Indicateurs des système d'enseignement
Indicators of Education Systems

PROGRES DEPUIS 1995 ET LES ECARTS A COMBLER DANS LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES INDICATEURS DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE L'OCDE

PROGRESS SINCE 1995 AND REMAINING GAPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OECD EDUCATION INDICATORS

RAPPORTS DES PAYS MEMBRES ET DES OBSERVATEURS
REPORTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES AND OBSERVERS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRESS SINCE 1995 AND REMAINING GAPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OECD EDUCATION INDICATORS  
PROGRES DEPUIS 1995 ET LES ECARTS A COMBLER DANS LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES INDICATEURS DE L’ENSEIGNEMENT DE L’OCDE .............................................. 9

REPORTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES AND OBSERVERS RAPPORTS DES PAYS MEMBRES ET DES OBSERVATEURS ......................................................................................................................... 9

AUSTRALIA / AUSTRALIE ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 10
  Overview of achievements to date and remaining data gaps ............................................................ 10
  Policy relevance of EAG at national level ...................................................................................... 11
  Balance between consolidation and development work ............................................................. 11
  Data comparability .................................................................................................................... 12
    ISCED ........................................................................................................................................... 12
    General data provision .............................................................................................................. 12
    Other data issues ..................................................................................................................... 13
  Structures ..................................................................................................................................... 13
  Dissemination .......................................................................................................................... 13

AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE ....................................................................................................................................................................................................... 14
  Austria’s focus on "traditional" outcomes measurements ............................................................ 14
  The first impact of participating in the development of EAG on Austria .............................................. 15
  Extending assessment beyond classrooms in Austria ................................................................. 16
  Educational policy and international assessment in Austria ...................................................... 16
  Austria’s neighbours as models and facilitators ............................................................................. 17
  Austria’s practical utilisation of the COMPED and TIMSS results ............................................. 18
  COMPED ...................................................................................................................................... 18
  TIMSS ......................................................................................................................................... 19
  What added value Austria expects from participation in PISA ...................................................... 19
  Policy relevance at national levels .............................................................................................. 20
  Balance between consolidation and analysis .............................................................................. 20
  New developments .................................................................................................................... 21
  Conceptual work ....................................................................................................................... 21

BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY) / BELGIQUE (COMMUNAUTE FLAMANDE) .................. 22
  Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels ................................................... 22
  Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................... 23
    Student achievement .................................................................................................................. 23
  Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................................................................................. 24
  Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work .............................................. 25
  Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures ...................................................................... 25
BELGIUM (FRENCH COMMUNITY) / BELGIQUE (COMMUNAUTÉ FRANÇAISE) .................... 27
Reseau A, B .......................................................................................................................... 27
Utilité du projet INES pour les décideurs au niveau national ........................................ 27
Progrès réalisés et lacunes subsistant dans les données .................................................. 28
Equilibre entre le renforcement et l'analyse des éléments d'information existants et l'élaboration de nouvelles données .......................................................... 28
Equilibre entre travaux théoriques et statistiques .......................................................... 29
Méthodes et structures du projet INES ........................................................................... 29
Groupe technique ............................................................................................................ 30
DOMAINE 1 - Utilité du projet INES pour les décideurs nationaux ................................... 30
DOMAINE 2 - Progrès réalisés et lacunes dans les données .......................................... 32
DOMAINE 3 - Equilibre entre renforcement des éléments d'information existants et élaboration de données nouvelles .................................................. 32
DOMAINE 4 - Equilibre entre travaux théoriques et statistiques .................................... 33
DOMAINE 5 - Méthodes et structures du projet INES .................................................... 33

CANADA ............................................................................................................................. 34
Policy relevance of INES at national levels ................................................................. 34
Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................................... 35
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments 36
Balance between conceptual and statistical work ......................................................... 37
INES Methods and structures ....................................................................................... 37

THE CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE ......................................................... 39
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 39
Policy relevance of INES at national level ................................................................. 39
Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................................... 40
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments 42
Balance between conceptual and statistical work ......................................................... 42
INES Methods and structures ....................................................................................... 42

DENMARK / DANEMARK .................................................................................................. 44
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels .................................... 44
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps .................................................. 45
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................. 46
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work .......................... 46
Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures ......................................................... 46

FINLAND / FINLANDE .................................................................................................... 48
Policy relevance of INES at a national level ................................................................. 48
Current state and assessment of the period between the general assemblies ................. 48
Future hopes and expectations ..................................................................................... 49
Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................................... 50
Current state and assessment of the period between the General Assemblies .............. 50
Future hopes and expectations ..................................................................................... 50
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................. 51
Future hopes and expectations ..................................................................................... 51
Balance between conceptual and statistical work ......................................................... 52
Future hopes and expectations ..................................................................................... 52
INES methods and structures ............................................................................................................. 52
Future hopes and expectations.................................................................................................................. 52

FRANCE .............................................................................................................................................. 55
Pertinence politique d’INES au niveau national .................................................................................... 55
Progrès et lacunes encore existantes dans les données ........................................................................ 55
Equilibre entre consolidation et analyse de l’information existante et nouveaux développements .......... 56
Equilibre entre travail statistique et travail conceptuel ....................................................................... 57
Les structures et les méthodes d’INES ................................................................................................. 57

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE ..................................................................................................................... 58
Policy relevance of INES at national levels ............................................................................................... 58
Progress and remaining data gaps .......................................................................................................... 59
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments ............... 60
Balance between conceptual and statistical work .................................................................................... 60
INES methods and structures .................................................................................................................. 60

GREECE / GRECE ............................................................................................................................... 62
Policy relevance of INES at national levels ............................................................................................... 62
Progress and remaining data gaps .......................................................................................................... 62
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments ............... 62
Balance between conceptual and statistical work .................................................................................... 64
INES Methods and structures .................................................................................................................. 64

HUNGARY / HONGRIE .......................................................................................................................... 65
Policy relevance of INES at national level ................................................................................................. 65
Progress and remaining data gaps .......................................................................................................... 66
Balance between consolidation, analysis and new developments ............................................................... 67
Balance between conceptual and statistical work .................................................................................... 68
INES methods and structures .................................................................................................................. 68
The method ............................................................................................................................................... 68
The Structure ............................................................................................................................................. 68
Media Coverage ........................................................................................................................................ 69

ICELAND / ISLANDE ............................................................................................................................. 70
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level ................................................................. 70
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ........................................................................... 70
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................................................................................. 70
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work ................................................... 70
Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures .................................................................................. 70

IRELAND / IRLANDE ............................................................................................................................ 71
Policy relevance ........................................................................................................................................... 71
Progress and remaining data gaps .......................................................................................................... 71
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .............. 72
Balance between conceptual and statistical work .................................................................................... 73
INES methods and structures .................................................................................................................. 73

ITALY / ITALIE ........................................................................................................................................ 75
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 75
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level ................................................. 75
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................... 75
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................................................................................. 76
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work ........................................ 76
Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures ..................................................................... 76

JAPAN / JAPON .................................................................................................................. 77
General comments on INES work .......................................................................................... 77
Assessment area 1 .................................................................................................................. 77
Assessment area 2 .................................................................................................................. 77
Assessment area 3 .................................................................................................................. 78
Assessment areas 4 ............................................................................................................. 78
Assessment area 5 .................................................................................................................. 78

KOREA / COREE ............................................................................................................. 80
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 80
Influence of INES on the Education in Korea ........................................................................... 80
Summary ............................................................................................................................... 80
Utilisation of “Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators” ......................................................... 81
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................. 84
Appendix: reports analysed ..................................................................................................... 85

LUXEMBOURG ................................................................................................................. 87
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels ................................................. 87
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................... 87
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................................................................................. 88
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work ........................................ 88
Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures ..................................................................... 88

MEXICO / MEXIQUE ......................................................................................................... 89
Assessment Area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level ................................................. 89
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................... 90
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments .................................................................................................................. 91
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work ........................................ 92
Assessment Area 5: INES methods and structures ..................................................................... 93

THE NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS ................................................................................ 95
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels ................................................. 95
Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps ............................................................... 96
The six priority areas as identified in Lahti: ............................................................................. 96
Student Achievement ........................................................................................................... 96
Tertiary Education ............................................................................................................... 97
School-to-work Transitions .................................................................................................... 97
Educational Finance .............................................................................................................. 97
Lifelong learning .................................................................................................................... 98
Equity .................................................................................................................................... 98
Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments ................................................................. 98
Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work............................................................ 99
Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures ......................................................................................... 99
| Assessment Area 3 – Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and developments | 127 |
| Assessment Area 4 – Balance between conceptual and statistical work | 128 |
| Assessment Area 5 – INES methods and structures | 128 |
| ISRAEL / ISRAEL | 129 |
| Impact of INES activities on decision-makers in Israel | 129 |
| Considering the issue of social indicators | 129 |
| Disseminating information and statistics | 130 |
| Additional contributions by the INES | 130 |
| Progress and finding “gaps” in the data | 130 |
PROGRESS SINCE 1995 AND REMAINING GAPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE OECD EDUCATION INDICATORS
PROGRES DEPUIS 1995 ET LES ECARTS A COMBLER DANS LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES
INDICATEURS DE L’ENSEIGNEMENT DE L’OCDE

REPORTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES AND OBSERVERS
RAPPORTS DES PAYS MEMBRES ET DES OBSERVATEURS

Note: The country reports are included in their original language.
N.B.: Les rapports de chaque pays sont inclus dans leurs langues originales.
Overview of achievements to date and remaining data gaps

1. Australia regards INES work as having broadly progressed according to expectations since the last General Assembly at Lahti five years ago. The main clear successes have been the progress made towards filling gaps in the data (especially in areas of student achievement and human capital), greater emphasis on analysis of data (e.g. through the publication of the Analysis volume of EAG), improved timeliness of data through bringing forward collection dates, consolidation of the published indicator set, and moves to improve data quality (e.g. the implementation of the new ISCED and the Finance Comparability study). EAG data are now widely used both inside and outside the OECD as benchmarks for comparing educational performance and, through World Education Indicators, such work has spread to developing countries.

2. Despite the achievements of the INES project there are still weaknesses in the data set and areas where objectives identified at Lahti have been difficult to fully achieve.

- Only limited progress has been made in respect of problems with the comparability of the EAG data set.

- The revised ISCED has led to a more transparent ISCED classification process but difficulties in applying ISCED in a uniform manner are likely to still exist to at least some degree. (The extent of improvement will not be fully known until EAG 2000 results are properly analysed.)

- Owing to constraints on data comparability and special influences in particular countries (all of which are difficult to overcome), the policy implications of the indicator set are sometimes difficult to determine beyond very broad conclusions. This coupled with resource constraints within the Secretariat has limited analysis of the policy implications of data despite general support among member countries for a greater emphasis on commentary and analysis.

- In regard to the indicator publication itself, the consolidation of the publication in recent years has meant that a good deal of (mainly non-core) data are only accessible in electronic form. In this context there is scope for the publication of a hard copy statistical compendium to ensure access and dissemination of the full indicator data set. (Some support for such a publication was evident at Lahti.)

- The role of the Networks has wound back only slightly since Lahti. There had been a common view that there was scope for winding back and this has mainly occurred through the demise of Network D. A more widespread winding back is, however, constrained by unfinished work in the other Networks, especially Network A.
3. To comprehensively resolve the data difficulties within EAG would require developments such as countries moving towards a common educational and statistical collection system. These are developments unlikely to happen because of more pressing national considerations affecting such matters.

4. The main obvious gaps in EAG data at the time of Lahti have either been or are in the course of being addressed. Basic indicators on rates of return to education are now available and student achievement data are finally on the way through the work of Network A. The main focus of Network A is on school-level achievement. While indicators at all levels including tertiary would be desirable, such an expansion of student achievement indicators may not be practical owing to increasing diversity in curricula as educational level increases.

Policy relevance of EAG at national level

5. In Australia the main use of the EAG data set is to facilitate broad comparisons of Australian performance in the area of education with overseas-developed countries. By comparing broad performance against comparable countries EAG gives useful pointers to the strengths and weaknesses of the Australian education system. The areas most carefully looked at are expenditure on education, participation in education and educational attainment.

6. Historically, the profile of EAG has been lower in Australia than in some other OECD countries. This mainly reflected the structure of the Australian education system. The very broad nature of Australia’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, which spans ISCED levels from Lower Secondary to Tertiary (Vocational) has made indicator interpretation difficult in many cases because the data for a given ISCED level in many cases cover two Australian education sectors. The extent of part time study at VET and university level in Australia has been another complication, since it limits the usefulness of headcount-based indicators.

7. The profile of EAG is gradually increasing in Australia and comparisons with overseas benchmarks using EAG data are becoming increasingly sought by political leaders and policy makers. There is also a move amongst some sectors of the education system to increase usage of indicators within their domestic systems.

Balance between consolidation and development work

8. Australia regards the general balance between consolidation and further development of indicators, which has taken place since Lahti as being broadly appropriate. In essence the main thrust of development work has been to plug existing gaps and this work is largely on track.

9. Network A has made substantive progress on its objective of producing indicators of student achievement for the INES project, with the implementation of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) project, which will assess the achievements of 15-year-old students in 2000 and every three years thereafter. The first set of indicators will be available after the initial release of PISA data, scheduled for October 2001 and will cover reading literacy, mathematics literacy and scientific literacy, as well as data on students’ familiarity with information technology and their capacity for self-regulated learning. There is also scope for adding a longitudinal follow-up component. Network A also produces indicators of student achievement based on non-OECD sources, notably the IEA’s Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

10. The Network A work represents substantial progress in developing school-level assessment and Australia strongly supports the continued use of PISA as the OECD’s principal source of international data
on student achievement around the end of compulsory schooling. Australia also has a significant interest in measuring achievement at the primary level and a number of initiatives have been undertaken at national level. The merits of international assessments at primary level may be worth following up among other Network A members. Student achievement at tertiary level is of significant conceptual interest but poses substantial practical measurement problems owing to diversity in curricula.

11. The Human Capital indicators work has filled in important gaps, particularly in terms of measuring returns to education. Data on both the stock of human capital and on the returns to education are important in measuring the contribution of education to the economy and the incentives for individuals to invest in additional education. There have been few data problems in estimating private returns but more significant ones in measuring social returns. There is a substantial literature of academic research in this area and the boundary between indicator development and research in this area involves significant overlap. The potential for further work in the Human Capital area to productive may be limited by the availability of consistent data across countries.

Data comparability

12. Quality of data is crucial if the EAG indicator set is to be useful for analytical purposes. To date there have been three crucial aspects of comparability that have been addressed in different ways.

ISCED

13. The revisions made to ISCED in 1997 and applied in EAG 2000 have led to a more transparent ISCED classification process. At the time of writing the results of EAG 2000 are not available but the expectation is that (while the new ISCED may reflect the structure of some countries’ education systems better than others) the transparent nature of the classification process undertaken since 1997 will result in countries being more consistent in their classification practices. This should reduce the extent of errors in programme classification, though difficulties in applying ISCED in a uniform manner are likely to still exist to at least some degree. In terms of future strategy Australia endorses the view that ISCED should be subject to ongoing review and adaptation as part of a process of continual finessing of its structure to the needs of changing education systems.

General data provision

14. Inconsistency in data provision related to differences in national definitions from those in the UOE manual also contributes to comparability problems. Even though the UOE manual provides quite detailed definitions and guidelines, if national collections are based on different concepts or standards countries often have little choice but to provide data based on national collections, and there may be limited scope to adjust these to meet the UOE guidelines.

15. To deal with such problems one must first identify the extent of differences between data in country returns and what is required if UOE guidelines were strictly followed. Such an exercise is being conducted as part of the Second Finance Comparability Study. Having identified the areas of inconsistency, the scope to overcome the problem areas may be constrained by the multiple needs being served by national data collections. Further issues relate to missing data and in this area Australia supports the efforts of the OECD Secretariat to encourage countries to estimate data cells, in cases where no national statistical data are available, provided the estimate is likely to be reasonably accurate.
Other data issues

16. For Australia, where part-time study is relatively important in post-school education, comparisons based on full-time equivalents rather than mere headcounts are important when our national data are compared with those of other countries. We are aware that the concept of part-time study is foreign to some education systems (e.g. Germany, Austria, etc.) and that this has made it difficult to expand the use of such comparisons. The issue has been discussed at the INES Technical Group but to date no easy resolution of the problem has been evident.

Structures

17. Australia is largely supportive of the existing structures within INES. Given the movement since Lahti to consolidate the project it was anticipated that the Networks would disappear in the medium to longer term. In the short term there is significant development work to be done in the Networks (especially Network A) so that their demise in the near future would be premature. Australia would support the take-over of the Networks by other INES structures (e.g. Technical Group) in the longer term.

Dissemination

18. Australia has no major problems with the dissemination of EAG results and the current types of publications meet most apparent needs. The key publications are seen as the EAG Indicators core publication and the electronic tables underlying and supplementing this publication. Core analytical publications such as the Analysis Volume and publications covering ISCED classification, Human Capital Indicators etc. are also important means of dissemination.

19. The interpretation of the indicator results is necessarily complex, especially given the extent of comparability problems and national educational idiosyncrasies affecting the data. Education Policy Analysis has been successful in identifying and analysing broad trends but the complexities mentioned have made more specific analysis more difficult and time consuming. Australia supports the continued publication of this volume but notes that significant resources are involved.

20. Australia makes significant use of the unpublished/electronic EAG data but feels that there is also a market for a comprehensive hard copy volume, which would present the indicator results not contained in the main volume in the form of a statistical annex. Since the data would be generated anyway for the electronic tables, the additional cost would not be great but the profile and accessibility of data currently available only in electronic form would be increased.
AUSTRIA / AUTRICHE

21. Austria has been engaged in the INES project right from the beginning. Following the initiating Washington Conference, it took over the chairmanship of Network B, “Costs and Resources” until its merger with Network A “Student Flows”, which was chaired by Australia.

22. It is presently engaged in all INES Networks and is participating in PISA. It has not held any positions in any of the INES supervisory boards.

Austria’s focus on "traditional" outcomes measurements

23. Austria’s school system, one of the first to impose universal compulsory school attendance, has retained a high differentiation of tracks and programmes. Beginning at ISCED level two, students are taught by two different categories of teachers: students in the GYMNASIUM, or university stream, are taught by university-trained specialist Professoren, while students in the mainstream HAUPTSCHULE and BERUFSSCHULE (for apprentices) programs, are taught by subject teachers who are trained in shorter, but highly charged pedagogical programmes at the PÄDAGOGISCHE AKADEMIEN.

24. Without going into too much detail, in this system of separate “higher” (i.e. academically oriented) and “intermediate” tracks for students of the same age group, the differentiation of university and non-university trained teachers essentially continues at ISCED levels three through five.

25. On a spectrum of traditional outcome measures of education, Austria holds its place in a country grouping which has primarily put its trust in the teacher’s professional competence. The fact that the teaching staff of the higher schools that prepare students for university study are academically trained themselves has traditionally served as the major guarantee of quality, a phenomenon which is seen throughout all academically-trained professions, and these teachers’ marking competence and power to promote or retain students from an early age is still generally undisputed. This model of determining students’ careers on the basis of individual experts’ teaching and assessment of students’ performance in class has been structurally reinforced through an elaborate national legal framework, which is designed to ensure that standards of teaching and marking are the same throughout the country at all levels and ages of the non-university education and training sectors.

26. At key points in the students’ career, the national system has gone beyond its specialists’ assessment practice: class teachers jointly determine their students’ yearly pass or fail standing (fails result in retention), and boards of examiners preside over the leaving and matriculation examinations1 at the end of secondary schooling. These boards’ actions are bound nationally by a detailed and rigid legal framework that defines examination content and procedures, and the observation and enforcement of these rules is one of the key responsibilities of the school inspectorate.

1 “Leaving” refers to obtaining a vocational qualification; matriculation (from “higher” schools and colleges) qualifies for direct and unlimited university access.
27. An assessment system that is solely based on the teachers’ individual or joint judgement can only yield statistics which are based on their monitoring and marking, and Austria has recorded statistical indicators based on students’ end of grade and matriculation examination results for many years. As well as being presented in the statistical education publications, this judgement-oriented outcome statistic has been nationally utilised in the labour-market context, where information on, for example, the distribution of general and professional graduations in Gymnasium and higher technical and vocational schools at the end of secondary education, has contributed to the political discussion by confirming the merits of strategic policy points. In the latter field these statistics have typically served as a reminder of the prevalence of conventional technical studies and of the fact that ICT studies were still underrepresented. This kind of quantitative statistic, and the types of indicators based upon its findings, still largely dominate the national discussion and indeed continue to be the international state of the art when tertiary education is dealt with.

The first impact of participating in the development of EAG on Austria

28. In Austria, OECD's *Education at a Glance* was welcomed by those with expertise in the area as a means to indicate policy-relevant issues across the whole spectrum of education; for the first time Austria’s education was highlighted in an international system of indicators that reflected on all levels of education, irrespective of which Austrian ministry happened to be responsible (until recently a separate ministry dealt with universities).

29. The Austrian media seized on political “sensations” such as the unit costs of education, which were shown as higher than average in primary and secondary, and lower in tertiary education. The media more or less completely overlooked indicators which - when read and interpreted in their political context - could have given rise to a sustained domestic political discussion. Thus indicators that went beyond information on the educational system itself went largely unnoticed (e.g. indicators on gender differences in salary when equally qualified or on the relatively short periods many Austrians spend in their active professional lives between a very late graduation from university and very early retirement). The “strong points” as indicated in *Education at a Glance* (e.g. the relationship between low youth unemployment and a strong vocational element in the upper secondary sector) also went largely unreported, as *Education at a Glance*, for lack of data, could not illustrate the public budget savings in connection with the dual apprentice system.

30. As a consequence the nationally most quoted and used outcomes indicators were ‘non-assessment effectiveness’ indicators such as:

− census-based indicators on highest formally attained level of education

− graduation indicators (intermediate and higher schools and colleges, non-university and university)

− employment by highest / lowest attained level of formal education

− proportion of general and vocational formal training

31. Gender differences were also considered in the reporting of the above indicators.
Extending assessment beyond classrooms in Austria

32. In a system where the measurement of the individual knowledge and skills of students is done by highly qualified, competent and reliable teachers there is little room for external assessment (not unlike the situation in higher education). Questions of quality of assessment practice will be asked and attention paid only if there is reason to believe that the system is not working the way that it should.

33. From within the system there have persistently been signals that all was not as well as it appeared. Not surprisingly in teachers’ circles, cases have been reported of how specialist teachers had assessed the same essay of a student differently; how what was assessed was often based on personal interpretations of curricula by teachers, and how one could pass in one school with a lesser effort than in another.

34. Involved parents have always been instrumental in obtaining teachers’ attention for a “fair” assessment for their own children; informed parents and students will look at a teacher’s assessment even more critically and will highlight any shortcomings that could work to their disadvantage.

35. One early attempt to get a more systematic grip on the objectivity of testing and assessment was the Austrian Lehrzielbank, an item-banking project of teaching objectives, which started as early as the mid-1970s in Austria. It covered the upper secondary technical and vocational curricula, established what the core objectives were in the key subject domains, and illustrated them with model test instruments which teachers could use for building their own teaching and testing paradigms on.

36. As this project stopped short of being developed into a national assessment project, the gap between the model instruments and the teachers’ real world of assessment remained by and large unbridged. If any effect was felt, it was through the enhanced quality of the school books published by authors who had been part of this project. Yet its impact on the quality of the instruments used in schools throughout Austria cannot be overestimated, as these books have been also used throughout secondary education, including general (and indeed to a limited extent also in tertiary).

Educational policy and international assessment in Austria

37. Bearing all this in mind, it is not surprising that Austria had persistently kept itself at a distance from international assessment projects. The first international assessment Austria took part in was IEA’s COMPED, both in the equipment and in the student surveys. Owing to the small number of countries in the student survey, COMPED country results never qualified, however, to be included in the INES Education at a Glance indicators.

38. When the results were published, the media, were quick to spot a section of teachers’ complaints about insufficient and outdated equipment, overlooking the fact that a new generation of computers had been introduced on the basis of a complete curriculum overhaul after the survey had been carried out.

39. The fact that Austria’s students had outperformed those in the few countries that had participated in the students’ questionnaires went largely unnoticed by the media. It was also difficult to sustain in light of weak international evidence (it did not help that any international evidence there might have been was not brought forward at the time).

40. COMPED as a study was not sufficiently convincing to turn the tide in favour of international assessment in Austria, and mainstream educational scientists, with the one exception of the newly formed University Salzburg IEA Austria Unit continued to advise against embracing the competence measuring school.
41. Even so, the ice was broken, and participation in TIMSS, which was presented as a research project, was able to be secured for all 3 population groups, including apprentice education.

42. Budget constraints and a general reluctance to reply to even more surveys were major reasons why Austria chose not to participate in the IEA Reading Literacy Study. No doubt a major reason why Austria did not choose to participate was that the BAMBERGER school of reading still holds the centre stage of educational policy in Austria. Although it is true that BAMBERGER does measure reading skills, he uses the results mainly as a predictor of students’ careers. BAMBERGER then actively promotes the skill at an early age, emphasising that this policy is the key to success in school and in later life.

43. CIVICS was also missed out because it was perceived as competing for focus and funds with the traditional emphasis of providing schools and teachers with the materials that were considered necessary to promote the case of model citizenship.

44. While still struggling with what TIMSS could or would not say about maths and science teaching in Austria, agreement to take part in PISA, an assessment that the OECD had put considerable weight behind, was a forgone decision.

45. Austria’s neighbours as models and facilitators

46. It is interesting to note that neighbours of Austria participated much earlier and more extensively in IEA surveys. Looking at just a few selected countries will give some background information.

47. Switzerland, where unlike in Austria, education is not the responsibility of a strong central government, is a European example of what a small but influential and engaged group of persons could accomplish in and for a country that clearly belongs to the diverse educational systems category. At an early stage of international assessment practice they understood the importance of being involved in international comparative studies on the quality of education systems. Their interest was methodical (“what could possibly be done”) as well as aimed at gaining a more valid assessment of Swiss education through utilising the international studies for intra-national comparisons between regions and Kantone. There was also the awareness that this kind of comparison requires extensive internal secondary analysis on the meaning of the results for the national context, and corresponding research programmes have been carried out.

48. During the mid-1990s there was a remarkable shift in the official policy of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education (Schweizerische Erziehungsdirektorenkonferenz - EDK), from a very reserved, conservative position (“We know that we are good and don’t need to compare ourselves to others”) to a more rational one. After that it was not too difficult (we were told that some lobbying was required) to gain the financial support of all 26 cantons.

49. What was perhaps unique in the case of Switzerland was the link that could be established between administrative management and innovative- and research-oriented spirits, which was the basis for the Swiss Initiatives in the INES Steering Group and in Network A, to name just two important networks in the field. The Swiss Initiatives were systematically probing the frame of INES and Network A activities for missing elements and their proposals of concrete activities to “fill the holes”, which were favourably received by all. Important stages of these activities were NOBS (for non-curricular bounded skills and knowledge), the Survival Kit as a threshold option, Cross-Curricular Competences, Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy (Mr. Helmut Fend), an ad-hoc group on equity (Mr. Walo Hutmacher), and Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo - Swiss financed and initiated with U.S. support) in order to progress in the task of having more serious theoretical foundations and integrated communication skills (i.e. reading, writing, talking and listening).
49. This is perhaps the time and place to say that without this extraordinary contribution by our Swiss colleagues, PISA might not have gained European and international backing to the extent it has. This certainly holds true for Austria, where a merely conventional subject-bound assessment would not have won the support it has.

50. Germany is both similar to and different from Switzerland. With the Länder each responsible for their education policies, secondary education is not organised uniformly. There are some remarkable differences in structure, with the exception of the one common track, which is vocational education and training, though students across Germany write the final examination at the general upper secondary level (“Abitur”) under comparable conditions and general standards. Germany, which unlike Switzerland was mainly represented in assessment activities by its scientific community in IEA, has been one of the strongest participants in international assessment (which is clearly shown in their Network A questionnaire response). This strong scientific involvement is also apparent in PISA, where Germany has been pioneering problem-solving. Similarly to Austria, not too favourable TIMSS results caught the attention of politics, the media and the public at large and the question of the quality of schooling and instruction have been top of the agenda in the Länders’ Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs.

51. Hungary has enjoyed a much longer tradition of partaking in international surveys than its neighbours Austria and the Czech Republic. It is interesting to see how already in communist-ruled Hungary, key educationalists were eager to test their country’s “adapted” education system against the “outside world” of western countries, and how their system took this on. Austrians are astounded by the fact that - almost unnoticed by their immediate neighbours for a long time - Hungary was able to participate actively in IEA studies, and build up a competence, which was reinvested in direct contact with IEA.

52. Other post-communist countries, including the former Czechoslovakia, another immediate neighbour of Austria, joined IEA right after 1989, more or less about the same time as Austria, with TIMSS being their first international survey (unlike the Czech Republic, however, Slovakia has to this day not carried on its international activities in PISA). It is also quite remarkable to see that as small countries and with little hope of help for instrument translation into their languages, these countries very quickly became top players in international assessment. Given the old and re-emerging close ties between Austria and its neighbours in the east and south-east, Austria was of course interested how its educational system would now compare with its close neighbours, with their common roots.

Austria’s practical utilisation of the COMPED and TIMSS results

COMPED

53. The assessment aspect was difficult to interpret given the small number of countries that took part in it, and the “horserace” test results, meagre as they were, were too good to prompt national analysis. Results that indicated shortcomings (i.e. inadequate access to and use of the computer in the classroom, and outdated equipment) were almost irrelevant and had little impact. Conditions had changed within the span of time from instrument application to data release, during which a considerable effort had been made to train teachers and install a new generation of equipment. Besides, since COMPED was the first international assessment project in which Austria participated, and since a cautious approach was chosen to

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2 The Federal Government has responsibility for the practical part of the dual system; the vocational college system is under the responsibility of the Länder.
introduce assessment to Austria for the first time, the stakeholders reacted in an on-off bout of attention, the data were not put to use analytically and the matter was not really pursued any further.

**TIMSS**

54. An ongoing process under the acronym IMST (Innovations in Mathematics and Science Teaching) was initiated extending to the end of secondary education. It is based on a thorough analysis of the population 3 test results, as they were particularly disappointing and at the same time largely puzzling if not inexplicable at first sight, given the better than average results in population 1 and population 2. On the basis of this analysis, an assessment of the status quo of the Austrian mathematics and science teaching was carried out and other countries’ reforms were discussed, where the results prompted this (e.g. the Netherlands). The respective conclusions and expert opinions have been formulated by way of policy recommendations in IMST² (Innovations in Mathematics and Science Teaching, the extra T in T² taking into account the important role of technology). IMST² is designed to foster innovations that aim at improving the quality of learning and teaching, focuses on mathematics and science, and addresses all stakeholders in the Austrian educational system.

55. Given that a vast wealth of data is still dormant (i.e. all of population 1 and population 2), it is disappointing to see that by the time it can be put to use most of the data are already outdated (politics is very critical of “old” data). As the situation is not actually helped by ever tighter public budgets, in future assessment cycles there should be more consideration of countries’ needs to utilise their data in a timely manner.

**What added value Austria expects from participation in PISA**

56. The main reasons why Austria continues to participate in international assessment is hope for help in the areas where we anticipate the greatest benefit of international co-operation:

- System monitoring;
- Assessment anchoring;
- International placement of system effectiveness;
- International agreement on competence standards and on benchmarking;
- Assessment measurement expansion into more complex domains;
- Encouragement of its scientific community for measurement-driven research in education; and
- A truly international documentation of best practices in knowledge / skills acquisition (instruction types and practices; attitudes and interactions of teachers, students, parents, and schools).

57. Austria considers that the following could be bi- and multi-national co-operation areas within the framework of international assessment:
− Evaluation of common system characteristics, which could better explain results and that are
  not dealt with internationally (e.g. domain organisation; student flows; classroom assessment
  and national marking systems effects);
− Identification of the key elements that determine the quality of the interaction process
  between teachers and students;
− Identification of the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders concerning national system
  characteristics;
− Co-operation in developing assessment areas that are of national interest, but have not yet
  been internationally accepted (e.g. Foreign Language, Democratic Skills; ICT Literacy,
  Communication Skills);
− Co-operation in assessing supplementary populations;
− Co-operation with a purpose of innovating assessment methods; and
− Developing a comprehensive system of quality control in education.

Policy relevance at national levels

58. Hopefully the implementation of ISCED 1997 will guarantee better comparability in general and
therefore stimulate the interest in international comparison. At the moment, the use of level category 4 is a
bit uneven, what causes problems with regard to the integration of different sources and the interpretation
of results - both on the national and international level.

Balance between consolidation and analysis

59. The purging of the diverse statistical masses should be one of the future priority themes. Many
initiatives were undertaken (by the Secretariat and/or certain countries) but they often did not result in
lasting consequences yet: such areas are for example the inclusion/exclusion of research components and
of administrative tasks (concerning both expenditure and teaching staff), of full-time and part-time
participation, etc.

60. Currently, the analytical issues have been improved considerably over the last years whereas the
underlying data partly still appears weak.

61. Key indicators - as regards the Technical Group - are:
− Educational expenditure relative to GDP
− Educational expenditure per student
− Ratio of students to teaching staff
− Participation rates
− Completion rates
62. These indicators represent basic information while other indicators seem to be related to more specific topics and interests, respectively. Even with regard to these key indicators, however, further improvement of the data quality appears to be essential.

New developments

63. The amount of activities concerning methodological refinements in different areas is one of the strength of the INES Project. Even the publication of experimental indicators has proved to be quite stimulating.

64. However, the developmental work on specific indicators, estimation procedures, etc., could perhaps be organised within the frame of electronic discussion groups, in order to allow a more vivid exchange of views and experiences.

Conceptual work

65. The state of the art should also be documented in a rather theoretical-oriented framework, in which one could find information on the indicators themselves and their assumed relations, the concepts and methods, the used data sources and remaining problems of comparability.

66. Such a reference would probably facilitate the discussion about future developments within and even outside the INES Project.
BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY) / BELGIQUE (COMMUNAUTE FLAMANDE)

Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels

67. The INES project has without a doubt played a very important role in educational policy-making, and, more specifically, in the domain of key indicators in educational policy-making. It is important for the Flemish Community to monitor our educational system by means of indicators in order to have a good/better educational policy.

68. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that there is a possible danger for misinterpretation of the indicators. At the moment some of the most quoted indicators are not that easy to interpret without knowledge of the structure and regulations in the different educational systems. This problem of interpretation must be kept in mind during all steps covered in the INES project from the theoretical framework to the dissemination of the results.

69. INES has definitely influenced the educational debate and policy-making in the Flemish Community. The INES project has given us the opportunity to position the Flemish Community in an OECD context.

70. Important results of the INES project are the publication of *Education at a Glance* (EAG) and *Education Policy Analysis* (EPA). Being a federal country these publications form the input for the Flemish indicators publication. The publications “Vlaamse onderwijsindicatoren in internationaal perspectief” are the result of the work on key indicators and in this publication a lot of the EAG indicators are published on a Community level. This publication normally receives more interest in the media than EAG. This is due to the fact that: Flanders is being compared internationally; specific Flemish indicators are also integrated there; and education is a matter of the Communities in Belgium and both educational systems are diverging more and more the relevance of Flemish indicators in an international context is greater than the Belgian ones.

71. Often the indicators in EAG set the agenda on the discussion of educational policies for some time after its release – both in the short and long term. Unfortunately the media often focuses on very narrow issues from EAG, and sometimes misunderstandings or misinterpretations cause unnecessary debates (see above).

72. Some editions of *Education Policy Analysis* have received a lot of interest from management in the Education Department. This publication is often more policy relevant than EAG as there is more room for in-depth analysis in EPA. Nevertheless, we think that more use could still be made of the EAG indicators in EPA.

73. Next to EPA, the recent publication ‘Highlights’ received a warm welcome and direct interest from policymakers. This is a good tool for wider dissemination of the results of INES. It has inspired us to do something similar in the (near) future.
74. EAG and other INES outcomes have been effective in targeting high-level civil servants in the Education Department. The INES outcomes have evidently influenced the discussions in educational policy in the Flemish Community. The indicators of the INES project are used for example as benchmarks for certain projects/items on the political agenda. The results of INES/EAG are more visible than in the past: the indicators have been used in the discussion on certain items. Some indicators have made it possible to have a more objective debate within the Flemish Community.

75. The INES project (and as a direct result of this: the Flemish indicators publications) has also sparked a greater general interest for educational statistics and analysis in the Education Department as well as in the Flemish Community on the whole. International benchmarking is one of the main results in this field.

76. Due to the very broad approach and the complexity of EAG a limited set of key indicators seems useful to us. This limited set of more technical indicators could be updated each year but it is not necessary to publish them each year in EAG. Dissemination through the Internet could be useful.

77. Dissemination through the Internet could also be very useful for the basic data of the indicators. This is a question we regularly receive from researchers who would like to do additional research on the indicators and therefore need the basic data behind the indicators. Before that is done, we would like to stress the importance of comparable coverage among the countries.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

78. The Lahti General Assembly defined 5 prior domains: student achievement, tertiary education, school-to-work transition, educational finance and lifelong learning.

Student achievement

79. As most other participating countries, the Flemish Community has, of course, high expectations of the data from PISA. This project will without any doubt be a very important step forward in the area of measurement of achievement.

80. However, the expenditure of these kind of projects must hold the constant attention of the OECD Secretariat and the participating countries (through the BPC). The conceptual work done by PISA in the field of student achievement could be used in other planned surveys. We welcome the OECD to make the same progress in the field of skills of the adult population and in the process area of education. We think it is important to link the input, process and output aspects of education (CIPO) during the next phase of INES.

81. Tertiary education: Within the Flemish Community we think that tertiary education is a domain in which more progression was and still is possible. Some problems on expenditures still exist, especially the separation of expenditure on R&D. We do hope that the indicators concerning financing of tertiary education will be improved on the basis of the Second Financial Comparability Study. Another item in which progress is possible, is the classification of educational and non-educational personnel at the tertiary level. In this perspective a close co-operation between the Technical Group and Network C is necessary.

82. We also hope that some of the problems remaining in the implementation of ISCED 1997 can be discussed within the Technical Group of the INES project.
83. We also want to stress the importance of comparable indicators on the level of higher education and this for example in light of the possible changes in higher education on the basis of the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations.

84. **School-to-work transition:** The transition from school to work has been successfully dealt with in the chapters on transition in EAG and EPA 1998. These chapters were very interesting and relevant exercises but we think that the need for further analysis exists. The work done in the subgroup Transition of Network B must lead to more concrete results in the near future. Data from other international organisations or networks could be useful.

85. **Educational finance:** Financing of education is very different between the OECD countries (e.g. private expenditures). This makes the area of educational finance very difficult. Even though a lot of work has been done since the last General Assembly, some indicators are still difficult to compare. The Second Finance Comparability Study will hopefully improve the data and indicators on finance. In this study it is necessary to take into account the coverage of the financial data (e.g. private expenditures, cost of the Education Department, pensions of educational staff, etc.).

86. **Lifelong learning:** The area of lifelong learning becomes increasingly important and should be prioritised in the future work of INES. Important aspects in this area are adult education or continuing education and training. At the end of this INES period some initiatives have been taken to further develop this area but the time has been too short to see concrete results already. In our view a significant gap still remains in the area of adult education, and this area should be given higher priority in the next period. The coverage of the UOE data collection could be a good starting point in this discussion. The lack of coherent data/indicators on the ‘initial’ education system and continuing education and training (adult education) remains a problem. A more fully developed theoretical framework would be useful. The work already done by UNESCO is relevant in this respect.

87. Lifelong learning should also include Cross-Curricular Competencies and the aspect of ‘the ability to learn’. These are two aspects, which need to be taken into account in the ALL project, even though this project is not directly allocated to the INES project.

88. **Remaining data gaps:** There are two remaining data gaps namely teachers and other educational staff and the expectations of the different partners within and outside education.

89. The data gap on teacher/educational staff not only concerns quantitative data but also other more qualitative aspects could be the item of indicators. Possible themes are the initial and continuing education of teachers, image and position in the labour force, career possibilities, etc.

90. The former Network D was active in the domain of expectations concerning education. We think it is time once again to pay more attention to this aspect of education. Changes in society could be the basis for changes in the expectations of parents and employers over time. The question to what extend these expectations influence educational systems is relevant to education policy.

**Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments**

91. As a reaction during the Lahti General Assembly to the absence of analysis the publication EPA was launched. In this publication more in-depth analysis is possible. This did not happen without any problems: often other data sources are used (in comparison with EAG) or not entirely correctly interpreted.
92. For the moment the Technical Group and the Networks are describing the indicators. In-depth analysis and explanation are not done sufficiently, often due to lack of financial and human investment. Nevertheless, this exercise would be very useful for the improvement of existing data and information and for policy relevance within the different countries.

93. It is very difficult to answer the question on the balance between consolidation and new development; as data providers’ and data users’ consolidation and improvement of existing data and information are important and necessary. But, as analysts and policymakers, you cannot forget the impact of the INES project on development work in different areas. It is essential that INES maintains a balance between consolidation and development, whereas we seem to go more in the direction of continuous development. Time investment, budget and ‘human capital’ for the consolidation and analysis of the existing indicators are needed.

94. In the conceptual work it is necessary according to us to have a close(r) co-operation between the different international organisations. By doing this, it is possible to prioritise the different projects between the international organisations, which should result in more coherent and more rapid results.

95. We sometimes have the feeling that a long-term vision on the balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments is not available. This lack of a longer-term vision problem seems a more general problem for the INES project. We hope to have good discussions and hopefully answers at the INES General Assembly in Japan.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

96. The conceptual work is very important and the basis for the credibility of INES. The work on definitions and basic conceptual work is judged positively by the different network and Technical Group representatives of the Flemish Community. Nevertheless, we miss a long-term and in-depth conceptual work and a better theoretical structure for the whole INES project.

97. As already mentioned in point 3 of this evaluation, we think that there is a need for long-term conceptual development and a closer co-operation between the different international organisations should be possible here. The work on ISCED was a good example of a closer and very useful co-operation between the international organisations.

98. We would welcome seeing a higher priority given to the work on coverage of the UOE data to ensure more comparability across countries, since this is the basis for a high number of indicators in EAG.

99. OECD has an excellent tradition of hiring outside experts for these kind of activities. Nevertheless we want to mention that the links between the INES project and other INES related activities such as the ad-hoc groups ‘Equity’ and ‘DeSeCo’ are not always that clear. We think that more effort can be made into better communication on the composition, the activities and the results of these ad-hoc groups.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

100. INES today has an extensive framework and structure of working groups and networks, which operate well in many ways. One aspect of the INES project that is unclear, however, is the hierarchy of decision-making in INES. The hierarchy of decision-making between the INES Steering Group, the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board is not completely clear. Better communication on the decisions made in the different INES groups could make it possible to have a better overview on the
INES and INES-related activities. The initiative on the INES Newsletter was a good step in this direction. A few years ago (1997?) the Secretariat made an agenda of the different INES activities during a one-year period. This calendar also made it possible to prepare the different meetings more effectively and thoroughly and to have a closer follow-up of the representatives of the Flemish Community. Maybe both the calendar and the INES Newsletter could be integrated in one communication action.

101. We think that the co-ordination and communication between the Secretariat, the Networks, working groups and ad-hoc groups could be improved. Furthermore, better information on the work of the INES ad-hoc groups, and better co-ordination between the ad-hoc groups and the Networks/working groups would be welcomed. For instance, both the Technical Group and Network C work on teaching staff data and indicators. Better co-ordination in this field would be helpful for all partners involved in the INES project.

102. Another lack in the INES project is a long-term vision on the different aspects of the INES activities. This could make it possible to make a long(er)-term planning for the INES project within the OECD Member countries. This is also closely linked to the budget available for the INES project. As in other ‘smaller’ OECD countries the costs of INES are also an issue of concern for the Flemish Community. The resources for the project are limited, and it is costly to take part in the different networks and groups. We would therefore like the OECD to give priority to a few surveys (through the Networks) and the UOE data collection (through the Technical Group). Special surveys for testing and “quick surveys” should be kept at a minimum and it must be possible for the countries to decide on the participation in these special surveys and testing.

103. Concerning the Networks we think it is now time to evaluate the task and the role of these networks. The innovative ideas and concrete results of the Networks cannot be neglected. Nevertheless we have the feeling that the Networks work too independently. Maybe working groups with a concrete task within certain time limits could be an alternative. Still, it should be acknowledged that the Networks have developed quite a high level of expertise in their respective fields. Not all networks have been equally effective however.

104. External scientific control of the different INES activities would be useful. A more traditional scientific cycle is often neglected on the basis of time problems. External scientific control could validate the different steps in for example surveys.
BELGIUM (FRENCH COMMUNITY) / BELGIQUE (COMMUNAUTE FRANCAISE)

Reseau A, B

Utilité du projet INES pour les décideurs au niveau national

105. Il faut reconnaître que, jusqu'à présent, les décideurs politiques se sont, dans l'ensemble, peu intéressés directement aux produits INES.

106. La Communauté française fait un effort tout particulier pour assurer la diffusion des Regards sur l'éducation auprès d'un large public de personnes concernées par l'éducation, mais peu habituées aux publications spécialisées : depuis 1993, chaque édition des Regards sur l'éducation fait l'objet d'une publication nationale qui met ses principaux résultats à la portée du plus grand nombre, en présentant les apports les plus intéressants du point de vue de la Communauté française.

107. A partir de cette année, les données publiées dans les Regards sur l'Education feront en outre l'objet d'un séminaire de diffusion auprès des décideurs politiques, de membres des administrations concernées et des cabinets politiques, ceci permettant entre autre d'améliorer la rapidité de la transmission de l'information.

Réseau A

108. Dans le domaine des résultats de l'enseignement, les Regards sur l'éducation ont en quelque sorte servi de ce caisse de résonance » par rapport à des résultats disponibles par ailleurs : les résultats de l'étude TIMSS, de l'IEA seraient certainement restés largement ignorés si l'OCDE n'avait pas diffusé très largement certains indicateurs basés sur TIMSS (il n’est d'ailleurs pas exceptionnel que l'étude de l'IEA soit attribuée à l'OCDE). Grâce aux publications de l’OCDE, la presse et l'opinion publique ont été rendues plus attentives à certains problèmes posés par les résultats de nos élèves (en sciences, en particulier). Le Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, organe consultatif en matière d'enseignement et de formation, composé des représentants des divers milieux concernés, a notamment rendu trois avis relatifs à l'évaluation des résultats des élèves (avis no 54, du 6 mars 1998 ; avis no 56 et no 57, du 4 septembre 1998).

109. Il reste cependant à rechercher une façon d'articuler les prises d'informations « nationales » et les opérations PISA (calendrier et contenu des tests), ainsi qu'à réfléchir à une utilisation plus systématique des résultats de nos élèves aux épreuves internationales dans le cadre du pilotage de l'enseignement.

Réseau B

110. En ce qui concerne les niveaux d'Éducation, la formation et l'insertion dans le marché du travail, prérogatives du réseau B, la publication des résultats, notamment à travers les Clés de Lecture de Regards
sur l'éducation, a permis une meilleure diffusion de l'information. Mais l'impact direct le plus important et le plus visible est sans doute celui qui a abouti à la révision de l’Enquête Force de Travail. En effet, plusieurs données n’étant pas disponibles en Belgique - telles que les données relatives aux salaires - l’ajonction de questions supplémentaires à l’Enquête Force de Travail a permis de remédier à la plupart des manques constatés. Ce travail est le fruit d'une collaboration étroite entre la responsable du réseau B pour la Communauté française, la responsable pour la Communauté flamande et l'Institut national de Statistique. Par ailleurs, la responsable pour la Communauté française a également contribué à la conception et à la diffusion de la nouvelle CITE 97, classification devenue indispensable dans le domaine de la comparaison internationale des données.

**Progrès réalisés et lacunes subsistant dans les données**

111. On n’est pas tout à fait sûr de cette date. Par ailleurs, ne serait-il pas intéressant de joindre quelques numéros des « Clés de lecture » au rapport de la CF ?

**Réseau A**

112. La décision de procéder à un recueil spécifique de données a progressivement été mise en œuvre et devrait assurer, à l’avenir, une alimentation régulière en informations récurrentes sur les sujets jugés les plus importants.

113. La question de l’équité est efficacement abordée dans un groupe « ad-hoc », auquel il reste encore à traduire ses conclusions en indications concrètes sur les analyses à effectuer et la présentation à donner aux résultats.

**Réseau B**

114. Bien que certaines données demeurent inexistantes en Belgique, essentiellement en ce qui concerne la formation tout au long de la vie, la plupart des données relatives au passage de l’école à la vie active seront prochainement disponibles. A cet égard, d’importants progrès ont été réalisés depuis la résolution de Lathi et des travaux se poursuivent dans ce domaine.

**Équilibre entre le renforcement et l'analyse des éléments d'information existants et l'élaboration de nouvelles données**

**Réseau A**

115. Dans l’ensemble, l’équilibre entre le renforcement et l’analyse d’éléments existants et le travail de développement de nouveaux domaines peut être jugé satisfaisant. Au sein du réseau, des sousgroupes se préoccupent davantage de défricher les terrains (est-il possible d'évaluer à grande échelle les capacités de résolution de problèmes ?), tandis que d’autres, sur la base d'un mandat qui peut être assez clair, approfondissent les domaines déjà largement explorés (construire un test portant sur l'image de soi en tant qu'apprenant).

116. Dans l’état actuel des choses, les questionnaires adressés aux chefs d'établissements et aux élèves constituent sans doute un des points faibles du premier cycle de PISA. Le questionnaire portant sur l'image de soi devrait également élargir davantage le point de vue adopté de façon à prendre en compte le point de
vue de systèmes éducatifs, comme la CF de Belgique, soucieux de permettre aux diverses réalités sociales et culturelles de s’y refléter. Le travail entrepris à propos de la résolution de problèmes devrait se poursuivre, malgré les difficultés rencontrées. L’évaluation des compétences en langues étrangères devrait faire l’objet d’un approfondissement similaire.

**Réseau B**

117. Un effort important a été consenti en Communauté française en ce qui concerne le développement de nouveaux domaines de recueil de données. Néanmoins, il demeure essentiel de continuer d’améliorer la qualité et l’actualité des indicateurs dans certains domaines comme le secteur de la formation tout au long de la vie, mais également en ce qui concerne tous les sujets traités par le réseau B. En effet, peu de sources existent en Communauté française de Belgique et il s’avère important de les diversifier au plus tôt. Néanmoins, au regard du travail effectué depuis 1995, il apparaît que l’équilibre entre le renforcement et l’analyse d’éléments d’information existants et le développement de nouvelles données est très satisfaisant.

**Equilibre entre travaux théoriques et statistiques**

**Réseau A**

118. L’équilibre semble satisfaisant.

**Réseau B**

119. L’équilibre semble également satisfaisant en ce qui concerne le réseau B.

**Méthodes et structures du projet INES**

120. Divers efforts sont faits pour assurer la transparence des processus, mais les rôles des différents partenaires pourraient certainement être précisés (en particulier les lieux de décision : quels sont les rôles respectifs du BPC, de l’assemblée plénière du réseau A, du Secrétariat, ...).

121. Les pratiques en matière d’emploi des langues devraient également être examinées, de façon à respecter le principe de l’égalité du français et de l’anglais, tout en prenant en considération le problème des coûts et l’efficacité de la communication, tant écrite qu’orale. Ainsi, la version française des textes n’est généralement disponible que tardivement, .... quand elle existe.

**Réseau A**

122. Certains progrès seraient encore souhaitables lorsqu'une consultation est requise : les délais imposés sont généralement trop courts pour permettre une préparation nationale des réunions ou même le recueil des réactions des différentes parties concernées en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit de prises de positions officielles, soumises à la décision d’un ou de plusieurs ministres; en outre, certaines consultations se font à des moments du processus où il est difficile d'encore réagir sans mettre en péril l’efficacité des opérations.
123. Peut-être serait-il possible de veiller à préciser très tôt les lieux et les durées des rencontres internationales (y compris celles des groupes) de façon à permettre une gestion des dépenses liées aux missions ?

124. Enfin, pour permettre une planification efficace de la participation de la Communauté française aux opérations PISA, y compris les différentes options internationales, il serait nécessaire que des informations permettant d'estimer avec une bonne précision les coûts nationaux des différentes facettes du travail soient disponibles dès le début de chaque cycle et ajustées si nécessaire.

Réseau B

125. Le réseau B, au même titre que le réseau A, souffre des délais trop courts imposés par l'OCDE. A titre exemple concret et actuel, la récolte de données 2000 impose un délai inhabituel et difficile à respecter si l'on tient compte de la nécessité, d'une part de terminer la récolte de données et d'autre part d'analyser les données récoltées (données de 1999, fin de la récolte continue en janvier 2000 dans le meilleur des cas, résultats demandés pour fin avril par le Secrétariat de l'OCDE). Un net effort pourrait ainsi être réalisé dans ce domaine.

Groupe technique

DOMAINE 1 - Utilité du projet INES pour les décideurs nationaux

126. Selon les auteurs du projet, les indicateurs INES sont destinés à aider les décideurs, politiques et autres, des différents pays membres de l'OCDE. Face à la diversité des préoccupations des États et des responsables politiques et face à la spécificité des systèmes nationaux ou régionaux, les indicateurs internationaux ne peuvent apporter aux responsables politiques qu'une première série d'informations, qu'il conviendra ensuite de préciser dans le contexte des particularités nationales ou régionales. Ainsi, en Belgique, il serait utile de distinguer les Communautés française et flamande. Cette préoccupation pratique existe dans d'autres pays tels que le Canada, la Suisse ou l'Espagne.

127. De façon générale, l'utilité du projet international est reconnue. Malgré les nombreuses difficultés liées à la comparaison de systèmes nationaux, souvent très différents, les indicateurs INES incitent et aident les pays à se situer dans un contexte international. Le projet INES a mis en évidence la nécessité d'assembler les évaluations et les décisions en matière d'éducation sur des données valides, internationales ou nationales. De ce fait, il a suscité un intérêt nouveau pour l'utilisation des statistiques comme instrument de gestion et de pilotage du système éducatif. Au sein des services de statistiques, le projet INES a essentiellement provoqué une prise de conscience de l'importance des demandes des organismes internationaux, de l'obligation d'en tenir compte lors des recensements et de la nécessité d'adapter les structures de fonctionnement de ces services. Ce message, bien perçu par les scientifiques, n'est pas encore bien compris par les responsables politiques et administratifs, gestionnaires des systèmes d'enseignement.

128. Théoriquement, les indicateurs de Regards sur l'Éducation sont utiles aux décideurs nationaux qui disposent ainsi d'éléments d'information dans des domaines relatifs à leurs compétences, mais aussi de comparaisons internationales leur permettant de situer leur pays ou région par rapport à d'autres États dont la situation est plus ou moins comparable à la leur. Ces indicateurs devraient également servir aux décideurs internationaux, par exemple au niveau de l'Union européenne, comme aide à l'élaboration d'une politique de régularisation dont l'objectif serait de réduire les écarts et de corriger les déséquilibres entre États et Régions européennes.
129. Les trois “produits” principaux du projet INES, Regards sur l'Éducation, le volume Analyse et la mise à disposition du public de diverses données statistiques sur support informatique sont jugés très utiles et complémentaires.

130. La qualité de la production est globalement satisfaissante. La lisibilité des informations par un large public pose cependant de nombreux problèmes que tente de résoudre, en Belgique francophone, la publication d'un ouvrage intitulé : Clés de Lecture accompagnant Regards sur l'Éducation. Un effort de lisibilité devrait être associé à une réduction importante du coût des publications et à une modification du processus de distribution. Des documents plus accessibles, traduits dans les diverses langues des pays de l'OCDE, devraient permettre un large débat démocratique dans les différents pays. Vu l'ampleur des informations contenues dans les publications, il est suggéré de réaliser des documents techniques spécifiques ainsi que des publications thématiques et régionales sur des points importants des systèmes éducatifs. Pour que les acteurs du terrain éducatif puissent être véritablement concernés par le projet INES, il est indispensable que les produits de l'OCDE puissent être diffusés dans les langues des utilisateurs potentiels.

131. Actuellement, malgré un intérêt théorique, les travaux INES n’ont que peu influencé les décisions politiques, dictées souvent par diverses contraintes régionales, prises dans un contexte historique spécifique et souvent dans un climat de méfiance vis-à-vis d’organisations internationales à vocation essentiellement économique, véhiculant des valeurs “commerciales”, éloignées d’une organisation civilisée de la société et globalement peu démocratiques.

132. En Communauté française de Belgique, seuls les indicateurs de résultats ont interpellé les décideurs qui, dans certains cas, mettent en cause ou ne comprennent pas un mode opératoire particulièrement complexe et ne tenant pas suffisamment compte de particularités culturelles régionales. À l’opposé, l’absence d’indicateurs financiers pour la Communauté française de Belgique dans Regards sur l’Éducation n’a suscité aucune réaction.

133. Parmi les acteurs de l’enseignement (enseignants, inspecteurs, parents,…) les travaux INES semblent n’avoir eu aucune influence directe. En Communauté française de Belgique, le projet INES a néanmoins produit plusieurs effets importants :

- il a suscité un intérêt nouveau pour les statistiques internationales, particulièrement au sein des services de statistiques;
- il a obligé les services des statistiques des trois Communautés du pays à renouer le dialogue, à rapprocher leurs méthodes et à rendre compatibles leurs données;
- par la publication des Clés de lecture de regards sur l’éducation, il a permis de diffuser les principaux résultats du projets INES au sein de la Communauté française de Belgique;
- il a suscité la création d’indicateurs spécifiques à chacune des trois Communautés de Belgique et en a favorisé la publication. Ainsi, pour la première fois en 1994, la Communauté française a réalisé un "Tableau de bord de l'enseignement". Un deuxième numéro est paru en 1996 et un troisième devrait sortir en 2000;
- il maintient des liens suivis entre plusieurs services du ministère (statistiques, relations internationales, …) et les chercheurs des universités et amène celles-ci à travailler sur des projets communs.
DOMAINE 2 - Progrès réalisés et lacunes dans les données

134. Le projet INES a permis aux services de statistiques de mesurer l'importance des besoins des organismes internationaux et la croissance de ces besoins, souvent différents des préoccupations “locales ou régionales” traditionnelles. En l'absence de véritables moyens supplémentaires, ces services de statistiques ont redoublé d'efforts pour exploiter au maximum les données disponibles. Leurs possibilités sont cependant très limitées. Ainsi, par manque de personnel et de politique en matière statistique, la Communauté française de Belgique n’a plus pu, depuis deux ans, fournir les données UOE. Dans la plupart des cas, les données “Belgique” se limitent donc aux seules données de la Communauté flamande. Depuis les années fastes 1995 et 1996, on a donc assisté à une régression régulière des capacités de production du service des statistiques de la Communauté française.

135. La décision d'organiser une collecte annuelle commune et unique à partir de 1995 et, ensuite, l’intégration de la révision de la CITÉ sont fondamentales pour obtenir, dans la plupart des pays, un maximum de données fiables et comparables. Dans la mesure du possible, les services de statistiques ont tenté d'adapter progressivement leurs modes de recensement aux demandes nouvelles des organismes internationaux. Cette procédure, très lourde, demande plusieurs années de mise au point et ne peut concerner simultanément tous les aspects de la recherche statistique. De ce fait, des enquêtes sur échantillons sont et resteront indispensables pour obtenir des informations sur divers aspects du système d'éducation qui, actuellement, ne font pas l'objet de recensements ou d'enquêtes organisées de façon régulière.

136. Aucune opinion ne prévaut quant au mode d'organisation de telles enquêtes. Il semble cependant préférable que ces enquêtes puissent être effectuées à un niveau proche des réalités locales et coordonnées par le secrétariat d’INES comme pour la nouvelle enquête PISA. Les moyens budgétaires affectés par la Communauté française au projet INES étant limités, il convient de veiller à un étalement dans le temps de telles enquêtes et à maintenir un équilibre financier entre les dépenses de fonctionnement du Groupe technique, des Réseaux et de PISA. Un calendrier précis devrait être établi afin d'éviter, par exemple, qu'une participation à une enquête soit remise en cause pour une simple raison de programmation budgétaire.

DOMAINE 3 - Équilibre entre renforcement des éléments d'information existants et élaboration de données nouvelles

137. Dans le cas de la Belgique francophone, les préoccupations actuelles portent essentiellement sur les coûts de l’enseignement et sur les résultats obtenus. Il semble qu’il conviendrait d’ajouter une nouvelle cible aux indicateurs: les décideurs pédagogiques. Si les moyens budgétaires le permettent, plusieurs thèmes devraient être développés :

- l’échec scolaire et le décrochage;
- l’organisation de l'enseignement;
- les contenus considérés comme "bagage commun" à tous les élèves;
- les processus de formation et la production d'outils pédagogiques.
DOMAINE 4 - Équilibre entre travaux théoriques et statistiques

138. De nombreuses possibilités de développement des indicateurs actuels existent. Il convient cependant de noter que les moyens de la plupart des pays sont réduits et qu'une croissance de ceux-ci n'est pas prévisible à court terme.

139. En quelques années, le projet INES a atteint une taille importante. Il conviendrait actuellement de mieux stabiliser l'édifice existant, d'augmenter sa visibilité régionale et l'intérêt des informations disponibles pour les pouvoirs locaux ou nationaux. Pour ce faire, il est indispensable de freiner momentanément sa croissance et de réfléchir à l'utilisation des résultats à un niveau régional, le seul véritablement utile pour les citoyens et les décideurs locaux. Si la fonction de développement et d'innovation ne peut être négligée, elle ne peut cependant être considérée comme prioritaire. La priorité du projet devrait porter sur les possibilités de régionalisation d'informations internationales combinant des données provenant de pays géographiquement et culturellement très différents. Dans son projet INES, l'OCDE devrait pouvoir se départir de l'a priori d'un modèle unique d'éducation et de système d'enseignement. Un progrès important serait la reconnaissance de systèmes, voire de valeurs éducatives différentes au sein de l'espace hétérogène OCDE.

DOMAINE 5 - Méthodes et structures du projet INES

140. La communauté française de Belgique est globalement intéressée par la poursuite du projet INES. Vu les moyens budgétaires disponibles, les efforts doivent porter prioritairement sur l'adaptation à la "nouvelle CITE" du système de collecte de données UOE. Parmi les fonctions du projet INES, il paraît prioritaire de consolider le système de collecte existant. En effet, seule la collecte de données fiables permet une analyse utile. La fonction analytique serait donc à placer en deuxième position. Pour que ces deux fonctions puissent être réalisées efficacement, il est indispensable de mettre au point le "Manuel Technique des Statistiques et Indicateurs de l'Education". L'association EUROSTAT, OCDE et UNESCO doit être privilégiée dans l’ensemble des procédures de collecte et d'analyse des données.

141. Les fonctions d'analyse et d'innovation devraient également se poursuivre, via les réseaux actuels ou dans le cadre d'un groupe technique élargi. Leurs travaux ne devraient cependant pas s'effectuer aux dépens du nécessaire financement du processus de collecte et de diffusion des données et de la réalisation d'indicateurs spécifiques au pays et, dans notre cas, à la Communauté française de Belgique.

142. Afin de maintenir un maximum de transparence au projet INES, d'inciter les pays à une collaboration utile et efficace au projet, d'assurer une bonne diffusion des résultats et d'augmenter, au niveau régional, l'intérêt pour les travaux menés par INES, il est impératif d'améliorer la communication entre les différentes parties et de tenir compte des spécificités nationales ou régionales. Il importe que l’anglo-américain ne devienne pas la seule langue de travail et de communication du projet international INES. Il convient que le modèle culturel et le mode de pensée anglo-saxon, sous-jacent et véhiculé par la langue, ne deviennent pas dominant. L'Europe continentale, partenaire important de l’OCDE, ne pratique pas l’anglais comme langue maternelle et sa culture n’est pas anglo-saxonne. Pour “dynamiser” le projet INES, il conviendrait, non seulement de rendre sa place au français et à la culture latine, mais aussi, d'intégrer d'autres langues culturellement importantes telles que, par exemple, l’espagnol et l’allemand. Cette disposition est importante si le secrétariat INES souhaite sensibiliser efficacement ses partenaires européens à l’importance des travaux du projet INES et à l’intérêt des résultats obtenus.
Policy relevance of INES at national levels

143. INES documents (e.g., *Education at a Glance* and *Education Policy Analysis*) have encouraged Canadian educators and policy makers to view our education and training systems within a global perspective. Documents released by INES (and APEC) have prompted Canadian policy makers to view and evaluate their education systems within a context of preparing children and youth to live and be competitive in a global society.

144. Although the data presented in INES have policy relevance, there is little evidence that they have been used to any great extent in the actual formulation or modification of education policy. In Canada, because the jurisdictional authority over education rests with the provinces and territories, while *Education at a Glance* data is reported at a “Canadian” level, it is arguably difficult for the policy decision-makers to bring home clear lessons from data which do not portray the diversity of their respective systems, but reflect an aggregate situation.

145. Because of this, on the Canadian political scene, INES is probably less relevant than in other countries. INES does not supply information directly usable by provincial/territorial school systems officials. It can (and does) happen that a given province or territory’s result in respect of one indicator is very different from the result for all of Canada. On the other hand, it is understandable that our counterparts in other countries are keenly interested in pan-Canadian results, just as we occasionally perform comparisons with U.S. data, which are the aggregate of data for 50 states. It may be of interest to individual provinces or territories to compare themselves with OECD countries. For such comparisons to be possible, either Statistics Canada would need to calculate OECD indicators by province/territory, or each province/territory must be able to perform the appropriate calculations.

146. In order to make INES outcomes more relevant to Canada, it might be interesting for the OECD to consider addressing the particular policy context of countries with multiple decision-making centres, such as federal states. Arguably, Canada is achieving this, however, through its Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program (PCEIP). The INES indicators have served as a model for the PCEIP. At the international level, INES has a key role to play in developing new indicators or refining existing indicators to improve the usefulness and reliability of education indicators.

147. Within the Canadian Education Statistics Council and Statistics Canada's Centre for Education Statistics, efforts have been made over the past couple of years to incorporate as many INES data definitions and analyses as possible to our inter-provincial/territorial indicator work. It is important to note, however, that there are issues to which INES definitions are not applicable within Canada because of our provincial/territorial responsibilities. There is no easy solution to this issue except to produce two sets of analyses (INES definitions and Canadian definitions).
Progress and remaining data gaps

148. Substantial progress has been made in various areas over the last five years. The most notable ones are student achievement (PISA) and school-to-work transitions. In these areas, the use of existing data (TIMSS, IALS, labour force surveys) has been more extensive and innovative than in others. No doubt current initiatives such as PISA (jointly run with the Youth in Transition Survey in Canada) will enhance the analytical capacity in these two areas even further.

149. In all areas of indicator development, even in those mentioned as showing good progress, major steps forward can still be taken.

- The ever greater complexity of tertiary education systems, coupled with the world-wide expansion of access, makes tertiary education a prime candidate for further indicator work, aimed at understanding both the different pathways and their outcomes in the labour market. This would help provide insight into the impact of education and training on social and economic development.

- Few indicators seem to reflect the concept of lifelong learning. It is essential to develop measurement tools to assess how well integrated this concept has become in national policies and individual realities. Much remains to be done in this area.

- Disparities and equity considerations are dealt with within other individual areas of indicator development. This is not a bad thing in itself. However, it tends to dilute and soften the important messages one should retain from the examination of equity issues. The OECD should consider looking at an emerging picture of equity, bringing together indicator developments so far made in isolation. The work of the Ad-hoc Group on Equity should provide an opportune momentum in this direction.

- There is a need for research and analysis into the relationship between education processes and education outcomes. A body of evidence now exists showing a relationship between socio-economic status and other demographic variables beyond the influence of school systems. Far less exists on the relationship between education outcomes and factors such as class size, curriculum, use of Information Communications Technologies, teaching methods, etc. Such indicators will be of particular policy relevance, since they pertain to aspects where, equipped with solid empirical evidence, policy makers and practitioners can intervene to improve education outcomes.

- There is a need for demand-side information on skill needs in the labour market, training and other strategies undertaken by employers to address these needs, and how they vary by industry and size of employer. The need is for quantitative measures that go beyond qualitative assessments.

- Efforts should be continued in exploring the cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of education. As education systems strive to go beyond teaching mathematics, science, and literacy, so the indicator system should also reflect broader outcomes such as citizenship, etc., through the examination of cross-curricular competencies.

150. Governments want a link between dollars spent and student success (as measured through academic achievement, transition to post-secondary education and work, and ability to gain employment in desired fields of study). This desire raises the need for INES to look toward merging the outputs of the different networks into comprehensive and cohesive analyses.
151. In terms of existing indicators, there remains a gap in comparability, especially in financial data. It is hoped that the departure of a consultant (Mr. Stephen M. Barro) does not signal a lessened emphasis on financial indicator comparability issues.

152. The analysis of financial indicators could be enriched by the use of identity equation systems that break down a major indicator into components. For example, education expenditures by GDP can be broken down into the expenditure per student, the inverse of the GDP per population, the number of students in the population aged 5 to 29 and the proportion of the population aged 5 to 29 in the total population (the latter two factors to measure participation and demographic structure). Such an approach is of interest because it allows for linkages and integration between a number of indicators in order to evaluate the contribution of each one to the differences found in the source indicator.

153. In order to keep the crucial support of the data providers for INES, any proposed changes must be thoroughly thought through and tested on volunteers before being implemented.

154. A concern with upcoming issues of Education at a Glance is the lack of “new” data to present. All Networks are scrambling to re-package data from aged sources (e.g., TIMSS and IALS). Canada, like many other countries, has probably gone as far as it can go in providing “basic” data to INES.

**Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments**

155. Well-targeted original data collection would greatly benefit the work of INES in the years to come. Such initiatives should rest on a well-designed process for the identification of priority projects. Better mechanisms should be put in place for the Networks to access resources for the developmental work. Developmental costs and time-lines must be weighed against the potential usefulness of each initiative and the ability of countries to participate in these new areas. Areas for future developments could include:

- Issue-based integrated analyses
- Utilisation and value of technology

156. The upcoming Network C survey forms an interesting new development. Other areas would benefit from co-ordinated original data collection, i.e. participation in education, and learning and school-to-work transitions.

157. One suggestion for INES to consider for the future is establishing two “core” sets of data that are updated and released in Education at a Glance on a rotational basis. Two core sets would be needed as (a) the data foundation is currently large and to release it all on an annual basis would create a huge document, and (b) annual comparisons are often of little value, but comparisons over a two-year period would be useful. This procedure would free up staff time and dollars to work on developmental projects.

158. It is important that archival information be maintained and readily available since indicators are not constant from one Education at a Glance to another. Data from previous editions of Education at a Glance should be made available on the Web to allow easy time series comparison.
Balance between conceptual and statistical work

159. Both statistical and conceptual work must be continued and both aspects have to be developed simultaneously. The formation of ad-hoc groups to lead the conceptual work has been beneficial in some areas (equity for example). It remains to be seen how this type of work will penetrate the Network structures to influence Networks’ indicator developmental work. However, care has to be taken to avoid the proliferation of working groups as this strains countries’ ability to participate fully.

160. The statistical work has come a long way since Lahti and this progression should not be set aside simply to make room for conceptual development (i.e., INES should be cautious about swinging the pendulum too far in the opposite direction). In regard to conceptual work in new areas (e.g., Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) and Network A’s initiative on cross-curricular competencies), care must be taken by INES to find ways for more countries to participate. With the current pay—as—you-participate model, small and economically poorer countries have difficulty working on new development committees.

INES Methods and structures

161. Until recently, the INES methods and structures have been fairly effective in producing the expected outcomes, a rich indicator set published yearly in *Education at a Glance*. In order to keep the work of INES focused and progressive, OECD should continue the organisational structure of networks and ad-hoc committees. The Steering Group and Technical Group ought to be permanent bodies, but since networks are in theory created to explore areas that are well less known and those for which the Technical Group is responsible, there might come a time when we could honourably discharge one network and create a new one with different objectives, using the freed-up resources and energies. In short, networks should have a mandate, objectives, and timelines clearly established by the Steering Group.

162. More clarity is needed on the roles and responsibilities of the various committees, including their terms of reference, and exactly how decision are made. In particular, the role of the Steering Group is not clear, as it appears to direct the work in some cases and have little influence in others. It is important that the role of the Steering Group vis-à-vis that of the OECD Secretariat, the CERI Governing Board, and the Education Committee be clarified. Also, “decisions” that are made at the Network level cannot be “ratified” by the Steering Group, as it is not representative of the OECD countries as a whole. If the desire is to use the Steering Group for more than simple policy/technical advice and to have it “steer” or manage the program, then it must be representative of the countries involved.

163. In the Networks, there is no strong sense that the whole project is clearly directed, developmental priorities are set, and efforts to address priorities are supervised for their sustainability. Within INES management structure, a greater place should be made to the co-ordination of activities across Networks. The project could become richer if there was more discussion of cross-cutting issues, with sometimes the establishment of inter-Network sub-groups.

164. Equally important is the need to engage active participation of members in Network activities. This may be achieved by making clear to countries that Networks need to bring together country representatives committed to sharing the Networks’ developmental work, now central to further progress in the INES Project.

165. It is important to note a process-related problem that arose from the tight timelines and lack of information available to inform decision-making on participation in PISA 2003. These factors made it difficult for Canadian provinces and territories to provide input. More information about the work of and decision-making process for PISA would be useful.
166. The recent establishment of the Newsletter is certainly a positive move towards developing a consciousness of belonging to a project among all the individual, numerous participants who previously did not have much opportunities to see the whole. A further step to consider would be the provision of up-to-date information on the work of INES on the OECD public web site, to allow education policy officials and other interested individuals in the OECD countries to remain aware of the ongoing developmental work being done in the various parts of the project.
THE CZECH REPUBLIC / REPUBLIQUE TCHEQUE

Introduction

167. The Czech Republic joined the INES project in 1992. Immediately after the 1995 OECD/INES General Assembly, representatives of the Czech Republic gradually started to co-operate within all the major activities of the INES (technical support, Networks, National Co-ordinators). The Czech Republic became a full-member of the OECD in December 1995.

168. There is beyond a doubt need for the availability of internationally comparable data on education regarding strategic considerations about the development of an educational system and schooling, professional discussions on various aspects on the state and development of the educational system, and for the more or less non-professional discussion (in the media, for instance) is beyond doubt. It is necessary to mention the highly positive role that the OECD plays in the provision of internationally comparable data (not only within the INES project) and the results achieved so far.

169. The basic approach of the Czech Republic is demonstrated by relatively extensive participation in the INES project, and other OECD activities in the field of education and in many other similar multi-national activities (membership in the EURYDICE network, participation in many projects for assessment of student achievement organised by the IEA – e.g. RLS, TIMSS, TIMSS-R, SITES, CIVICS).

170. The extensive participation of the Czech Republic in various activities was largely due to the absolute absence of relevant and internationally comparable data during the period preceding the period of democratic development (i.e. before 1990). After feeding the basic “hunger for information”, a period of thorough assessment of results and benefits for the national political, professional and non-professional public arrived. Especially in a country that is facing restricted human and financial sources. Thus, a thorough assessment of the INES project made for the purpose of the GA in Tokyo provides a great opportunity to analyse deeply the contributions of the INES project and to compare our own assessment with the assessments of other countries. It is however necessary to keep in mind that the return on investments made in such products will come in the long-term period and its measurement will be extremely difficult.

Policy relevance of INES at national level

171. There is no definite assessment of the political importance of the results of the INES project and the possibility of their utilisation for political and professional decisions. In fact, no direct utilisation for political decisions in the Czech Republic is made, and nor are the results of the INES project required for such political purposes. Nevertheless, we observe their increasing application in political and professional discussions where they are gradually becoming an irreplaceable source of comparative indicators. The data interpretation is frequently purpose-based and in some cases the particular data is challenged,

3 Two important examples can be given in this respect: permanent discussion on teacher's salaries, broad discussion on the possible development of tertiary sector.
especially when it is in conflict with deep-rooted and traditional illusions about the Czech educational system.

172. The utilisation of the INES indicators among the professional public is more common and the same applies to a number of prominent “opinion makers” (e.g. analytical journalists, representatives of prominent intellectuals, etc.). The role of INES indicators is especially significant in analytic and conceptual documents employing the comparative approach. The role of the INES results is important in this respect, too, regardless of its indirect impact: it highlights some (often unpleasant) defects in the Czech educational system, thus contributing to the creation of a wider area of discussion and subsequent changes.

173. Basically, there are two reasons for the above inconsistency (apart from reasons and imperfections on the users’ side – their unwillingness and inability to work with valid and internationally recognised data):

174. The nature of the most important product, i.e. the publication Education at a Glance (EAG): by its conception and extent is designed especially for experts and specialists. However, this does not mean that it is necessary to radically modify its nature (the comparability of detailed data and methodical description could be challenged), but it is necessary to prepare, on the basis of this publication, derivations that would by their nature be more familiar to the users. In this respect it is necessary to highly applaud the publication Education Policy Analysis and feel that it should literally become “compulsory reading” for all engaged in the educational process. Also the brochure Key Comparisons and Trends designed as a part (and, also, issued separately) of the EAG 1998 was a correct step. However it stopped midway as (especially because of its highly technical language) it mainly addressed the specialists.

175. Level and extent of dissemination activities at the national level: Most activities of this type are designed for the professional public and their impingement upon a wider public, including politicians is rather indirect. It is necessary to prepare products (leaflets, brochures, journal articles, seminars, press briefings, etc.) that would be accessible to a wider public, and attractive to politicians and journalists. The associated danger (possible misinterpretation along with excessive simplification) is generally known but must be undertaken. International support is of the utmost importance (see the above paragraph).

176. Regarding the contents, it can be said that the indicators associated with funding of education (especially the amount of public expenditure on education), and with the participation rates and the students achievement are the most popular.

**Progress and remaining data gaps**

177. It is necessary to state that a certain amount of progress was achieved in all major areas declared in Lahti, although not always in the same scope. The continuous effort of the OECD Secretariat to eliminate the deficiencies (i.e. particularly data incomparability) existing in both the contents and methodology (continuous effort for the most accurate determination of terms, detailed mapping of all

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5 Maybe some parts of EAG, which are completely the same in the different editions, could be omitted.

6 This publication is annually translated into Czech and thus made available to a relatively wide group of users.
educational programmes in the publication *Manual for ISCED-97 Implementation in OECD Countries*, etc.) should be highly applauded.

178. Also the incentive function of the international co-operation should be applauded. In fact, all international activities support the development (particularly the statistics and methodical processes) at the national level.

179. Notes on particular major areas:

- **Student achievement**: The progress achieved within the project PISA (although the results are not yet available) is undoubtedly highly significant and it can be assumed that it will be a certain qualitative jump. It is to be expected that the results of the PISA project will contribute to a deeper understanding in other areas (e.g. in the examination of the internal life and climate of schools, and in the solution of fair access to education).

- **Tertiary education**: Apparent progress was achieved in the measurement of participation in tertiary education. The transition to the new classification ISCED-97 also offers the possibility of improvement in the comparability of this data within various systems of tertiary education and its world-wide conception. On the contrary, relatively little attention is paid to the measurement of successfulness (or effectiveness) of tertiary education.

- **Transition from school to work**: Even in this area significant progress has been achieved, the data regularly provided by the EAG shows a relatively clear overview of the area concerned. But greater attention should be paid to the associated activities, findings of which should be also utilised within the INES project.

- **Educational Finance**: The progress achieved here is rather moderate, which is certainly caused by a relatively high level of this data at the beginning of the period under evaluation. Activities being directed towards the better comparability of these data should be applauded. Of particular importance is the wide and diversified area of private educational expenditure, and some unresolved areas to date (for instance the method for including tax allowances into educational expenses). Again, the positive influence of international activities on national statistics should be applauded.

- **Lifelong learning**: This is the area (together with the following one) where the progress (at least that which is evident) is still the least apparent. Although it is a very sophisticated issue (if we have stated that there is a large diversity of systems in tertiary education, then it applies more often to the area of continuing education), it cannot be ignored. It is necessary to utilise the actual experience of member states, and co-operation with other multinational organisations is also required (particularly with the EU).

- **Disparities/Equity**: This is the other area where the progress is the least apparent. The quality of an indicator included into the EAG 98 (Students with special education needs) failed to reach the qualities of other indicators. It is also indirectly demonstrated by the fact that only 8 countries are included. But this is only a part of this area. It is to be hoped that certain results will be obtained from the PISA project. Also the issue of regional differences and their reasons should remain not unnoticed.

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7 Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life.

8 Particularly the pending *Second Study on the Comparability of the OECD Indicators on Educational Finance*. 

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180. There is still a significant problem, especially for transforming countries which is that with respect to the rapidity of changes, the officially published documents are rather outdated (e.g. at the beginning of the year 2000 there is only a EAG 98 edition available showing the majority of the 1996 indicators). Certain shortening of the period for the preparation of the EAG publication made in the previous period should be applauded, however, it would be worthwhile to consider whether greater progress could be achieved in this respect. It is however likely that this would require certain “pressure” on the member countries.

**Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information, and new developments**

181. This is a very important (and also interesting) issue. From a general point of view it can be stated that the balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and the identification of new, still unexamined areas is very good.

182. Neither of these developments can be neglected. It is very important to continue with the collection (and also specification and subsequent analytical utilisation) of “traditional data” as one of the most important factors is maintenance of long chronological lines. The effects of reforms can only be assessed on a long-term basis. It is necessary to find a proper way how to publish these time series (part of EAG, some specialised product).

183. Simultaneously, it is vital to identify new areas, even where no particular short-term outputs can be expected. In this sense the courage of OECD to support such activities must be applauded. At the same time it is necessary to take a realistic approach to these activities (and their results). This means determining goals, possible results and their chronological horizon. Only in this way can certain disillusions due to the lack of particular outputs from such activities be avoided.

184. Excessive ambitions in this respect and the absence of realistic views could then initiate activities which would be very difficult to control (we hope that this will not be the case of the PISA project) and where inappropriate decisions could be made (e.g. the selection of the tested population does not allow the implication of a link to school variables).

185. Areas where further development should be considered: school value added, human capital, functional literacy, equity, and lifelong learning.

**Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

186. Basically, a similar assessment applies as in the preceding paragraph: the balance between these two areas is very good. Under no circumstance can conceptual activities be underestimated, on the contrary they are of significant importance. A number of objections challenging validity and comparability of the indicators used (see Assessment area 1) can only be eliminated by a thorough conceptual preparation.

**INES Methods and structures**

187. A project as highly extensive as the INES project (in terms of the contents, number of participating countries and time) always brings the danger that its management could become unclear, non-

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\[9\] For instance see the DeSeCo activities
transparent and finally too costly. There are too many conceptual, executive and decision-making bodies. This may result in initiating activities, which substantiate the existence of particular bodies and the ineffective utilisation of invested funds.\textsuperscript{10}

188. Our opinion is that in this respect the following issues should be considered:

- Is it necessary that apart from the basic executive units of the project (Technical Group and the Secretariat) there were also permanent working groups (Networks)? Would it not be more useful (and probably less costly) to create provisional working groups dealing with particular issues? Besides, a similar step was considered within the INES project, some time ago. Our opinion in this respect is not definite, but we believe that this possibility should be thoroughly discussed.

- It is necessary to find a functional and effective mechanism that allows particular OECD Member countries an adequate participation in adopting the major decisions (e.g. selection of indicators for the EAG). Existing structures within the INES project often fail to reflect this need. Executive structures (Technical Group, Networks, and National Co-ordinators) lack an adequate mandate for this. The Steering Committee is rather a professional advisory body (it was not built on the principle of fair participation of the member countries) and the political governing structures (CERI Governing Board and Education Committee), where the all member countries are represented, are too far from the actual decision-making process (e.g. in connection with the topic given, for example, the selection of indicators to be included in the actual publication of EAG).

- Finally, it is necessary to point out that in order to improve and have effective operation of the INES project and to eliminate overlapping of a number of activities (especially at the national level), it is absolutely vital to further strengthen co-operation with other international organisations (especially with the EU) and to identify mechanisms for the mutual sharing of the existing data.

\textsuperscript{10} A small example of ineffective utilisation of funds may be the training of supervisors for the main investigation within the PISA project, the goal of which is useful, but due to its implementation it undoubtedly became ineffective and too costly. Although it is only a detail of the entire PISA project, it generates questions as to whether the amount of the international fees is appropriate when they are used for other activities in a similar manner.
DENMARK / DANEMARK

Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels

189. The OECD and INES have without doubt played a very important role in the development of key indicators in education policy-making.

190. INES has definitely influenced the educational policy-making in Denmark. The definition of policy makers is not very clear across the countries, but it is here understood as ministers, Members of Parliament and civil servants.

191. From a national perspective, the most important outcome from INES is *Education at a Glance* (EAG) and *Education Policy Analysis* (EPA). EAG normally receives a lot of interest in the media, and often indicators in EAG set the agenda in the discussion of educational policies for some time after the release – both in the short and long term. Unfortunately, often the media focuses on very narrow issues from EAG, and sometimes misunderstandings or misinterpretations cause debates. And it has been very difficult to present clarifications and explanations in the public debate. Some editions of *Education Policy Analysis* have also received interest in the media, but less since the release has been separate from the release of EAG.

192. EAG definitely reaches policy makers (i.e. Members of Parliament and ministers) through the media and public debate. Because of the extent and complexity of EAG, it is however doubtful if EAG has a direct interest for policymakers at this level.

193. But EAG and other INES outcomes have been effective in targeting high-level civil servants in the ministries – of course in the Ministry of Education, but also in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour. The INES outcomes have evidently influenced the themes and issues in the educational policy in Denmark.

194. The INES project has also sparked general interest for educational statistics and analysis in Denmark and also for international benchmarking.

195. The indicators on teaching time and instruction time have also had a direct impact on the collective bargaining with the teachers’ union on teaching time, etc. And the results from the assessment surveys have been repeatedly used in a number of programmes with the aim to ensure quality of education.

196. EAG has a very broad approach and is very complex, and INES/EAG has of course been an inspiration to the Danish proposal on a limited set of indicators. The broad approach is essential and here, INES has played an extraordinary role. But on the basis of the broad approach, as a supplement to EAG, we wish to work towards a more limited number of indicators – both in OECD and in other international organisations. The limited set of indicators can be used for comparisons with a view to develop the individual country’s educational activity and as input in the ongoing political debate. It is only possible to agree on a limited number of indicators in related countries and for that reason not possible in INES. A limited set of indicators would very much depend on INES indicators.
197. EAG and INES have been an inspiration for several national indicator projects. The Ministry of Education every second year publishes a set of indicators called “Facts and Figures”. This publication includes national indicators, but also indicators that compare Denmark with other countries. The international indicators often use EAG as a source, and the original aim of “Facts and Figures” was to present EAG in a Danish perspective. Also the framework of the publication is inspired by EAG.

198. Since 1998, the Ministry of Education has been working on a national indicator project “Quality that can be seen”. The aim of this project is to develop and test a system in order to evaluate and improve the quality of education in Denmark. The project attempts to identify targets for good quality, identify indicators and criteria and identify mechanisms to assure a high level of quality. INES/EAG has inspired several other indicators projects in Denmark.

199. Finally, the Nordic public “Nordisk utbilning i fokus – indikatorer” is a project established by the Nordic Council of Ministers in which the educational systems in the Nordic countries are compared using EAG as a starting point.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

a) Student achievement

200. This is an area where data gaps remain, but Denmark has of course high expectations for the data from PISA and SIALS. These projects will without any doubt be very important steps forward in the area of achievement. Denmark welcomes surveys of this kind, but we are worried about the increasing expenditure of these projects. Denmark has supported the “rationalisation” of data collection and conceptual work done by PISA in the field of student achievement. We would welcome if the OECD could make the same progress in the field of skills of the adult population.

b) Tertiary education

201. Tertiary education is generally covered well in Education at a Glance and Education Policy Analysis. Some problems on financing expenditures still exist, especially the separation of expenditure on R&D. We do realise, that these problems are being dealt with in the Technical Group and hope that the indicators concerning financing of tertiary education will be improved.

202. Sometimes it is difficult to “recognise” the national education system in international indicators and comparisons because of the international classification systems. With the old ISCED this has been a problem especially at the tertiary level. We hope that the new classification system (ISCED 97) will improve the readability of the indicators concerning tertiary education.

c) School-to-work transitions

203. The transition from school to work has been successfully dealt with since the last General Assembly. The chapter on transition in EAG and EPA 1998 was very interesting and relevant.
d) Educational finance

204. The educational systems are financed in very different ways in the OECD countries (e.g. the share of the private expenditures varies very much). This makes the area of educational finance very difficult, and even though a lot of work has been done since the last General Assembly, the data and indicators are still problematic. The expenditure comparability study will hopefully improve the data on educational finance.

e) Lifelong learning

205. The area of lifelong learning is very important and should be prioritised in the future work of INES. The data on early childhood education has been improved since the last General Assembly, and adult education or continuing education and training has also been taken into account. But in our view a significant gap still remains in the area of adult education, and this area should be given higher priority in the next period. The UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT (UOE) data collection provides coherent data on the initial (ordinary) education system, but there are a number of problems in particular in the area of continuing education and training (adult education) to solve.

206. Lifelong learning should also include Cross-Curricular-Competencies and the aspect of the ability to learn. In the future, teaching has to be organised in such a way that learners learn to learn and to accept responsibility for their own education.

Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

207. It is very difficult to answer the question on the balance between consolidation and new development. As data providers, we wish consolidation and improvement of existing data and information. But, as analysts and policymakers, we appreciate continuous development work in new areas. It is essential that INES maintains a balance between consolidation and development.

208. Denmark would very much welcome time series and trend indicators, and this requires some stability in the classification systems, data collections and definitions.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

209. The conceptual work is very important and the basis for the credibility of INES. The current balance between conceptual and statistical work seems good. It is important to have a theoretical framework for the indicators and analysis. The OECD has an excellent tradition of hiring outside experts and a high professional level.

210. Denmark would welcome a higher priority to the work on coverage of the UOE data (which educational programmes are included) to ensure more comparability across countries, since this is the basis for a high number of indicators in EAG.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

211. Denmark agrees that INES today has an extensive framework and structure of working groups and networks, which operate very well in many ways. But the hierarchy of decision-making in INES is
very unclear, and the co-ordination between the Secretariat, the Networks, working groups and ad-hoc groups could be improved.

212. The borderlines between the Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board concerning INES could do with more clarification. Furthermore, better information on the work of the INES ad-hoc groups set up by the steering committee and better co-ordination between the ad-hoc groups and the Networks/working groups would be welcomed. For instance both the Technical Group and Network B work with adult education, and a better co-ordination in this field would be helpful.

213. The costs of INES are also an issue of concern for Denmark. The national resources for the project are of course limited, and it is costly to take part in all the networks and groups. Special surveys for testing “quick surveys” should be kept to a minimum since the national “rate of return” of these surveys is low. We would therefore like the OECD to make priority to a few broad and big surveys and the UOE data collection.
Policy relevance of INES at a national level

Current state and assessment of the period between the general assemblies

214. After the Lahti General Assembly, the products of the INES project have clearly established their position in support of the preparation of Finnish education policy. Finland has been able to enhance awareness of the INES indicators better than ever before. The use of the indicators has also increased due to the improvements in their reliability as tools for international comparison and to the increased reliability of their statistical basis.

215. In the Finnish educational administration, from the Ministry level to the regional administration, INES indicators are used as the main data for comparison of our national education system with those of other countries. Moreover, Statistics Finland also uses INES data in many ways for the dissemination of quantitative information. Measurements of learning achievement have been the most prominent topic in Finnish education policy. In recent years, the highest expectations have been set for the production of trend indicators.

216. Above all, the INES indicators are used to compare our own country with other countries, whereas they are only used for the evaluation of international development trends to a lesser extent. Education at a Glance has given rise to quite lively public debates on a few occasions. In the mid-1990’s, there was an animated debate on costs of education, based on the INES indicators. Of all the OECD countries, Finland invested the highest amount of public funds in proportion to its gross domestic product. The debate focused on whether the input/output ratio was correct or whether our education system was inefficient.

217. In addition to supporting ongoing development work, the INES indicators have also functioned as instruments of fundamental legislative work and even parliamentary control. When hearing experts, the Parliamentary Committee for Education and Culture often requires them to possess information on the status of Finnish education in comparison with other OECD countries. Similarly, when supervising the activities of the authorities, Parliament determines the status of Finnish education in relation to other countries primarily on the basis of the OECD indicators.

218. New initiatives, begun in the field of assessment of learning outcomes in particular, are very useful and deserving of support from Finland’s point of view. At present, our national concern is educational equality. The concept of educational equality is understood in an extremely broad sense, meaning equality between regions, genders, as well as pupils and students with different learning conditions. Opportunities for learning must be guaranteed to all groups. The development of such equality can best be monitored with the aid of regular measurements of learning outcomes. Consequently, Finland has considerable expectations of the PISA project.
219. In the previous decade, the development of educational administration in Finland progressed vigorously towards institutional decision-making powers and local autonomy. This in turn places emphasis on the need for both national and international reference data. There is particular interest in factors that explain learning outcomes. For this purpose, the process indicators developed in the INES project, which progress by level of education, have proved to be useful sources of reference data. They also have a role in supporting local self-evaluation. In this respect, the INES project is now proceeding to cover upper secondary education. This stage will yield important reference data for the priorities that are currently relevant to Finnish education policy. It is still useful to continue developing process indicators, however, by concentrating exclusively on particularly relevant process factors based on scientific evidence.

Future hopes and expectations

220. Trend indicators are of the utmost importance in Finnish education policy. Every four years, the Ministry of Education prepares a medium-term objective plan for Government approval, which determines the development needs for our education system. The indicators play a major role in helping to prepare this plan. The plan defines policy at a national level, which means that international reference data provides essential background material. The monitoring of the objectives set for education policy requires such information that allows Finnish developments to be placed among the trends in other advanced countries.

221. Even longer-term education policy objectives have been set in such a way that achievement of them can be measured with the aid of the OECD indicators. Similarly, regular production of indicators has a central bearing on the setting of objectives for those areas, in which Finns have been successful according to measurements of learning achievement, such as children’s literacy. The purpose of national literacy assessments and participation in the OECD Second International Adult Literacy Survey (SIALS) has been to ensure that there is continuous awareness of the development of Finnish literacy. It is only by means of international comparisons that it is possible to monitor the direction, in which the Finnish education system is heading, and whether there is a need to take specific measures in particular skill areas.

222. Finland views the indicator work as being a development process for both researchers and statistical experts. Finns have sought to participate extensively as possible in the measurements of learning outcomes and thus develop the expertise of Finnish researchers. Nationally, the evaluation of the outcomes of education is one of the main development fields in Finnish education policy, and this work has been greatly stimulated by the OECD measurements of learning achievement. Statistics Finland considers that, through international co-operation, it will gain information that may be used to develop the national statistical service.

223. The use and dissemination of indicators at a national level requires that the figures of all participating countries be presented in the actual publications or, if these only aim to present examples, they should search for a better balance between the countries. In addition, with regard to projects that involve less than a third of the member countries, it might also be advisable to consider presenting these in some publication other than Education at a Glance or Education Policy Analysis, which should primarily focus on comparisons between all OECD member countries.

224. The continuous development of indicators should be dimensioned to ensure that all member countries have opportunities to participate in the main projects and that the main projects secure a sample that is representative of the member countries as possible. Such projects, which are mainly implemented using the Member countries’ own funds, may easily emphasise the share of the countries with the best financial conditions. Cultural differences will become unnecessarily exaggerated if the initiatives and responsibility for brainstorming the sub-projects of the project rest too often with large member countries.
225. In terms of education policy, the essential aspect in the measurements of learning achievement and skills is to identify indicators that enable evaluation of the realisation of the idea of lifelong learning in a national context. Therefore, the SIALS and, in principle, the ILSS are essential to Finland. However, a problem encountered in measurements of labour skills is that it is not possible to perform an international comparison at reasonable cost and the cost may become too high for many small countries, unless other simultaneous indicator development work is restricted.

226. On the whole, however, the work done to develop the measurement of educational achievement is regarded as being of the utmost importance in Finland. This work should still be a priority, in such a manner, however, that national costs can be kept at a reasonable level. High-quality learning of fundamentals and essential knowledge within the actual school system is a prerequisite for lifelong learning. It is therefore beneficial to Finland that educational achievement surveys ensure the continuous availability of international reference data on Finnish children’s levels of achievement.

Progress and remaining data gaps

Current state and assessment of the period between the General Assemblies

227. Of the priorities set at the Lahti General Assembly, significant progress has been made particularly in the assessment of learning outcomes, surveys of the transition from education to working life and descriptions of educational finance. In order to improve international comparability, the OECD has performed a remarkable feat in developing the revised International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The revised ISCED has improved the international comparability of INES indicators. However, a clearer idea of the current comparability of higher education data, for example, can only be formed once we have more experience of using the new ISCED 1997.

228. There are still considerable gaps in the description of the various dimensions of educational equality. It has still not been possible to perform sufficiently reliable comparisons of certain dimensions of equality, such as education for ethnic minorities, education for groups in need of special attention and regional differences.

229. There has not been much progress in the description of lifelong learning, especially in terms of measurement of non-formal learning. Various forms of statistical and indicator data on learning in educational institutions are best equipped to describe international differences in education for young age groups, but it has not been possible to pinpoint reliable indicators for international comparison of the educational situation among the entire population and the ageing population in particular.

230. Clear strides have been made overall in terms of the reliability and comparability of basic statistical material, but there is still plenty to be done. Transparency of national differences in statistical practices could be further promoted. The 1999 joint comparison project between the five Nordic countries, based on INES indicators, revealed differences in the production of statistical material even between such similar countries. A phenomenon that appeared to be the same in the education systems was not so in practical terms, after all.

Future hopes and expectations

231. One of the most important tasks of the INES project is to increase the reliability and transparency of the material used. The use of the indicators describing education systems always entails interpretation, which means that it is important to be able to assess the basic data given and to adjust it to suit both the
education system of one’s own country and that of the country concerned. Advanced societies are characterised by the fact that they attach greater value to the development of innovations than to the enhancement of the quality of the groundwork. This is also evident in the INES project. Ensuring the visibility of the project by introducing new indicators has sometimes been more important than developing the reliability of basic data.

232. As already stated above, indicators play a significant role in supporting the development of education policy in Finland. Therefore, it is very important from a national point of view that the data available is actually reliable and that it can be genuinely used for comparisons between countries. Finland supports those survey projects, which aim to determine the national criteria for data collection. There is no reason to strive for harmonisation, but the priorities in the production of statistics must stem from national needs. Instead, it is advisable to improve open dissemination of information concerning the criteria used in different countries for the collection of background data for indicators. One possibility is to develop the transparency of national systems of producing statistics by means of modern database tools.

Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

Future hopes and expectations

233. In Finland, it is considered of the utmost importance that there is a set of core indicators, which enable the acquisition of basic information concerning our standing in comparison with other countries. It is obvious that the indicator work gains its legitimacy in public through new developments and provision of new information. Public debates in the Member countries and media interest in indicators require both new information and simplified and popularised material. The Finnish standpoint on this is, however, that the primary user group of INES indicators is made up of education policy decision-makers. The most important factors for them are, on the one hand, that the indicators provide a foundation for reliable comparison and, on the other hand, that they describe changes, i.e. the effects of education policy measures on educational outcomes.

234. The matter in question is one of the OECD’S best selling products, so there is always a temptation to continuously produce new indicators and to make moves towards completely new, little researched fields. The development of indicators in an international context is so expensive that we feel we should be prudent with these types of initiatives and continue to concentrate on the development of the quality of the indicators already tested as well as of the interpretation of these indicators.

235. The General Assembly should firstly reach a decision on those core indicators that will be produced to describe trends. From Finland’s point of view, the central areas include investments in education, an indicator of educational accessibility covering the entire population, as well as educational outputs mostly in terms of placement in working life and further education. The statistical foundation for these indicators has been developed to quite a reliable level, and it is possible – and indeed advisable – to study the problems of statistical comparability further in these areas.

236. In our opinion, the development work should be restricted and, above all, co-ordinated. Progress should be made within restricted fields, which appear to enable collection of fairly comprehensive information. The development procedure applied should constitute the feasibility studies prepared by a representative group of countries. In terms of fields that are difficult to study, we believe that we should primarily proceed by monitoring national development work. If there is a promising development in a member country in a less charted field, such as measuring non-formal learning, the OECD could support expansion of the development work to cover international comparison by means of the above-mentioned feasibility study procedure.
237. In practical terms, recent development projects (cf. ILSS) have proved to be very difficult for many member countries, primarily due to high costs. We should therefore adopt a fairly reserved attitude towards development of innovations. It is still possible to further enhance use of the existing material, and this should indeed be strongly promoted. In terms of the editorial policy of the *Education at a Glance* and *Policy Analysis* publications, Finland endorses the line that collected material be analysed from different points of view in both publications, covering several years as well. With material generated by measurements of learning outcomes in particular, the data collection date is not as decisive as in the collation of normal statistical data, and the material can be analysed over several years.

**Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

*Future hopes and expectations*

238. Conceptual development work should focus on the measurements of skills. This is the area in which there are very few competent researchers in most countries, and it is also advisable to use the INES project for training new researcher generations in these tasks. Indeed, the OECD’s strength lies exactly in this building of a theoretical foundation, and it should therefore have a sufficient number of competent people in the Member countries at its disposal for these tasks. However, it is always possible to improve the balance between different countries.

239. Statistical work forms the core of the INES project. Therefore, its development must not be neglected. The INES project makes it possible to develop reciprocal exchange of information and experience between statistical offices. Statistical methods can be improved internationally through co-operation between statistical offices and research institutions. In our view, it is advisable to perform this work in the form of voluntary co-operation stemming from the member countries’ own motivation. Under the leadership of the EUROSTAT, the EU countries are aiming to standardise data collection in some major fields of data collection in order that the common EU statistics are based on similar data collection procedures. However, this involves a risk that, due to harmonisation, the nationally important areas of statistics production will only yield data suitable for international purposes, but not at the level of precision required at the national level.

240. The balance between conceptual and statistical development work must be found through project prioritisation. The main areas in the new mandate of the INES project include high-quality implementation of the PISA and further development of the statistical foundation, comparability and reliability of the core indicators. Consequently, conceptual work should primarily aim to improve the measurement of the outcomes of learning at school. Another priority for the conceptual work should be creation of lifelong learning indicators. It is indeed advisable to continue the latter in the form of a conceptual and theoretical development project, which will also include general theoretical discussions on the feasibility of international comparison.

**INES methods and structures**

*Future hopes and expectations*

241. Being decentralised, the INES process is not always entirely transparent, since it is not always easy to manage several parallel activities at a national level. At times, development work becomes too decentralised, with the independent development of networks not always being co-ordinated in the best possible manner. By nature, various projects are only managed as a whole by the Secretariat, and it is
sometimes difficult for National Co-ordinators, for example, to obtain an up-to-date and full picture of what is happening. This is partially a question of national organisation, but then again, it also concerns organisation at the OECD level.

242. The most conceivable solution to the problems mentioned above is that network activities be restricted by a higher level representative body more clearly than at present. Networks should not generate new development projects on their own account, but these should stem from the joint objectives and policies of the INES project.

243. The Steering Group is the most appropriate body to make policy decisions, but since it only represents some of the member countries, it obviously cannot be granted authority to co-ordinate activities. As a higher level body, the Education Committee can define the policies to be observed in INES activities, but it has no chance of monitoring the activities so closely that it could co-ordinate the practical development measures planned by the Networks, the Technical Group or the PISA BPC. National Co-ordinators in turn are not usually in a suitable political position to enable them to make final decisions on behalf of their respective countries. Therefore, from a national perspective, INES activities inevitably appear to be led very much by the Secretariat. It is fair to say, however, that dialogue with the Secretariat has functioned relatively well. The development of electronic data interchange, in particular, has improved opportunities to access information.

244. There is no clear-cut and natural alternative to the Secretariat’s leading role in relation to the member countries in the INES development work. Therefore, our main national expectation is to see that dialogue between the Secretariat and the Member countries becomes even closer. In this case, the Member countries will be represented by National Co-ordinators, who will have a specific national duty to provide information and to receive proposals for policy definitions from political decision-makers.

245. It would be important for Finland – as appears to also be the case with other small EU countries – that a clear division of work be achieved in the indicator work. Co-operation should be enhanced continuously, as has indeed been the case, but a more clear-cut division of work should also be reached at the level of concrete products. Organisations must further develop their co-operation so as to ensure that the basic materials for joint data collection are analysed in the most high-quality and comprehensive manner possible, avoiding, however, overlapping work in the member countries. Finland endorses all initiatives to develop co-operation between the EU and the OECD.

246. There has been definite progress in the transparency of costs, but it is still almost impossible to assess the national costs of indicator production over several years. Naturally, international indicator production proceeds at a relatively slow pace, as there is already several years’ experience of this in the INES project. Nevertheless, some development projects are still being launched with quite optimistic schedules. Consequently, instead of ideal schedules, the aim should be to prepare realistic schedules, which would also enable better long-term planning of national work. The INES schedule, particularly in terms of measurements of learning outcomes, has a decisive bearing on the implementation of national assessment programmes, at least in Finland.

247. The organisation of future indicator work during the last period has been successful in principle. Networks of experts will be needed in the future as well, and continuity plays an essential role in these networks. It is therefore advisable to build their national mandates on a long-term foundation.

248. There will also be a need for national co-ordination and a body to keep contact with the OECD in the future. It is advisable to preserve the network of national co-ordinators, but its opportunities to influence and, subsequently, its responsibility need to be increased. The national co-ordinators function as collectors of statements of opinion by the member countries and they have well-functioning contacts with
the education policy decision-making mechanism. Consequently, it would also be possible for them to generate joint policy decisions at meetings that have been sufficiently well prepared in advance. This will, however, require that the co-ordinators convene at least twice a year to discuss policy definitions and priorities.

249. At least from Finland’s point of view, the Steering Group of versatile experts has been extremely useful in terms of INES activities, but this is naturally primarily due to the fact that Finland has been represented in the group. Although the Steering Group does not represent all the member countries, it does represent the diverse expertise necessary in INES activities, and thus it is also advisable to continue its mandate.

250. The INES project operates in a field closely related to decision-making in education policy. Thus, related matters may well be on the agendas even at ministerial meetings, and some of the basic policy definitions may fall under their jurisdiction.
FRANCE

Objet : Bilan 1995 – 2000 concernant le projet ‘INES’

251. La Direction de la Programmation et du Développement (DPD) a participé de manière très active à la plupart des activités liées à ce projet : groupe technique, réseaux A, B et C, réunions des coordinateurs nationaux. De plus, cette direction assure les travaux liés à PISA et participe à ce titre au bureau des pays participants (BPC) et au groupe sur les aspects méthodologiques. Par ailleurs, il faut signaler que la France a décidé de ne pas participer à ALLS (Adult literacy and lifeskills survey) car les assurances méthodologiques qu’elle demandait n’ont pas été satisfaites.

252. Cette participation représente une charge de travail importante pour l’ensemble des structures de la DPD. Il convient d’entrer de jeu de préciser que cette charge de travail ne saurait être augmentée. La présentation de ce bilan est basée sur les différentes catégories suggérées dans la note du secrétariat de l’OCDE.

Pertinence politique d’INES au niveau national

253. La France utilise les indicateurs INES pour alimenter la publication “L’état de l’école”. Ainsi cette publication, qui retrace, pour un large public, en trente indicateurs les principales évolutions de moyen terme du système éducatif en France peut offrir à ses utilisateurs des points de repère sur la position de l’éducation en France par rapport aux autres pays grâce aux indicateurs INES qui rendent possible une comparaison internationale.

254. Par ailleurs, ces indicateurs INES sont très souvent utilisés dans des notes de synthèse communiquées aux cabinet des ministres et par exemple le coût de l’étudiant a fait l’objet de débats à ce niveau utilisant les données d’INES. On doit cependant mentionner ici un problème que nous rencontrons dans nos discussions politiques. En effet, très souvent, dans la présentation des résultats ou même dans les notes de problématique, l’OCDE a tendance à considérer le modèle libéral pur comme unique modèle efficient, alors qu’il ne s’agit là que d’une hypothèse théorique. Nous souhaitions donc que l’OCDE soit plus prudente sur la façon dont elle présente parfois ces discussions sur le financement, que les diverses approches théoriques concernant l’efficacité des modèles de financement du système éducatif fassent l’objet de débats et que ceux-ci soient développés non pas dans le recueil annuel des indicateurs mais dans le document d’analyse qui l’accompagne.

255. La France n’organise cependant pas de conférence de presse lors de la sortie de ‘Regards sur l’éducation’.

Progrès et lacunes encore existantes dans les données

256. Des progrès ont été réalisés dans plusieurs domaines notamment dans l’évaluation des acquis des élèves avec la mise en place de PISA, dans l’enseignement supérieur et dans la situation des jeunes
pendant la période de transition école – vie active. Cependant, des lacunes subsistent dans les données financières, dans les données sur la formation tout au long de la vie, dans les suivis des élèves quittant le système éducatif, dans l’étude des disparités et de l’équité et comme déjà mentionné plus haut sur les compétences des adultes. Ces lacunes correspondent à la fois à des problèmes de disponibilité de données mais également à des problèmes de concept et de méthode en particulier sur les compétences des adultes.

257. La France participe aux travaux en cours dans le domaine des finances. Comme nous l’avons déjà mentionné ci-dessus, nous restons préoccupés par les difficultés que nous rencontrons dans les développements en cours des indicateurs. Nous souhaitons vivement que soit correctement prise en compte notre système de financement qui est très différent dans ses concepts et sa mise en oeuvre du système anglo-saxon par exemple. L’OCDE se devrait en effet de présenter les systèmes internationaux de financement de l’éducation, et notamment les modalités nationales spécifiques d’intervention de l’État, en privilégiant la mise en relief des spécificités que ces divers systèmes présentent, en relation avec les objectifs prioritaires des politiques nationales d’éducation.


259. Il faut également mentionner les problèmes rencontrés dans l’application de la CITE 97. En effet on observe certaines anomalies dans les classifications des différentes programmes : peu de programmes en 3C, en 4 ou en 5B. Si cette tendance se confirme, les améliorations apportées dans la construction de la nouvelle CITE n’auront pas produit les améliorations attendues dans le domaine de la comparabilité. De plus, il est nécessaire d’utiliser à bon escient cette nomenclature dans les tableaux de présentation de résultats et d’être très attentif aux regroupements et aux terminologies utilisés dans ces présentations. La France a eu l’occasion récemment de faire des remarques précises à ce sujet sur des regroupements hasardeux proposés par le secrétariat de l’OCDE entre le niveau 3C et le niveau 2 en utilisant une catégorie mal précisée de 3C court.

**Equilibre entre consolidation et analyse de l’information existante et nouveaux développements**

260. Il est difficile de traiter tous les domaines en même temps sur cette question.

261. En effet, comme il a déjà été signalé plus haut, sur les indicateurs financiers, l’effort essentiel doit porter sur la consolidation et l’analyse. Il ne paraît plus utile de continuer de développer alors que l’information fine collectée n’est pas complètement consolidée et donc non utilisable dans le cadre d’analyses politiques, économiques ou sociales. On est arrivé à un point sur ce sujet où plus aucun pays n’est capable de fournir l’ensemble des informations demandées ce qui en dit long sur le niveau de détail exigé.

262. Concernant l’éducation tout au long de la vie, il est clair qu’il faut développer les informations actuellement disponibles. De même sur la transition entre école et vie active, des développements doivent être encore effectués pour mieux suivre les sortant du système éducatif. Les analyses sur les disparités et sur l’équité sont absentes du dernier numéro de ‘Regards sur l’éducation’.
Equilibre entre travail statistique et travail conceptuel


264. Le réseau C a lancé une enquête intéressante sur le fonctionnement des établissements du second cycle du second degré. Mais dans le même temps il est assez curieux que l’enquête sur le fonctionnement des écoles primaires n’ait pas donné lieu à publication. On peut également se poser la question de la transmission de certains indicateurs sur les enseignants du réseau C au groupe technique car ces indicateurs sont maintenant stabilisés et en bonne logique devrait être prise en charge par le groupe technique.

265. Sur les indicateurs traitant des acquis des élèves, il est nécessaire de mieux cibler les objectifs et d’éviter de transformer les groupes de travail et les réseaux en groupes de recherche hyper spécialisés alors que dans le même temps les indicateurs de base n’ont pas été totalement stabilisés. Il est cependant nécessaire de continuer de traiter des aspects conceptuels dans ce domaine. Mais il convient de le faire en prenant en compte la diversité des approches sur ce sujet. Nous y reviendrons un peu plus loin.

266. Le réseau B a effectué jusqu’à présent un bon travail sous l’impulsion de nos collègues suédois. Il convient cependant de concentrer les efforts de ce réseau sur la transition école – vie active et sur l’éducation tout au long de la vie. La dérive vers des études d’une nature un peu différente comme l’investissement en capital humain devrait être évitée car ce sujet devrait être traité en dehors d’INES.

Les structures et les méthodes d’INES

267. Le premier problème concerne la multiplication des sous-groupes de travail qui est très coûteuse pour les pays participants. Même si ce mode de fonctionnement est très utile dans les phases de développement, il convient d’en limiter le nombre et de minimiser les coûts de fonctionnement car comme il a été dit au début de cette note, il n’est pas possible d’augmenter la charge de travail dévolue à INES. Il faut de plus ajouter qu’il n’est pas possible d’augmenter les dépenses consacrées à ce projet.

268. Le second problème concerne le manque de transparence dans les coûts des opérations liées à PISA. Il n’est pas facile de bien saisir comment sont utilisés les coûts internationaux de cette opération.

269. Il faut également mentionner les difficultés à faire prendre en compte ou même simplement faire mentionner dans un compte rendu des opinions un peu divergentes de l’opinion majoritaire. Cela nous paraît être un problème à traiter avec sérieux car à plusieurs occasions, la France a eu l’impression que ces remarques n’étaient pas mentionnées dans les compte-rendus. C’est notamment apparu dans le réseau A. De la même manière un travail fait avec l’accord du réseau A et du BPC sur les catégories socio-professionnelles n’as pas été correctement pris en compte par le secrétariat de l’OCDE.

270. De la même manière, la façon dont sont prises certaines décisions nous pose problème. Ainsi l’ajout de domaines obligatoires dans PISA n’a pas reçu notre approbation et la France pourrait se retirer de la deuxième phase de PISA si de telles décisions étaient prises par le secrétariat de l’OCDE sans tenir compte de l’avis de nombreux pays.

271. Des délimitations nettes doivent être établies avec d’autres projets. Ainsi, il nous paraît souhaitable que ALLS ne soit pas considéré comme une partie intégrante d’INES. De la même manière, comme il a déjà été mentionné plus haut, les études sur l’investissement en capital humain devraient être nettement dissociées d’INES.
272. Les problèmes mentionnés ci-dessus sont importants et doivent être résolus. Il faut cependant indiquer que le projet INES continue d’être un projet de référence qui a su garder un dynamisme certain. Il convient toutefois d’être attentif afin d’éviter les dérives qui ont pu apparaître depuis la dernière conférence générale de Lahti.

GERMANY / ALLEMAGNE

Policy relevance of INES at national levels

273. Public and political interest in INES work has greatly increased in Germany over the last few years. Education at a Glance in particular is being discussed by the media and the expert community.

274. In the first few years, interest focused on financial indicators. The most important fact, which was taken up by the media, was that Germany was positioned near the bottom of the ladder regarding public spending on education. This discussion, on the one hand, intensified the national debate on educational financing, which also includes a discussion on the introduction of tuition fees. On the other hand, the discussion also had an impact on the further development of indicators in terms of methods. Contributions to improving financial indicators were developed in Germany in order to uncover and eliminate statistical inaccuracies and enhance the range and quality of interpretation by means of broadening indicators.

275. After the publication of the TIMSS results, interest mainly focused on outcome indicators. Germany unexpectedly achieved only average results. This led to an intensification of the discussion on the efficiency and performance of the German school system and had a concrete effect on school policy. The resulting measures concentrated in the first place on efforts to improve teaching methods in mathematical and natural science instruction and to improve in-service training for teachers in this field. In some instances the Länder increased the number of weekly lessons in these subjects and recruited more teachers. Another side effect was that evaluation of education, which had not previously been a topic in Germany, became the centre of interest; that again increased readiness in Germany to participate in PISA, and has since led to a substantial commitment on the part of the Länder. INES has also had an influence on the development of national indicators: in higher education new indicators were proposed and published. The report on educational financing jointly prepared by the Federal Government and the Länder was greatly improved on the basis of OECD indicators. Under the PISA project the Länder agreed to increase the sample in order to enable comparison between the Länder.

276. The EAG has been widely accepted in the political and scientific areas, less so among teachers. In the political area in particular, it is used a lot as a source of data for international comparisons. Particularly frequently-used indicators are the financial indicators and the indicators on educational attainment and on the tertiary sector, particularly on student mobility. The most important indicators are included in the Basic and Structural Data of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Grund- und Strukturdaten), the chief annual publication on German educational statistics.

277. The above statements refer to EAG, while EPA is quoted much less frequently. The problems with EPA are that there is a time difference between EAG and EPA and that both publications use different
databases; a second reason, however, is the reluctance to evaluate the results from a political aspect. In addition there are frequently no data available on EPA topics for Germany.

278. Within the framework of international educational comparisons, the World Education Indicators Project makes an important contribution beyond INES. Germany welcomes its continuation.

Progress and remaining data gaps

279. Progress in the priority areas is assessed by the Germany as:

– **Student achievement**: Publication of the TIMSS results sparked interest in Germany in measuring student achievement. A broad discussion ensued. The results of IALS, too, met with a public and political response. PISA is expected to bring further progress in measuring achievement. Concentration on central competences is considered expedient. A stronger link of achievement indicators with traditional indicators, for example from the financing area or from the area of organization of the education system, would be desirable, with still greater emphasis being placed on the connection between educational results and the influence of context and process variables on such results, e.g. of school management.

– **Tertiary education**: In the past, statistical inadequacies led to unsatisfactory discussion results and press contributions regarding EAG results, particularly in the field of tertiary education. In response, Germany increased its national effort to improve indicators, particularly on study duration, student drop-out, the overall costs of studies and student mobility.

– **Transitions from school to work**: Relevant indicators were greatly broadened by Network B in EAG 2000; but in spite of this they still need improving. In particular, data gaps, also for Germany, are seen as regards the situation of vocational education graduates and in the field of long-term longitudinal studies. The goal should initially be to prepare an overview of existing data and then to make an attempt at their harmonisation. First steps have been made within the framework of the EU with the Transition Ad-Hoc Module on the European Labour Force survey. It will have to be seen what the results and a new edition of the module contribute.

– **Educational finance**: Progress regarding financial indicators has been made with German participation (inclusion of educationally relevant population, inclusion of private expenditure, and new indicator on public subsidies). In Germany, improvement of the indicators has contributed a great deal to making the debate more objective. Nevertheless, there are still open questions, for example regarding delineation of the education and research sectors and in the personnel sector (full-time equivalents).

– **Lifelong learning**: This topic is of great interest at the national level. An action programme to promote lifelong learning was recently adopted. Nevertheless all those involved are aware that the national database for statistical purposes is still very thin. The institutional sector of learning has been largely covered by statistics. Gaps exist particularly in the field of continuing education, specifically in its softer and more informal forms. A German contribution on the progress achieved so far is being prepared for the General Assembly.

– **Disparities/Equity**: Germany welcomes continued inclusion of this topic in the debate. However, it is necessary to define the topic more precisely within the INES project. So far,
only initial approaches can be seen in Network B regarding the indicator on the intergenerational change in education (published only once so far). A broadening of the indicator by including the entire social background is desirable.

280. From the national point of view, priorities for future INES work are the further development of financial indicators, trend indicators, indicators on lifelong learning, on social background and on tertiary education. Decomposition methods as well as cross-curricular competencies are also seen to be important.

**Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments**

281. In the past a balance was in essence achieved between consolidation and new developments. In the future, data consolidation should be continued with an extra effort. The development of new indicators should be restricted to fields that promise reasonable results on the basis of the data available.

282. In this context it seems expedient to begin with existing data in the member states and to try to harmonise these to the greatest possible extent. Acceptance of the indicators by the member states is ensured in this way, and this procedure is less expensive than major international studies, even though it will be necessary to make some concessions regarding comparability.

283. As important as major international studies such as PISA and ILSS may be, they can be used only to a limited extent, as they involve very high costs and a major international organisational structure. For this reason they can only be used to a limited extent for regular data generation. As the success of the EAG largely rests on the topicality of the data material, national resources should be evaluated simultaneously also for data available in the background questionnaire. This applies in particular to continuing education data, which, in EAG 2000, for example, are taken from an IALS survey made six years ago.

284. In order to have more time for the development of new indicators, Germany suggests that EAG be published only bi-annually, while annual intervals should be retained for the UOE questionnaires.

**Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

285. Conceptual work should concentrate on improving interpretation and explanation of indicators, but not be too far removed from the indicators. This is a danger that exists in the current conception of EPA. INES bodies should focus more on “traditional” indicator production, that is, they should guarantee a certain regularity and leave analytical work at irregular intervals to other OECD bodies and projects.

286. On the other hand, greater transparency and co-operation with other OECD projects would be desirable in INES bodies. Whenever different bodies work on the same topics, there is the danger of inefficiency and duplication. In particular, links with projects carried out within the sphere of CERI are not always apparent. Other relevant examples are the topics “Lifelong Learning” (TG and ad-hoc group), school-to—work transitions (Network B and Transition Review) as well as continuing education (Network B, IALS/ILSS and Adult Learning Project).

**INES methods and structures**

287. Participation of member states in the development and interpretation of indicators is the great strength of the project. It ensures broad acceptance of the results and should be maintained whatever happens. This principle is violated in the case of EPA: With the exception of minor correction work,
member states are not involved. A body composed of representatives of the member states to discuss the topics and their processing would be desirable. Tentative considerations in this direction were voiced in the group of National Co-ordinators.

288. Steering of the INES project regarding member state participation could, however, be assumed to a greater extent by the Education Committee. In this connection it should be considered to what extent the steering function of the Education Committee should be increased in general.

289. A problem in the Networks is constituted by the workload on members. The volume of work involved in the development of new indicators, and also in the provision of national data, etc., is sometimes such that it cannot be mastered within the Networks. Greater involvement of external experts would be desirable and should be supported by the Secretariat. In particular, many member states are prepared to contribute financially to specific tasks when their own personnel capacity is not sufficient (i.e. Network B in the field of continuing education).

290. Furthermore, communication between Networks could be increased by means of intensifying information exchanges, for example, via newsletters.

291. Translation of the EAG and EPA publications, which is largely financed by Germany, should be also be continued in the future. The large number of German copies speak for themselves. It would be desirable to allow more time for translation work without, however, abandoning simultaneous publication of the German, English and French editions.
GREECE / GRECE

Policy relevance of INES at national levels

292. Greece has been participating in INES activities since 1993. We participate in most INES programmes - Technical Group (T.G.), Network A (including PISA), Network B and Network C.

293. Concerning the interest of policy-makers for INES outcomes either directly or indirectly through the media and public debate, there has been a growing interest and increased use. For example, apart from the use of indicators in discussions and negotiations, there has been specific use of the INES indicators in such publications/documents “Operational Plan of the Ministry of Education for the 3rd Community Support Framework”, “National Strategic Plan for Employment”, etc. The indicators that were mostly used were from the Technical Group and Network B. There has been considerable mention of INES indicators in public debates and through the media with special emphasis on the financial indicators (GDP share on education expenditures - Technical Group, teachers salaries - Network C), curriculum evaluation (Network A). It is significant that during the Parliament debates for the budget ratification, reference was made to the INES indicators either by the government party or by the opposition.

294. Furthermore, a lot of journalists have shown great interest in the INES publications (e.g. EAG), especially in the financial indicators, in the correlation among countries and possible consequences for the future. This interest from the media can generate greater dissemination of INES results. However, there is a lack of dissemination in school personnel generally (teachers, school directors and counselors). Efforts have been made for INES publications to reach the Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education all over the country. Another way to improve the dissemination process at national/international level is to advertise the INES publications through media.

295. Additionally, we believe that through OLIS and Internet, the member countries will be able to have information on what kind of surveys are conducted not only in OECD but also in other international organizations or particular programmes (EUROSTAT, UNESCO, etc.).

Progress and remaining data gaps

296. A Network for the following fields could perhaps be developed: a) tertiary education; b) lifelong learning; and c) disparities/equity.

Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

297. We think that the current balance between the existing information base and developmental work in new areas is very satisfactory although there is a field for certain adjustments. Our proposals (and priorities) for Greece for additional indicators concern different subjects in each educational level such as:

- Text-books evaluation, curricula development and other relative areas

62
- The calculation of functional illiteracy in relation to school failure
- Training of immigrants
- Data and indicators on school/university equipment

298. Furthermore, new developments should be focused basically on areas of great significance irrespectively of the data availability or conceptual constraints. For example, we agree with the extension of the Networks, but in a period of little financial resources, sample surveys should be encouraged only if no data from other sources exist (e.g. international organisations, programmes, and research Institutes). We would consider such contribution (to the additional international overhead costs of these studies) only if they are relevant to the educational policy or if there were valid findings concerning the non-existence of such data or statistics in other international organisations or programmes.

299. On the whole, the choice and quality of indicators is quite satisfactory but certain improvements can be suggested:

- Coverage: It seems to us that the results of the recent quick survey (OECD - EUROSTAT) on coverage of the educational system may offer further insights on areas or categories of education not covered so far.
- Quality: We think that certain indicators can include wider dimensions, i.e. to the figure of Higher Education students studying within a country there could be co-related also the number of students of the same nationality studying abroad in order to form a more complete picture. What could also be measured is the learning of foreign languages outside the school where studies are normally conducted.

300. Additionally, we consider that the products of INES/OECD - *Education at a Glance, Education Policy Analysis, Managing Information Strategies in Higher Education*, etc. - are satisfactory, objective and accurate. But we think that there is a need for more qualitative and synthesizing description of the individual conditions in each country. In the past there was a two-page description with a plan of the educational system of each country. We believe that these descriptions should be revised and should perhaps be further enlarged providing basic socio-political-historical features and some particular and unique characteristics of each country’s educational character.

301. However, another serious issue concerns the need for a more qualitative and comparable description. That is to say, we should describe and choose indicators which will be able us to provide comparability between the countries and also provide a kind of qualitative background, especially in financial indicators for which there is great interest from the member countries. This can take place and can be scheduled as a framework within the activities of the new group that is going to function in the next weeks (“Second comparability study for financial indicators”).

302. Finally, we suggest that a special (choice and quality of indicators) group/committee be formed to make a detail diagnosis of these factors and to present a report to the Steering Group and to the National Co-ordinators.
Balance between conceptual and statistical work

303. On the whole the current balance between conceptual and statistical development is satisfactory. Moreover, more emphasis should be placed on conceptual development as concerns indicators of crucial significance and debatable comparability between countries.

304. As a consequence, we could have some core indicators (e.g. for a period of 3-4 years) and based on these, we will be able to provide conceptuality and comparability simultaneously.

INES Methods and structures

305. On the whole, we think that the OECD Secretariat provides adequate co-ordination and support for the various INES activities. Concerning the transparency of the cost mechanisms, although we believe that so far there has been no serious criticism about the operations, we suggest for the further improvement of the management that there could be established a group/committee of comptrollers recruited from Member countries, with sufficient expertise and accountability who could regularly check and report on the efficiency of the cost management.

306. Last, but not least, we consider that there has been a satisfactory balance between the possible control and the dynamic developments of the INES activities.

307. During 1995-96, Greece in cooperation with DEELSA/OECD had conducted its second evaluation of its educational system (“Reviews of National Policies for Education – Greece”) and in 1999 the “Follow-up Report by the Greek Authorities” took place. Since the school year 1997-1998 a continuous educational reform has begun, based on some points on the proposals of the OECD external examiners.
HUNGARY / HONGRIE

Policy relevance of INES at national level

308. Hungary has been participating in the OECD INES work since 1993. The Lahti General Assembly in 1995 first raised awareness of the significance of the OECD indicator program in Hungarian education government circles. As part of the Hungarian OECD-DEELSA activity, INES activities were considerably extended within the last five years. Whereas in 1995 Hungary had only a technical co-ordinator, in 2000 it has a National Co-ordinator, a Technical Group and a representative in Networks A, B, and C and in the SEN network. Furthermore, Hungary participated in the SIALS and committed itself to the PISA project.

309. Hungary was one of the most active promoters of the Network A Data Strategy and its realisation PISA. International comparative assessment data had been widely recognised as a source of education quality information since the beginning of Hungary’s involvement in IEA in 1970. The PISA project is seen as an international assessment exercise complementary to Hungary’s national assessment system. It is highly valued for its scientific rigour and the quality assurance provided by the OECD.

310. Hungary has also participated in the SIALS project. Besides the invaluable information it provides in the process of Hungary’s EU integration, the innovative research methodology of SIALS is a useful challenge in assessment methodology.

311. OECD indicators published in EAG volumes have played a significant role in the intra-governmental negotiations in the preparation process of the annual national budgets. Mainly the per capita GDP indicators and the student/teacher ratios were used as arguments by the Ministry of Finance on the one hand and the Ministry of Education on the other hand.

312. OECD indicators are used in the annual publication “Report on the Hungarian Public Education” published by the National Institute of Public Education.

313. There is a modernisation project of the Hungarian national system of education statistics under implementation. One of the primary objectives of this project is to make the national system fully compatible with the methodology of the OECD INES and of the EUROSTAT.

314. INES plays an important role in standardising the conceptual framework of statistical systems in education all over the world. In our case, for example, the renewal of ISCED – for the first time – focussed the educational government’s attention to the wider context of the structural changes of the Hungarian educational system. It was realised that classification should be seen as an effort to compare systemic variables in education systems. It was realised that the education market is also on the way of globalisation, where nations are interested in valid comparison of their systems in an international context.
Progress and remaining data gaps

315. The period since the last General Assembly in Lahti can be characterised by stabilisation in the data submission from Hungary to OECD INES. During the last five years the UOE data submission has become part of the regular work schedule of the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education. A team of statisticians have become familiar with the conceptual framework of the OECD data collection. Our OECD and EUROSTAT data submissions have been merged as a result of negotiations and harmonisation of data sets between the Ministry of Education and the Central Statistical Office.

316. A more conscious, indicator-related data submission became possible in the course of years as the Hungarian Technical Group became familiar with the philosophy and technology of producing OECD indicators for *Education at a Glance*. Some of the initial missing data in the EAG indicator tables were due to external data missing from the OECD database (e.g. population data by age cohorts). These gaps could be filled by simply providing the data missing from the respective parts of the OECD database. Also our participation in the INES Networks enriched the Hungarian data submission. Each year more indicators could be included in the EAG volume.

317. There are still important data gaps in our data submissions, particularly in the Finance Tables. These are as follows:

- Private (household and other private) expenditure (no data collected)
- The expenditure of private institutions other than that from public subsidies (no data collected)
- The distribution between teachers and other personnel of the expenditure for compensation of personnel (definition problems and the lack of conceptual harmonisation between data bases within the country)
- Non-salary compensation (revision is needed in the method of estimation)
- Expenditure not included in the financial reports of the educational institutions (allowances in transportation, etc.)
- Expenditure on administration of education (no separate report is available at present, a change is expected with the introduction of NACE in our financial report system)

318. Most of the above data gaps are attributable to the limitations of our finance data collection system, which is changing, but very slowly. Statistical regulations of EUROSTAT will speed up the process of adaptation.

319. Some of the gaps are due to the limitations of our national statistical system in education statistics. The adaptation procedure is slow, because the whole statistical infrastructure has to be reconstructed. The past decade saw fundamental changes in educational legislation and the education infrastructure. At the same time, the statistical system designed for the old school system gradually became obsolete both in content and in technology. Progress was made in public education where conceptual and legislative problems had been solved by 1998. The introduction of a new education statistical data collection system in public education is implemented in 2000.
320. A similar procedure is going on in the higher education data collection system where conceptual legislative problems have to be solved before a consolidated student based data collection system can be implemented.

321. The most important data gaps in the enrolment data are as follows:
   - Personnel data by personnel category
   - Student flow data (particularly in higher education)
   - Drop-out rate data
   - Information on educational personnel by age

322. Network B indicators also suffer from the inadequacy of Hungarian data sources. We expect changes from a new Job Study and the inclusion of indicators from the SIALS study. Data harmonisation initiated by EUROSTAT may improve the relevant data areas in our Central Statistical Office. Hungary will carry out the decennial population census in 2001. This will improve the quality of indicators using population cohorts data.

Balance between consolidation, analysis and new developments

323. The Hungarian national INES team assesses the balance between consolidation, analysis and new development appropriate even though new developments require considerable effort on the national side. It is felt, however, that the constant strain is necessary to maintain the credibility of INES, because it is well known that there are large structural, financial, conceptual and philosophical differences between education systems. To capture similarities and differences is a dynamic effort, which is the only valid approach in studying organic systems in a larger environmental context.

324. The stability of this balance is necessary to create a stable foundation for the INES work within the country. As it started five years ago, INES was a loose network of researchers each responsible for a segment of the INES work but knowing little of each other. Now INES is considered the core element of our co-operation with the OECD. Budgeting and planning the INES work will be institutionalised in the Ministry of Education from this year on.

Balance between conceptual and statistical work

325. The balance is seen appropriate on the side of the OECD. We need and plan to strengthen the conceptual work in Hungary. Conceptual work (i.e. development of the conceptual model) is a very slow process both internationally and nationally. Since statistical work is dependent on the working concepts and their definitions in educational legislation, and, vice versa, statistical data are used as an instrument to measure effects of educational policy changes, it is vital that the concepts and definitions remain stable over time. ISCED is an example how difficult it is to implement any new categorisation internationally. As international comparison is a high stake exercise for any government, changes for sake of international comparison are at the focus of attention nationally as well.

326. Since the OECD uses databases other than the education database, it will be necessary to cooperate with organisations responsible for other conceptual frameworks like ISIC, NACE or CPA. In our finance data submission, we find difficulties that are related to the interpretation of these nomenclatures.
INES methods and structures

327. INES tries to cope with a double requirement. On one hand, it tries to satisfy the requirements of scientific standards, and, on the other, it tries to satisfy educational policy people often driven by the necessities of media attention and the agenda of a government cycle. So far a delicate balance has been found between the Scyllae and Charybdes of these two powers.

The method

328. INES has a methodological strategy, which enables to invite the best researchers in the field and, at the same time, produce indicators in a timely fashion. This strategy consists of the following elements:

- Exploratory work (country- or Secretariat-initiated pilot studies with ad-hoc data collection and analysis, e.g. the ISCED programme survey). Exploratory work sometimes takes the form of country visits and case studies initiated from outside INES (like SEN).

- Pilot data collection studies: as concepts and measurement objectives become clearer the indicator development procedure is tried out by voluntary data collectors. Such pilot data collections were initiated by SEN, and the Technical Group (i.e., to institutionalise data collection on new entrants)

- Decentralised projects with independent data collection (like SIALS)

- Regular data collections (like the UOE data submission and PISA)

- Structures for reviewing existing research in areas of interest for indicator development (network activities)

- Indicator development (Technical Group and network activities) using existing data and exploring new ways of aggregating data.

The Structure

329. The INES structure is compatible with the aims and objectives of the indicator programme. There is, however, a danger of mushrooming of committees and programmes, which is particularly unfavourable for small countries with meagre resources. The General Assembly may be a good forum for discussing these problems.

330. In Hungary, we have been trying to set up a structure matching the professional and political requirements of the INES programme.

331. An INES Committee was set up in 1996 including members of the INES working group in Hungary, our OECD Education Committee member and CERI Governing Board member and higher-level ministry officials. This effort did not prove very fruitful, because project participation and planning of INES activities largely depended on lobbying rather than on policy strategy.

332. In 1998 an OECD Steering Group was set up by the International Programme Development Department of the Ministry of Education (its head Mr. Péter Soltész is our representative in the Education Committee of DEELSA). INES is represented in this Steering Committee.
333. In 2000 a new budget planning and programme selection policy is being worked out, which will probably facilitate communication between policy makers and experts. It will also facilitate decision making in projects and communication of results to decision-makers.

334. The members of the PISA National Committee have been commissioned. The Committee has not yet started its work, but it is important that this body is commissioned by the Minister of Education.

335. We expect that Hungary can participate in the OECD work with a sounder foundation in the political structures than before. This provides hope that the OECD activity will have a bigger impact on shaping educational policy than in the past.

Media Coverage

336. Little progress has been made in acquiring better media coverage for *Education at a Glance*. We have tried to attract journalists, and we bought EAG for all high-level ministry officials. It must be admitted that amidst the tremendous amount of work little time was left to produce national analyses that would have attracted the media. Nor did the national working group risk attracting scandal monger media. We realised that scandalous data (or lack of proper interpretation) might do harm to the INES work and we preferred to have it first accepted as a standard instrument of educational policy makers. We expect that with the OECD becoming a focus of attention on a government level, the problem of media coverage will be solved.
ICELAND / ISLANDE

337. As Iceland has not so far participated actively in the INES Networks, we are not in a position to make an overall assessment of the INES activities.

Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level

338. The outcomes and activities of INES, especially as presented in Education at a Glance, have resulted in debates and discussion in the country and have attracted attention of politicians, policy-makers, media and the general public. The policy relevance is undoubtedly high. It has been important for national authorities to have access to comparative information in the field of education.

339. Iceland has in the last few years increasingly been providing information/data for Education at a Glance, which means that national data gaps have gradually diminished.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

340. More information is needed concerning student achievement in upper secondary education.

Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

341. From our point of view, there should be a focus on the breadth of presentation and analysis of the indicators (at the same time quality should be guaranteed) in order to respond to the different situations and needs of the participating countries.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

342. There should be a focus on conceptual work and the issue of statistical information available in the different countries.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

343. As stated above, Iceland has not been participating in the steering groups nor the Networks. The existing structures and operational management are not feasible for small countries like Iceland. The participation in the project is too expensive, too time consuming and demands human resources not available.
IRELAND / IRLANDE

Policy relevance

344. The two main INES publications, *Education at a Glance* and *Education Policy Analysis* have come to the attention of policy makers in Ireland and have informed policy development. The contents of both publications have attracted media attention and prompted public debate. There has been a very keen interest on the part of senior politicians in the publications and, on a number of occasions, parliamentary questions have been put down on aspects of the reports. There has been a particular interest on the part of policy makers in the data on student outcomes in literacy, science and mathematics.

345. In light of the favourable economic situation in recent years the INES publications here have informed public debate on the relationship between the education system and the economy. In this context comparative date on expenditure on education, participation rates in tertiary education, on educational attainments in the population and on education and the labour market have been particularly informative. The public debate on these topics contributed to the development of a national consensus on the need to increase investment in the education system at all levels and in particular in science and technology. The INES publications also played a useful role in drawing attention to the need to address the question of adult education as an important policy priority. The indicators on teacher compensation and pupil teacher ratios were also of great interest both to policy makers and the general public and attracted media attention.

346. It is felt that dissemination of findings at national level was generally satisfactory and researchers seemed adequately informed on them. There is no reliable information available on the extent to which there was awareness of the findings at school level but the indicators on educational attainments, pupil teacher ratios, teacher compensation and expenditure on education were commented on with great interest in educational literature for teachers. These indicators were also well disseminated and discussed by teacher union representatives and by politicians.

347. We are confident that the two recent publications from PISA will be important in making information about the project accessible to educators at all levels of the system in Ireland. The PISA Project is an important activity for Ireland and a schedule of national assessments of curricular attainment in first and second level schools has been planned to integrate with the PISA schedule. The experience and expertise gained by our participation in PISA can beneficially inform our national programme assessments. It is also desirable that insights gained in national programmes can be put at the disposal of the Network A through the national representation.

Progress and remaining data gaps

348. The priorities identified at Lahti still remain important for this country. In the case of tertiary education the need to increase participation rates among disadvantaged groups including the disabled is a particular priority. There is also an agreed policy priority to increase third level participation in courses in science and technology.
349. The increased participation rates in tertiary education, which have been achieved for women in certain courses e.g. science, technology and business need to be maintained and further increased. Comparative data on these will continue to be of interest in this country. The question of lifelong learning is also of considerable interest.

350. From an equity perspective the need to promote social inclusion is an important national priority. There is a consensus that the educational system has an important role in achieving a higher degree of social and economic equity. For this reason Ireland would like to see progress with the development of new equity indicators and, perhaps, on the amendment and refinement of existing indicators to reflect considerations of equity. We are fully aware of the complexity of the task involved and do not underestimate the extent of the difficulty of the methodological and ideological problems that have to be overcome in this context. However, it is Ireland’s view that some valuable initial work has been done and that this should be developed. The pace of this work might be accelerated.

351. The new initiatives to develop indicators on both transition to work and continuing education will continue to receive our full support. The need to provide learning opportunities over a life-span and the notion that effective learning takes place in a range of settings other than the conventional school system are now well accepted in Ireland as elsewhere. The development of educational links with industry and the working environment generally, as well as the nurturing of more flexible forms of provision, will be key elements in the services of the future. Some comparative indicators of international good practice in this area would be useful to policy makers.

352. The new technology based industries both, hardware and software, constitute a very important part of our economy and continue to depend for their maintenance and development on the availability of a highly trained labour force. Considerable investment in new technology training has taken place at all levels in the education system in this country. Ireland would welcome the development of indicators on information and communications technology in the education sector which would yield policy relevant information and insights on the nature of the relationship between education systems and economies and give pointers to successful practice which would assist future policy development in this sector.

353. The special education sector is of major importance in Ireland and the services we provide to cater for special educational needs are a matter of great interest to the public and to policymakers. The data in the 1998 edition of EAG generated interest in Ireland and we would encourage and will actively support the refinement of existing indicators and the development of new ones.

**Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments.**

354. It is felt that the balance between analysis of existing information and new developments is about right. It is our view that new developments should concentrate on policy relevant topics where it seems feasible to generate good information. Since the final outcome of the activity is to provide indicators which have high policy relevance we are firmly convinced that experimentation with areas where the underlying conceptual framework and data gathering procedures are not tried and tested should be avoided.

355. Indicators that yield data on processes when they are used for international comparison must always be kept under rigorous review. Differences between countries in educational practices, processes and procedures are often very great and in spite of the best effort of those devising the indicators to overcome these there is a danger of oversimplification in order to achieve even modest comparability. This is not always appreciated by those who are the final users and interpreters of the data.

356. Ireland is of the view that the work on locus of decision – making is not a high priority as a matter of policy. The work has given interesting information up to now but we are convinced that further
enflation of this topic would not yield much that is not already known. The structure of educational administration in developed countries does not change much from year to year and it is felt that intervals of five to seven years should lapse between publications of data on this indicator. Furthermore, when future work is being contemplated on this topic we would advise there should be a greater emphasis on the social and political context in terms of partnership and consultation that constitutes the background to the administrative and legal infrastructure for decision-making in the education system.

**Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

357. It is felt that INES should persist with the more long-term work on strengthening the theoretical basis for some indicators and on improving their analysis. The international nature of the activity with all the heterogeneity that this implies in terms of provision and practice as well as in expertise brings a dimension to the work that is scarcely possible in any national context. Ireland is satisfied that INES should continue with the work on competencies, equity and lifelong learning.

358. When the content of all editions of EAG has been interesting and informative there is a sense in which TIMSS in particular has been overanalysed at a univariate level. Ireland would like to see the publication of more multivariate analyses of data in EAG. Where the simultaneous contributions of more than one indicator of pupil achievement can be considered, and, where appropriate, compared across countries.

**INES methods and structures**

359. In our view the INES process is sufficiently transparent. One constraint to effective participation in INES activity on our part is that all our Network representatives have heavy workloads and responsibilities apart from their INES commitments. This means that, at times, they are unable to participate as actively as they would like and results, regrettably, in their inability to participate in sub-committee work associated with their respective networks.

360. Language factors can sometimes have an adverse effect on the full participation of some members in the work of the Networks. In nearly all cases now the effective language of communication of all networks is English. This has two results in our experience. Participants from English-speaking countries exercise an influence in the network disproportionate to their number and, conversely, some members whose first language is not English do not always make the full and valuable contribution to the Networks of which they are so clearly capable.

361. The PISA Pilot assessment in 1999 made very considerable demands in Ireland where there are a relatively small number of post-primary schools. It would seem preferable from our point of view if the pilot testing could be streamlined in the second cycle of PISA. One way of doing this would be to filter out in-suitable items at a pre-pilot stage in one or two of the larger participating countries.

362. As the work of the INES Network develops it is becoming increasingly apparent that the expertise within the Networks could benefit, on occasion, from enrichment from outside sources. This is especially the case at the development of indicators on tertiary education. At the time of the establishment of Network C the nomination of member state participants took place on the basis of their expertise in schools and school processes in first and second level schools.

363. It is felt that the establishment of small and big sub-groups within the Networks with special expertise in the topic under examination would strengthen the work of the Networks.
ITALY / ITALIE

Introduction

364. In preparation for the 4th INES General Assembly, the OECD Secretariat invited all Member countries to assess, from the national perspective, the work done and to provide advice for future improvement. The Secretariat established five assessment areas for this purpose.

Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level

365. Italy has actively and constantly participated in the project from the very beginning (late 1980s) and the Italian delegates have been, until now, the same in all Networks. So the Italian “team” that attended the first General Assembly in Lugano and the third in Lahti will participate in the fourth in Tokio with very few changes.

366. In Italy the project is carried out by the Ministry of Education. The General Director of Cultural Exchanges is the INES National Co-ordinator. The National Statistics Institute co-operates with the Ministry in the Technical group.

367. From Lahti onwards there has been a growing interest in Italy in INES results and products, as it is demonstrated by the fact that Education at a Glance is now regularly translated into Italian. A press conference organised for presenting to a growing audience every new edition of Education at a Glance is a demonstration of the country interest in INES. This interest has become bigger after the last OECD Country Review in 1997.

368. INES Indicators have been more and more carefully considered in the last years at Ministerial level in defining important education plans with financial implications. At present, indicators on school processes are taken in account by several members of the Commission appointed for defining the content of the education reform.

369. However, although INES indicators often receive wide press coverage, they are not always correctly used and reported.

370. As regards schools, principals, teachers, they have been in the past not been interested in indicators. However, at present, the implementation of the education reform is promoting a growing interest in them.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

371. Starting from Lahti, progress made by the INES project has been considerable, especially in the field of student achievement. Italy considers the PISA project for producing student outcomes indicators an important step, especially for the conceptual work done in this domain.
However an additional effort could be made in order to develop “lifelong learning” and “equity” indicators that Italy considers very meaningful for policy makers. There is also a need for a policy-oriented framework that could allow to understand the relationship among indicators (for example between inputs and educational outcomes). Italy has participated for a long time in this debate and knows very well how difficult is to establish such a relationship, but, at the same time, it is convinced that the issue deserves further attention.

Assessment area 3: balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

It is a real dilemma for countries involved in INES to decide whether it is better to invest in new developments or to consolidate the existing information. Italy considers that the financial investment in the INES project is considerable and that, for this reason, new developments have to be carefully considered. One good solution could be that small groups, e.g. subgroups of Network A, could be put in place, on the initiative of some countries, in order to explore new domains, while the existing Networks should continue to work on the consolidation of existing information and refine existing indicators.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

The statistical work is the fundamental basis for producing indicators in a systematic way and at this stage countries would like to have, as it is for Italy, trend indicators.

At the same time, the conceptual work has been, until now, an important component of the INES project and it could not be left completely in the hands of other people or institutions as it is for DeSeCo project. One of the priorities for the future will be to find a balance between the two components.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

Italy considers the current INES structures very effective.

The Network organisation has allowed for full participation of all countries in the definition, selection and publication of indicators.

The success of the INES project depends, to a large extent, on the Network structure, but it must be recognised that it depends also on the capacity of the OECD Secretariat in securing the circulation of ideas, in organising the meetings, in supporting countries.

On the contrary the role of the INES National Co-ordinators appears to be very weak, especially if it is compared with the role of the Steering Group where only few Countries are represented (this issue could be discussed in the General Assembly).

The co-operation between OECD and the European Union must be strengthened if one considers the interest of European Countries in producing indicators of “school quality”.

76
General comments on INES work

381. The OECD/INES has achieved brilliant success in the last decade. Notably the publication of *Education At A Glance* is one example. We have a very high opinion of the OECD Secretariat and Member countries’ work, which has raised international comparability of educational indicators. Nobody can deny that the OECD/INES projects lead exclusively to the international comparison of education indicators. Many countries have always paid attention to the results of the OECD Indicators and none are not able to ignore them any more.

382. We hope that there will be more interest and support from Member countries in the INES projects.

Assessment area 1

383. INES outcomes do not so much stem from policy-makers, yet. In Japan international comparison is always a matter of concern not only to policy-makers but also to all people. However, the INES outcomes have not yet sparked the interest of policy-makers and other stakeholders. Within the Ministry, officials in related fields are showing a growing interest in some data such as participation and financial data.

384. Lack of continuity and stability led to our hesitation of disseminating INES. We have not made efforts to disseminate INES outcomes. This might be one of the reasons that the interest of policy-makers and other stakeholders is not so high. The reasons why we have hesitated to disseminate the outcomes positively are: 1) lack of stability such as not-yet-establishment of core indicators, frequent changes of definitions of the data reporting; and 2) many experimental indicators.

Assessment area 2

385. The PISA Project is the most important achievement in the 4th phase. We think that initiating PISA well into operation is one of the most important achievements in the present phase. The project is Japan’s greatest concern. We have taken pride in having contributed to this project. We hope that PISA is able to produce outcomes that participating countries expect from the project.

386. There is not enough improvement in higher education indicators. Developing higher education indicators such as net entry rate into higher education, survival rate and separation between education and research expenditures have been worked on, but we do not think those are successful. The data gaps remain. Especially, we have strong interest in net entry rate, but there are many countries that cannot report the data due to the change of the definition of calculation.
387. Excessively subdivided classification of education finance cannot be dealt with. Finance indicators are ‘core’ indicators for all stakeholders. Some basic data for such educational expenditure relative to the GDP have been supplied continuously. We appreciate that, however, we are suspicious about the tendency of the development of financial indicators that seems to be excessively subdivided. Financial systems are different from country to country. They have their own characteristics. Therefore, there are a lot of difficulties to compare with even though we can complete a thoroughly statistical framework of comparison. We had better concentrate on supply stable core indicators that give us essential trends while recognising that no country can report all requested data.

388. While giving consideration to differences of lifelong learning frameworks, all Member countries still agree on the importance of lifelong learning in their educational policy. However, countries have a different history for the framework concerning adult education, continuous training systems and learning cultures. Therefore, it is necessary for us to examine such differences as a requisite for the development of lifelong learning indicators.

Assessment area 3

389. Establishing and raising reliability of core indicators is very important. We cannot fully address this area from a broad perspective because we have not participated in the network groups. We think that it is important to make the outcomes of INES more feasible through establishing and raising the reliability of core indicators. Because there is a limit to the resources, we have to concentrate more on consolidating the existing indicators rather than developing new indicators.

390. Presentation of EAG is not so user-friendly. EAG is sometimes difficult to use although it now it is in its seventh edition. For example, I) the definitions are sometimes too simple to use for analysis; II) because of the simplicity we need time to clarify and verify the result and data; III) the notes are not standardised enough to use. And it is sometimes difficult to see what the main indicators are because of so many classifications, charts and tables.

Assessment areas 4

391. Need to recognise the limitation of reportable data from Member countries. It is important to maintain and improve the quality of the data/statistical development in areas with well-established theories and methods. The Technical Group has done some work on improving tertiary finance and net entry rates. We respect their work but the results are not sufficient. It is healthier to collect the maximum common data that member countries are able to report with recognising the limitation of available data.

392. More effective work with focusing on the themes in the limited resources. We do not commit ourselves to activity of the definition and selection of competencies (DeSeCo) and we cannot review all of the work. However, we think that we should do work on focused themes under the financial constraint of Member countries. We expect that DeSeCo activity will have some results but we think it is better to make the deadline for the conclusion considering the balance between INES projects as a whole.

Assessment area 5

393. Some transparency of the management and operation has been secured. In the fourth phase the Secretariat was strengthened and has played the pivotal role in INES activities. The Secretariat has managed INES operations effectively. As for strategic control, the newly established Steering Group, supported by the Secretariat, has had a certain transparency secured on decision-making of the projects.
394. The cost was not fully transparent. The internal management and its cost are not very transparent. Member countries are not fully given the explanation of the cost-sharing of expanded projects, such as the WEI activity. Who pay for that? Participating countries cannot see it easily. The internal management and its cost should have greater transparency.

395. There is a need to review the self-inflating Network structure. The network system has dynamism in terms of developing new indicators. This is a constructive point. This point, at the same time, tends to inflate the activity itself. INES has not been able to control such inflating activity in the framework. We look back to the Lahti meeting to see what points were identified and then we can discuss the dissolution of the network structure and more using an ad-hoc system to lighten the INES structure.
Introduction

396. This report has been prepared to diagnose the effectiveness of INES outcomes in Korean educational settings by evaluating the influence of the outcomes on policy-makers, researchers and the general public. This report, among other things, focuses on the utilisation of the outcomes produced as a result of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, one of the key INES projects.

397. Since 1995, Korea has been actively participating in INES by publishing a Korean-language version of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*. Our activities have been concentrated on participation in the education statistics and indices Technical Group and the Network project. As a result, in the 4th edition of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, published in December of 1996, Korea’s education indicators were included for the first time. In the 5th and 6th editions published in 1997 and 1998, a total of 33 indicators and 26 indicators were provided, respectively.

398. Publication of the Korean version of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* has provided us with the opportunity to gain objective understanding by comparing Korea’s status of education with those of other countries.

399. Korea will actively participate in publishing *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* and continue to publish the Korean version of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*.

Influence of INES on the Education in Korea

Summary

400. The objective comparison of educational conditions in countries across the world provided in *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* presents a relatively detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of Korea’s education system. It has assisted a variety of stakeholders of education including administrators and professionals and the general public to look squarely at the reality of the nation’s education and re-examine its current status. In doing so, it enables them to point the education system in the right direction and enhance its overall quality.

401. By addressing major issues such as education conditions (number of students per class, ratio of students to teaching staff, etc.) and educational finance (proportion of public financing, public educational expenditure per student), the highly creditworthy *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* advances our ability to objectively understand the current education status by using indicators of advanced countries as a base for comparison.
402. Used as reference for virtually all of the nation’s basic research reports as well as policy reports on education, it serves as a prime basis for benchmarking. Educational policymakers find *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* to be an excellent reference source in formulating major education policies.

**Utilisation of “Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators”**

403. In order to examine the influence of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* on Korea’s education, we attempt:

- to find concrete examples of how and how often *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* was cited in education-related reports aimed at analysing and providing alternative for the problems of Korean education; and
- to survey education policy makers at the Ministry of Education to find the degree of utilisation and usefulness, along with their key areas of interest.

**Citation in Key Policy Reports**

404. The advent of a knowledge-based society has made changes in the education system inevitable. Changes in relevant policies are required to respond to such new trends. Key policy reports published by major educational R & D institutions have been analysed to examine how *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* has been utilised in various policy researches aimed at redirecting Korea’s future education and formulating new policies. Analysed five reports are within the past three years when the Korean version of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* began to be practically utilised. Also they provide a vision of the Korean education system and relatively concrete solutions.

405. After sub-dividing the various education-related areas into the six categories of early childhood education, primary and secondary education, tertiary education, lifelong learning, education finance and teaching profession, we examined the influence that *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* had on the policies in each of the six categories.

406. According to the analysed results, it is evident that *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* enables a comparison of the various aspects of education in other countries or the OECD average to Korea. Also, it is possible to gain an objective understanding of the education reality, as well as discover possible solutions to improving the quality of education. In particular, it provides an opportunity to reflect upon the education conditions in each sector (i.e. the ratio of student to teaching staff, number of students per class, term it takes to reach highest salary, etc.) and educational finance (the proportion of private educational expenditure to total sources for tertiary education, public educational expenditure per student, proportion of public resources, etc.).

A. Early Childhood Education

407. The educational expenditure per child is far lower than that of advanced countries. Accordingly, subsidies for early childhood education must be provided to low-income families.

408. Education for 3-5-year-old toddlers falls far short of the OECD average rate, calling for a need to raise the rate of participation in education by 5 year olds. As one means of enhancing this participation rate, a budget of 11.2 billion won was injected into this sector to fully exempt children of low-income families subject to protection of livelihood as stipulated by law from entry fees and tuition.
B. Primary and Secondary Education

409. Among all of the OECD member countries, Korea marks the highest ratio of student to teaching staff at each of the elementary, junior high and high school levels. A gap exists between the average number of students per class at elementary, junior high and high schools in Korea and in the advanced countries. In order to promote education conditions to those of major OECD countries, a special act on educational environments has been formulated to reduce the maximum number of students per class.

C. Tertiary Education

410. The ratio of graduates of junior colleges in proportion to the total population of persons at the suitable age for tertiary education completion is lower in Korea than in major OECD countries. Corrective measures include supporting the specialisation of junior colleges, increasing the number of graduates from such institutions, and strengthening financial support provided to them. Stronger links with the labour market should be promoted, along with the implementation of measures such as fostering joint research institutions that are connected to local industries.

411. The ratio of students per teaching staff in Korea is very high when compared with the OECD average. Possible solutions include reducing the number of students per teacher and the proportion of part time teaching staff.

412. In terms of the proportion of individuals with Master’s or Doctor’s degrees to the total population of those educated, the ratio is notably lower in Korea than in the U.S., United Kingdom, Australia or other advanced countries. In order to improve this situation, the Brain Korea 21 (BK 21) project was launched, accompanied by measures to build a stronger infrastructure to support academic research.

D. Lifelong Learning

413. OECD Member countries have made educational account one of their mid- to long-term tasks and are currently seeking measures for its realisation. In Korea, it has also been examined through test operations and is slated for future implementation.

414. In terms of continuing education for adults, the rate of participation in vocational education by people between the ages of 25-64 in Korea is far lower than in other countries. Improvement on this disparity is currently underway by pursuing various policies such as extending the educational credit bank system, converting training centres within industries into lifelong education institutions, and revitalising distance education using cutting edge ICT such as the Internet (i.e. recognising degrees earned through distance education, institutionalising private tutoring centres and training centres via distance education).

E. Educational Finance

415. The proportion of private educational expenditure to total sources for tertiary education is outstandingly high in Korea. Measures must be taken to reduce the financial burden of the low-income families for tertiary education.

416. The ratio of tertiary education expenditure to the government budget falls far short of the average of OECD countries. In order to improve upon this situation, government investment in research and education at colleges and universities must be gradually.
417. The level of independence of local education finances in Korea is very poor compared with OECD countries.

418. Of the educational expenditure spent at primary and secondary school level, the portion for operating and facility expenses is insufficient. Therefore, the proportion of operating expenses to current expenditure minus labour costs must be raised to the level of the OECD through an overall expansion of school operating expenses.

419. The public educational expenditure per student in Korea is only a third of the U.S. level and a half of the OECD average. Possible solutions include increasing national funds and city and provincial taxes, as well as seeking out various other channels for resources.

420. Public resources account for 83.3% of total educational resources on average in OECD countries, while it accounts for only 59.4% in Korea.

F. Teaching Profession

421. The ratio of part time teaching staff in Korea is far lower than that of Canada and Germany, suggesting the lack of flexibility in the Korean system for appointing teachers. It is desirable to increase the ratio of the part-time teaching staff in order to provide students with a wider variety of subjects to select from.

422. In OECD countries, it takes elementary school teachers an average of 25 years to reach the highest salary, while the corresponding period in Korea is 41 years. The remuneration system for teachers should be revised in a rational manner, implementing a bonus or piecework system that can fully reflect their abilities and performance.

Utilisation by Education Policy Makers

423. In order to understand how Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators has been utilised in formulating education policies in Korea, we examined the extent and areas of use, along with plans for future use, by surveying policymakers at the Ministry of Education, the frontline of education policy formulation. The results are as follows:

A. Extent of Use

Degree of reference in policy formulation

424. According to the study on the extent of the use of Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, all those involved in the formulation of education policies responded that they used it as a reference. With 22.2% of the respondents using it in the formulation process of every policy, and 55.6% using it frequently, it is clear that Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators is widely used in the policymaking process.

Foundation for new policies

425. Respondents, when asked if they had experiences where the various indicators of the many other countries presented in Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators served as foundation for developing the nation’s education system or as ideas for new policies, all answered that they had such experience. 11.1%
replied that they had such experiences on a ‘very frequent’ basis, 44.4% ‘relatively often’, and another 44.4% on an ‘on and off’ basis.

Degree of usefulness in policy making

The survey on the level of helpfulness of Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators in the policy-making process showed that 33.3% and 66.6% of the respondents found it to be ‘extremely helpful’ and ‘somewhat helpful’, respectively. Needless to say, all respondents regarded Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators to be useful as a source of reference.

B. Usage Areas of Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators

Most frequently used areas

Respondents who answered that Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators was helpful were asked to choose the area in which they found it most useful among the six areas of school achievement, tertiary education, school-to-work transitions, educational finance, lifelong learning and disparities/equity in education. Results showed that it was most helpful in the area of educational finance, the top choice of 55.6% of the respondents. It was also said to be helpful in the areas of tertiary education, school-to-work transitions, lifelong learning and disparities/equity in education.

Areas assisted most for future policy formulation

Among the six priority areas, 33.3% of the respondents forecast that the area of educational finance would remain the most helpful. This was followed by the areas of tertiary education and lifelong learning, both had considerably high support rate of 22.2% each.

C. Future plans for using Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators

As all of those surveyed responded that they planned to refer to Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators in the future process of policy-making, therefore, it is expected to be more widely used in the future.

Based on the above research results, it may be assumed that Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators has been very helpful to those involved in the policy-making process at the Ministry of Education as it served as a key reference source. It was found to be particularly useful in the area of educational finance and is expected to be more so in the future. Users also anticipate that it will serve them well in the areas of tertiary education and lifelong education. Apparently, respondents intend to make active use of Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators in the future. Overall, Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators has provided education policy-makers with many suggestions up to now and is expected to continue to serve as a prime source of reference and ideas in the future.

Conclusion

Research and analysis on how Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, a key INES project, affects Korean education and to what extent it is used resulted in the following, which clearly illustrates its considerable contribution to the process of establishing education-related policies.
432. *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is often cited in major policy reports, enabling a better understanding of the current status of the Korean education system. It continues to contribute to the policy-making process by helping to set Korea’s future education in the right direction through comparisons of Korea’s indicators to those of advanced countries.

433. Among the various areas of education in *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, the data on conditions of education and educational finance was found to be of particular interest and beneficial to those involved in the Korean education system.

434. Furthermore, policy-makers frequently refer to *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* for stimulation in developing policies and feel that it serves as a useful guide in a number of areas. In particular, policy-makers replied that they benefited most from the section on educational finance.

435. For broader and more effective use of *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators*, Korea has carried out the project of publication in the Korean-language version and will continue to carry out such efforts in order to ensure that *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators* is fully utilised for the betterment of the nation’s education system.

**Appendix: reports analysed**

1.*Guidelines for the Development of Korean Education in the 21st Century*, (1998, Published by Education Reform Committee)

: Published by the Education Reform Committee, a presidential advisory organ, the report aims at fully understanding the current status of Korean education in terms of the 12 areas in which reform is deemed essential based on comparisons to standards of other OECD countries.

: Six of the 10 tables related to lifelong learning and 5 of the 10 tables on educational investment and finance were extracted from “Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators”.

2.*Five-year Educational Development Plan: Green Paper* (1999, Published by Korean Educational Development Institute)

: The report’s main objective is to gather the opinions of the education sector and the general public in order to establish a 5-year educational development plan. It begins by first presenting concrete policies and the direction which Korean education should take.

3.*Educational Strategies for Developing Human Resources Needed in the Knowledge-Based Economy* (1999, Published by Korean Educational Development Institute)

: By examining the educational strategies adopted by advanced countries in response to the knowledge-based economy, the report presents the basic direction of educational policies and measures for fostering human resources which are most appropriate for Korea’s current educational system.

4.*The Directions and Tasks of Korean Educational Policy in the Knowledge-based Society* (1999, Published by Korean Educational Development Institute)

: Through a thorough examination of the changes in the education environment rising from the advent of the knowledge-based society, the report seeks to redirect Korean education and research policy tasks.
5. *Mid- to Long-term Vision for Korean Education* (1999, Published by Korean Educational Development Institute)

This report aims to establish consistency between the policies that have already been established or are in the process of formulation in response to the new paradigm that will unfold in the future. This is in turn used as the basis for establishing mid- to long-term visions for Korean education.
Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels

436. The INES project is of highest importance to national-decision makers. The governmental programme for the election period 1999-2004 explicitly refers to the OECD activities and the importance of – internationally accepted – indicators in education and the relevance of comparative analysis. Luxembourg participates in various INES activities and projects. During the previous years, Luxembourg has increased its efforts to align itself with international standards.

437. The PISA study proves to be of particular importance, both in targeting policy makers and in strengthening the national indicators project. To a lesser extent the Network B activities and the recently launched study, Second Finance Comparability Study, are instrumental in making the national work more professional. Though of substantial interest to national policy, the work of Network C did not create an impact at the national level. We ask, therefore, that the activities of Network C be more focussed and, above all, better tuned with the activities of other networks.

438. The Luxembourg education statistics situation is very much affected by the difficulty in getting reliable data on students in private schools and particularly on students studying in other countries. Although it is chiefly Luxembourg’s task to cope with this problem, we expect a better handling of this – intermediate – situation within the INES context: Luxembourg’s particular situation must be clearly described when merging aggregate data and publishing results. Otherwise, the potential benefits of an INES co-operation may fade away or, even worse, may be replaced by a devastating public perception in Luxembourg of the INES work.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

439. A small country like Luxembourg, with very limited scientific and logistic resources, has to make careful choices in its international involvement. Thus, it is quite natural that progress substantially differs across the different priority areas identified in Lahti.

440. The greatest progress has been achieved in the field of student achievement due to the successful participation in the PISA programme. The results of the study will substantially improve the knowledge base on Luxembourg students. Beyond the mere results, participation in PISA led to a major technology transfer in the field of student assessment.

441. A similar impact was expected in the field of life-long learning and school - work transitions through the possible participation in the ILSS/ALL study. However, because of the rather unclear position of this study within the INES context, these expectations have not been met to a similar extent to that of PISA.

442. Careful observation of Network B’s activities and the participation in the Second Finance Comparability Study has been instrumental in further improving the national situation. On the other hand,
both activities clearly uncovered the difficulties of a smaller country to cope with the speed of implementation proposed by the INES stakeholders.

443. The fields of tertiary education and disparities/equity could not be sufficiently addressed during the last years.

Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

444. Our overall assessment is that the balance between consolidation/analysis and development work is well thought out, as far as countries with a well-established infrastructure are concerned. Smaller countries or countries who have to (re-)engineer their structures are, however, at risk. Nevertheless, we do not recommend to artificially alter the balance, but instead to put in place mechanisms to help these countries to continuously move in the direction of the “lead countries”. It is crucial to understand that imposing a pace, that certain countries cannot follow, will inevitably lead to a disintegration of the INES project.

445. As the INES work clearly aims at helping decision-makers at a national level, the most important criterion for selecting new development areas should be “political relevance.” Feasibility/data availability is definitely an issue, but, in the long run, it would be fatal to the INES effort to forget about the right order of criteria.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

446. We highly welcome the efforts spent on conceptual work, a mandatory component of any successful long-term strategy. The challenges that Network A faced and is still facing with the PISA CCC component show, however, that the structures that are already in place are far from being sufficient. It is an urgent requirement to create some stable structure, which is able to handle the conceptual work at the same level of professionalism as that of the statistical work. Together, with the implementation of such a structure, new flexible ways of financing conceptual works should be analysed. Finally, whatever structure will be created, it should be guaranteed that member countries are fully involved in, or at least informed of the conceptual work in an early phase of development.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

447. Beyond what has been said about structures in the previous paragraph, we highly appreciate the overall structure of the INES project, the professionalism of its components and the co-ordinating competence of the OECD Secretariat. The information and communication procedures are well developed and the documentation of processes and outcomes is far beyond average. However, we encourage the OECD Secretariat to update the INES chart more frequently, and above all to inform in a systematic way about informal/semi-formal undertakings and ad-hoc groups.
448. The OECD generates the *Education at a Glance* (EAG) indicators through a project named Indicators of Education Systems (INES) also the educational outcomes indicators published in the EAG are obtained through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

449. Since 1995 INES has developed and consolidated indicators in the educational outcomes area and emphasised the analysis of the cross-curriculum competencies, higher education, school-to-work transition, lifelong education, equity and disparity.

450. INES works with a system of networks that allows the member countries to be more effective in the development, production and analysis of educational indicators.

451. Following the schema suggested by the OECD Secretariat, Mexico presents the evaluation of INES educational indicators regarding its use, utility, process of generation and also the Networks’ organisation.

**Assessment Area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national level**

452. The INES indicators have been used to develop and compare the national indicators and to generate better actions of educational planning.

453. The use of INES indicators is more well-known in higher education, especially at University and technological level.

454. INES indicators are used in internal national comparisons having as a framework the international data. Indicators are also used in shaping policy decisions related to improve the operation, and outcomes of higher education in the country.

455. At the state level the INES indicators are used in the Higher Education Planning Committees to decisions regarding the supply of this level of education.

456. Regarding Basic Education, UNESCO indicators have a wider use than INES due to their wider dissemination within the education community such as in Mexico.

457. On the basis of the above information we identify the following areas of likely improvement:

   − The dissemination of INES indicators at the country level needs to be reviewed under the aspects of a) availability; b) language; and c) procedures.

   − Availability: Few researchers, officials and stakeholders know and use the INES indicators to back up their work or make decisions.

   − Language: English and French are a problem for a large number of education officials.
Procedures: the methodology to build the indicators has lower profile dissemination.

458. To overcome the above-mentioned problems we suggest the following actions:

− The availability must be higher and the Undersecretary of the Planning and Co-ordination office with the participation of the Directorate of DEELSA can promote the access and use of INES indicators to different stakeholders and officials in the educational system.

− It should be convenient to translate the Education at a Glance and Education Policy Analysis to Spanish every year (Education Policy Analysis was translated into Spanish only in 1996 and 1997)

− The Undersecretary of the Planning and Co-ordination office jointly with the Directorate of DEELSA, can promote workshops in which stakeholders, officials and researchers receive information about: what are the purpose of the indicators; what is the methodology used to develop them; and how they may be used in the process of decision-making.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

459. PISA was implemented to obtain data related to students’ abilities and outcomes to cope with society demands in adulthood.

460. ISCED levels were reclassified in order to have a common framework to generate valid international indicators and comparisons.

461. The school-to-work transition, lifelong learning and educational finance studies permit the development of indicators that make possible the analysis of actions that apparently are isolated but that are related to increased opportunities of a better life for the citizens of the Member countries.

462. On the other hand, the EAG indicators cover the areas of:

− Student achievement (chapter F)
− Higher or Tertiary education (chapter C)
− School-to-work transition (chapters E, C)
− Educational finance (chapter B)
− Lifelong learning (chapter A)
− Disparities/equity (chapter C)

463. Quality of education is one of the Mexico’s national priorities. Know-how to measure and assess the educational outcomes is an important element to offer educational services with quality.

464. Our participation in PISA has been an enriching process that has enhanced our procedures to assess the quality of the educational services.
465. It has also been possible to develop international frameworks that contribute to a wider vision about what is regarded as quality educational service in more developed countries.

466. However, the data collection on educational finance has gone down to the municipal and state levels as well as to private spending of education.

467. All the above-mentioned work is very important. However, we consider that it is necessary to improve the indicators of:

- Lifelong learning; and
- Disparities/equity.

468. Also we suggest the inclusion of new indicators in the following areas and topics:

- Scientific and technological development regarding applied research and pure research: a) number of human resources working in scientific areas such as medicine, chemistry, biochemistry and so on; b) transfer of human resources through the different technological and scientific areas (how many researchers switch between different research areas?).

- Tertiary education (University and Technological level). Academic level of professors: a) number of professors who work part- and full-time; b) number of years working in the field of teaching (how many years worked as a doctor, engineer, lawyer, business administrator, etc.?); c) how much time is used to find the first job after the students:graduate d) the link between studies and the area of work; and d) the link between years of study and the type of employment.

- Basic education: development of indicators related to: a) initial education 0-3 years old, b) preschool education 4-5 years old.

Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

469. We consider that the generation of indicators for the areas of student achievement, school-to-work transition, educational finance are consolidated, however, they need to be used during a period of time (two PISA cycles) to know and assess the utility of them.

470. From our perspective the areas that need more development are:

- Tertiary education;
- Lifelong learning; and
- Disparity/equity.

471. Our suggestion for tertiary education is to desegregate the indicators by educational level as follow:

- Bachelor or ISCED level
- Master or ISCED level
- Doctor or ISCED level
- Ph.D. or ISCED level

472. For Lifelong learning and disparity/equity we suggest having two indicators of each one by gender (women and men)

473. Our recommendation also considers that it is convenient to define information areas to obtain indicators that do not represent a long time and money investment.

474. For the development of new indicators we advise waiting until the conceptual development is defined in a more precise way before trying to obtain the data for the indicator.

475. We also suggest consulting the Member countries: to know if they want the number of quantitative indicators reduced; the criteria and procedure to select the indicators that will be and that will not be published; and if some indicators are not selected for publication, use them to do wider qualitative analysis in the *Education Policy Analysis*.

**Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

476. The development of the conceptual work is slow, given the nature, but it allows finding the answers to research questions and it generates knowledge.

477. The cost is very high, in terms of time and funding, in relation to the time that INES requires for an answer. However, it allows Member countries’ researchers, to develop joint work with experts in the same field and to obtain funding for research in the area of their specialisation.

478. The development of statistics and data areas does not arise from itself; it is produced through a conceptual correlation that makes easier the data gathering and the statistical work.

479. The development of the conceptual and statistical work, which is associated with the definition and selection of competencies (i.e. the DeSeCo initiative), the way of measuring the problem-solving, the construction of reference frameworks such as the integrated communication technology (ICT) and others; are appropriate and also good investments in terms of time and money in the medium- and long- terms, because they will enrich the indicators that will arise from PISA.

480. We suggest, in this assessment area, that the experts of Member countries are invited to give lectures and workshops in Member countries where the theoretical framework developed within INES is less known.

481. By doing so, the knowledge in countries will be increased. It will allow them to contribute in a more active way in the development of current and future concepts and statistical measures for the indicators.

482. We suggest developing a concept of quality of education, where in particular, for tertiary education, indicators on the following should be obtained:

- student holders of an academic degree
− alumni working in their field
− professors/researchers by field and type (pure or applied)
− number of patents registered

483. It is also advisable to start a study that allows one to know from an economic point of view, what the social return of education is and to answer to the following qualitative questions:

− What are the economy key conditions that allow a higher social return?
− How are economic, employment and production generation policies linked to education and curriculum contents?
− What is the co-ordination between productive and educational sector to support applied research and to generate new patents for consumption goods?
− What is the value and social perception on education, that the users of the education system have (parents and students) to attain their goals in life (good employment or business creation)?
− What economic and social conditions hinder the educational policies applied to obtain the results for what they were designed?
− To what extent is there a National Educational Planning Program that links its actions and programs to production, employment generation, and the development of artistic, intellectual, civil and democratic values?
− Does the construction of technological and university education respond to a National Program for the development and support to technology?
− Do technological and university education have programmes of regional development to take advantage of local resources and the potential of the productive sector?
− What is the procedure for the allocation of resources in each educational system?
− Is it based on political situations or does it respond to an educational and economic development program where priorities are defined?

Assessment Area 5: INES methods and structures

484. INES structure is adequate but it can be made more efficient in the following items:

485. Regarding the indicators generations, it would be advisable that countries could receive the data tables with macros that calculate automatically the indicators and that those formulas are not susceptible of altering and that only its results are reviewed by the Secretariat’s statistical group (by doing so, you save some of the Secretariat’s operational expenses).

486. In accordance with our perspective, the studies in all the Networks should be unique and not repeated, or if they are related with the work of another network, it should be asked that the network that
has the most advanced conceptual or statistical work should include those of interest of other networks. By doing so, costs and efforts are reduced (i.e., the study of Network C on the context of schools of upper secondary education that has already been done by PISA).

487. Also we advice that three parties should share the funding of the studies. The OECD, participant countries and external sponsors or potential users of the outcomes of the study (UNESCO, The World Bank, the Inter American Development Bank, and so on).

488. We hope that our assessment and suggestions help to improve the operation of the INES Project. We are pleased to send you our best wishes and also hope that this Fourth General Assembly of INES is a success.
THE NETHERLANDS / PAYS-BAS

Assessment area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels

489. The Netherlands participates in the INES Steering Group, the Technical Group and in the Networks A, B and C (Chair). The activities are co-ordinated at a national level in the INES working group, and chaired by the National Co-ordinator at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

490. Every year, when Education at a Glance (EAG) is published, the new data are used to make a broad comparison of the performance of the Dutch educational system with other OECD countries. Our Minister of Education informs the Parliament of the strength and weaknesses of our system, and civil servants by giving a press briefing. The areas that receive the most attention are: educational finance, attainment and student achievement, salaries and teaching time, pupil/teacher ratios, participation, transition to work, and computers in schools.

491. This year we focused especially on a comparison with our neighbouring countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Denmark, and the United Kingdom).

492. The indicator that has featured most prominently in the public debate for several years now is the educational expenditure as % GDP (the OECD average is often referred to as the ‘OECD norm’). Also, especially in times of collective bargaining negotiations, the teacher salaries and workload in an international perspective are highlighted greatly in the public debate by politicians and teacher union representatives. There has also been a marked interest on the part of policy makers in the indicators on student outcomes in mathematics, science and the literacy attainment of the population.

493. Education Policy Analysis has received less attention up until now. Last year our Minister informed our Parliament about the relevant policy conclusions in EPA 1999. Also a press notice was released, but the media did not pay much attention to this. Although we regard EPA as a valuable complement to EAG, in the current form it is difficult to distil country-specific and policy-relevant conclusions from it. Its main value at the moment is that it draws attention to important educational questions of the day for reflection and discussion.

494. The most important indicators from EAG are included in the statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Education (Kerncijfers).

495. The INES indicators have stimulated the public debate about the health of our educational system. The indicator on educational expenditure played a particularly prominent role in increasing the sense of urgency on the importance of investments in human capital. But it is difficult to draw policy implications from the EAG indicators beyond broad conclusions based on league tables.

496. In the Netherlands, education policy-makers increasingly feel the need for a more comprehensive and in-depth interpretation of the EAG indicators, when comparing with relevant benchmark countries. The coverage of the indicators, the organisation of these educational systems, relevant national education
policies, the broader socio-cultural en economic context, etc. are all factors which should be taken into account.

497. Two years ago the Ministry of Education established an ongoing research project (O8-project) with a view to investigate the accessibility of the EAG indicators for benchmarking our education system on relevant neighbouring countries.

498. There is some tension between the need for fewer indicators and the need for new indicators. On the one hand, policy-makers need a few crisp, transparent and convincing indicators with clear policy relevance in order to be able to create a sense of urgency and to be able to realise important policy changes timely. This explains the call for a small set of core indicators.

499. On the other hand, in order to be able to explain (the relationships between) key indicator values, and to learn from other countries’ experiences, a rich, detailed and comprehensive set of valid indicators is needed. Also, they must be complemented by quantitative and qualitative information on the organisation of education systems and their broader context, systematised in typologies and country profiles.

500. Country profiles are probably a good means to serve this purpose. It is, therefore, disappointing that the first steps on the way to country profiles, developed and submitted by the Network A members, were rejected for publication in EAG 2000.

501. The needs for fewer indicators and for a comprehensive set of indicators are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Finding a balance in this field of tension, through clear mechanism for priority setting on the basis of policy needs, is an important challenge for the INES project in the next years.

502. The recent EU-summit in Lisbon has much increased the (potential) policy relevance of educational statistics in the EU. The ongoing process of open co-ordination and benchmarking in the EU could benefit a lot from the state-of-the-art educational statistics of the INES project. A close relationship of co-operation should be established between the OECD and the EU, as well as with the IEA, UNESCO and The World Bank.

Assessment area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

503. There have been significant advances since the General Assembly in Lahti. Important achievements are PISA, the implementation of ISCED-97 (the consequences of which should be reviewed carefully on the basis of EAG 2000), and indicators on the transition from school to work. Also, we regard the Second Finance Comparability Study as an important next step towards better comparable financial indicators.

The six priority areas as identified in Lahti:

Student Achievement

504. Within Network A and PISA, important developmental work is done on student achievement around the end of compulsory schooling. It is important that achievement is not only defined in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but also in terms of important knowledge and skills needed in adult life. Therefore the assessment of cross-curriculum competencies (CCC) is an integral part of PISA.
Nevertheless, the attention that is paid to the CCC is less than should be expected, if one looks at the importance of the CCC for the PISA framework. This is partly due to the fact that the CCC are an option, and therefore can easily fall between the cracks. And, also, because the main PISA contractor is not responsible for the development of the CCC. We therefore propose to make the CCC part of the core of the PISA project (as soon as instruments are developed and pre-tested satisfactorily) and that for each and every CCC instrument also a FEG be established under the responsibility of the main contractor.

IALS has been a very important instrument for measuring the outcomes of lifelong learning policies, and ALL has that the same potential. One may wonder, however, why the life skills surveys have difficulty in attracting the same level of participation. A new management structure may have to be developed in order to promote a sense of ‘ownership’ among OECD countries regarding ALL, and to further enhance its quality and affordability.

Tertiary Education

Good progress was made in the measurement of participation and completion rates. The separation between education and R&D expenditure in tertiary education should be implemented in the finance statistics.

Further progress could be made with the analysis of the equity dimension in the participation in tertiary education: access from different social and ethnic groups, participation of women by field of study, etc.

School-to-work Transitions

We also consider this an important area of policy concern. Important progress in describing the transition from school to work in EAG was made on the basis of national LFS data. The Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life showed interesting analyses on the basis of the indicators developed in Network B. The addition of a longitudinal component on transition issues to the PISA study is an interesting possibility.

With regard to the transition of school to work there is a need for more information about the skills that employers demand of school leavers.

Care should be taken that the point of gravity in the development of indicators in this field does not shift too much to youth unemployment and labour participation rates as such. The link with indicators of school structures as a determinant of labour outcomes should be strengthened.

Educational Finance

Although progress has been made in increasing the comparability of the finance indicators, still major gaps exist. The lack of coverage of private expenditure and public subsidies, the difference between gross and net student loans, the separation of education and R&D expenditure, the identification of expenditure for ancillary services are issues that need further attention. We have welcomed the initiative for the Second Finance Comparability Study, and regard this area to be of continuing importance for the next few years.
Lifelong learning

513. Not enough progress has been made in defining and quantifying educational efforts after initial education. This is a difficult field in which much conceptual work still has to be done. There is a danger here that this work gets bogged down in wide ranging discourses. Clear and attainable policy needs should be guiding this work. Co-operation with the recent initiatives of EUROSTAT is desirable.

Equity

514. The equity dimension, particularly gender, is incorporated in several other indicator fields. Although this brings to light interesting findings, this does not provide an overall picture of equity in education systems. We hope the ad hoc group on equity develops a more comprehensive, overall examination of equity issues.

Assessment area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

515. There might be a danger that new indicators will be developed at the expense of what is achieved and what could still be improved. In our opinion, the INES project should start with laying practicable building blocks for future work.

516. We suggest that the current work be consolidated, improved upon and extended: e.g. on educational finance, teaching time, instruction time, working conditions of teachers, etc. It would help if attention is given to indicators of the entire school career: repeating classes, dropping out, participation in special education, class size, transition to work, etc.

517. In addition, an effort should be made to quantify the educational efforts in the post-initial education trajectory (lifelong learning). The Netherlands suggests continuing efforts in determining the outcomes of education, through the examination of both curricular and cross-curricular competencies.

518. As a long-term goal, the INES project might work towards the clarification of the following two basic relations:

− The way educational inputs (finance, participation, etc.) relate to educational outcomes (qualifications, labour market outcomes, and competencies);

− The way educational outcomes lead to returns in a broad sense: economic (productivity, competitiveness, and income), societal (cohesion and social capital), cultural (norms and values), and individual (personal development).

519. Regarding the first relation – between educational inputs and outcomes - there seems to be a missing link when it comes to macro-indicators: the learning process. Although much is already known about the learning process on a micro-level from small-scale pedagogical research, little information is available at the macro-level in order to link input and output indicators in a meaningful way.

520. Here is an important field of work for Network C. Also, since inspectorships are rich sources of data and information about the learning process, they may become a partner in a process of developing and harmonising process-indicators internationally. Possibilities for co-operation between INES and SICI may be explored.
521. Regarding the second relation – between educational outcomes and their impact on society at large - much remains to be done. And much should be done indeed, as herein lies the key to the legitimisation of educational expenditure. We welcome the OECD initiatives in exploring ‘the role of human and social capital in economic growth’. At this moment it would be wise to start to develop a framework on the relationship between human and social capital and economic development, and not to start with the collection of data on these aspects. We propose a project like DeSeCo, an in-depth study of about four years, in order to ensure collection of the relevant data.

Assessment area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

522. The primary goal of the INES project should be the development of policy relevant indicators of education systems. Research into new areas should not be the main part of the INES work. However, conceptual work and theoretical underpinning is often a prerequisite for achieving valid indicators. Theoretical work might strengthen the EAG indicators as a coherent framework.

523. For example, the relationship between inputs, educational process and education outputs/outcomes is of great policy relevance and needs more research.

524. Also, as we stated above, policy-makers in the Netherlands feel the need for better interpretation and analysis of the indicator values. Conceptual work should address this need and facilitate the translation of indicator scores to country specific policy-relevant explanations.

Assessment area 5: INES methods and structures

525. The methods and structures of the INES project have been fairly successful in developing and producing Education at a Glance. The extensive framework of committees, working groups and networks has engaged active participation and led to the development, production and evaluation of indicators of high quality.

526. However we would also like to remark on some aspects of this extensive framework that, in our view, could be improved upon.

527. It is not always clear how the responsibilities are divided between the several committees, and how decisions are made.

528. Until now, every Network has developed instruments of the network itself, even if these instruments could be used by other Networks. Examples are the school questionnaire for Network A and C, transition from school to work for Network A and B, problem-solving for Network A and ALL, etc. It has hardly been possible to develop instruments that are useful for more than one network. This duplication of work is cumbersome and cost-inefficient. A more coherent framework and a division of tasks between the Networks are needed.

529. The number of subgroups and related groups are not always clear. An example is the co-existence of Network A and the Board of Participation Countries (BPC), while nearly all countries in Network A participate in the project. We suggest integrating Network A and the BPC.

530. The main aim of the Networks is to explore new avenues of work. But in our opinion they do not always provide enough incentive for engaging active participation of members and of finding resources for developmental work. Maybe the Networks should rely more on commissioned experts to mobilise development work. Also participation in the costs of the Networks could be more equally divided.
As we mentioned above, we encourage stronger links between the OECD and the EU. Although we know that the OECD has established contacts in the past, we feel that more structural consultations could be mutually beneficial.

The Netherlands suggest a division of labour between international organisations. The OECD should decide which data for EAG should be collected by the OECD itself, and which data by others. A close relationship of co-operation should be established between the OECD, the EU, the IEA, UNESCO and The World Bank.

We should avoid having the OECD collect data that were formerly collected by an other organisation, at increasing costs. Competition is alright, but costs should be kept to a minimum. There is a limit to what we can afford financially. Of course, we always want to collect more and to know more but spend less. It is time that we carefully weigh the benefits of expansion against the extra costs incurred.

Some final remarks. We would like to emphasise that countries need ample time to prepare for the publication release of EAG and EPA, which includes informing their Parliament and press in due time. This means that concepts should be available beforehand (also of additional publications like *Highlights*); and the publications themselves should be available in the countries on the day that they will be released to the press in Paris. Having said this, we would like to express our appreciation for the work of the Secretariat that fulfils every year the Herculean task of preparing and publishing EPA and EAG.

It would be very helpful if at the beginning of the year, a calendar with all planned meetings of all committees and networks, and of all publications, is available.

Last but not least: after all these remarks about the content of *Education at a Glance*, one last remark about the form: unfortunately the book falls apart after having opened it two or three times. These widely used indicators deserve more durable binding.
Policy relevance of INES

537. New Zealand participates in the Technical Group and Networks A, B and C. The key criteria for New Zealand in our participation in INES must be the appropriateness of the indicators to our economic and social development, their validity for our education system, and their relevance to national goals.

538. The Ministry of Education has been increasingly focusing on education indicators and outcome measures. This work is driven by the Ministry of Education’s strategic focus on education outcomes and factors affecting achievement, and our accountability to answer the question of how we know we are making a difference. These directions put student achievement and outcomes at the forefront of our information and research efforts, and for these reasons New Zealand has prioritised participation in Network A and PISA over activities of other networks. We expect to continue to place emphasis on student outcome measures over the next five years.

539. In general, our participation in INES has provided opportunities to benchmark New Zealand’s education performance with other OECD countries, and many of the indicators developed are also used to assess differences between groups within New Zealand. New Zealand also sees benefit from the effort of other OECD countries in the development of methodologies and measures of educational performance.

540. New Zealand’s participation in Networks B and C has been limited by the data we are able to contribute. In some cases, such as teaching salary and time indicators, the indicators that have been chosen by Network C are not very appropriate to New Zealand’s situation.

541. New Zealand sees Education at a Glance and the associated databases as a useful information base and reference tool to assist policy development and planning. Education Policy Analysis provides a more useful direct input to policy, in that it presents more in-depth discussion focussed on issues of international concern. In the last few years the usefulness of this publication has been limited by the timeliness of the data presented. New Zealand’s view is that there is a need to improve the accessibility of INES information for policy-makers through a greater emphasis on issue based analysis and synthesis of a range of INES material.

Progress and remaining gaps

542. New Zealand applauds the work that has been done since Lahti in the measurement of student outcomes and the provision of INES databases electronically. Although of less relevance to New Zealand due to availability of local data, we believe that Network B has also made progress in developing measures of transitions from school to work and in continuing education and training.

543. The New Zealand Government has placed considerable importance in making progress towards reducing disparity in New Zealand. In line with this progress the Ministry of Education’s work to develop a programme of strategic research has identified two areas of focus: addressing underachievement and
building capability in the education sector. A third focus is effective resources and strategies for improving reading, writing and numeracy in the early school years.

544. Arising out of these national priorities, we have two areas where we would like to see increased INES activity. The first is around community and family engagement and background, especially economic background. Reviews of student achievement indicate the strength of the association between these background factors and achievement. Indicators of disparity were signalled as a priority at the Lahti General Assembly and New Zealand believes this in area that requires still further development. Indicators of disparity within countries should be developed as well as national-level measures of disadvantage.

545. The second area we have identified relates to classroom processes. We acknowledge cultural effects will make that this area particularly difficult to measure in an international context, but would like to see INES attempting to address the area. In particular, we are thinking of measures of teacher/student interaction, teacher development including collaborative approaches, extending performance measures beyond analysis of salaries, and management leadership.

Balance between consolidation and new developments

546. The New Zealand Ministry of Education’s view is that there is a need to consolidate the amount of data being collected and the subsequent indicators produced. We see the need to set strong limits and to establish priorities regarding the number of indicators which are published in Education at a Glance. We believe that limiting the number of indicators produced will assist in engaging policy makers in particular.

547. More consideration should be given to identifying a set of lead indicators, focusing on participation, achievement, and other outcome measures. The story told by these lead indicators could then be filled out with the more contextual material on processes, particularly in the areas identified as current gaps (i.e., measures of disparity and family background and classroom processes). This would provide a mechanism for strengthening and making more explicit the links between these process indicators and outcome indicators.

548. The establishment of priorities for the indicators to be published, particularly the lead indicator set, should be based on a set of principles around policy usefulness and how the indicators link together. There should be considerable consistency over time in the indicator set (particularly for lead indicators), so that useful time series can be developed and maintained. The rich picture developed around those core indicators should be more varied over time, and could draw from a wider range of sources.

Balance between conceptual and statistical work

549. New Zealand acknowledges the very useful conceptual work carried out in the Networks over the last five years. In terms of balance, we would like to see a continued push in the conceptual work. One matter we would particularly like to see on INES agenda for the next five years is the identification of what outcomes matter most, considering social and cultural outcomes as well as cognitive outcomes. In this work, cross-curricular competencies will be particularly important, and we would to see the work of DeSeCo continued. In suggesting this, we recognise the technical difficulties in measuring cross-curricular competencies, social and cultural outcomes in an international context.

550. The Ministry of Education would also like to see more emphasis on dynamic measures, especially in PISA. Such measures will help in better understanding transitions over time and in linking process indicators to outcomes. Over the next five years, we would like to see INES begin to tackle the
thorny issue of links between process and outcome indicators, so that we can start to develop a conceptual model of dynamic processes and influences on outcomes.

**INES methods and structures**

551. In line with our suggestions for further work on linking process and outcome measures, we believe there will need to be strong links between Network C and Network A. In the longer-term, New Zealand sees some benefit in merging these two networks. We would also like to see a greater level of dialogue and co-operation between these networks, with a joint conceptual work programme around identifying links between processes and outcomes. Short of merging the Networks, New Zealand believes that better links between Networks C and A could be forged through joint meetings of network members, perhaps through the Networks running meetings back-to-back with a joint session in the middle to discuss linkage issues. The development of working groups drawn from both Networks to advance conceptual work would also assist.

552. New Zealand believes that INES has made progress in developing links with other international organisations, particularly through the World Education Indicators project and work with UNESCO and EUROSTAT. The desirability of strengthening links with the countries of the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC) also needs consideration. Several members of OECD, including New Zealand, are also members of APEC, and there are efficiency gains to be made by sharing developmental work and conceptual thinking with other international education indicator groups.

553. The Ministry of Education’s other main involvement in the international comparisons is participation in IEA. There is a need for the two agencies to make explicit linkages that would assist participating countries to make most use of the data, particularly with respect to the shaping of policy in this area. The basis of the concern is the extent to which the frameworks for the range of literacies (e.g. reading, mathematics, and science), cross-curriculum competencies (e.g. problem-solving and self-regulatory behaviour) and background variables (e.g. SES and ethnicity) are sufficiently coherent or otherwise to allow countries who are participating in different projects to make links between the student outcomes as measured by different studies. For example, there is a need to develop frameworks that would assist in linking IEA reading Literacy Study and Progress in Reading Literacy Studies with the International Adult Literacy Study and PISA; similarly, IEA International Maths and Science Studies and PISA.

554. As a country that is geographically isolated from most other OECD countries, New Zealand finds it difficult to participate in various sub-groups formed by the Networks from time to time to develop proposals or write issue papers. Over the last few years we have not participated in any of these groups. Our travel and time costs to attend meetings, which are usually held in Europe, are also high.

**Concluding remarks**

555. New Zealand is committed to the continued development of education indicators through INES. Aside from the opportunities for international benchmarking and conceptual work that participation has given us, we have benefited from opportunities to develop international networks of government educational research and data management managers. We have found that the opportunity for knowledge transfer, which participation in INES brings, to be a useful as a source of innovation for our own research, data collection, analysis and reporting. We would like to express our thanks to all our INES colleagues for the support they have given New Zealand over the last few years.
556. We would particularly like to thank the lead countries for their efforts in managing the Networks, and for their leadership in the development of network indicators. Our congratulations also to the Secretariat on the good progress that has been made since Lahti.
**SWEDEN / SUEDE**

**Evaluation of INES at national level**

557. Each OECD/INES Member country was invited to prepare a national assessment of INES and to advise on ways in which INES objectives and structures might be adjusted to meet future priorities. It was proposed by the OECD to focus on five described assessments on about five pages.

558. Sweden has actively participated in the project on International Indicators of Education Systems, INES, ever since its inception in the late 1980s.

559. In Sweden, work on the project is carried out at three public agencies: Statistics Sweden, the National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Higher Education, with the participation of researchers.

560. Activities are co-ordinated by a national reference group and a co-ordinator at the Ministry of Education and Science.

561. The INES project has produced concrete results in the form of statistical publications that have aroused interest and stimulated public debate on education in Sweden and the other OECD countries. Increasingly, consideration is given to developments in other countries when political assessments in the field of education are made. Some inquiry results from the INES project have had a concrete impact on political standpoints.

562. INES has contributed substantially to developing the quality of statistics on education regarding comparisons between countries. At the same time information from the OECD has gradually become a natural reference point for results analyses carried out by public agencies in the field of education and also in the political work of the Government and Riksdag.

563. Taking the long view, the INES project and the publication *Education at a Glance* (EAG) represent a major step forward regarding possibilities for international comparison. We now have access to several international series that can be compared. These were not available in the 1970s nor for most of the 1980s. Although these series are rather difficult to use, they still represent major progress.

564. The Ministry of Education and Science considers the future of the project to be promising and Sweden intends to continue to participate actively in it. The following is a report of what we consider has been good or not so good so far, and the way in which we consider the INES project should be developed in the future.

565. The Swedish proposals are among all:

- The INES project should focus more on analyses concerning education policy that both researchers and education authorities can fit into their own analysis work.
− *Education at a Glance* should continue to be developed to become a broad education statistics report with indicators of even higher statistical quality, a standardised structure and completed with the data-base accessible by electronic means. The basic statistics in book form should be published at the most every second year. This should in turn make room for additional analysis work.

− Work initiated previously on a handbook, in which the indicators are described with the aid of templates, should be resumed and completed.

− The division and delimitation of work may need to be refined and organised more effectively between and within the Networks and the Technical Group.

− The OECD and the EU should establish a joint working group that will develop a division of work between the organisations.

− A more clear-cut decision-making process would help INES to set more distinct priorities.

**Policy relevance of INES**

566. The objective of the INES project was to develop indicators that are simple, well-defined and politically relevant. The results should meet the need for information of the general public, politicians, administrators, head teachers, teachers and pupils. The results should also function as an incentive for in-depth analysis and encourage research. This has been the intention from the start of the INES project and this goal should be maintained.

567. However, it means that the needs are heterogeneous and difficult to overview. In our opinion, in the next few years the INES project should focus more on developing basic material that is directly applicable to policy drafting than was previously the case. Among other things, it is a question of continuously producing more in-depth international analyses concerning education policy that researchers and education authorities in this country can fit into their own analysis work. They may be theme-oriented analyses in which efforts are made to find explanations for differences between countries. It may also concern a certain limit number of specific policy-related indicators, for example a deeper analysis of the quality of education within a delimited section of the education system. *Education Policy Analysis* will thereby primarily generate basic data for the Ministry of Education and Science indirectly through researchers and authorities that can be a better basis for a political dialogue between countries.

568. In parallel with these analyses, the publication of comparative international statistics within INES must continue to be given broad content addressed to many different users in society and made readily available. *Education at a Glance Indicators* takes a broad approach and is comparable to the publication of an international yearbook on education or a database containing basic statistics for the education sector in the form of indicators and time series. In our estimation this publication should continue to be developed to become a broad “education statistics report with indicators” of even higher statistical quality and the results should be more easily accessible by electronic means. As far as contents are concerned, the indicator report should have a standardised structure. Bearing in mind that there are very few changes in the course of a year, basic statistics in book form should be published at the most every other year. This should in its turn make room for additional analysis work.
Progress and remaining data gaps

569. Sweden is strongly supporting the development of indicators shedding light on the variety of links existing between education/training and the labour market. Important developmental work in this field has been going on in Network B for some time. A number of indicators have already been developed on the transition from initial schooling to the labour market. Other indicators are designed to capture information about the incidence of participation in continuing education and training (CET). However, a lot of aspects in relation to transition and CET can still be clarified. Therefore, we think it’s very important that the developmental work in these areas continues.

570. According to the priority development areas decided at the last General Assembly in Lahti in 1995, the greatest needs and interest as far as Sweden is concerned regarding new indicators still relate to lifelong learning and disparities/equity. It may indeed be said that most of the work remains to be done in these areas. However, interesting development work is currently under way, inter alia within Network B in the first instance in the area of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning has also been discussed in a special OECD ad-hoc group. Some progress has been made to secure a “basic data level”, however the INES project should make a concerted effort to produce good indicators for this area in future. It is also desirable that the work is co-ordinated with the corresponding development work carried out within the EU.

571. The proficiencies acquired by the students from their education, student achievement, is one of the most fundamental issues of the INES project. Within Network A and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) important development work has been carried out, and continues, to produce measurement instruments that can indicate how well young people are equipped for adult life when they leave compulsory school. PISA represents the new cognitive approach that stresses pupil participation and understanding, and does not focus solely on factual knowledge. Sweden intends to continue to support this development work and we look forward to the first publication planned for the autumn of 2001.

572. The statistical quality of indicators of education costs has been inadequate. The Technical Group has worked on the question of financial support for students and distinguished between the costs of research and those of higher education, achieving results in this work. Sweden also participates in an on-going ad-hoc project, “Second Comparability Study” engaged in improving cost statistics. The costs of staff, in-house and other training organised outside the public education system should in future be included in the INES project.

573. Reports of basic higher education are relatively extensive in the INES project and we think that this should continue to be the case. On the other hand, data on research education are not noted to a great extent. It is therefore desirable that indicators for research education are reported and hopefully it will be possible to produce more of these reports when application of the new ISCED-97 begins. Furthermore, there is a need for indicators relating to teachers in the higher education system.

574. The ideas underlying the establishment of network D, concerning attitudes and expectations in the education sphere, are of topical interest again. This project wrestled with many different difficulties. However, this should not obscure the fact that attitudes to education are a natural component of an indicator system, particularly bearing in mind the education system’s need for legitimacy.

575. Sweden has considered it essential to support the development of indicators of the qualifications and social capital of the adult population, of adults’ application of the knowledge acquired, for example from education and occupational training, of adults’ capacity to solve problems, of adults’ application of information technology, ICT, etc. These are highly interesting questions from the perspective of both education and labour market. The two leading projects relating to these issues have been the International
Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the ongoing development project Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL). Sweden considers it important that development in these areas continues and is secured within INES.

**Balance between a) consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments and b) conceptual and statistical work**

576. In addition to what has been said above about the need to develop new indicators, the task of the Networks and the Technical Group is also to actively assist in verifying the quality of data prior to publication and in analysing the results that are to be published. It is in the Networks and in the Technical Group that material to be published in EAG is confirmed. By assisting in this work, countries can participate and be joint owners of the published material. Greater consensus on this among all the parties involved in the INES project is desirable.

577. Bearing in mind that there are a large number of indicators in the fairly broad and extensive indicator report, EAG, the division and delimitation of work may need to be refined and organised more effectively between and within the Networks and the Technical Group.

578. In the Technical Group requires a more functional division among groups that are each more specialised in their areas, for example experts on economic and cost comparison statistics, experts on statistics relating to institutes of higher education, schools, the labour market, etc. Extra effort is still needed to improve the quality of the statistical reports submitted to the OECD. Implementation and comparability in the interpretation of ISCED-97 should also be followed up in detail.

579. The responsibility of networks for the development of new indicators can be judged from different points of departure. The network organisation is unique, inter alias, in the opportunity it provides to reach broad agreement, in advance of the publication of results, on the relevance of indicators, the quality of data and the chances of making relevant and reliable comparisons between countries. We assume that EAG will continue to be published as a broad report containing many indicators or be available as a database. It should be possible for the individual countries, through the Technical Group, to take responsibility for and confirm a successively larger share of the basic statistics that EAG comprises, including time series and demands for statistical comparability.

580. General and systematically routine documentation of the agreed indicators is needed, which includes documentation of definitions of concepts decided necessary, in the production of statistics for EAG. It may be established that this has been neglected recently. Work initiated, previously on a handbook in which the indicators are described with the aid of templates, should be resumed and completed.

581. A project to develop a standard for statistical quality in the form of a set of criteria that must be satisfied for the quality of the data to be approved, was commenced in Network B some years ago. The underlying rationale was to agree on and publish such quality standards and that each country would subsequently assess and specify the quality of the data it supplied with reference to this standard. However, for various reasons this work has been put to one side but it should be resumed and generally implemented in the INES project.

582. Our overall assessment is that the balance between consolidation and development of complex areas within INES has been good but the analyses have been rather poor or tended to be too broad. Deficiencies in the quality of the statistics are still an overriding problem, which has probably contributed to this imbalance. Analysis work in the INES project can and should be successively intensified. Thus, the INES project should develop its analysis work substantially and we would like to see, for example, more a in-depth *Education Policy Analyses* in which researchers are consulted. Furthermore, results of
development work in the Networks that are not considered basic statistics for EAG or that comprise few countries should preferably be reported in *Education Policy Analysis*.

**INES methods and structures**

583. For the production of statistics within INES, permanent network groups have made possible a continuous dialogue between statisticians as is needed for an improvement in the statistical quality. The Networks have accounted for the development of new indicators, for data control and for its confirmation. They are the backbone of the project and explain much of its success. However, for the INES project’s future analyses in priority areas, it would be advantageous to apply even more project-oriented working methods within the framework of the work of the network groups. The Networks have reported deficiencies, inter alias difficulties in engaging participants to the extent desired. Naturally, measures must be taken within the INES project to remedy this and in this context the project approach could be an asset. It would mean that assignments and result requirements could be made clear and kept alive and researchers could be involved to a greater extent, which Sweden considers is essential.

584. Furthermore, the distribution of costs, for example in Network B, should be changed so that common costs are divided equally among countries and not borne by the chairing country alone. This should free more funds for the Networks’ project work.

585. Consolidation signifying an improvement in the quality of statistics is necessary. It is equally necessary that the INES project analyses are improved. Therefore, it would be a good idea if at the upcoming General Assembly the countries could agree on a joint assessment as to how INES’ work should be organised in future to ensure the promotion of both statistical quality and in-depth analysis.

586. A joint assessment of future work in INES is also needed regarding links to competing or overlapping projects, for example other equivalent indicator projects within the EU.

587. The extended co-operation that has taken place between inter alias OECD Networks and the EU has not sufficed to manage the overlaps. The OECD and the EU should therefore establish a common working group that will develop a division of work between the organisations and explain it to Member countries.

588. We feel that the steering of the project could be more transparent. A more clear-cut decision-making process would, in our view, help INES to set more distinct priorities. In the current structure there are at least three bodies involved in this process. The Education Committee and the CERI Governing Board have the overall responsibility and the Steering Group provides practical advice as regards the implementation of the programme.

589. A smaller number of bodies could promote more efficiency in decision-making and transparency in prioritisation. To this end one might consider discontinuation of the Steering Group. Simultaneously we believe that the executive group (CERI) and the Board (Education Committee) should be consulted more frequently and systematically as regards INES matters. The National Co-ordinators should also play a more important role.
590. The INES project has been strongly supported by Swiss authorities since its conception and continues to be. For the last twelve years, this has certainly been the most important project in the field of education statistics; with its high policy relevance and an outstanding capacity to mobilise and combine expertise and other resources constructively at an international level. It has been extremely successful in extending the scope of education statistics and indicators, as well as in improving quality standards and comparability between and within Member countries. In Switzerland, the global assessment is therefore very positive and participation in the project is still given high priority. This positive global assessment should be kept in mind throughout this report. Swiss authorities remain very supportive of the project and the critical assessment and reflections made in this report are always intended to be constructive for the future.

Policy relevance of INES at national levels

591. The range of INES outcomes is now very broad in terms of data and indicators. Indicators are tools for information, knowledge and argument. They are only interesting for people if they produce answers to their questions, which themselves are diverse and probably infinite. Despite the richness of the offer, everyone is not interested in every indicator nor will they find the data and information that specifically interests them. When appreciating the impact of INES outcomes in Switzerland, different groups of people may be considered.

Policy making and administration:

592. Indicators in general and INES indicators in particular have gained status, acceptability and credibility in the Swiss education policy field, their use is more frequent and also more competent. Although indicators are rather rough instruments, they fit into an emerging habit of more evidence-based educational debate and management, even within cantonal administrations. Recently, the OECD indicators on outcomes (TIMSS and IALS data) and on finances have been given high attention. Although it has been rather widely advertised and distributed, EAG has had rather low media impact as such in Switzerland. Indicators are not conceived as direct decision tools, they are only a part of the knowledge base contributing to policy debate and decisions. In this respect, real progress is noticeable over the last five years.

Statistical offices and expertise - research community

593. Like in most other countries, the INES project coincides in Switzerland with a process of increased interest for the international horizon, the rise of a more macro-systemic approach and higher concern with economics and finances in education policy and management. This process has in turn improved policy support for the sustainable development and improvement of education statistics and indicators. Positive signs are present, as well as the high policy support for the PISA effort and its regional or cantonal implementation, as the rising demand for improved quality and comparability of cost and
financing statistics at national and inter-cantonal level. INES has helped improve the quality and diversity of data and indicators especially through the gain of expertise resulting from participation in an international co-operative effort. In the meantime, the Swiss Statistical Office publishes its own set of indicators (on paper and/or on the Internet) with cantonal breakdown and international comparison wherever possible. The demand on statistical offices and other experts for presentation and comment of statistical data and indicators in symposia, workshops or policy-making committees is increasing.

594. On the other hand, a majority of scholars and researchers in the education field still show little interest, except in the domain of outcome indicators (TIMSS, IALS, and PISA), where the recent creation of a Competence Centre for Educational Evaluation and Assessment manifests an increasing impact of INES work. The little interest in general is linked partly with the predominantly micro-level and “qualitative” research–orientation, which is somewhat reluctant about the statistical approach, it is also partly encouraged by the sometimes over-simplified presentation of the indicators in the media, which this rather critical public disapproves. But this disinterest may be due also to the fact that INES itself, as an international project, has neglected the scientific community (hardly any international symposia, workshops, etc.). The mobilisation of researchers and experts has been mainly left in the hands of member countries.

595. More direct and efficient approaches to inform the research community about indicator development and production still have to be found: improvement of the availability and attractiveness of information on the Internet will be among the next steps, which is necessary but not totally sufficient. The goal is not that all scholars and researchers rush on the indicators as such. It is rather that they are informed more extensively about what is available in order to use them more frequent on appropriate occasions. An alternative way to mobilise the scientific community may be however to involve more scholars and researchers in the conceptual work prior to indicators’ development and/or in the analysis of existing indicators and data. Such analysis, would also “add some flesh to the dry statistics” to that which is insufficiently developed at national and international level.

School leaders and teachers

596. Indicators development and products have particularly low impact at the school level: school leaders, teachers, parents and students. The professional media for teachers do take some notice of the international and national publications, and teacher unions sometimes use them for their arguments. But most teachers and school leaders are uninformed. Those who are informed are discouraged by the strong accent on meso- and macro-levels of the present indicator set that appears to be of little relevance to their jobs. There is also some suspicion and defiance either because of the “quantitative” nature of indicators or because they are perceived as control and power tools. Overall, statistics and indicators are not (yet) an integral part of the professional culture in education systems. And, in this respect, knowledge and know-how are low, the relation to statistics is sometimes magic, but more often reluctant and suspicious. The discourse between specialists (statisticians and researchers) and decision-makers could be facilitated, if specialists gave more prominent attention to the transmission of policy relevant information.

597. INES is clearly a long-term effort that will have to continually adapt to change in society and in education systems. Its rate of return should therefore be considered in a long-term perspective. Many returns are still to come. The international effort however appears as a necessary condition for efficient conceptual development at a high level of expertise. Important returns also result from the added value of international comparability and high standards for the quality of data and of indicators produced.
About INES publications

598. EAG tends to develop into a normal statistical compendium but does not allow hasty policy-makers to get a rapid overview (at a glance) of the state of education systems and their outcomes. In the future we recommend thinking over the publication strategy of INES. As we see it, the following types of publications may be envisaged:

- EAG with a small set of core indicators that appear every year, clustered on a limited number of permanent issues that remain central in education policy over the long run. In the future, the main issues might be: quality, efficiency, transition, lasting effects over the life span, and equity. Such a structure would nevertheless presuppose a conceptual effort that still has to be done (see area 3). In the meantime other thematic clusters might be chosen, which are nearer to present conceptions, e.g. input, outcomes, transitions, societal context, etc.

- EPA, more or less in the present form, contains analytical contributions on specific themes that change yearly. These papers might draw on existing standard indicators as well as on data and results from more in-depth research from within or outside the OECD. The production of this type of analysis might increasingly involve scholars, researchers and experts from a broader range of participating countries. The challenge is their capacity and willingness to cope with the variety of institutional environments, cultures and societal structures that might contribute significantly to the internationalisation of educational research in Member countries.

- A compendium of statistical data and indicators, publicly and freely available on the Internet. Ideally basic data should be connected with the indicators: from data to indicators and from indicators to data, without losing sight of the conceptual framework and definitions. Descriptions and charts of member countries’ education systems should be available through the same channel.

- Another source of value might be the more procedural and conceptual products like expert papers and progress reports of Networks and other INES groups. This material remains insufficiently publicised. It may be available sometimes, but the channels to access them are often known to insiders only. Systematic documentation and availability of such outcomes on the Internet would be a small investment for much added value.

Progress and remaining data gaps

599. The way in which the question stresses “data gaps” rather than “indicator gaps” might be interpreted as a sign of a continued prevailing trend in INES to concentrate more on data-gathering than on indicator-building. Data are of course necessary, but the goal is indicators with their conceptual framework (see below).

Assessment of progress

Student achievement

600. Progress has recently been particularly substantial in this domain and increasingly momentous because more output-oriented education policies require high quality and increasingly complex indicators
on outcomes. International standardisation and quality assurance are particularly important in this field. This relates to the PISA project, but, although IALS cannot be considered as relating only to education systems’ outcomes, this project is even more important. Internationally comparable measurements of competencies in the adult population are of high relevance in terms of education policy as well as for social and labour market policies. Conceptual guidelines for the development in this area can and should be anchored both in the human capital and the social capital approaches.

601. Some weaknesses should be underlined:

- The harmonisation between the PISA and the life-skills approaches is still not satisfactory, especially at the conceptual level of indicator definition. Will ILSS measure the continuing effect of school outcomes such as measured by PISA? In how far and in which domains will it assess the competencies aimed at in the post-compulsory phases of initial and continuing education (lifelong learning)?

- Further endeavour will have to be made for the differentiation of competencies assessed; the development of the CCC components is important for PISA and ILSS. Important key competencies are still missing in both. DeSeCo itself will command much effort if the present rather abstract conceptual level is to precipitate into something like a research framework for further indicator development.

_Tertiary education, school—to-work transition, lifelong learning, ICT and human capital_

602. Overall, progress is behind expectations in these domains. The new ISCED certainly lays good ground. This is also true for the tertiary education level, but there has been little indicator development for this sector. Conceptual work taking into account the specific situation and problems of the tertiary sector in a meaningful international perspective is becoming more and more urgent as this level of education becomes increasingly important in a knowledge economy and society.

603. Some progress has been made on transition indicators in EAG 1998 and in the thematic review on transitions. Developers may however have the impression that, given the rising number of indicators, official enthusiasm was only limited; some data are in danger of not being exploited which in turn could curb the quality of the data as well as the motivation of participants.

604. The process of the ad-hoc group on lifelong learning has not been very transparent. A conceptual paper has been outlined with a proposal for a set of indicators, but no clear mandate was delivered for implementation neither to Network B nor to any other group. In the meantime, INES might well have missed the boat, since within the OECD this topic has been taken over in the labour market sector and outside, the European Union is building up a task-force on lifelong learning.

605. It also seems difficult to make significant progress in the domain of human capital, although the OECD is really predestined to develop this approach conceptually and empirically.

606. Overall assessment and questions:

- At least in the fields of transitions, lifelong learning and ICT skills, developments have not been conducted systematically and expectations remain unrealistic in comparison with available resources and political will; what should have been the role of the Steering Group and the Secretariat in these matters?
It appears that transitions, lifelong learning and human capital are cross-unit issues within the OECD. How far is the explanation for slow progress connected with internal co-ordination in the Secretariat?

**Education finance and costs**

607. No progress has been made on private financing (families and companies). The comparability of existing data is still troublesome and the new examination is welcome. Also in this domain, more investment in conceptual work will be needed in the future, e.g. on issues like cost and financing structures, individual and collective returns on investment.

608. Future new developments should be initiated more often through pilot studies involving only a limited number of countries in order to test new approaches and methods on a small scale before generalising them.

**4. Disparities/equity**

609. Although it started late (in September 1998), the ad-hoc group was able to convene a group of high-level experts from eight countries. A first publication will present a conceptual discussion in this highly sensitive area as well as a first proposal for an organisational framework of equity indicators in the education field. In the future, the Steering Group will have to decide upon the best way to implement this perspective in the different fields of education indicators. Available data sets at an international level and particularly at the OECD already allow the production of some relevant indicators about equity in and of education systems. These possibilities should be further developed in a coherent way.

610. Swiss authorities strongly support the efforts for producing comparable data on students’ SES within PISA and more generally. This is a basic prerequisite for generating appropriate indicators on the equity of education and therefore a priority for future data collection at the international level.

**Rate of return**

611. Investment in indicators and in education statistics cannot be easily separated. On many issues INES follows the same directions as the development of education statistics in general, and specific investment into INES is relatively low.

612. In the recent years Switzerland has invested heavily on the issue of the assessment of competencies (TIMSS, IALS, PISA, preparation of ILSS) including conceptual developments (DeSeCo). This priority is justified by the increasing output orientation of education policies and because the formation, maintenance and renewal of human capital are major challenges for the future with high policy relevance.

613. Similar reasons explain the investment into other directions:

- Costs and financing because transparency and accountability issues have become more significant in the policy debate.

- Transitions from tertiary education to the labour market appear of key importance at the interface between education, economy and society.
− Investment in questions of disparities and equity is less linked to immediate policy priorities but to the insight that these are permanent and fundamental questions for education policy which education statistics simply must reflect.

614. In all these fields and many others, the development of statistical instruments and indicators is a sheer necessity, which would have to be covered even without international co-operation. However, this co-operation stimulates the process at national level and international comparability represents a high added value.

Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

615. The development of indicators mainly takes place in the Networks and the Technical Group. However, except for Network A and the development of PISA, there appears to be some deficit of public perception, discussion and validation of this work as such within INES and in its environment. Products often appear through the publication of indicators in EAG without there being sufficient prior information about and discussion of the conceptual frameworks and about the background fieldwork. The relevant information is often available but it has to be sought through channels that are not always easy to find. Therefore, a feeling may develop that some data roll into EAG without one knowing why and how.

616. One major new development that is urgently required is a more systematic investment into increased analysis of existing data and indicators. It can be expected that this would in turn feed back into developmental work through increased perception of the usefulness of indicators as well as through renewed inputs into conceptual work.

617. As the database becomes richer and the collection is run on a more routine basis, the quality control of the data will become more time consuming and need enhanced scrutiny, especially to ensure that the data timely reflect the changes occurring in Member countries’ educational institutions and structures.

618. For the rest, conceptual development and statistics should certainly not be opposed since they are intimately connected. The best data are those that have a meaning for policy debate and decision. At present there sometimes seems to be a trade-off between rapidity of publication and availability of indicators on one hand and their conceptual consistence and data quality on the other.

619. Over the first ten years, the pragmatic approach of INES has been mainly data-driven and using a “skeleton framework” that has never been quite satisfactory, has certainly contributed to the success of the project in terms of rapid development and improvement of the (mostly available) data and indicator sets. But the movement will dissipate and weaken if a very systematic effort is not undertaken to consolidate the conceptual basis of the project. Four directions are suggested:

− Re-examine the general framework that guides the INES project overall and its different components. It seems necessary and possible today to make significant progress in this direction, founding on: a) the accumulated experience and expertise within INES; b) a more elaborate theory of education systems, policy and management; and c) the present and forthcoming education policy and system management agenda.

− The cornerstones of this conceptual effort should be the most fundamental issues that permanently dominate education policy debate and policy-making, i.e.: a) quality of outcomes; b) efficiency of education processes; c) transitions from education systems into the labour market and society; d) continuing effects of education over the life span, especially in
relation to lifelong learning; and e) equality and equity in and of education systems. Defining these concepts and employing them in policy relevant indicators is a major challenge.

- Return to so-called “subjective” data which would better be called “cultural” because they ought to be seen in their collective nature. The state and change of attitudes, values, expectations and opinions of different actors are at least as policy-relevant and relevant to policy-makers as are so called “objective” facts. Indicators of this type are of outstanding importance for the development of political debate, procedure and action. They will also sustain the understanding of cultural differences among member countries.

- A more systematic and rapid integration of the human capital approach and of economics of education (two OECD classics) into INES appears urgent. These approaches contribute much to the rational discussion of fundamental education policy problems.

620. A renewed framework should of course guide the conceptual work in specific fields mentioned above, which is pursued in the Networks and ad-hoc groups. Moreover, it may constitute a good basis for a new conception of the future project structure.

621. Given the present stage of development of the INES programme, it would seem possible to slow down the pace of data production somewhat. At the same time conceptual work should become a major issue, more formally institutionalised and structured as such and including a time for discussion in a broad scientific and policy-making environment.

622. Compared with the costs of data production and gathering, conceptual work is not very expensive and it appears a good investment as it results in better scientific legitimacy and political credibility. Development work should therefore be more explicitly planned in a mid- or long-term perspective. New developments in data collection could also be produced more often on a pilot-basis before distributing it to all countries, as is already done in some cases.

INES Methods and structures

623. Since the last General Assembly, the PRAG (established in 1992) was replaced by a Steering Group placed under the general authority of the CERI Governing Board and the Education Committee (hereafter the Committees). The mission of this group was to: 1) prepare a medium-term programme with reference to the priority areas that emerged in Lahti; 2) authorise and advise on proposals for work, in particular on any new data gathering; 3) take initiatives to direct the programme conceptually and strategically; 4) report regularly to the Committees; and 5) discuss financial arrangements for sharing costs.

624. Considering the limited number of meetings, this steering and co-ordination structure seems to have been reasonably efficient: a medium-term programme has been established, the PISA process and structure were installed, the ISCED classification was revised in co-operation with UNESCO, Network D was closed, initiatives were taken on conceptual and strategic issues mainly through the installation of three ad-hoc groups, some progress was made on a regulation of cost sharing, etc. The Committees have also been regularly informed and confronted with options and decisions to make.

625. Given the complexity of the project, which mobilises simultaneously very extensive and diverse expertise and policy stakes, the overall structures have shown creative and effective until now. Nevertheless, some doubts appear about their sustainability in the long run:
Networks are the traditional organisational tool for development work. They have increasingly become meeting places for experts, while the participation of policy-makers seems to decline. Network leaders and leading countries play a major and positive role in coordinating their work, while inputs from the different participating countries are still very unequal. The decision-making process within the Networks is not always very transparent and their may arise a feeling that major options are taken by a few countries or experts while at the same time the increased expertise potential resulting from the development within Member countries is insufficiently tapped.

The Technical Group has become very large, partly because, besides strictly technical questions of data collection, transmission, control and treatment, it also assumes development work, committing its own substructures for specific issues.

National Co-ordinators meet on a yearly basis; these meetings pursue mainly the purpose of information from the Secretariat, little time is generally left for exchange and debate on policy and strategy issues.

The links between the substructures of INES (TG, Networks, NC) and the Steering Group are uneven and the information flow mainly depends on the Secretariat. Partly due to recent circumstances (PISA), Network A seems to have a more direct and privileged access to the Steering Group than the others. Steering Group members have little or no direct contact with the substructures and therefore have little direct information and feeling of their own about their mode of operation. The reverse is also true: Networks, Technical Group and National Co-ordinators are hardly aware of the existence of the Steering Group.

Ad-hoc groups appear to be an interesting new instrument; they are flexible in their composition and clearly task oriented within a limited time frame. But they do suffer from limited institutionalisation, they report to the Steering Group, but their status and connections with the rest of INES (the Secretariat, Networks, and Technical Group) should be further clarified. Information about their proceedings and outcomes is available to the Steering Group, but might be publicised more effectively in the rest of INES.

Members of the Steering Group are recruited on a personal basis; more than half of them are senior policy-makers in their country but officially they do not represent their own country. However, as they are loosely connected with the proper INES structures, their main direct sources of information, apart from the OECD Secretariat, are participants and stakeholders in their own countries (National Co-ordinators, network members, etc.). There is a risk therefore of the Steering Group appearing as a sort of G7 structure, rather than a balanced government of INES.

The Secretariat is the only structure where all the connections meet and all information converges. It therefore holds a very strategic position as well as a powerful one, since its director chairs the Steering Group and it informs the Committees.

In the committees all Member countries are formally represented. However, these committees handle INES issues as part of a much broader agenda and they are mostly composed of senior officials. These senior officials are not directly connected with the specialised field of education statistics and indicators and are sometimes insufficiently informed about the specific interests and problems in this domain within their own country.
- Overall, it is not always clear where decisions are to be made, nor where they have already been made. Structures are a recurrent problem in INES, since the beginning. At present, the structural setting has evolved, however, senior officials and policy-makers with direct stake and involvement in the field of statistics and indicators in their countries may feel that they have too little say in the overall steering of the project. Although they often mobilise and coordinate their countries’ participation and resources for the project.

- As a whole, INES seems to be in transition to a new phase. The most urgent work of catching up with the need for high quality, valid and internationally comparable basic education indicators is certainly not finished, but it is on good track. The project also has established good roots in Member countries. Much routine data collection, indicator production and publication is being stabilised and effective procedures have been experienced that will allow further implementation and stabilisation. There certainly remains much work to do, but the need and possibility of a more mid- and long-term perspective is coming up, especially on conceptual issues (overall framework and specialised frameworks), as well as on data strategy and on improved analysis.

- Given this outlook, the complexity of the project and the greater ramifications among and within Member countries both from a policy perspective as well as from the viewpoint of scientific and technical expertise, it may be time to rebuild the INES project structure. This restructuring can look to capitalising on the good will that has been obtained, keeping alive the broad levels of participation and mobilising even more efficiently the rising potential of the INES project, within a larger range of countries. For the PISA project, an alternative structure has been invented recently which might also be applied to the whole of INES. It would imply a Board of participating countries for INES, assuring more direct policy involvement from all countries as well as scientific, technical and financial support.
Assessment Area 1: Policy relevance of INES at national levels

626. INES outcomes have contributed to evaluate where our education system stands from an international point of view. Especially in 1997, after undergoing the transition from five years to eight years of compulsory education, Turkish decision-makers benefited from the statistics of countries who already had eight or more years of compulsory education by considering the obstacles or problems that they would have been faced with (e.g. capital expenditures, training of more teachers). INES indicators have been effective for policy-makers to determine the educational objectives for the future. Determined educational targets will come up to the OECD mean level especially for pre-primary education.

627. INES outputs are not popular with respect to researchers, school leaders or teachers because of inadequate dissemination. If the outcomes are disseminated by Internet more people concerned could access the INES outputs.

Assessment Area 2: Progress and remaining data gaps

628. Areas of work identified in Lahti are very important and when we discuss them one by one. First, the opportunity for education should be provided to all children. It is also important to provide high quality education. The main priorities are access to education, student achievement, educational finance and lifelong learning.

Assessment Area 3: Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments

629. The current balance between the consolidation and analysis of the existing INES information base is appropriate. New developments can be focused on feasibility of data availability and areas where the conceptual and empirical ground remain difficult to work in.

Assessment Area 4: Balance between conceptual and statistical work

630. One of the most important points for indicators is comparability. Among countries there are a lot of differences with respect to their educational and financial systems. Concepts should be understood with the same meaning by all countries. This is important for statistical work to be valid.

Assessment Area 5: INES methods and structures

631. The existing structures provide an appropriate framework for the project. But the OECD Secretariat can provide more co-ordination among different INES activities. Member countries can be
included in technical and statistical work to get their expertise. Technical methods can be given to Network leaders to comprehend related works.
UNITED KINGDOM / ROYAUME-UNI

Introduction

632. The OECD is to be congratulated on the success of the INES project to date - particularly as regards developing comparisons of education systems in key areas of policy and political interest and as regards the overall quality and reliability of the data. The United Kingdom (UK) has consistently assessed INES as a top priority for the Education Committee and CERI work.

Policy relevance of INES at national level

633. INES has sparked the interest of policy-makers, researchers and other education interests in the UK and made significant progress towards addressing their needs. It is clearly helpful to be able to compare UK educational provision against those of other countries. More specifically, INES has shed light on key areas of policy interest such as attainment levels, education funding and structures, teacher issues and educational outcomes. It has been useful in identifying areas for possible further policy consideration by individual OECD Member countries. The read-across to employment issues is particularly relevant to the UK, while bearing in mind the merger of our main education and employment departments.

634. The work undertaken in conjunction with the IEA on measuring education outcomes has a particular bearing on policy development. TIMSS results have been quoted in policy documents leading to the establishment in England of a National Numeracy Strategy and we hope that PIRLS will similarly inform the continued development of a National Literacy Strategy, while SITES should have a bearing on the UK’s National Grid for Learning. In all cases, the studies have looked to move beyond crude measures of performance towards factors influencing outcomes. In the adult sphere, the results of IALS strongly influenced the establishment of a high-level Working Group on Post-School Basic Skills. However it is the results of PISA which are most eagerly anticipated in the UK as providing, for the first time, international comparisons of the skills of pupils towards the end of their compulsory schooling.

635. There is however also a need to recognise INES’s limitations - the inevitable time lags in the data, and the difficulties in relating inputs to outputs and outcomes. The project is still some way from producing genuinely comparable data on a number of key issues, and there have been problems with the data being used as basis for rather crude and simplistic league tables.

636. The sheer volume of groups, outputs and initiatives under the INES umbrella also raises issues of presentation and accessibility. (We therefore welcome the help which the OECD provided this year, both to officials and media representatives, in identifying key UK issues in Education at a Glance 2000.)

637. INES has not had much impact yet on the development of indicators at national level for the UK: although there are some indicators in common, for example on entry rates to higher education, UK indicators are generally developed specific to national targets and structures. Moreover, comparative educationalists have tended to prefer description to quantitative analyses of education systems.
638. As regards the dissemination of INES results, *Education at a Glance* has proved the most influential international education indicator publication. It has attracted widespread media interest, been used in briefing Ministers and policy-makers, and also been used by researchers. Listing the statistical returns of so many countries is a major task; pulling them together in tabular and chart formats has been a Herculean task, and the OECD should be congratulated on its success in largely getting this right. *Education Policy Analysis*, the companion volume to EAG, has also provided some potentially useful material. It seems well grounded in the data, appropriately cautious and written in clear language. The successful co-operation with UNESCO on the World Education Indicators project has helpfully expanded core INES data to a large number of new countries, and already proved a valuable source.

639. The key issue now on dissemination is how to enable policy-makers and the wider public to access key points in such a complex, voluminous and specialist publication. (At present, EAG seems primarily designed for researchers.) The UK welcomes certain developments in the last couple of years - the focusing of EAG on about 30 key indicators, grouped for ease of analysis; the development of Key Comparisons and Trends; and the production of country-specific briefings to help focus the attention of the media in particular. The production of *Education Policy Analysis* has also proved helpful in providing a deeper analysis of a few key issues, drawing out key policy conclusions and pointing the way forward, and in relating EAG data to the conclusions of other OECD project work.

640. As the content and coverage of the INES project has grown, however, producing 30 detailed and robust indicators each year is becoming increasingly difficult. Moreover, the structure of EAG is possibly too rigid in its adherence to fixed chapters. EAG 2000, for example, included chapters on “student achievement” and the “learning environment and organisation of schools” which included out-of-date figures from TIMSS and other misleading data (e.g. teaching and instruction time indicators drawing on data provided from different countries on different bases).

641. More space should be given in future editions to new results, for example, in the next edition, from the TIMSS[R] and CIVICS study.

642. The UK also suggests that consideration be given to:

- development of an even smaller set of perhaps 10 core indicators - for example on expenditure, participation, graduation and labour market outcomes - and measuring trends in these. This set of indicators could be agreed by the INES National Co-ordinators and/or Technical Group;

- the production of separate and shorter publications on specific aspects of EAG, as suggested by the UK at the 1995 General Assembly; and

- a moderate increase in the number of areas where data is presented on separate countries of the UK. (This should sharpen focus, particularly as devolution is likely over time to increase the differences between our education systems.)

**Progress and remaining data gaps**

643. The UK welcomes the progress that has been made since the 1995 General Assembly. Apart from the developments referred to above, we regard the implementation of the revised International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97) as an important breakthrough. We are however particularly concerned to see further work on the development of expenditure indicators and on identifying a more satisfactory, long-term solution to the classification of “secondary attainment” levels.
Turning to the six priority areas identified at the last General Assembly:

- **Area 1: student achievement.** This is an area of strong policy concern to the UK. We await with interest the results of PISA round 1. We also hope to see an extension into areas of adult skills/competences, provided better instrumentation can be developed than that currently offered by ALL.

- **Area 2: tertiary education.** We have found the INES project findings extremely helpful as regards issues such as completion rates (on which the UK scores particularly well), studying abroad, employer participation, funding and efficiency, and effects on employability and earnings. Work done by the Technical Group has proved valuable in developing tertiary education indicators, one of the gaps identified at the 1995 General Assembly. It might now be timely to develop analysis of the equity dimension - widening access to higher education from different social and ethnic groups, those with special educational needs, etc. It would also help to have more specific data on funding issues such as tuition fees. (Other possible areas for development could relate to entry criteria, quality assurance, structures, staffing, ICT and business links. However bearing in mind resource limitations, it would clearly not be feasible to address all of these.)

- **Area 3: school-to—work transitions.** This too remains an important area for the UK, as does the area of continuing education and training on which Network B is also doing work. The difficulty seems to be that, as currently structured, the INES project is finding it difficult to find adequate resources to devote to both these areas. One of the conclusions of the London conference on youth employment issues was that there is a crying need for more scientific evaluation of transition policies. We regard the developmental work on indicators in this area in co-operation with the Education Committee as very worthwhile. Some specific areas for possible further development might be on participation and attainment in vocational education and training and on wages gains to different qualifications.

- **Area 4: educational finance.** Important progress is being made in consolidating finance indicators, through the ongoing comparability study. This study has shown that there are significant inconsistencies between the finance data provided by different countries, which urgently need to be addressed.

- **Area 5: lifelong learning.** This clearly relates to the OECD’s overall mandate for current educational work, as set at the last formal meeting of Ministers. To date however limited progress has been made by INES in defining, let alone measuring, lifelong learning. It would help if future indicators work could use a definition of learning for people over 16 that encompasses all learning activities, not just those taking place in educational institutions. One specific area for development might be on data on number and types of mature students.

- **Area 6: disparities / equity.** This is another area of key interest to the UK. However we are concerned that the INES project may be at risk of over-stretching itself, with some rather abstruse and long-term developmental work. There should perhaps be more of a focus on what is more readily measurable and explainable to a non-specialist audience, i.e. on the possible practical applications of current wide-ranging conceptual work.
Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and new developments, and between conceptual and statistical work

645. Consolidation and development are clearly both important, and the current balance seems about right. The UK suggests that consolidation should be for the Networks, focusing on key aspects of current INES work such as educational expenditure and achievement levels, and that development would best be taken forward by small working groups of particularly interested countries (on the lines of the current DeSeCo group or the ALL project group). They should also have clear targets and be time-limited where appropriate. There is a particular need for Network B to have clearer targets for results that they can realistically deliver, in priority areas.

646. Developmental work should focus on a restricted number of areas. There is clearly a need to tackle areas of particular weakness or conceptual difficulty. In the long-term, a priority should be to establish more of a link between current indicators on educational inputs (e.g. expenditure, duration of education) and outputs/outcomes. However it would be a mistake if the developmental work was wholly geared towards long-term objectives. Both for policy-making and political reasons, there would be benefit if the development work also focused on a few areas of work capable of leading to practical results within a reasonably short time-scale.

647. Similarly, conceptual and statistical work are both important. In the UK’s view, however, higher priority should be given to statistical work with well-established theories and methods.

Possible priority areas for further work

648. The UK suggests that these might include:

− **Further development of the indicators on educational expenditure levels**: our reasons for suggesting this have already been indicated, above.

− **Further development of the indicators on upper secondary attainment levels.** Although commendable progress has been made, more needs to be done to move beyond definitions based on structures (duration and place of study, etc.) to the essence of ISCED, which is educational content. A definition of upper secondary attainment in the UK and other countries needs to be agreed as a matter of urgency - possibly through a review of secondary school curricula content.

− **Consolidation of existing trend analyses** - concentrating on the group where trends are currently shown, which seems a sensible group.

− **Rates of return to different levels of education**, covering both private rates of return and those that also include public costs. Parts of this analysis are fairly well advanced for the UK, but international comparisons are lacking. Finalisation of ISCED-97, including resolution of the issue of attainment levels referred to immediately above, would clearly be fundamental to any work in this area.

− **Determinants of educational success.** TIMMS, IALS and PISA have already done some helpful work in this direction but there is evidence of a need to develop further the comparability and robustness of existing measures. This could be taken forward by Network A, by establishing a framework for the questions which policy makers would like to see addressed by future context questionnaires. Equal attention should be paid to these questions
as to the excellent work on developing the assessment frameworks. The UK would be particularly interested in measures of the quality, rather than quantity, of teaching.

- **Adult learning.** As indicated earlier, this is an area of key policy interest in the UK as elsewhere, in which however the INES project has made limited progress to date. There appears scope for greater co-operation with both EUROSTAT and UNESCO, and within the INES network, to avoid duplication of effort.

### INES methods and structures

649. The UK recognises that the existence of established working groups has proved valuable in securing continuity and facilitating long-term planning and financial support. The Technical Group has proved particularly valuable, in underpinning the whole INES endeavour. However there may be a risk of the current structure becoming somewhat fossilised and unwieldy. The remit of each Network and other INES group should perhaps now be re-examined, starting from the work that needs to be done, in order to prevent a self-perpetuating tendency and to improve transparency. The proposed re-examination should also aim to create closer and clearer links to the policy concerns of OECD Member countries. It would also help if it could provide a clearer picture of estimated **total** costs to Member countries, including not only financial costs but also staff time.

650. There may also be scope to contract out particular pieces of work to time-limited task groups, funded by voluntary subscription, as with the current work on improving expenditure indicators.

651. The increasing volume of tightly-deadlined demands on individual Member countries, emanating from individual Networks, should be more clearly explained and justified (though not in undue technical detail) and discussed in advance by the OECD Education Committee and/or CERI Governing Board. This too would help improve transparency, policy-relevance and predictability of costs.

652. There may also be scope to consider a closer link between Network A’s work on PISA and Network C’s work on the Upper Secondary Survey, and between DeSeCo and ALL.

653. As regards working methods, there appears to be scope to improve communication between different INES groups (e.g. ensuring that Networks are kept up-to-date on Technical Group work on ISCED), and to build on the progress already made in developing links with outside bodies such as EUROSTAT. Greater use of electronic discussion mechanisms, to supplement but not replace regular meetings, should also continue to be developed. The possibility of scheduling smaller meetings of experts, for instance alongside the Technical Group, should be investigated in order to widen further the debate.

### Conclusion

654. The UK welcomes the opportunity for this review of the policy relevance, organisation and working methods of the INES project. With pressure on resources both in the OECD and individual Member countries, there is a need to identify clear and realistically deliverable objectives, building on the best of the existing project but perhaps with some shift in priorities and re-evaluation of current methods of working to improve transparency and cost-effectiveness.
UNITED STATES / ETATS-UNIS

655. In preparation for the INES General Assembly in Tokyo, Japan in September 2000, OECD Member countries were invited to prepare a national assessment of the INES Project. This document first provides some overall comments both about INES successes and about suggested areas for improvement from the perspective of the United States (U.S.). It then addresses the five assessment areas identified by the OECD.

656. Since the last General Assembly in Lahti, Finland, the INES Project has made a great deal of progress. There have been significant advances in areas important to Member countries (e.g., student achievement, education finance, standards for quantitative data) and a consolidation of the structures and mechanisms of INES. The Secretariat, the Networks, and working groups within networks are effective structures through which the interests of OECD Member countries are advanced and realised. In fact, it is the U.S. view that the Networks, and the country collaboration that is achieved in these bodies, are at the very heart of the INES project. For that reason, we would suggest that the INES project reports—either through the Secretariat or the network chairs—directly to the Education Committee. This would give INES activities more salience than they might otherwise have than when an intermediary body, in which the representation does not reflect the full membership in the INES project, takes the decisions on project directions.

657. One area of concern for the U.S. is the tension between the two directions in which the INES project appears to be going—on the one hand, for fewer indicators and, on the other hand, for new indicators. While these are not mutually exclusive goals, it does raise the need for a transparent mechanism for priority setting among the increasing body of information available and the somewhat more limited opportunities to present it. Without clear priorities set ahead of time, there will be a waste of resources (as has been seen with the Education at a Glance 2000 chapter on student achievement, for example, in which the draft material was cut by more than 50 percent).

658. Following from this, the U.S. urges that the INES Project be creative in thinking about what the products of this work will look like in the future. Over the past five years, the push with EAG has been for higher quality quantitative information. As the U.S. views this as a largely successful endeavour, it would be useful in the coming years to re-incorporate the qualitative aspect—in innovative ways—to provide a richer body of information, more reflective of what is going on in the INES Project and Member countries.

Assessment Area 1 – Policy relevance of INES at national levels

659. INES outcomes are valuable to policy-makers in the United States; indeed, we believe Education at a Glance to be the most visible and widely used OECD product in the United States in the field of education. Student achievement indicators have received the most attention (even though in some cases, the achievement data reported through INES have originated in other data-collection initiatives such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study). INES is providing a widely respected set of data that enables U.S. policy-makers to compare educational outcomes in the United States with those in other countries. Also, because of the broad coverage of INES, in which the inevitable “league table” approach shows a given country (like the United States) to be doing well in some areas while doing poorly in others,
it is far easier for policy-makers to use the data to pinpoint areas for improvement and harder for the public to dismiss it than would be the case with a single indicator from a single, potentially biased source.

660. INES has supported the development of indicators in the United States by showing that other countries also take this approach seriously and are able to provide the necessary data. The process of reaching consensus internationally has both benefited from and, in turn, benefited data development in the United States, which necessarily depends on a co-operative relationship and coherent approach among the federal, state, district, and school levels.

661. INES outcomes receive press coverage; however, more remains to be done to reach policy-makers at the state and local levels. In order to reach a wider audience, it might be useful to make the full text of *Education at a Glance* and *Education Policy Analysis* available at the OECD web site. In addition, re-incorporation of qualitative data that allow us to better understand why and how certain outcomes are achieved will likely increase the perceived relevance of the data to a broader public.

662. National legislation in the United States now requires all federal government agencies to develop a strategic plan with clear objectives and measurable indicators of progress based on quality data collection and analysis. Each program of the Department of Education, for example, is required to have rigorous performance information or plans to develop such information. This requirement increases the Department’s need for indicators, particularly of student outcomes, both in the United States and in other countries. In addition, the importance of international education activities, including development and sharing of comparative information on education policy and practice, has recently been highlighted in the United States by a Presidential directive on international education policy. If managed wisely, with adequate attention to the key policy priorities of Member countries, we expect INES and its products to continue to be of significant value to U.S. policy-makers.

**Assessment Area 2 – Progress and remaining data gaps**

663. For the United States, the areas of greatest interest (of those priorities identified in Lahti) are student achievement, school-to-work (STW) transitions, and disparities and equity. With regard to the former (student achievement), although the fruits of the labour are not yet apparent, the U.S. certainly feels that this area has been well addressed through PISA and is pleased with the prospects for new data over the coming years. With regard to the latter (STW transitions and disparities and equity), additional development work is desired. With disparities/equity in particular, attention needs to be paid to differences in how these concepts are viewed in different countries.

664. Education finance is another area of interest but, from the U.S. perspective, there is a great deal of work already done in this area and the important questions have been adequately addressed. Tertiary education and lifelong learning are of less interest, and, in particular, lifelong learning is viewed as an area in which considerable conceptual work is still needed.

**Assessment Area 3 – Balance between consolidation and analysis of existing information and developments**

665. In considering the level of focus on development work relative to existing work or relative to other options for development, it is the U.S. perspective that these decisions should largely be determined on the principle of practicality. In essence, the formula that has been found to work (if judging by the areas of relative success in INES) is that those areas in which there was knowledge to build on tended to garner the necessary scientific and political support and succeed. INES is not a research program, but a policy-driven indicators program. Future efforts should be modelled on the notion that national
experiences are the laboratories, and that efforts at the international level are most usefully spent in determining how to scale up those experiences rather than to endeavour in completely new, untested areas. If PISA is any example, those areas which lacked feasibility initially (even at the national level) are those which, in the end, were not widely supported.

**Assessment Area 4 – Balance between conceptual and statistical work**

666. Conceptual work is an important part of the future of the INES project. However, as the conceptual projects currently function, there appears to be less transparency about decisions and priorities within this work than in the other areas of INES. For instance, with the DeSeCo project, although there are opportunities for substantive input, in general, countries have limited opportunities to participate in the decision making processes governing the direction of the work.

**Assessment Area 5 – INES methods and structures**

667. Overall, in the past five years, the methods and structures of INES have developed well. A few more particular comments:

- The OECD Secretariat provides excellent support to the Networks and National Co-ordinators—in serving as a liaison to the Steering Group, in transmitting information about the project overall, and in establishing the financial mechanisms for Members to support work that is of interest to them.

- Within the network structure, the use of working groups and commissioned experts represents an advancement in the Networks’ ability to mobilise, organise, and conduct development work.

- Although the U.S. is largely pleased with the mechanisms and processes that now exist, there are some mechanisms which could function in a more transparent way. As noted above, some of the ad-hoc work undertaken by individual members’ functions counter to the stated value of wide participation.

- Following from that, the U.S. views the network structure as an irreplaceable feature of the INES project, as it is the Networks in which a broad agenda can be advanced and realised.
Israel has been a participant in the INES only in recent years, and therefore most of our responses deal with the impact of INES activities on us. The evaluation will cover several topics:

**Impact of INES activities on decision-makers in Israel**

In Israel the information received from the OECD is considered to be very important, since the OECD is considered by political decision-makers and communications experts as an important and prestigious organization, in which Israel is interested in becoming a member. Furthermore, the data provided by the organization is considered to be highly reliable.

Participation in INES enables us to place on the agenda those issues that are important to OECD Member countries and to present them as issues that should also be important in Israel, for example, the issue of the national education expenditure. Below are two examples that relate to the national education expenditure:

Example 1) The 1998 edition of *Education at a Glance* included data on Israel relating to the national expenditure on education. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education was satisfied that Israel ranked high in terms of education expenditure as a percentage of the GDP. On the other hand, it asked why we were not as successful on international tests (of the IEA) in terms of scholastic achievement, such as math and science. Such statistics are likely to have an impact on decision-makers with regard to improving pupil achievement.

Example 2) The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) decided to stop issuing statistics regarding the national expenditure on education because of budget cuts and the desire to explore new directions that were not even related to the education sphere. The Ministry of Education and the Council for Higher Education opposed this decision. One of our main reasons was that these statistics were needed for the OECD’s educational indices, and that it was unthinkable to give up this vital survey. In the end, spending for the survey on the national education budget was not cut.

It should be noted that participation in the INES not only affects funding, but also increases the desire of government ministries to supply data so that Israel can appear in OECD publications.

**Considering the issue of social indicators**

The CBS is aware of the subject of social indicators, and there is a special unit working specifically in this area. This issue is also of interest to the Ministry of Education and the Council for Higher Education.
Disseminating information and statistics

675. The Israeli public, living in a small and distant country, is highly interested in international comparisons, and therefore the OECD statistics were published in the daily press. The CBS also published a special report and a press release. In addition, the CBS took the data from the 1997 edition of *Education at a Glance* and “added” Israel’s education statistics. This is a report that is about to be published. The Finance Ministry has also expressed a great deal of interest in this data.

676. Nevertheless, in our opinion the INES needs someone to market the data and information. In particular, it needs to “segmentise” the target populations in the member countries in general, and in each country separately.

Additional contributions by the INES

677. Close co-operation was initiated between the Ministry of Education, the CBS and the Planning and Budget Committee of the Council for Higher Education in order to fill out the questionnaires. Other agencies were included as well.

678. Participation in the group has also led to an improvement in the quality of the data. For example, up to now Israel has gathered statistics on the learning rates of pupils under the supervision of the Ministry of Education only. Because of the INES questionnaires, these statistics were combined with parallel statistics from the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Religion. These are new, and very significant, statistics.

679. The existence of the Glossary of Terms (ISCED-1997) used by UNESCO, the OECD and the European Union is very important. The Ministry of Education has its own “Glossary of Terms” that has not yet been completed, and the existence of ISCED-1997 allows us to pressure the Ministry towards completing its glossary. Completion of this Ministry of Education glossary will enable the CBS and other agencies to reach an agreement on a national Glossary of Educational Terms. It is time for Israel to adopt the Glossary of Educational Terms (ISCED-1997) and arrive at its own uniform glossary.

Progress and finding “gaps” in the data

680. High-priority topics on which progress or gaps were noted:

- Pupil achievement – Israel is participating in international studies, such as with the IEA, and considers them of the utmost importance. Israel is also participating in PISA.

- Higher education – We began to collect data on foreign students in higher education in order to comply with OECD data requirements. We have also begun efforts to obtain comprehensive data on academic and other personnel in all institutions of higher education, whereas up until now this data was limited primarily to the universities.

- The transition from school to work – Not enough is being done in Israel on this issue. The CBS, Ministry of Education, and Planning and Budget Committee have data dealing with high school graduates and their continuing education in post-secondary and academic frameworks. We must expand this subject to include the world of employment as well, and follow-up on the graduates and their integration in the work place.

- Education expenditure – see Paragraph 1.
- Lifelong learning – The idea that this is an important topic is gaining momentum, and it is necessary to carry out methodical examinations and evaluations of this issue. The CBS has begun initiating a new year long social survey of the population over age 18, and among the alternative subjects proposed is the question of “lifelong learning.”

- Disparities/equity – This has always been an important issue in the State of Israel. At the Ministry of Education, the subject of reducing educational gaps is at the top of its priorities, and it is also the Annual Theme throughout the education system in 2000. The thrust of Israel’s higher education policy in recent years is to open the gates of higher education to all population groups in Israeli society.