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# Financing Policies for Inclusive Education Systems

Financing Policy Self-Review Tool

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**EUROPEAN AGENCY**  
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

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# **FINANCING POLICIES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

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Editors: Amanda Watkins, Edda Óskarsdóttir and Serge Ebersold

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Secretariat

Østre Stationsvej 33  
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark  
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20  
[secretariat@european-agency.org](mailto:secretariat@european-agency.org)

Brussels Office

Rue Montoyer, 21  
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80  
[brussels.office@european-agency.org](mailto:brussels.office@european-agency.org)

[www.european-agency.org](http://www.european-agency.org)

## FINANCING POLICY SELF-REVIEW TOOL

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The policy issues, goals and objectives identified in the overall [Policy Guidance Framework](#) must be directly related to policy actions that have to be taken at the different levels of the inclusive education system: school, local and national. The framework of issues, goals and objectives identified in the Policy Guidance Framework can be used as the basis for reviewing current situations relating to financing policies and then identifying policy actions to be taken.

This document presents a self-review tool that can be used to explore policy questions in relation to financing inclusive education systems, such as:

- 'Where are we now?'
- 'Where do we want to be?'
- 'How well are we doing?'

### Using the self-review tool

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The Financing Policy Self-Review Tool has been developed with two possible uses in mind:

1. It has the potential to initially be used as a support for **auditing** policy frameworks and identifying a baseline of current situations.
2. After a period of policy change and implementation, it has the potential to be used for **monitoring** policy implementation, identifying and recognising progress and developments made.

This self-review tool has been designed for use by policy-makers responsible for developing and implementing policies for inclusive education at national, regional and/or local levels. The tool has the clear intention of supporting reflection on financing policies for inclusive education with decision-makers working in different social sectors – education, health, welfare, etc. – at national, regional and/or local levels.

When used with groups of professionals, the information gathered through the tool can potentially:

- promote discussions around shared key issues;
- lead to shared understandings of key concepts across sectors;
- provide a mapping of perceived barriers and facilitators for financing policy implementation;
- support group reflection that leads to the identification of shared goals and priorities for future action.

## Completing the self-review tool

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The tables below are based around the idea of a **progressive continuum** in the development of comprehensive policies for financing inclusive education systems.

Each table contains two columns of texts representing the extremes of current policy situations (policy starting points and ideal policy situations). They are separated by shaded columns.

The texts in the left-hand column indicate **policy starting points** – i.e. there is limited or no policy action being taken in relation to a specific area.

Between the policy starting points and ideal policy situations text columns, there is a number of shaded columns containing  $\Rightarrow$  arrow symbols. These indicate a progressive continuum towards the ideal policy situation.

The next column contains texts indicating **ideal policy situations** – i.e. there is comprehensive and embedded policy action being taken in relation to a specific area.

There is then a column for noting **evidence** and possible **comments**. This allows users to provide information on the sources of their assessments, as well clarifications or evaluative comments relating to specific items. Recording such information can also be used as the basis for discussion around the evidence for areas to be built upon and areas for development.

The last column is for noting **potential priorities** and possible **ways forward**. It is provided so users can identify possible next steps relating to specific items.

By completing all of the items in the tables, an overall perceived profile of strengths and challenges in the current policy situation will be apparent.

The tool does not provide any ‘grading’ for the  $\Rightarrow$  arrow symbols indicating the progressive continuum. The intention is that countries/users discuss and agree upon their own rating scale that links in with similar tools they may use, applying labels for policy strengths and areas for reflection already used within their own working contexts.

Users should indicate the position on the continuum of their country’s current policies. This will build up an overall profile of perceived strengths and areas for reflection of current strategies in relation to financing inclusive education systems. Stakeholders can use this to identify areas to be built upon and areas for development.

Such a process is considered vital in finding solutions to overcome barriers and identifying priority policy actions linked to the framework of policy financing issues, goals and objectives.

The financing policy cross-sectoral issues, goals and objectives appear as follows in the tables:

- The four cross-sectoral issues are presented as section headings.
- The policy goals are presented as sub-headings. They are phrased as key questions for overall consideration and review.

- The specific financing policy objectives are the elements to be rated. They are presented as opposing statements at either end of a progressive continuum.

## **Adapting the self-review tool**

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The material presented in the tables is open-source and can be adapted and developed to meet specific country or local situations as needed (please refer to the [Creative Commons license](#) in this document for more details). The current tool has the potential to be adapted by country stakeholders for use in specific regional- or local-level situations. It also has the potential to be adapted into different versions for use with groups of schools or individual schools, possibly using different presentation formats or media.

It is hoped that users will adapt the materials in a variety of ways, as best suits their needs.

## Section 1. The need to ensure all learners are effectively included in appropriate educational opportunities

### 1.1 To what degree is there cross-sectoral policy commitment to the right to inclusive education for all learners?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
1.1.1 There is limited or no financial commitment towards inclusive education	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The financial commitment towards inclusive education is clearly stated and implemented		
1.1.2 There is limited or no financial commitment towards excellence for all system stakeholders	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The financial commitment towards excellence for all system stakeholders is clearly stated and implemented		
1.1.3 There is limited or no commitment towards the development of adequately resourced, diverse support measures for learners and stakeholders	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The commitment towards the development of adequately resourced, diverse support measures for learners and stakeholders is clearly stated and implemented		



**1.2 To what extent do resourcing mechanisms support the implementation of inclusive education within local contexts using a community-based approach?**

<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
1.2.1 The resources required to implement inclusive education as a key task and area of responsibility at all decision-making levels (national, local and school level) are not available	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required to implement inclusive education as a key task and area of responsibility at all decision-making levels (national, local and school level) are widely available		
1.2.2 The resources required for schools to implement their social responsibility towards inclusive education are not available	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required for schools to implement their social responsibility towards inclusive education are widely available		
1.2.3 The specific and targeted resources required for schools to meet the full range of learners' diverse needs are not available	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The specific and targeted resources required for schools to meet the full range of learners' diverse needs are widely available		

### 1.3 To what extent do resourcing mechanisms support school development and capacity-building for inclusive education?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
1.3.1 There is an imbalance between needs-based (input) funding approaches and whole-school (throughput) funding approaches	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A sustainable balance between whole-school (throughput) funding approaches and needs-based (input) funding approaches is effectively implemented		
1.3.2 There are limited or no resources available for developing inclusive learning communities	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A wide range of resources for developing inclusive learning communities is available		

## Section 2. The need to promote a school-development approach for inclusive education

### 2.1 Are incentives for the provision of supportive learning environments available to all schools?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
2.1.1 There is limited or no targeted financial support available for schools and learners at risk of under-achievement	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A range of targeted financial support possibilities is available for schools and learners at risk of under-achievement		
2.1.2 There are limited or no resources available to support effective working within learning networks	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A wide range of resources to support effective working within learning networks is available		

### 2.2 To what extent are schools supported to be autonomous in taking responsibility for meeting all learners' needs?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
2.2.1 There are limited or no degrees of flexibility in the use of public funding	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Clearly stated and effectively monitored degrees of flexibility in the use of public funding are in place		

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
2.2.2 There is limited or no school-level flexibility over curricula, assessment and resource allocation	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Clearly stated and monitored degrees of flexibility over curricula, assessment and resource allocation are in place		

### 2.3 To what extent is the implementation of inclusive education embedded within quality assurance mechanisms at school level?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
2.3.1 There are limited or no resources available to support schools to implement distributed leadership	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A wide range of resources to support schools to implement distributed leadership is available		
2.3.2 A framework of resourcing mechanisms necessary for supportive and innovative learning environments is not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	An effective framework of resourcing mechanisms necessary for supportive and innovative learning environments is in place		

## Section 3. The need to provide innovative and flexible learning environments

### 3.1 To what degree do resourcing and support systems promote capacity-building strategies at different system levels?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
3.1.1 The resources to support local community-based capacity-building strategies are not available	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There are widely available resources to support local community-based capacity-building strategies		
3.1.2 There are limited or no resources available to support school-based capacity-building strategies	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	A wide range of resources to support school-based capacity-building strategies is available		
3.1.3 There are limited or no specific and targeted resources for capacity-building strategies around the provision of external support for learners' needs	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The specific and targeted resources for capacity-building strategies around the provision of external support for learners' needs are widely available		

### 3.2 To what extent are separate, special settings effectively supported to act as a resource for mainstream settings?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
3.2.1 There are limited or no incentives for special settings to act as resource centres supporting the mainstream sector	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There is a range of incentives available for special settings to act as resource centres supporting the mainstream sector		
3.2.2 The resources required to ensure inclusive education issues are embedded within all pre- and in-service training of specialists working in separate settings are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There is a range of resources to ensure inclusive education issues are embedded within all pre- and in-service training of specialists working in separate settings		

**3.3 To what extent is inclusive education embedded within all professional development opportunities?**

<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
3.3.1 There are limited or no resources to embed inclusive education in all teacher training/ education opportunities	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required to embed inclusive education in all teacher training/education opportunities are widely available		
3.3.2 There are limited or no resources to promote leadership capabilities for developing inclusive schools	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required to promote leadership capabilities for developing inclusive schools are widely available		
3.3.3 There are limited or no resources to include parents in training/ development opportunities	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required to include parents in training/development opportunities are widely available		

## Section 4. The need to ensure transparent and accountable systems of inclusive education

### 4.1 Are there multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance strategies that promote effectively co-ordinated systems for inclusive education?

Policy starting points	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Ideal policy situations	Evidence/comments	Potential priorities/ways forward
4.1.1 The governance and resourcing mechanisms necessary to promote and guide the work of networks of schools are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Effective governance and resourcing mechanisms necessary to promote and guide the work of networks of schools are in place and widely implemented		
4.1.2 The governance and resourcing mechanisms necessary to promote and guide local-level, horizontal collaboration, resource allocation and decision-making within and across local communities are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Effective governance and resourcing mechanisms necessary to promote and guide local-level, horizontal collaboration, resource allocation and decision-making within and across local communities are in place and widely implemented		



<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
4.1.3 The governance and resourcing mechanisms required to ensure an effective professional inter-disciplinary support framework are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	Effective governance and resourcing mechanisms required to ensure an effective professional inter-disciplinary support framework are in place and widely implemented		
4.1.4 The resources required to ensure there is an effective and efficient inter-ministerial governance framework are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There are dedicated resources to ensure there is an effective and efficient inter-ministerial governance framework		

**4.2 To what degree has the move from procedural control mechanisms to systems where key stakeholders are clearly held accountable for inclusive education been supported and made?**

<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
4.2.1 There is no connection between the funding of inclusive education and evidence-based resource-planning	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The connection between the funding of inclusive education and evidence-based resource-planning is clear and embedded in policy and implementation		
4.2.2 The resources required to implement monitoring mechanisms that link schools' use of resources to evidence of progress towards efficiency and equity goals are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There are dedicated resources to implement monitoring mechanisms that link schools' use of resources to evidence of progress towards efficiency and equity goals		

<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
4.2.3 The funding of inclusive education is unconnected with the framework of system goals and indicators for inclusive education	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The funding of inclusive education is connected to and mapped against a framework of system goals and indicators for inclusive education		
4.2.4 The resources required to embed inclusive education issues within all reporting and dissemination mechanisms are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There are dedicated resources to effectively embed inclusive education issues within all reporting and dissemination mechanisms		

**4.3 To what extent do the goals and objectives for inclusive education underpin the quality assurance framework?**

<b>Policy starting points</b>	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	<b>Ideal policy situations</b>	<b>Evidence/comments</b>	<b>Potential priorities/ways forward</b>
4.3.1 The resourcing mechanisms required to ensure inclusive education issues are embedded within all quality assurance systems are not evident or in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	There are clear and effective resourcing mechanisms ensuring inclusive education issues are embedded within all quality assurance systems		
4.3.2 The resources required to develop and implement inclusive education quality assurance tools and mechanisms are not in place	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	⇒	The resources required to develop and implement inclusive education quality assurance tools and mechanisms are in place and working effectively		



Secretariat:

Østre Stationsvej 33  
DK-5000  
Odense C  
Denmark  
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20  
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office:

Rue Montoyer 21  
BE-1000  
Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80  
brussels.office@european-agency.org

[www.european-agency.org](http://www.european-agency.org)

