satisfactory by the Inspectorate following a number of evaluation visits. The introduction of *Droichead* has seen a gradual extension of an induction model, undertaken at individual school level, as the pathway to full registration with the Teaching Council. It is intended that this system will pass entirely to schools over the next few years. The Teaching Council envisages that the system will combine self-regulation in the school and profession with appropriate external involvement of the Inspectorate in a small number of cases.

In **Italy**, a new merit-based performance bonus was introduced under the comprehensive Good School reform (approved by the Parliament on 9 July 2015, Law 107/2015). Each year, the school head identifies the best –performing teacher for a one-time performance bonus. The award is decided according to criteria developed by the school's teacher evaluation committee and is focused on student achievement and school improvement. The committee is comprised of) the school head; (ii) three teachers; (iii) an external evaluator (a teacher or head from another school, or an inspector); (iv) two parent representatives (in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools) or one parent representative and one student representative (in upper secondary schools). In 2018, based on an assessment of the first three years of implementation, the Ministry of Education will establish national guidelines for teacher evaluation. EUR 200 million per year have been allocated for teacher performance bonuses.

Latvia first piloted a new teacher appraisal approach under the European Social Fund project *Promotion of Educators' Competitiveness within the Optimsation of the Educational System*. The approach included teacher self- and peer-assessment linked with the remuneration system. The pilot was the basis for the "Evaluation Procedure of the Quality of Teachers' Professional Performance (accepted 17 June 2014).

In 2017 the pilot approach was reviewed and a new teacher evaluation model was introduced. It proposes to reduce the number of quality levels from five to three and to simplify the process of evaluation. The most important criterion for assessing the quality of the work of the teacher is the teacher's daily work in the classroom, cooperation skills and pupils learning outcomes. The assessment process of the teacher will be carried out at each education institution, thus promoting the autonomy of it as well as raising the responsibility of the head of the school for ensuring the quality of the education process. The quality level can be awarded to a teacher for one, two or three years and is valid only in the education institution where the teacher has been assessed. The assessment is voluntary, and all

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teachers will be able to apply for the evaluation, choosing the quality level to which he or she applies.

Teacher appraisals, whether conducted by school boards, school management or peers provide the opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning at classroom level. The OECD TALIS found a statistically significant relationship between areas emphasised in appraisals and changes in instructional knowledge and practices[xvi]. It is also important to note that when appraisals emphasise improvement, and are not linked to promotions or incentive awards, teachers are more likely to be open about their challenges and perceived development needs. Appraisal frameworks that are also linked to school priorities for development plans can strengthen opportunities for collective professional learning within a school.

Box 8: Developing formative external evaluation of teachers (Spain)

In **Spain**, the Education Act establishes that the education authorities, with the participation of teacher representatives, will elaborate plans for teacher evaluation. The formative nature of the external evaluation mechanisms deployed nationwide, contribute to the betterment of the teachers' work, presenting themselves as a tool to bring about change in the methodological model towards one that integrates competences.

Both national and international reports include evaluations of teachers' classroom performance, as well as indications as to how to improve practice.

The Act plans that school leaders will be evaluated and, if positive, they will receive personal and professional recognition in the terms defined by each educational administration.

4.3 Trust and shared accountability

> Trust and respect between and among internal and external actors are fundamental for effective evaluation and school development

Increasingly, education systems distribute governance responsibilities across national, local and school levels. There is a more equal sharing of accountability for learner outcomes and engagement in and support for school development. Shifts to multi-level governance may also require shifts in system cultures and individual mindsets. This may be enhanced through mutual commitment of internal and external actors to evaluation as a means to improve processes and outcomes. Trust in the quality of the evaluation instruments and the fairness and integrity of the system support are also vital.

Box 9: Including teachers in a critical dialogue on quality assurance mechanisms (Hungary)

In **Hungary**, the education system was re-centralised in 2011, and a new inspection mechanism was introduced in 2013. The previous inspection procedure had been abolished in 1985, so there was a significant gap since schools were last externally evaluated. The biggest barrier to the new approach to inspection is teacher mindset. There has been a lot of resistance to the new approach although the focus is on identifying strengths and weaknesses to support the school's own self-improvement action plan, and inspectors are actually practicing teachers. Hungary notes that to build the mechanism further, it will be important to involve teachers in policy-level discussions, to provide examples of effective working between internal and external evaluation, to monitor the quality of inspectors' work, and to invest in ongoing training for all stakeholders. Trust building will be essential.

Research points to a number of advantages for governance of systems which supports the development of trust among key actors and that this trust can reduce transaction costs and the likely hood of unexpected interactions or opportunistic behaviour[xvii]. Trust increases the likelihood that actors will invest their resources in cooperation and in developing and maintaining relationships (their social capital). Trust among key actors can also support the search for innovative solutions and exchange of ideas.

In education systems that have traditionally taken a top-down approach to quality assurance, with external inspections seen as 'control' of education systems, it will likely take some time

to shift mindsets and perceptions regarding the intentions of different actors. Moreover, in education that have been traditionally risk-averse, it may continue to be important to maintain some level of accountability and transparency of performance data. Quality assurance approaches will also need to strike the right balance between the importance of trust, and the need to verify outcomes.

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Box 10: Achieving system-wide development with high autonomy (Norway and The Netherlands)

In **Norway**, the responsibility for quality assurance is divided among the various levels of the education system. Dialogue and co-operation are necessary to promote system-wide learning. There is a national supervisory body to oversee regulatory compliance, but the quality assurance approach is primarily based on trust among actors, so it is important to have good processes. The clear division of responsibility for quality assurance at national and local levels is a necessary to ensure that the mechanisms function as intended. Measurements are criterion-referenced, focusing on actual progress against goals.

In the **Netherlands**, there are no central standards, and schools have a great deal of autonomy in deciding what and how they teach. While inspectors concentrate on schools considered 'at risk' of not meeting quality standards, they may also visit effective schools to see what is working well (in agreement with the school's board). The inspector's role is to consider how they can support school self-evaluation as well as teacher development and innovation. The school board may also organise teacher peer reviews.

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Several countries in Europe include high-stakes approaches within their overall quality assurance approach. For example, in **Romania**, accreditation may be denied to schools that do not meet quality assurance standards.

Publication of a range of data may also help to lower stakes associated with a single, high-visibility assessment. **Estonia** is considering how to increase transparency while also supporting school development. The aim is to publish multiple types of data (from both external and internal sources), along with interpretations of data and impact of context for lay readers, in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of school performance and to increase transparency.

4.4 Opportunities to support innovation in schools

> School leaders and teachers need opportunities to take considered risks in order to innovate and develop. Careful attention to data on the impact of innovations, including potential unintended outcomes, is essential.

Risk is inherent to the process of innovation. Systems that support the synergy of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms will have more in-built resilience for the complex process of change. This includes shared attention to quality and outcomes; openness to new ideas; open channels of communication among internal and external actors; and capacity to respond quickly to identified needs.

Box 11: Specific recommendations on innovation

Montenegro found that there was a need to raise the level of awareness about the importance of regular introduction of educational innovations and the development of mechanisms to measure their impact, and to provide support for continuous improvements. The improved model of external and internal evaluation (2016) includes an indicator on the presence of educational innovations. Specific examples of innovative practices are disseminated via the website of the Bureau for Education Services.

In **Portugal,** school inspectors may include recommendations on how to improve the level of innovation in classroom and pedagogical differentiation. These external recommendations complement internal classroom observations that are part of teacher appraisal.

Monitoring and evaluation are an integral part of the innovation process. Attention to data can allow innovators to take a more considered approach. Educational innovators may track the impact of new approaches on teaching and learning and make quick adjustments when necessary. This includes being alert to unintended consequences. In **Slovakia**, universities and research institutes conduct experimental verification of new fields of study or specific teaching methods before they are approved by the Ministry of Education and implemented in schools.

It is important to assess the impact of innovations, to make necessary adjustments, and to start the process again. This iterative approach ensures that while innovations entail risk, students will not be left to falter. Moreover, monitoring is not left to an annual, or even tri-annual school self-evaluation, but is ongoing. Schools and teachers implementing innovative methods also need to gather more detailed data on a regular basis to monitor the impact of new methods and make adjustments than possible solely through external and internal quality assurance mechanisms[xviii].

External and internal quality assurance typically operate on a longer feedback timeline, but are also important to highlight the impact of successful innovations for further dissemination and take-up, and track potential unintended longer-term consequences. The results of quality assurance may also be used to identify areas where innovations are needed.

4.5 Shared understanding and dialogue among stakeholders

> Quality assurance approaches should support the development of a common language and shared understanding among internal and external actors that the fundamental purpose of evaluation is to support school development.

Education actors and stakeholders typically come from different professional backgrounds and contexts. They frequently use different vocabularies to discuss quality assurance. To be effective, quality assurance should be accessible for all stakeholders. A shared language of teaching and learning – focused on learner needs and progress - should be at the heart of communications among all education stakeholders.

Box 12: Boards with different stakeholders (Sweden)

In **Sweden**, at upper secondary level, businesses and other stakeholders are represented in the different programme boards which are run by the Swedish National Agency for Education. Their role is to advise the NAE on the development of the programme content and to make sure that education meets standards and correspond to the demands of working life.

A school survey is carried out prior to school visits by the inspectorate. All students in years 5 and 9, their parents and all teachers are addressed in the survey. The topics concern safety and the learning environment, educational leadership, basic values, and the working of the school. During a regular inspection the Inspectorate interviews the responsible staff in the local authority, the operator of independent schools, and the school head. A visit lasting several days can include classroom observations, if all other data collection means have not provided sufficient information on the school. An in-depth inspection includes, in addition, interviews with teachers, students and student social welfare staff.

For more on this process see European Commission (2014) in Chapter 7: References[xix]

Dialogue between schools and parents and pupils is also an important part of quality assurance. It is important to avoid vocabulary which excludes any of these stakeholders. **The Netherlands**, notes that the success of its new 'bespoke' approach to quality assurance (see above) will require that internal and external assessors are able to express quality assurance concepts in words that are relevant and meaningful for all stakeholders. This includes interpretation of quantitative data to ensure accessibility.

Box 13: Providing tools to assist in the evaluation process (Czech Republic)

The School Inspectorate in the **Czech Republic** has recently shifted from formal inspections to evaluations of teaching and learning processes. The aim is not only to provide objective feedback on school performance, but also to support improvements in teaching as well as of school facilities. These changes are particularly motivated by the desire to provide practical methodological support for the continuous improvement of education for every child. (For more information http://www.csicr.cz/en/home?lang=en-us)

The **Quality School model** includes criteria for evaluation of conditions and results of education; methodologies for inspection activities; and forms to record evaluation data. In addition, the Czech School Inspectorate has prepared a new set of tools for evaluation of support and attainment in reading, mathematics, science, language, social, and information literacies.

These tools are also available for the use of schools and school facilities as well as for other education stakeholders, such as school founders or teacher training universities.

In **Italy**, the National System for Evaluation of Schools provides a variety of tools to external evaluation teams (coordinated by an inspector). Prior to the school visit, each team member completes a report based on data and narratives in the school's self-evaluation report. The team members share their findings prior. They then each complete a report of the school visit, and share these with the full team. In this way, the insights of team members are agreed upon and synthesised in the final evaluation rubric.

Communication based on a dialogic process of looking, listening and speaking may help to bridge differences. For example, stakeholders may also require explanations regarding what the quality assurance data cannot tell them about system and school performance, including the limits of existing measurement technologies.

Box 14: Frameworks of standards: working with a common language (Ireland and Slovakia)

Ireland has a long-established and respected approach to quality assurance and school inspection. A range of inspection models are used and reports emanating from all but Incidental Inspections are published on the Department of Educational and Skills' public website. However, no published reports contain data that would enable league tables to be formed. Legislation enabling Ministers to prevent the publishing of league tables has been availed of by all Ministers since the Education Act 1998 was published.

A common framework for teaching and learning was published in 2012. This was revised and extended to include standards for leadership and management in 2016. Since 2012, all schools are required to engage in school self-evaluation using the common framework. Schools are supported by national support services and by the Inspectorate to build a common understanding of the standards, to encourage teachers to share experiences and good practice within schools, and to improve schools' capacity to gather and use data effectively in order to improve student learning.

In **Slovakia**, in 2017, the Ministry of Education issued professional standards of each category of teaching and professional staff, for each career degree and career position. Professional standards include the teacher's competency profile in relation to the pupil, the education and training activities and the professional development. The professional standards, following the qualification requirement, defines a set of professional competences necessary for the performance of a teaching activity for the category and subcategory of teachers according to the appropriate career grade and career position.

These standards are currently being applied in practice and if necessary they will be improved to ensure, that the expected changes in school system will be realized by highly professionally trained and motivated teachers and other specialists. The aim is to create legislative changes in the system of continual education, credit system, career system and attestation in relation to professional standards of teaching and professional staff.

Box 15: Improving the use of an established Framework (Serbia)

School quality in **Serbia** is currently evaluated against 30 standards. These standards are grouped in seven key domains related to school work, which include a total of 158 indicators. External evaluation of schools is based on: analysis of records, school documentation and school self-evaluation reports, class observation, interviews with principals, school counselors, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders.

The first five-year cycle of external evaluation in **Serbia** was completed at the end of 2017. A new quality framework with revised standards and evaluation procedures is planned to be introduced in the new cycle at the beginning of 2018/19 school year. The aim is to improve the current framework to better support school development and innovation, based on evidence of its impact and on stakeholder feedback. The Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation is to involve all relevant stakeholders (including teachers and external stakeholders) through quantitative and qualitative research and public hearings. Several advisory sessions for external evaluators have been already conducted aiming at reviewing the framework for evaluation and operating procedures. School development will also be supported through external contractors.

4.6 Networks to support development

> Networks between schools and with local and wider communities can support collective engagement, build social and intellectual capital and spark new synergies across school systems.

Networked professional learning communities, which bring together practitioners within a school or link or cluster institutions, can incentivise pedagogical and school development. Networks with clear objectives, that are well-managed, and which build on evidence (including quality assurance data) can effectively support collaboration for change.

Box 16: Compulsory integration of network plus network tools (Poland)

In **Poland**, it is obligatory for school inspectors to involve, as appropriate: parent board (or individual parents), student council, NGOs, representatives of police, social welfare, and others in the process of external evaluation of the quality of school performance. There are two types of measures used to gather the data: anonymous questionnaires online, and interviews with representatives. School leaders and teachers can use the special internet website (www.npseo.pl) with the web based platform where they can find all the information about the assessment procedures, research tools, school evaluation reports, articles and other resources.

Collaborative networks enable educational innovations and school developments to evolve more quickly as more stakeholders are involved in testing and improving approaches. Research suggests that educational innovation networks are important both for the development of innovation as well as transfer of knowledge and practice across a wide range of stakeholders[xx]. Collaborative networks may create a pool of ideas and resources, and support dynamic exchange among participants.

Box 17: School networks as a shared approach to school development (Portugal, the Czech Republic and Serbia)

In **Portugal**, there are 811 'school clusters' (based on geographic proximity). There is a direct relationship between cluster leaders and the Ministry of Education. There are school councils for clusters to represent stakeholder views and give input on school development plans. External and internal evaluation standards are established for each grade, and schools know what's expected of them. Nevertheless, a major challenge in Portugal is to develop understanding and ownership of quality assurance indicators – including clearly definitions and understanding of 'quality' – and to ensure that it quality assurance focused on real improvement and not just on creating an 'ideal' school self-evaluation document.

In the **Czech Republic,** the Conference of Associations in Education is a voluntary group of pedagogical associations, pedagogical programmes and civil associations. The Conference organises monthly informal round tables on current educational issues as for all interested persons. They also organise annual open conferences of membership associations and other representatives. The main aim is to support networking and cooperation among the different non-profit organisations.

Serbia implements the SHARE project, a school network which supports horizontal learning among schools, thus creating professional learning communities that extend beyond individual schools.

Collaboration between schools and the wider community is also increasingly promoted as a way to ensure inclusion and provide appropriate support for all students. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may benefit from the support of multidisciplinary teams, cross-sector networks and resource-sharing at the local level.

A number of countries have developed quality assurance measures that also involve the wider community. For example, in **the Netherlands**, there are community-based supervisory and representative advisory boards. **Belgium(Flanders)**, the **Czech Republic**, and **Portugal** have school councils which include community members. In the **Czech Republic**, **Ireland** and **Poland**, community members may provide input for quality assurance through questionnaires. At the city-level, Nuremberg (**Germany**) holds and annual *Bilumgskonferenz*, and Nantes (**France**) organises an education conference to bring external stakeholders closer to schools. In **Slovakia**, a new school act on dual training will allow employers to have greater impact on profiling secondary vocational schools. In **Montenegro**, the model for Quality Assurance contains standards for contribution of the wider community to the quality assurance. The report on internal and external evaluation contains recommendations for improving the level of cooperation

Networks require careful management. Research notes that the involvement of multiple stakeholders in interactions creates the potential for more conflicts of interest[xxi]. Participants in networks which have strong cultures of trust are more likely to invest time and knowledge.

There are several key conditions for effective networks[xxii], including:

- Consistency of values and focus
- Evidence-based knowledge creation, "subject to robust quality assurance procedures"
- Rewards related to learning (e.g. support for professional development)
- Dispersed leadership and empowerment
- Adequate resources

Box 18: Piloting a new network model of quality assurance (Slovenia)

In **Slovenia** – a network of 16 kindergartens and 16 schools will pilot the new model of quality assurance between 2018 and 2020. Kindergartens and schools will move from an annual cycle of self-evaluation to a triennial cycle. The self-evaluation will focus on three main quality areas: learning achievement, school climate and staff professional development. The model allows the schools and kindergartens the freedom to add further quality areas at their own discretion. Pilot kindergartens and schools are to prepare self-evaluation reports, present them to the school/kindergarten councils and publish them on their institution's website. The Council for Quality and Evaluation will review a sample of the reports and together with the national evaluation report, identify possible revisions to mandatory areas of evaluation and evaluation studies, and will develop targeted proposals and research projects.

4.7 Building capacity for generating, interpreting and using data

> **Investments in building capacity of key actors to generate, interpret and use data are crucial.**

Investments in capacity-development of actors at school and local levels can help to develop technical knowledge on generating, interpreting and using quantitative and qualitative data, and developing internal support for evaluation. This is an important factor ensuring school self-evaluation supports school development.

Box 19: General reform and the capacity of actors (Finland and Cyprus)

In **Finland**, the system is highly decentralised and the school inspectorate was abolished in 1989. The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) works very closely with municipalities. The focus is on guiding processes that lead to quality outcomes. Each municipality develops its own plan following its own format. National student assessment is sample-based, so there is monitoring of general student performance but stakes for individual schools are low. Quality assurance is seen as a continuous process of development, and there is a strong focus on the need to establish a vision for the future, and a plan with specific goals and indicators to track progress toward that vision.

Cyprus is undergoing a general reform, which is also affecting its quality assurance reform. The approach is currently limited in that internal evaluation stays within schools and external evaluation is limited to teachers (primary) and school leaders (secondary). The Ministry of Education and Culture and the various stakeholders are examining plans and proposals now for changes in the current system of teachers' evaluation in order to improve this approach and to include school evaluation for development and improvement.

Countries may work on a regional basis, which is certainly the case in **Germany**. Here the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs for educational monitoring adopted measures in 2004 to thoroughly develop and assure the quality of instruction and school education on the basis of binding standards, the *Bildungsstandards.* Thus, quality development in the general education schools of all Länder can be checked against jointly agreed criteria in the form of qualification-related educational standards. In addition the IQB comparisons between the Länder centrally review the extent to which the educational standards of the Standing Conference have been achieved.

School and local stakeholders may need to invest in capacity building on how to generate data (including how to identify the most appropriate indicators to track school progress), to develop a shared understanding on how to interpret data (including from external quality assurance), and to then adapt strategies in areas identified for improvement. This technical

knowledge will help ensure a higher-quality review, and help strengthen the integrity of the overall quality assurance approaches.

Box 20: National assessment and the use of data (Belgium(Flanders))

In **Belgium(Flanders),** standardised examinations of all pupils are not mandated, but information on student outcomes is available from a number of externally designed tests available to help schools measure their outcomes. These include sample-based tests on student attainment in the framework of the National Assessment Programme (NAP) (peilingen). Participating schools in the NAP receive a feedback report, which constitutes a valuable instrument for schools to evaluate their students' performance in comparison with other schools.

The Ministry of Education and Training runs a special website that offers a selection of student tests for schools (Toetsen voor scholen). These include nationally developed or supported tests, tests developed by the education umbrella organisations (funded by the government) and the NAP tests. All registered primary schools can also use the Flemish pupil monitoring system (LVS, Leerrlingvolgsysteem voor Vlaanderen), including a supporting manual of instructions. Schools can use this to monitor student progress in Dutch language and mathematics skills at different stages of their primary education. With the correct leadership, schools can use these as an effective and key part of their self-evaluation activities.

As schools are free to determine their process of self-evaluation, they are equally free to decide how they will use of the results. However, legislation (Participation Decree of 2004) gives key stakeholders - parents, pupils, and others - the right to an official voice in school policy making. The school council comprises representatives of the parents, pupils (in secondary education), members of staff and the local community. They can advise on matters concerning the school self-evaluation. The results of the internal quality monitoring should be presented to the school council.

School self-evaluation is a relatively new quality assurance mechanism in many countries. School and local level actors may need to develop a deeper knowledge of quality assurance processes, and how to ensure school self-evaluation is used genuinely for internal accountability and school development, and not as just another report to be produced. In **Finland**, national student assessment is sample-based, so there is monitoring of general student performance in the education system, but stakes for individual schools are low. **Estonia** and **Slovakia** have recently introduced value-added assessments. These assessments measure teacher's effectiveness in supporting student attainment in a given school year.

Box 21: Different access to and use of data by different stakeholders (Austria, Cyprus and Italy)

In **Austria**, the results of external student assessments are not linked to direct consequences (for example, performance awards or sanctions) for individuals. Data are disseminated according to the level of governance: while students receive their individual examination results with reference to their cohort fellows, teachers get only anonymised results of their classes or groups and school principals receive data on class-level performance to support targeted school development initiatives. Education authorities, inspectors, and school committees receive data which cannot be disaggregated at level of individual student, class or teacher. The results of individual schools are deliberately not published.

Cyprus takes a diagnostic approach to identifying students who are at-risk of not meeting goals for literacy learning. These students are provided with additional support, and parents and schools receive feedback on their progress. Since 2007 the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation has been running the Functional Literacy Programme in the grade 6 and since 2012 in grade 3 of primary school. The purpose of the programme is the early identification of pupils with a high probability to remain functionally illiterate through various stages of compulsory education, so as to include them in supporting programmes.

In **Italy,** the results of external student assessments constitute one of the elements for school self-evaluation and improvement. When schools publish their self-evaluation report, they may decide if they want to include the aggregated results of the external examinations or not. Internally, the aggregated and disaggregated results are intended to support school improvement.

4.8 Developing a balanced view of school development

> Different types of data - both quantitative and qualitative, and gathered over time - are necessary for a balanced understanding of school development and learner progress. These data should communicate authentic narratives of schools and provide the information necessary to support decision-making within schools and across school systems.

Multiple types of data, gathered over time, are needed to develop a well-rounded picture of system and school development, including aspects such as well-being of all in the school community. As well as existing in parallel, qualitative data can give added meaning to quantitative data and support broader stakeholder understanding. The tools, processes, and the level of detail for different internal and external quality assurance needs and for broader dissemination should be considered.

Box 22: The use of indicators and checklists (Serbia)

In **Serbia,** the School Report Card is a checklist of information gathered by the school. It includes indicators pertaining to school functioning in several areas:

- General information about the school (basic data)
- Statistical data on students (numbers by different categories)
- Statistical data on educators (structure, work experience, level of in-service training)
- Resources (revenues and material investments and in-service training of employees)
- Education environment (offer of required and optional programmes as well as other extra-curricular activities, professional development, safety of children, etc.)
- Student educational achievements (general academic success rate, qualification examination achievements, other external testing, success achieved in competitions)
- Evaluation of institutional operation (the results of internal and external evaluations)
- Communication (resources and manner of communication with the environment)
- Message to the public (motto / other message which the institution sends out to the public)

The School Report Card serves as a tool for monitoring student achievement in schools in accordance with the previously defined national standards, informing the public on the main characteristics of the school and its progress in certain areas of development and provides the decision maker with information necessary for the improvement of the individual school but also of the education policy as a whole. The aim is to enable:

- the promotion of the culture of measuring while stressing progress and development,
- education process to become results oriented,
- increasing accountability of all stakeholders in the educational process,

- involvement of the public, the providing of information to parents, students, local community, the Ministry and wider professional public on the work conditions in the school and its achievements
- comparison between schools located within the same administrative unit as well as the comparison between different administrative units.

The School Report Card (*prosvetni*) was introduced in 2011. Use is optional, and it is thus only partically implemented. At the beginning of 2017, the School Report Card was integrated with the Education Information System of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (see http://opendata.mpn.gov.rs)

Box 23: Challenge of large numbers of students and different student groups (Turkey)

In 2015, **Turkey** officially approved an Education Framework. It sets out 14 areas, including main students gains, educational environment, social partners' participation, student achievement and transitions, and monitoring activities. The challenge is to design quality assurance approaches appropriate for a system of 17 million students, including 500,000 Syrian refugees. Education officials are very sensitive to the needs of specific student groups, including those at risk of early school leaving. They intend to develop alternative assessment approaches, to complement traditional testing, to capture a well-rounded picture of the student within his/her context and across a range of skills.

Multiple measures of school and student performance help to ease the high stakes associated with high-visibility school evaluation and student assessments. Different measures allow for a variety of perspectives on school performance and together, provide a more accurate picture of performance, and help highlight priorities. **Portugal** includes in its published data the progress toward goals to reduce early school leaving. **Slovakia** and **Spain** formally include PISA data in their quality assurance mechanisms, whereas most countries refer to PISA as a basis for reflection, but do not include them in their own quality assurance mechanisms.

To ensure that measures improve validity and reliability of quality assurance, systems should consider how to weight different mechanisms, and how to ensure that complementary measures increase synergy.

Box 24: 'Value-added' data (Slovakia)

In 2015, for the first time, **Slovakia** provided secondary schools with data on their "value-added" for pupils, accompanied by data showing progress between their school entrance (Testing-9) and school-leaving examinations. The National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NUCEM) and the State School Inspection (SSI) are currently preparing proposals and models for setting other school quality indicators that would reflect the context of these cognitive measurements and school and individual pupil results. These indicators will

include, for example: school climate, teaching staff climate, students' motivation, and classroom climate.

Box 25: Looking beyond academic achievement of learners (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, there is a focus on more holistic outcomes and social cohesion, looking beyond students' academic achievement. This is particularly important in the post-civil war context. They emphasise that it will be important to build capacity of all stakeholders, and to share good practices from other countries or across municipalities to help generate new ideas regarding effective quality assurance mechanisms in these areas. Students and parents should also have an opportunity to share their views on recent decisions or possible changes in the educational process.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that countries take note of the **eight guiding principles** when reviewing their quality assurance mechanisms for school education. Furthermore, it is recommended that:

At European level:

➢ Countries continue to take opportunities for **peer learning** and peer counselling in order to reflect on and refine their own quality assurance approaches;

➢ Discussions between countries continue in order to **take forward the achievements of the ET2020 Working Group Schools** on the particular challenges and opportunities related to quality assurance, especially as regards generating, interpreting and using data at different levels and related capacity-building;

➢ The impact of this work is **monitored** in order to assess its usefulness in policy development and guide future co-operative work;

➢ Recommendations on quality assurance are coherent with other recommendations on the **governance** of school education;

At national level:

➢ New quality assurance approaches should start from the **strengths** of schools and school education systems and be developed and monitored from there;

➢ In considering new approaches, it is useful to make some tactical planning, particularly in being prepared for the reaction of **stakeholders** and that:

  • A stronger, two-way **dialogue** between stakeholders should be envisaged, particularly regarding data;

  • **Incentives** for teachers and school leaders to be 'agents of change' should be considered along with a strategy for generating a culture of trust;

  • **Schools outside of the mainstream system** should be involved in this dialogue and the specific needs of **alternative pedagogical approaches** should be taken into account.

➢ **School self-evaluation** should be strengthened, including capacity-building for school leaders and teachers; learning from other sectors that have regularly engaged in internal monitoring; and developing tools where appropriate;

➢ The role of school **inspectorates** should be to facilitate improvement for example through follow-up with schools in identified needs and through disseminating good practices.

> ➢ **Coherence** of quality assurance mechanisms with other relevant policies should be ensured.

> ➢ Countries should take a forward-looking perspective: not dwelling on past needs but acting towards a **vision of the future**.

6. List of country and stakeholder examples

indicator on the presence of educational innovations) and **Portugal** (school inspectors' recommendations to improve innovation in classrooms and pedagogical differentiation)

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