

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION  
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Cancels & replaces the same document of 01 December 2009

**Network on Early Childhood Education and Care**

**REVISED PROJECT PLAN: ENCOURAGING QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
AND CARE**

**7-8 December 2009  
OECD, Paris  
Conference Centre Room CC4**

*Delegates are invited to DISCUSS the following questions and AGREE on the revised project plan. They are also invited to DISCUSS the most useful questions to be included in the questionnaire of the new project.*

- 1. Overarching question and analytical questions: Are the proposed analytical questions most relevant to answer the agreed overarching policy question of the project?*
- 2. Focus policies: How do you assess the policy developments of your country in the selected 7 policy areas? Of the 7 policies, which one(s) are currently on your policy agenda as a priority to raise quality in ECEC? What are the key challenges in implementing this priority policy?*
- 3. Policy tool box: Will this output type be useful for your country? Are there any suggestions for what to include, which will be more useful for countries?*
- 4. Country specific policy profile: Will this be useful for your country? Are there other suggestions for what to include which could be more useful for countries?*
- 5. Policy forum(s): If you were to be involved, what type of outputs would you expect of the policy forum(s) and the summary of the forum(s)? What would be the most useful role for the OECD to play in the specific contexts of the ECEC development in your country?*
- 6. Questions to promote peer-learning: Please suggest one question concerning 'policy implementation' for each of the 7 selected policy areas, which could be included in the questionnaire.*

Deborah Roseveare, Head of Division; Tel: +33 1 45 24 17 54; Email: Deborah.Roseveare@oecd.org  
Miho Taguma, Analyst; Tel: +33 1 45 24 92 65; Email: Miho.Taguma@oecd.org

JT03275513



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## REVISED PROJECT PROPOSAL

### Background

1. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a growing policy priority in many countries. A growing body of research recognises that ECEC brings a wide range of benefits, including social and economic benefits (Heckman and Masterov, 2004; Vandell and Wolfe, 2000; CQO, 1995; Brooks-Gunn *et al.*, 1994); better child well-being and learning outcomes as a foundation for lifelong learning (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2009; Early Childhood Australia, 2009; Jalongo *et al.*, 2004; Heckman and Masterov, 2004; Vandell and Wolfe, 2000; NICHD, 1999; Blau, 1999; Shore, 1997; Barnett, 1995; Phillips *et al.*, 1987), more equitable outcomes and reduction of poverty (Mitchell, 2009; Heckman and Masterov, 2004; CQO, 1995), and increased intergenerational social mobility (OECD, 2009). But these positive benefits are directly related to the "quality" of ECEC.

2. The new policy output *Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care* was accorded the highest priority among all proposed policy outputs in 2008 by the Education Policy Committee. This activity will investigate what defines quality, which policies can promote and enhance quality, and how such policies can be effectively put in place. As the topic links closely with the other activities of the Network on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), the Committee decided at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 that the Network would be responsible for overseeing the new policy output.

3. At its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting on 11-12 May 2009, the Network was invited to discuss the scope and output results of the new project to ensure that the new project be of high relevance to OECD member countries. Based on the discussions and comments submitted through written procedures, this paper presents a revised project plan. It sets out:

- Overarching policy question and a set of analytical questions.
- Expected outputs.
- Suggested timeline and working methods.
- Participation and costs.

### Overarching policy question

4. Earlier OECD work on ECEC – *Starting Strong I & II* – already produced a set of policy orientations (see Annex 1). These are all directly or indirectly related to encouraging quality. The Network suggested that the new project should draw on the existing work of the OECD and deliver something new, useful and relevant for countries taking the existing policy work further. In particular, the real challenge is how to move from policy analysis to successful implementation.

5. The challenge therefore is to take the work of *Starting Strong I & II* further by focussing on the following overarching policy question "**How can countries put in place policies that would raise quality in ECEC?**" The new project will aim to shift from 'what' to 'how'.

6. To answer the overarching question, the project aims to answer a set of analytical questions:

- How can quality be defined in ECEC?
- What factors can enhance child well-being and learning outcomes?
- What policies can make a difference in child outcomes, affecting these factors? What are the relationships between the core quality indicators and child outcomes, over time and with varied by ECEC type?
- What are the practical tools, checklists, and materials that can help countries to implement these policies?
- Under what conditions can such tools, checklists, materials and/or strategies be used effectively? What are the success factors and obstacles for effective implementation of these policies?

### **Expected outputs**

7. Analytical outputs of the project will feed into the four output results below. Countries will receive different output type(s), depending on different modes of participation.

1. Policy tool box.
2. Country-specific policy profile.
3. Policy forum(s) and a summary of the forum(s) in individual countries.
4. Round table discussion on implementation: for all countries.

### ***Output type 1: Policy tool box***

8. The policy tool box will aim to present "practical solutions" for policymakers. The policy orientations set out by *Starting Strong I & II* are broadly defined so that countries can find their own ways to achieve their own goal in line with these orientations. While some considerable efforts have been made, countries are still at different stages of implementation and new initiatives are emerging. Regardless of which stage countries are at, they might find it useful to learn how other countries have adopted some of the suggested policy orientations and what kind of tools, checklists, materials and strategies they have taken or are taking to implement the policies.

9. Therefore, the policy tool box will aim to go beyond presenting evidence and policy suggestions. It will aim to present selected policies with accompanying supporting materials, in other words, to translate or transform the selected policy orientations into practical policy tools, checklists, materials and/or strategies for implementation. Chief executive officers of the education ministries of OECD member countries met in 2008 and noted that "evidence is most helpful when it is fed back to institutions along with information and tools about how they can use the information" [EDU/EDPC/M(2008)2].

10. To present both 'what' and 'how', the box will pool:

- Definitions and indicators for quality that countries are currently using.
- Factors that may affect child well-being and learning outcomes.
- Policy orientations in *Starting Strong I & II* that are likely to be effective in encouraging quality.
- Tools, checklists, materials and/or strategies that will help countries to put in place these policy orientations.

11. Annex 2 presents definitions and indicators that will define quality in the tool box. Annex 3 provides a mapping of indicators that some countries are using to define quality.

**Output type 2: Country-specific policy profile**

12. Of the policy tool box, a country-specific policy profile can be prepared for countries, adapted to their country-specific needs. Among the suggested policy orientations, countries can select one focus policy, or suggest a policy that is currently on their policy agenda for implementation. Policy implementation often requires more time than planned. Countries often face the time lag when implementing a white paper, new law, revised curriculum, new monitoring initiative, *etc.* Partly as a result of the time lag in implementation, an impact lag may also occur in bringing the desired changes and expected outcomes. These lags may reduce the effectiveness of the chosen policies and need to be tackled.

13. One major obstacle in implementing a policy is a lack of awareness or stakeholder buy-in among ECEC managers, teachers and staff, parents, different ministries, politicians, general public, *etc.* The aforementioned meeting of chief executive officers of the education ministries of OECD member countries addressed the need for policymakers "to build consensus on the aims of education reform and actively engage stakeholders...in formulating and implementing the policy responses". Indeed, *Starting Strong II* concluded by noting that:

“A major underlying lesson from the OECD reviews is that sound policy cannot be a quick fix from outside but more a matter of democratic consensus generated by careful consultation with the major stakeholders. Official policy in the early childhood field can meet resistance or be ignored unless it is based on prior consultations with the major stakeholders, and provides a place for local initiative and experimentation.”

14. To obtain stakeholder buy-in, a strong case should be made out with relevant information, especially compelling evidence. The added value of the OECD lies in its rich and reliable data, cross-sectoral analysis, and practical policy learning among member countries. Drawing on evidence from multi-disciplinary database within the OECD, the country-specific policy profile will include:

- Factsheets with relevant statistics, with highlights featuring the country in the international landscape, *e.g.* highlighting the country in the graphs.
- If the country wishes to include one or two countries as a reference country(ies), the Secretariat can also feature these countries in comparison.
- List of the key factors, based on the cross-sectoral analysis on ECEC, that are most likely to affect the child outcomes in the country concerned.
- Selection of tools, checklists, materials and/or strategies that will be most applicable for the country to implement the selected policy.

15. Annex 5 provides an example of three comparative fact sheets that Japan would receive if they selected '**Provide substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure**' as their focus policy. This output will be most useful if combined with the policy forum where the profile will be used in action, accompanied by the Secretariat's visit(s).

**Output type 3: Policy forum(s) and a summary of the forum(s) in individual countries**

16. Using the country-specific policy profile, policy forum(s) will aim to further help countries for effective implementation of the selected policy. Some countries already use the OECD data and analysis to make out a case for stakeholder buy-in. International comparison often produces compelling evidence and may raise awareness among stakeholders of the need to act more quickly. Such evidence can be better received by stakeholders when presented by where the source comes from. Countries could expedite the implementation process by using the forum to better engage target stakeholders or using the forum to inform policy and general public of international evidence and practices.

17. To make the forum(s) most useful, practical and relevant, countries are invited to define the specific purpose of the forum(s), the role of the OECD and the expected outputs, which may vary depending on the different needs and contexts of the country concerned. Different countries experience different challenges in implementation, ranging from: setting up a dialogue between different sectors / different interest groups; engaging stakeholders and building consensus among them; facilitating discussion on priorities among conflicting interest groups; raising awareness among those deeply rooted in domestic politics of international policy developments; searching for a forward-looking approach; *etc.* Examples of the OECD's role in the forum(s) include:

- Informing policy and general public of international evidence and practices;
- Promoting dialogue and fostering engagement of stakeholders for making change happen;
- Building consensus on the specific steps to take or an action plan towards the quality goal;
- Developing an implementation plan, working alongside key stakeholders;
- Facilitating the process of identifying and crystallising priorities among stakeholder;
- Providing an external assessment on priorities that may underpin the decision-making; or
- Assessing the degree of stakeholder engagement and suggesting alternative options to the implementation process, drawing on other country experiences.

18. The process of the forum(s) itself will be examined to identify success factors and obstacles as one aspect of policy implementation.

19. The differentiated approach to country visits extends further the methodology used for the OECD Policy Review of Migrant Education and the insights gained on where the OECD can add value (see Box).

**Box 1. Policy Review of Migrant Education**

The importance of careful consultation and consensus building may be a common issue to any theme. For example, country experience with the recent OECD Review of Migrant Education may imply that policy dialogue is an important new output in and of itself. Some countries pointed out that there were few surprises in the findings of the OECD policy review visit on strengths, challenges and possible policy options, however, the process of the OECD review visit itself was an added value [EDU/EDPC/MI/M(2009)1].

*First*, the OECD visit helped to identify relevant stakeholders and created rare opportunities for the Ministry to meet with them. It was noted that the OECD's visit sparked new interest among certain groups, providing a new arena for discussions among important stakeholders who previously would not meet with each other or the Ministry. A visit by an external body would be critically important when debating a theme that is highly politicised or remains within a sector. The OECD's neutrality could be seen as adding value in advancing the debate and developing steps to effective policy implementation.

*Second*, the OECD visit helped to highlight key issues, among those already known, as a result of a consultation with key stakeholders. It helped countries to crystallise priorities and get them firmly on the policy agenda.

*Third*, the OECD visit helped to carry forward the strategy and justify research. The OECD could facilitate evidence-based discussions drawing on international research and country experiences and could play a role to raise awareness of the issues in the immediate community and in society.

***Output type 4: Round table discussion on implementation***

20. After a round of national policy forums had been held, the OECD will hold a roundtable among all member countries to exchange country experiences featuring those countries that participated in policy forum(s). All countries will be invited to share their national experiences. The purpose of the round table discussion is to draw out general lessons about success factors and obstacles in implementing policy to encourage quality in ECEC. The discussions could be synthesised into a short publication.

### **Suggested timeline and working methods**

21. To deliver the expected outputs, the project will undertake specific tasks in four phases:

#### ***Phase I: Developing the Knowledge Base (Q1 2010-Q3 2010)***

22. Phase I will aim to establish a solid knowledge base on quality in ECEC, building on existing work and research on quality. The knowledge base will include most relevant policy options that will encourage quality and factors that affect quality. It also aims to lay out the project's analytical and logistical framework. This phase will undertake three tasks:

##### *Stock-taking of definitions of quality and quality indicators*

23. The purpose of this exercise is to develop some core systemic indicators that would apply regardless of the system and other indicators that might be more specific to programmes and delivery methods. This exercise will start by examining the quality indicators, certain requirements, minimum standards that are in use but will relate them to the different ways in which ECEC is delivered in countries (See Annex 3 for some country examples). Quality would be defined by positive and large effects of system indicators on child outcomes. An analytical framework would be developed for this.

##### *Literature review on "what works in raising quality in ECEC" and statistical analysis*

24. This exercise will identify policies and factors that may affect quality in child outcomes within the defined framework (Annex 2). This will include a review of ECEC policy evaluations in the field, longitudinal studies, certain requirements for quality, practices in ECEC to enhance child outcomes for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, *etc.* This will also include statistical analysis using international data and/or national data to examine the effect of participating in ECEC on child outcomes in later stages of life.

##### *Country questionnaire and country responses*

25. To streamline the data and information collection process, this project will focus on asking questions focusing on "policy implementation" while "statistical data on quality" will be collected through the exercise of the Network's updating country profile and the DELSA's Child Database (See Annex 4). The project will also draw on findings from the Network meetings. For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> Network meeting already provided country experiences that identify challenges, factors at play and policy tools to achieve the goal to **"improve the working conditions and professional education of ECEC staff"** (See [EDU/EDPC(2009)19]).

#### ***Phase II: Developing the Policy Tool Box (Q4 2010)***

26. Phase II will aim to translate and transform the knowledge base into a box of practical policy tools for policy makers. There are two main outputs of the project in this phase:

- Output 1: Policy Tool Box
- Output 2: Country-specific policy profile

#### ***Phase III: Policy Forum(s) (Q1 2011 – Q3 2011)***

27. In each country that opts for a policy forum, one or more forums can be organised in the country. In some countries quality in ECEC, in part or in whole, often falls under regional rather than national level responsibility. Subject to the approval of national authorities, it may make sense for the region(s) rather than a country to participate in the exercise and be the subject of policy forum(s). The number will depend on the decision of the national and, if relevant, regional governments.

28. The forum would be developed in conjunction with the authorities (national and, if relevant, regional governments). As mentioned earlier, specific objectives, the expected role of the OECD in forums, and expected outputs will be suggested by the country and be mutually agreed by the Secretariat.

29. In this phase, the OECD will aim to work with individual countries in collaboratively analysing policy design and implementation. This collaboration would include the major stakeholders, recognising that their involvement is critical to both finding the best policy design and getting the buy-in necessary for successful implementation. There is one major output of the project in this phase:

- Output 3: The policy forum(s) and the summary of the forum(s)

#### *Step 1: Planning with Country*

30. The country and the OECD will mutually agree on the focus (key policy issue) of policy dialogue, target stakeholders, logistics and timeline. Countries are expected to clarify country context (political dimensions, stakeholder involvement, *etc*) to make the forum(s) most useful, relevant and politically pitched at the right level.

31. The OECD will: i) conduct a preparatory country visit and carry out a needs assessment with the country; ii) resent the OECD's country-specific policy profile for the country; iii) prepare a policy forum strategy plan, based on the agreed focus and timeline.

#### *Step 2: Conducting one or more policy forums*

32. Each forum would typically be a two-day event with a maximum of around 100 participants (the details to be mutually agreed with the country). Some countries may wish to hold only one policy forum, while others may wish to hold more than one, aiming to build consensus or establish networks at different levels (national or state), with different target groups (policymakers, kindergarten/centre owners, researchers unions, *etc*), or conduct repeat events to widen coverage and include more participants.

#### *Step 3: Delivering a post-forum summary*

33. The OECD would prepare a summary of the discussions at the forum(s). Depending on the different needs and contexts of the country concerned, the nature of the summary may vary. It can be an objective summary record of the forums; a list of agreed principles, priorities and action plans among stakeholders; an OECD's assessment on implementation; the OECD assessment on priorities to tackle for the country; *etc*.

#### ***Phase IV: Roundtable and synthesis (Q4 2011)***

34. Phase IV aims to take stock of individual country experiences with policy forum(s) and analyse what are the success factors and obstacles in implementing policies to raise quality in ECEC. Countries that did not carry out policy forums are also invited to participate to share their country experiences in policy implementation in this area. The major output of the project in this phase:

- Output 4: Round table discussion on implementation

35. The discussion can be synthesised into a short publication or a proceeding of the meeting if ample country examples are shared from which general lessons are drawn that are beneficial for all countries.

#### **Participation and costs for different output types**

##### ***Output type 1: Policy tool box***

36. All members of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care – OECD countries, observers to the Education Policy Committee and non-member economies in line with the OECD global strategy – will be asked to respond to a questionnaire to develop the Policy Tool Box. This output will be

shared in the public domain for all countries and the general public. This phase of the activity will not involve direct financial transactions.

37. Country participation in the activities of the network is important for this project as the activities of the network will feed into this new project. Countries are encouraged to participate in its meetings to share country practices and update country profiles. They are also encouraged to help disseminate the results of the project as the work proceeds.

***Output type 2: Country-specific policy profile***

38. As the project is highly rated by the Education Policy Committee, appropriate assessed contributions have been allocated to carry out the core part of the desk-based work (*i.e.* establishment of the policy tool box). However, a more comprehensive tool box could be developed if countries made voluntary contributions to support its development. For example, 15 countries contributing 10 000 EUR each would finance an additional senior analyst to work on developing and refining the tool box.

39. Those countries that provide voluntary contributions of 10 000 EUR to the development of the policy tool box will receive a country-specific policy profile.

***Output type 3: Policy forum(s) and a summary of the forum(s)***

40. Countries may also request a policy forum in their country/region at a cost of 50 000 EUR for one policy forum. This will include a contribution of 10 000 EUR towards the development of the tool box. An illustrative budget, based on the assumption about the level of country participation, is set out in Annex 6. The countries will receive a country-specific policy profile, policy forum(s), and a summary of the forum(s).

41. As mentioned earlier, one or more forum(s) can be requested. If a country wishes to have several forums during one country visit of the OECD, the cost per forum would be lower depending on the scope to realise economies of scale (see Table below). Countries will be expected to bear the travel costs of the OECD to accompany the preparatory visit and the visit of policy forum(s). In-kind contributions may be appropriate to host a policy forum(s).

**Table. Cost per forum**

	<b>Total contribution per country</b>
Option 1: One forum	EUR 50 000
Option 2: Two forums (organised in a series)	EUR 65 000
Option 3: Two forums (organised separately)	EUR 80 000
Option 4: Three forums (organised in a series)	EUR 80 000
Option 5: Three forums (organised separately)	EUR 110 000

***Output type 4: Round table discussion on implementation***

42. All OECD countries will be invited to participate in the roundtable discussion on 'translating policy into practice' to share country experience on policy implementation that would encourage quality. This phase of the activity will not involve direct financial transactions.

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## ANNEX 1. POLICY ORIENTATIONS FROM *STARTING STRONG I & II*

Eight policy orientations from the first round of the thematic review on early childhood education and care *Starting Strong I*, completed in 2001.

1. **Take a systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation:** It is important to set a clear vision for children from birth to age 8; co-ordinated policy frameworks at centralised and decentralised levels; and strong links across services, professionals, and parents also promote coherence for children.
2. **Build a strong and equal partnership with the education system:** it will support a lifelong learning approach from birth, encourage smooth transitions for children, and recognise ECEC as an important part of the education process. Strong partnerships with the education system provide the opportunity to bring together the diverse perspectives and methods of both ECEC and schools, focusing on the strengths of both approaches.
3. **A universal approach to access, with particular attention to children in need of special support:** while access to ECEC is close to universal for children from age 3, more attention to policy (including parental leave) and provision for infants and toddlers is necessary. It is important to ensure equitable access, such that all children have equal opportunities to attend quality ECEC, regardless of family income, parental employment status, special educational needs or ethnic/language background.
4. **Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure:** while ECEC may be funded by a combination of sources, there is a need for substantial government investment to support a sustainable system of quality, accessible services. Governments need to develop clear and consistent strategies for efficiently allocating scarce resources, including investment in an infrastructure for long-term planning and quality enhancement efforts.
5. **Implement a participatory approach to quality improvement and assurance:** defining, ensuring, and monitoring quality should be a participatory and democratic process that engages staff, parents, and children. There is a need for regulatory standards for all forms of provision supported by co-ordinated investment. Pedagogical frameworks focusing on children's holistic development across the age group can support quality practice.
6. **Provide appropriate training and working conditions for staff in all forms of provision:** quality ECEC depends on strong staff training and fair working conditions across the sector. Initial and in-service training might be broadened to take into account the growing educational and social responsibilities of the profession. There is a critical need to develop strategies to recruit and retain a qualified and diverse, mixed-gender workforce and to ensure that a career in ECEC is satisfying, respected and financially viable.
7. **Place systematic attention to monitoring and data collection:** it may require coherent procedures to collect and analyse data on the status of young children, ECEC provision, and the early childhood workforce. International efforts are necessary to identify and address the existing data gaps in the field and the immediate priorities for data collection and monitoring.
8. **Establish a stable framework and long-term agenda for research and evaluation:** as part of a continuous improvement process, there needs to be sustained investment to support research on key policy goals. The research agenda also could be expanded to include disciplines and methods that are currently underrepresented. A range of strategies to disseminate research findings to diverse audiences should be explored.

Ten policy orientations from the second round of the thematic review on early childhood education and care *Starting Strong II*, completed in 2006.

1. **Place well-being, early development and learning at the core of ECEC work, while respecting the child's agency and natural learning strategies:** Rather than ECEC being an adjunct to labour market policies with weak development agendas or an under-resourced "Cinderella" education service, it needs to have the child and its well-being and learning at the core.
2. **Aspire towards ECEC systems that support broad learning, participation and democracy:** The touchstones of a democratic approach are to extend the agency of the child and right of parents to be involved in the education of their children; learning to be, learning to do, learning to learn, and learning to live together are the critical elements to be promoted in each child.
3. **Provide autonomy, funding and support to early childhood services:** Within the parameters of system-wide goals and guidelines, educators and services should have the autonomy to plan and to choose curricula for the children in their care; policy should provide the means for staff to exercise such autonomy and participatory approaches.
4. **Develop broad guidelines and curricular standards with the stakeholders for all ECEC services:** Guiding frameworks – especially when they have been developed together by the key stakeholders - help to promote a more even quality across ECEC, to guide and support professional staff, and facilitate communication between staff and families.
5. **Base public funding on achieving quality pedagogical goals:** Most countries need to double their annual investment per child to ensure child-staff ratios and qualified staff on some parity with the primary sector; the investment should be directed to achieving quality pedagogical goals rather than simply aiming to create sufficient places.
6. **Improve the working conditions and professional education of ECEC staff:** the OECD reviews found a number of common weaknesses that need attention: low recruitment and pay levels, particularly in child care services; lack of certification in specialist early childhood pedagogy; excessive feminisation of staff; lack of diversity of staff to reflect neighbourhood diversity.
7. **Create the governance structures necessary for system accountability and quality assurance:** These include such elements as strong expert policy units, data collection and monitoring capacity, an evaluation agency, and a pedagogical advisory or inspection corps.
8. **Attend to the social context of early childhood development:** Well organised services should work towards a broad but realistic vision to which the other stakeholders can subscribe, serving at the same time to support parents in child-rearing, facilitate women working, and help social inclusion for low-income and immigrant families.
9. **Encourage family and community involvement in early childhood services:** The continuity of children's experience across the different ECEC environments is greatly enhanced when parents and staff members share information and adopt consistent approaches to socialisation, daily routines, child development and learning; communities are important both as providers and as offering space for partnerships.
10. **Reduce child poverty and exclusion through upstream fiscal, social and labour policies and increase resources within universal programmes for children with diverse learning rights:** research indicates the effectiveness of universal programmes for children with different disabilities and disadvantages, combined with enhanced funding and investment in quality services, rather than targeted programmes which serve to segregate and stigmatise.

## ANNEX 2. INDICATORS THAT DEFINE QUALITY IN THE POLICY TOOL BOX

Definitions of quality differ across countries and across different stakeholder groups (Moss and Pence, 1994; Dahlberg et al., 1999) and national definitions should be interpreted with caution and sensitivity when comparing cross-country practices. At the 4th meeting, the Network agreed that "defining quality" is most challenging and suggested to group quality indicators into: 1) outcome indicators, 2) process indicators, and 3) input indicators (See Annex 2 for country examples). The project will pay particular attention to measuring quality outcomes, which will be framed and linked to processes and inputs. Quality would be defined by positive and large effects of system and process indicators on child outcomes.

### Outcome indicators

Since the 1990s, research has investigated the returns on investment in early childhood services to justify public expenditure. Besides social, economic and labour market returns, educational outcomes have been often found.<sup>1</sup> Such outcomes include: well-being, socio-emotional developments, citizenship, preparation for school, long-term academic achievements, etc. *Starting Strong I* broadly categorised them into two goals or outcomes.

- Goals in specific developmental areas, e.g. physical and socio-emotional development; and
- Subject and learning areas, e.g. communication and language skills, art, emergent literacy, etc.

It will be difficult to separate each of these skills or developments because a child develops such skills in a complex, interactive developmental process. The project will aim to seek a good balance to focus on cognitive and non-cognitive skills. To complete the project within the suggested timeline and with available resources, however, it will focus on self-regulation, ability to play cooperatively and language outcomes, leaving aside physical, art, and other developments. Social outcomes will be collected by the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs: *i.e.* child poverty rate, low birth weight, infant mortality, breastfeeding rate, vaccination rate for pertussis, and vaccination rate for measles.

### Process indicators

Quality may be also defined in terms of *process* (i.e. what is occurring in programmes and to a child) and *Starting Strong I* reports process indicators such as:

- Health and safety features,
- Interactions between children and adults,
- Partnerships with parents,
- Learning and social opportunities offered, etc.

Due to the limited time, the project will include "partnerships with parents" and "interactions between children and adults" as two priority process indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> Andersson, 1992; Jarousse *et al.*, 1992; Borman and Hewes, 2002; Mass and Barnett, 2002; Reynolds *et al.*, 2002; New Zealand Council of Educational Research, 2004; Sylva *et al.*, 2003; Belfield *et al.*, 2005.

### **Input indicators (system level)**

As a result of the discussion at the 4<sup>th</sup> Network meeting, the project will focus on 7 policy priorities to encourage quality out of the 18 policy orientations of *Starting Strong I & II*. The final scope of priority policies will be subject to the financial situation of the project. The selected priorities are set out as below:

#### ***Governance, co-ordination and management***

1. **Take a systemic and integrated approach to policy development and implementation:** It is important to set a clear vision for children from birth to age 8; co-ordinated policy frameworks at centralised and decentralised levels; and strong links across services, professionals, and parents also promote coherence for children.
2. **Provide autonomy, funding and support to early childhood services:** Within the parameters of system-wide goals and guidelines, educators and services should have the autonomy to plan and to choose curricula for the children in their care; policy should provide the means for staff to exercise such autonomy and participatory approaches.

#### ***Funding***

3. **Provide substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure:** While ECEC may be funded by a combination of sources, there is a need for substantial government investment to support a sustainable system of quality, accessible services. Governments need to develop clear and consistent strategies for efficiently allocating scarce resources, including investment in an infrastructure for long-term planning and quality enhancement efforts.

#### ***Research, evaluation, monitoring and data collection***

4. **Place systematic attention to monitoring and data collection:** It may require coherent procedures to collect and analyse data on the status of young children, ECEC provision, and the early childhood workforce. International efforts are necessary to identify and address the existing data gaps in the field and the immediate priorities for data collection and monitoring.

#### ***Teachers***

5. **Improve the working conditions and professional education of ECEC staff:** Quality ECEC depends on strong staff training and fair working conditions across the sector. Initial and in-service training might be broadened to take into account the growing educational and social responsibilities of the profession. There is a critical need to develop strategies to recruit and retain a qualified and diverse, mixed-gender workforce and to ensure that a career in ECEC is satisfying, respected and financially viable.

#### ***Organisation, curriculum and pedagogy***

6. **Develop broad guidelines and curricular standards with the stakeholders for all ECEC services:** Guiding frameworks – especially when they have been developed together by the key stakeholders – help to promote a more even quality across ECEC, to guide and support professional staff, and facilitate communication between staff and families.
7. **Encourage family and community involvement in early childhood services:** The continuity of children's experience across the different ECEC environments is greatly enhanced when parents and staff members share information and adopt consistent approaches to socialisation, daily routines, child development and learning; communities are important both as providers and as offering space for partnerships.

**Input indicators (programme level)**

Programme-level quality indicators could be useful information to accompany policy tools. The project will aim to answer what the common features of quality programmes are with respect to: *e.g.*

- Duration and intensity of programmes,
- Size and composition of children's groups,
- Adult-child ratios,
- Indoor and outdoor- environments, *etc.*

Quality of programmes would be defined by positive and large effects of system indicators on child outcomes. This is important because, for example, class size (for older ages) is often used as a quality indicator, but PISA has not found a strong association between education outcomes and class size. From quality assurance perspectives, minimum standards or requirements for a programme can be considered as the minimum standards for quality.

## ANNEX 3. EXAMPLES OF DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY AND QUALITY INDICATORS

Quality Indicators and Principles	Australia	Austria	Belgium - Flanders	Belgium - French Community	Canada	Czech Republic	Denmark	Finland
<b>Protection, care and safety</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Staff acts to protect each child	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Staff supervises children at all time	X	X	X		X			X
Staff ensures a safe environment for all children (dangerous products and objects are inaccessible to children etc.)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facility safety standards (the centre ensures that buildings and equipment are save)	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Space requirements		X	X					
<b>Health and nutrition</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Staff promotes healthy lifestyle habits (eating, taking care of themselves, hygiene rules etc.)	X	X	X	X	X			
Implementation of effective and current food safety and hygiene practices	X	X	X	X	X			
Toileting and nappy changing procedures	X	X	X					
Possibilities for rest and comfort for the children	X	X	X	X	X			
Presence of medical care		X	X					
The centre promotes occupational health and safety	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Meal service	X	X	X				X	
<b>Staffing, training and work conditions</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Workforce qualifications by education/teaching/care staff by service type	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child/staff ratio by service type	X	X	X	X			X	
Teachers registration	X	X	X					
Number of workforce exemptions granted	X	X						
Presence of indigenous/migrant staff	X	X						
Professional development opportunities for staff	X	X	X	X	X			
Preparation time for teaching staff	X	X						
Staff communicates effectively to promote professional teamwork	X	X	X		X	X		
Staff's salary		X			X	X		
Professional experience		X						
<b>Licensing and general administration</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State licensing/registration requirements by service type	X	X			X	X	X	X
Total government spending (funding) per service type	X					X	X	
Operational schedules per service type	X	X	X					
Availability of vacation care	X	X	X					
Equal access to all facilities and activities for all children (independent of their (financial) background)				X		X	X	X
Internal regulations				X	X	X	X	X

Quality Indicators and Principles	Australia	Austria	Belgium - Flanders	Belgium - French Community	Canada	Czech Republic	Denmark	Finland
<i>Process components</i>								
<b>Educational program (curriculum) and pedagogy</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational and upbringing concept and objectives of the centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Following national curriculum guidelines	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promotion of child's lingual, cultural, expressive and learning abilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Emphasis on individual needs						X		X
Existence of specialist services (disability etc)	X	X	X	X				
Early intervention identification	X	X		X	X			
Indigenous/migrant specific programs	X			X	X			
Material equipment		X	X	X		X		
Programs are planned in advance (according to the service and development of the children)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Transition to other forms of education or care		X		X			X	
Educational outcomes/results	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cooperation with other professional organisations (3rd party)		X	X		X	X		
The (care/education) program meets the demands of the children and their parents	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
The activities of the program contribute to the socialisation process				X	X	X	X	
Existence of and following a general framework	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluation report ( of individual or centre)				X	X	X	X	
<b>Parent and community communication and involvement</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Staff and families communicate to exchange information about the child and the centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encouragement of family participation and involvement in the centre	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
The centre provides an orientation process for children and their families	X	X	X					
Engagement of the community	X	X	X	X	X			
Measuring/assessing parental satisfaction	X	X	X	X	X			
Written and/or online information about the centre is available to families	X	X	X	X	X			
<b>Relationships with children</b>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Staff interacts with children in a friendly and respectful way, regardless of their background etc	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Staff guides children's behaviour (fosters development of self-confidence, independence etc)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Source: AUS - National Childcare Accreditation Council (2005), Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Handbook NCAC, Australian Government ([http://www.ncac.gov.au/publication\\_extracts/qias\\_handbook](http://www.ncac.gov.au/publication_extracts/qias_handbook)); AUT - Institute about child-care in Austria (<http://www.charlotte-buehler-institut.at>); BEL/FL ([www.kindengezin.be](http://www.kindengezin.be)); BEL/FR, Le Gouvernement de la Communauté française (1999), 'Le code de qualité de l'accueil et son application', Belgian-French government ([www.one.be](http://www.one.be)); CAN - Occupational standards for childcare practitioners from the Canadian childcare federation ([www.cccf-fcsge.ca](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca)); CZE - The Czech School Inspectorate ([www.csicr.cz/upload/The%20Czech%20School%20Inspectorate.pdf](http://www.csicr.cz/upload/The%20Czech%20School%20Inspectorate.pdf)); DEN - The Danish Day Care Act

**ANNEX 4. JOINT-EFFORTS ON DATA COLLECTION**  
BETWEEN DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND DIRECTORATE FOR EMPLOYMENT,  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

**Target levels**

At the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OECD Network on ECEC, several delegates expressed an interest in focusing on quality initiatives "under age 3"; however, others stated that it is very difficult to collect data. Early childhood services for this age group are under-regulated in many countries and policy approaches are changing rapidly due to the increased public spending, expanding access, changing parental leave policy, etc. as *Starting Strong II* points out.

Structurally, some countries regard the age range from 0 to 6 as "a continuum" and the main responsibility is delegated to one ministry, either under education ministry (*e.g.* New Zealand, Sweden, England) or under social welfare, health and family services (*e.g.* Denmark, Finland). Others see the spectrum as a dichotomy between 0 to 3 and 3 to 6 and different arrangements are put in place such as for governance, regulations, curriculum, pedagogy, and costs for these age groups (*e.g.* Belgium, Germany, Japan, and France). Moreover, some countries have different regulations for regional entities concerning "under age 3" (*e.g.* Australia, Canada, the United States, etc.) (Table 4.1 and 4.2 of *Starting Strong II*).

The arrangements are complex to cover age 0-6; however, the project will aim to cover the age spectrum in order to further uncover the complex arrangements and add value to international comparison. The project will also seek added value by collecting information on "under age 3" to investigate quality such as the duration and licensing of the services and qualified staff. This will need close cooperation with the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs.

**Data collection**

The Quality project intends to pool factors that may affect child well-being and learning outcomes, drawing on two data sources: 1) the updated country profiles of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care (EDU) and 2) the Child Well-Being Module of the OECD Family Database (ELS).

***1. Updated country profiles of the OECD Network on ECEC***

The revised template will be presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Network. Whether the updating of country profiles will be a one-off exercise or be continuously carried out to ensure the most up-to-date data is available will be also discussed at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, considering the policy needs and financial availability.

***2. Child Well-Being Module of the OECD Family Database***

The CWBM proposal will be shared in due course.

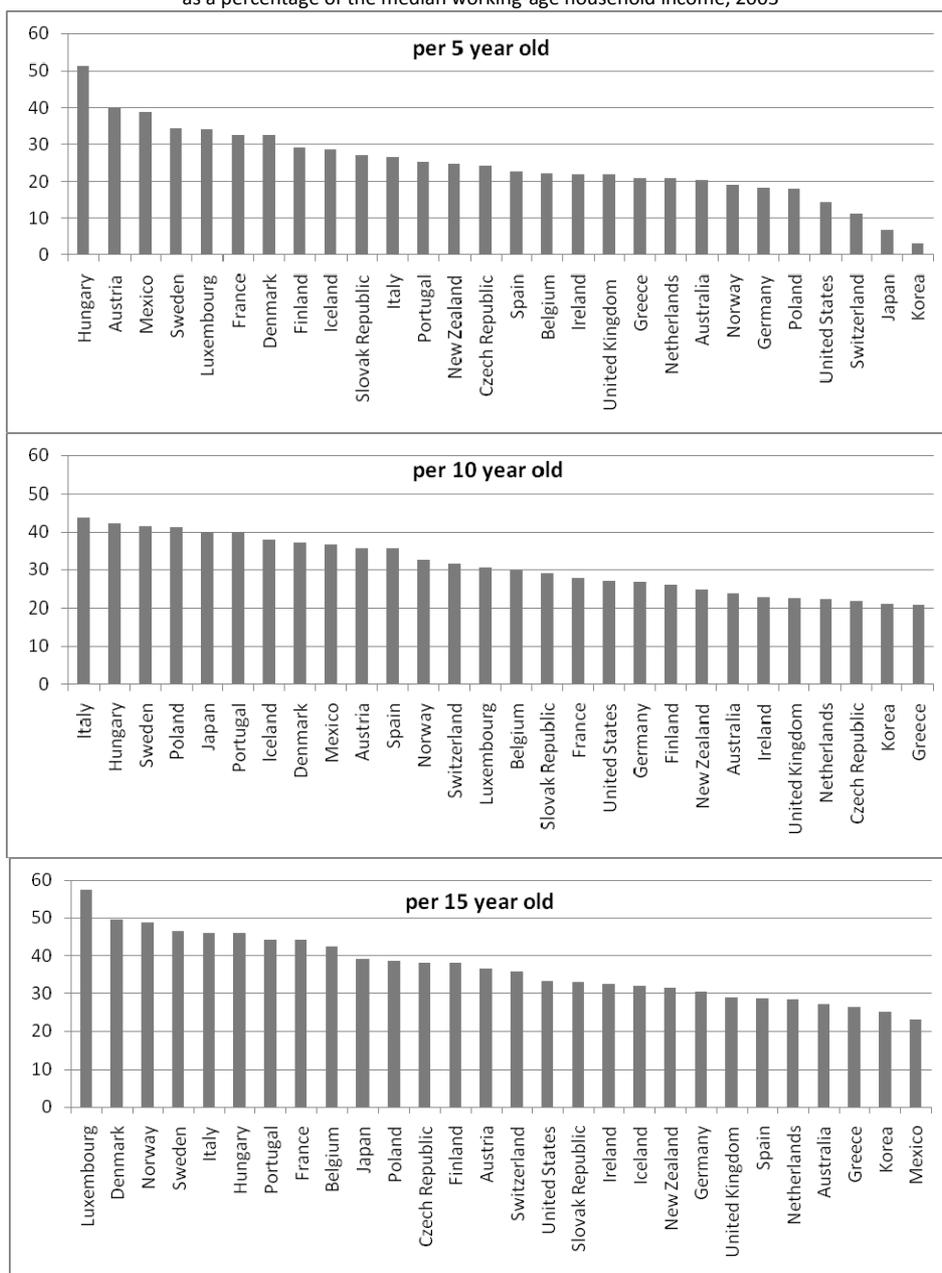
**ANNEX 5. EXAMPLE OF COMPARATIVE FACTSHEETS**  
TO BE INCLUDED IN POLICY PROFILE  
(CASE OF JAPAN SELECTING 'PUBLIC SPENDING' AS A FOCUS POLICY)

- Example 1: Public spending on childcare and education at different ages
- Example 2: Public spending on childcare and education at different ages
- Example 3: Employment rates for mothers

### Public Spending on Childcare and Education at Different Ages

- OECD statistics measure the amount of public resources that each country spends per child at each age. To make it easier to compare spending across countries, each country’s spending has been converted to a common scale. The scale used is the percentage of the median working-age household income.
- For Japan, the data show:
  - Japan spends only about 1/6<sup>th</sup> of public funds on each 5 year old as it spends on a 10 year old or 15 year old.
  - Japan spends less taxpayer funds on each child at the age of 5 than every other country except Korea.
  - Japan spends more than most countries on 10 year-olds and more than many countries on 15 year olds.

**Public spending on childcare and education per child**  
as a percentage of the median working-age household income, 2003

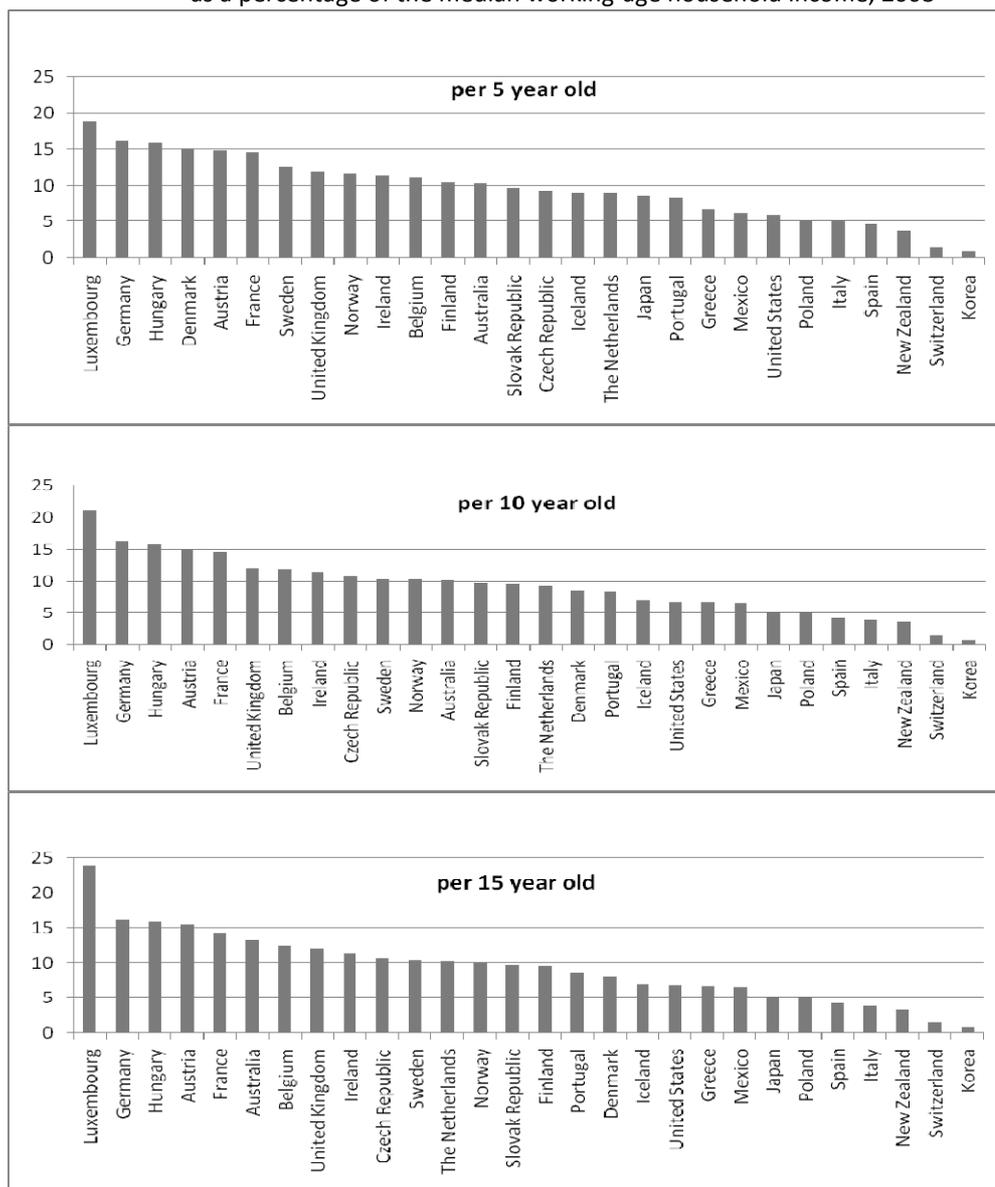


- Data is available for each age from pre-natal to 29 years and is published in *Doing Better for Children* or [www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing).

## Public Spending on Cash and In-kind Benefits and Tax Breaks for Children at Different Ages

- OECD statistics measure the amount of public resources that each country spends per child at each age. To make it easier to compare spending across countries, each country's spending has been converted to a common scale. The scale used is the percentage of the median working-age household income.
- The data show that Japan spends a moderate amount on child benefits and tax breaks for children at different ages, although less than many OECD countries and less than most countries for older children.

**Public spending on cash benefits, tax breaks and in-kind benefits per child as a percentage of the median working-age household income, 2003**

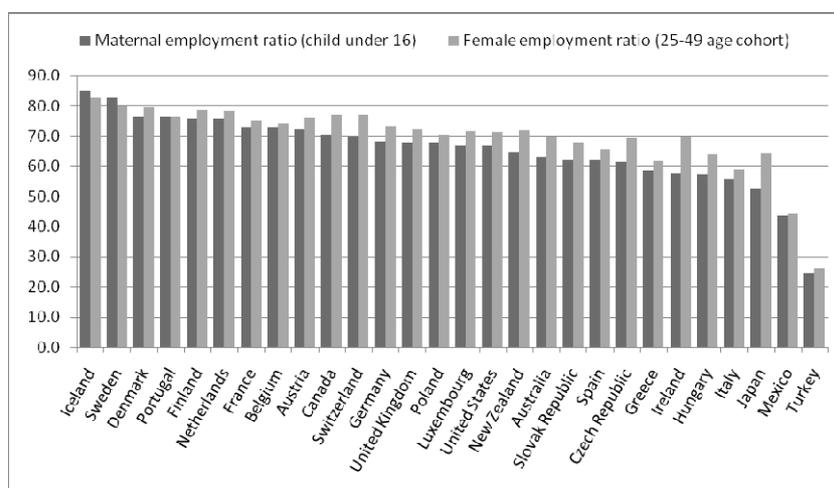


- Data is available for each age from pre-natal to 29 years and is published in *Doing Better for Children* or [www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing).

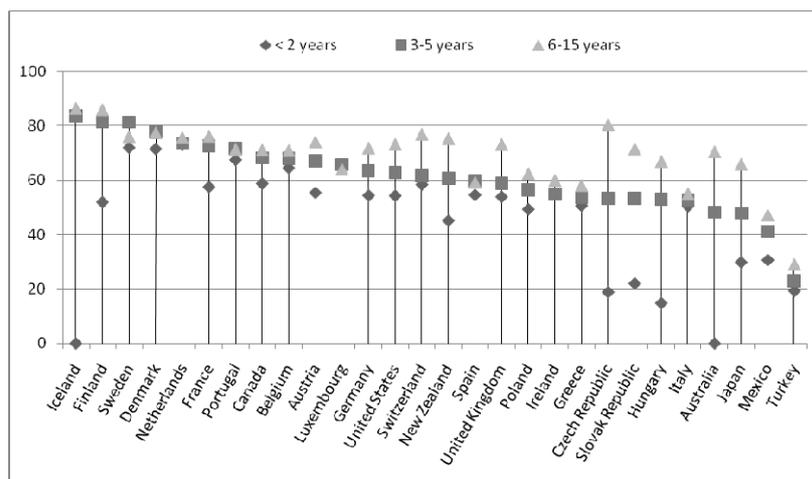
### Employment Rates for Mothers

- OECD statistics show the employment rate for women aged 25 to 49 years old and for mothers with a child under age 16.
- The employment rate is measured as the number of persons employed as a share of the whole cohort.
- The data show:
  - In Japan, around 65% of women are employed compared to around 80% in Denmark, Iceland and Sweden.
  - Japan has one of the lowest employment rates for mothers with a child under 16.
  - In Japan, only one out of two mothers with children aged 3 to 5 years old are in work: only Mexico and Turkey have lower employment rates for mothers with children of this age.

Employment rates of women and mothers  
2007



Employment rates by age of youngest child  
2007



- Data on employment rates is available on the OECD is available at [www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database)

**ANNEX 6: PLANNED EXPENDITURES ON COUNTRY POLICY DIALOGUES**

*Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)* will be financed by a combination of the assessed contributions of the OECD Part I Budget and voluntary contributions of 50 000 EUR from countries that will participate in organising one policy dialogue forum.<sup>2</sup> The table below provides a typical breakdown of how the voluntary contributions of 50 000 EUR per country will be spent. It is assumed that countries requesting a policy dialogue will also make a voluntary contribution of 10 000 EUR towards the development of the tool box, which is included in the 50 000 EUR. A revised full budget for the project will be circulated once the number of participating countries has been finalised.

**Table. Total estimated costs and breakdown of tasks and costs required for each output**

Per country review (EUR)

Output: Policy tool box and country-specific policy package		
Contribution towards development of toolbox		10,000
Output: One policy forum and a summary of the forum (OECD staff costs, overhead and direct costs for the production of materials produced for the country prior to and after each forum)		
Developing policy dialogue framework for the national/state forum through pre-visit consultation, country-specific needs assessment	15,000	
Prepare seminar material (tools tailored to the country) prior to the forum	10,000	40,000
Facilitating the forum	9,000	
Preparing and disseminating the output of the forum	6,000	
Total		50,000

2. Two forums (organised in a series) will cost 65K; two forums (separate), 80K; three forums (in a series), 80K; and three forums (separate), 110K.