



Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro – SINC@HE

Work Package 1: Background analysis for inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education

Briefing Paper

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1. Introduction

This briefing paper sets out the initial proposed approach to implementing work package 1 of the SINC@HE project. WP1 - Background analysis for inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education – can be seen as the ‘baseline’ from which the strategy and activities necessary to achieve the overall goal of the project will be developed. This goal is to improve the quality and relevance of support for the inclusion of students with disabilities in Montenegro. In line with this overall goal, the main objective of SINC@HE is to create the conditions and standards that will support the inclusion of students with disabilities in HE Institutions in Montenegro, in accordance with EU practices and policies. WP1 therefore has a descriptive purpose – mapping the ‘landscape’ of policies and practices to support the inclusion of disabled students in higher education in the EU; an analytical purpose – identifying commonalities and differences in policies and practices; and a ‘benchmarking’ purpose – comparing current state of the art in Montenegro with that of the EU and identifying areas for improvement. The results of this work feed into two other work packages of the project: WP2 – developing Guidelines for disabled students and staff, and Regulatory documents for HEI’s; and WP3 – identifying, developing and implementing support services based on the needs of students with disabilities.

In this context, the main objective of WP1 is to define and map the overall background against which the project activities will be implemented. This entails three key tasks (work activities) as follows:

- Work activity 1.1 - Analysis and Report on EU practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education
- Work activity 1.2 - Analysis and Report on national practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education
- Work activity 1.3 - Integration of comparative analysis of EU and national practices and benchmarking of Higher Education Institutions in Montenegro against current policies and practices.

The main output of WP1 is a Report (Deliverable 1.1 - Analysis and benchmarking of EU/national policies) that will provide a prospective analysis of the background for students with disabilities involved in tertiary education in Montenegro, set against EU standards and good practices. It will report on opportunities and constraints for future actions in the field and provide recommendations for improving access and support for students with disabilities.

Against this background, this document sets out the approach to implementing the objective of WP1 and carrying out its constituent work activities. The document is structured as follows.

- Following this Introduction, Section 2 sets out the overall approach and methodology for WP1
- Section 3 sets out the implementation plan to deliver the approach, covering which tasks need to be done by whom and over what timescale
- A set of Annexes provide procedures and templates for data collection and analysis

2. Approach and Methodology

2.1 Overview

Table 1 summarises the three work activities that comprise WP1, together with the tasks that need to be carried out and the methods to be used.

Table 1: WP1 Approach and Methodology

Work activity	Tasks	Methods
Work activity 1.1 - Analysis and Report on EU practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education	Identification, collection, collation and analysis of material on inclusion of disabled students in HEIs Working visits to review policies and practices	Realist Review Learning Dialogues
Work activity 1.2 - Analysis and Report on national practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education	Identification, collection, collation and analysis of material on inclusion of disabled students in HEIs Working visits to review policies and practices	Realist Review Learning Dialogues
Work activity 1.3 - Integration of comparative analysis of EU and national practices and benchmarking of Higher Education Institutions in Montenegro against current policies and practices	Integration and synthesis of material on inclusion of disabled students in HEIs at EU and national levels Comparison of situation in Montenegro vis a vis EU Working visits to review results	Triangulation Benchmarking Learning Dialogues

As Table 1 shows, work activities 1.1 and 1.2 entail two common tasks:

- Firstly, identification, collection, collation and analysis of material on the inclusion of disabled students in HEIs (at EU level, for WA1.1 and at national level for WA1.2)
- Secondly, working visits by partners involved in WP1 to participating institutions, to both contribute to the collection of material on policies and practices, and to collaboratively review the material collected and analysed.

Work activity 1.3 then focuses on the integration of the material collected and analysed in WA1.1 and 1.2, followed by a synthesis of the material to provide a consolidated view of the 'landscape' of policies and practices for the inclusion of students with disabilities in HEI's within the EU. This landscape will identify the standards and good practices that can then be used to develop and apply a benchmarking framework to enable the situation in Montenegro to be compared with the EU situation.

Four data collection and analysis methods are proposed to implement these tasks:

- Realist Review
- Learning Dialogues
- Triangulation
- Benchmarking.

These are discussed in detail below.

2.2 Realist Review

Policy and practice reviews in fields characterised by complex social issues typically come up against three main problems - the potentially vast body of evidence that needs to be collected and assessed; the variability of the evidence base in terms of relevance and quality; the problem of 'attribution' – establishing 'what works' in environments that are highly contextualised. Applying traditional systematic reviews in this type of field – using for example the 'Jadad scale'¹ to measure robustness of data – hardly ever produces good results, because social interventions are too complex, too contextualised, too embedded in open systems, and too prone to change. The realist review, developed by Ray Pawson², is a way of addressing these problems. Realist review allows researchers and policy-makers to take context into consideration when making decisions and sharing knowledge. The process looks at how something is supposed to work, with the goal of finding out what strategies work for which people, in what circumstances, and how.

Pawson and other prominent writers in this field, such as Weiss³ focus on what has been termed the 'recursive discontinuous process' through which policy and policy interventions are made and carried out. The argument is that interventions involve a number of complex steps over time, rather than the implementation of a clear, and subsequently unchanging logic at the beginning. As Weiss observes, all interventions are subject to 'knowledge creep' – that is their vision, logic, objectives and purpose change over time as the policy or intervention develops. The realist review maps the direction and nature of travel along which a policy or intervention proceeds, with a particular focus on how 'context' influences that change, and how 'intangibles', like ideological positions and power relations, affect that journey. A key element of the realist review approach is a search for, and an assessment of, the 'middle-range theories' that underpin interventions. These lie somewhere between the 'grand theories' that seek to explain all social structures, interactions and behaviours within a unified theory, and the detailed minutiae of social relations that are too particular to be generalizable.⁴

Figure 1 shows how the approach works. As the Figure shows, the review starts with identification and clarification of the research purposes, focusing on the key questions the research needs to address. This clarification is normally supported by a conversation, between the research team and stakeholders who are aware of the 'problem' and who are looking for answers on to how to improve current approaches and practices. The main aim of this conversation is to pin down and further clarify the scope of the enquiry and to specify the key question for the review. Subsequent stages of the review entail an iterative process of:

- mapping the key 'theoretical drivers' that shape policy and practice
- searching the field for 'evidence', including 'grey' literature
- applying quality criteria to the material identified, based on relevance and rigour
- extracting data from the final shortlist of material to uncover evidence in support or contradiction of the theoretical drivers identified
- synthesising the results of the data extraction and analysis to re-assess the original 'map' of the field, and to produce conclusions and recommendations on 'what works, for whom under what circumstances'

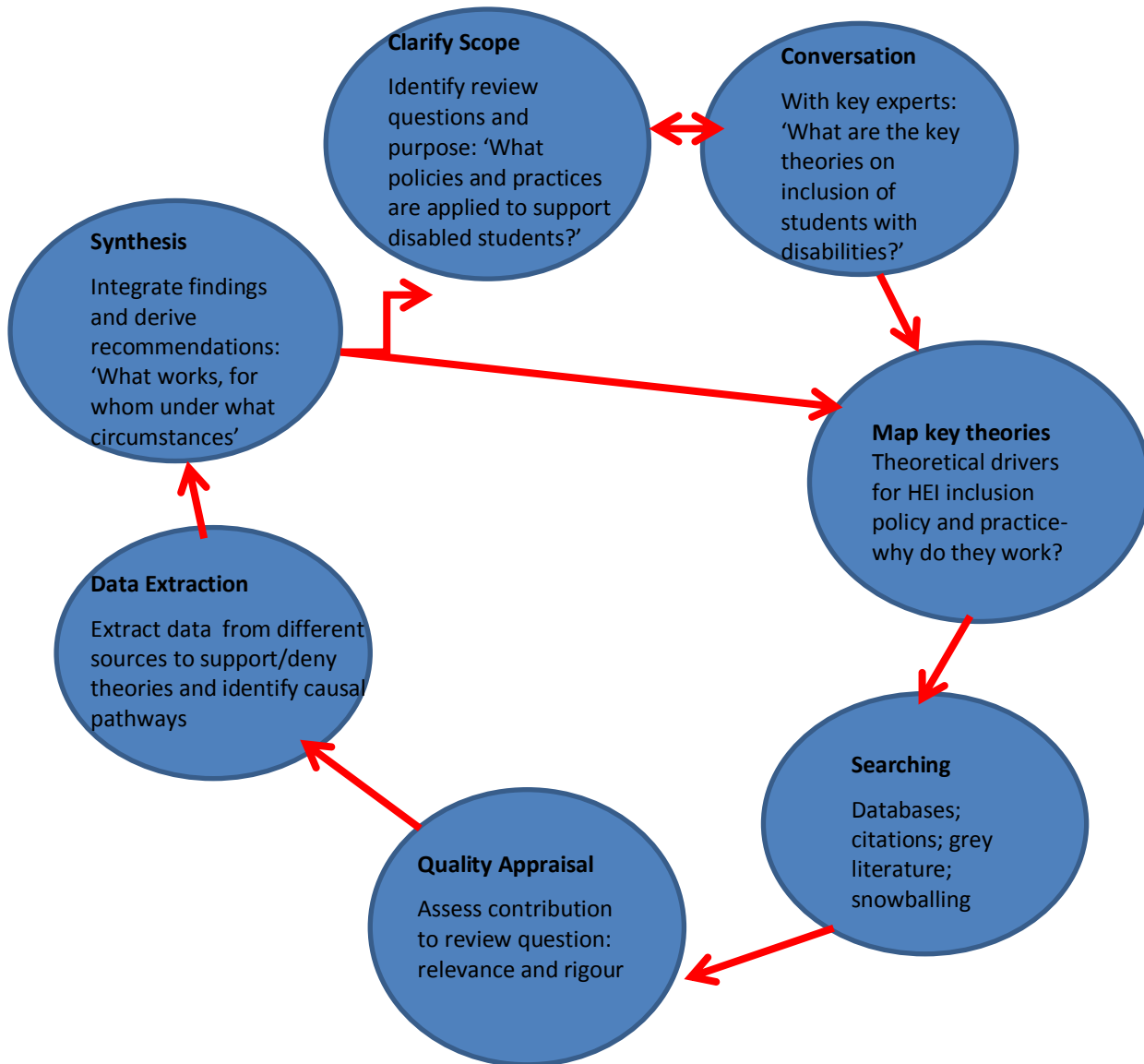
¹ Jadad, Alejandro R.; Enkin, Murray (2007). *Randomized Controlled Trials: Questions, Answers and Musings* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.

² Pawson R, Greenhalgh T, Harvey G, Walshe K. (2005), *Realist review--a new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions*. *J Health Serv Res Policy*. 2005 Jul;10 Suppl 1:21-34.

³ Weiss, C 1995. "Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families." In *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*, ed. James P. Connell et al. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

⁴ see for example Walshe C, Luker K. (2010) District nurses role in palliative care provision: a realist review. *Int J Nurs Stud*.

Figure 1: The Realist Review approach



As Pawson puts it, doing a realist review entails “feeling your way” through the available literature to find out how to do something that may involve many different ways, depending on the complex and changing social systems that surround a particular question. It is essential, therefore, that the research starts with a systematic and robust scoping exercise that specifies the parameters and boundaries of the research, and that subsequent mapping and data analysis procedures follow rigorous procedures that ensure that the material used shows a consistent ‘goodness of fit’ with the research questions. This supports the main goal of the realist review, which is to provide policy makers with a roadmap, alerting decision makers to the problems they might confront along the way, and some of the safest measures to deal with these issues. This helps decision makers understand what is happening around them and develop long-term strategies and ways of thinking that incorporate not only research results, but also different kinds of influences, ideologies and values.⁵

The use of the realist review approach as an overall methodological framework for WP1 brings into play two supplementary methods that will be used to add further analytical and explanatory power to the project. These are:

- theory of change
- logic model analysis

Theory of change seeks to identify both the explicit and implicit paradigm of change that underlie policies and interventions and their impacts assessment (Weiss, 1995⁶; Sullivan and Stewart, 2006⁷). It can be defined as a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes and context of a policy or an intervention. It involves the specification of an explicit theory of how and why a policy or intervention might cause or have caused an effect.^{8 9} Since unpacking the underlying ‘candidate theories’ that shape policy, programmes and interventions is crucial to carrying out realist reviews, it is essential that we have a robust method to do this. The focus here is on understanding how key actors construct the objectives, expected outcomes and impacts of policies and practices aimed at supporting the inclusion of disabled students in HEI’s; how these are then expressed, implicitly or explicitly, as ‘causal pathways’ that are embedded in the ‘vision’ of an intervention; how these in turn are linked to the selection and implementation of assessment methods, and whether these methods are appropriate, relevant and effective.

Logic model analysis provides a way of linking the theory of change to the ‘intervention logic’ of a policy or an intervention¹⁰ Figure 2 illustrates how this works. The Figure shows two main things: firstly, the ‘intervention logic’ of a policy, programme, intervention or project (represented by the top horizontal dotted line). This shows how a policy, programme or intervention has an implicit ‘logic’ or theory of change that reflects a strategy for dealing with identified problems, needs and issues. This theory of change is then converted into a set of objectives intended to promote this change and provide solutions to the problems and needs identified. The objectives are converted into ‘inputs’ (for example programme or intervention activities) and these in turn generate outputs (for example

⁵ Pawson R et al. 2005. “Realist review — a new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions.” *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*; 10(S1): 21-34.

⁶ Weiss, C 1995. "Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families." In *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts*, ed. James P. Connell et al. Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.

⁷ Sullivan H and M Stewart (2006), *Who Owns the Theory of Change?* *Evaluation*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 179-199

⁸ DTI (2006) *Evaluating the impact of England’s Regional Development Agencies: Developing a Methodology and Evaluation Framework*, DTI Occasional Paper NO 2

⁹ Cook, Th. (2000) “The false choice between theory-based evaluation and experimentation”, *New Directions in Evaluation*, Fall, vol. 87

¹⁰ McLaughlin, J.A. and G.B. Jordan. 1999. Logic models: a tool for telling your program’s performance story. *Evaluation and Planning* 22:65-72

training), then outcomes (immediate short term results like increased skills) and finally impacts (longer term results like reduction in social exclusion). In parallel to the intervention logic is an evaluation process (represented by the second horizontal dotted line) that monitors the actual progress and results of the programme or intervention in relation to its expected objectives, inputs and results. Using logic model analysis in conjunction with theory of change analysis enables us to assess the ‘goodness of fit’ between the underlying ‘theory’ of a policy or intervention; how this ‘intervention logic’ is put into practice, and whether and how it works. This provides us with an additional method of data extraction for Step 5 of the realist review approach – gathering evidence to confirm/deny the candidate theories we are testing.¹¹

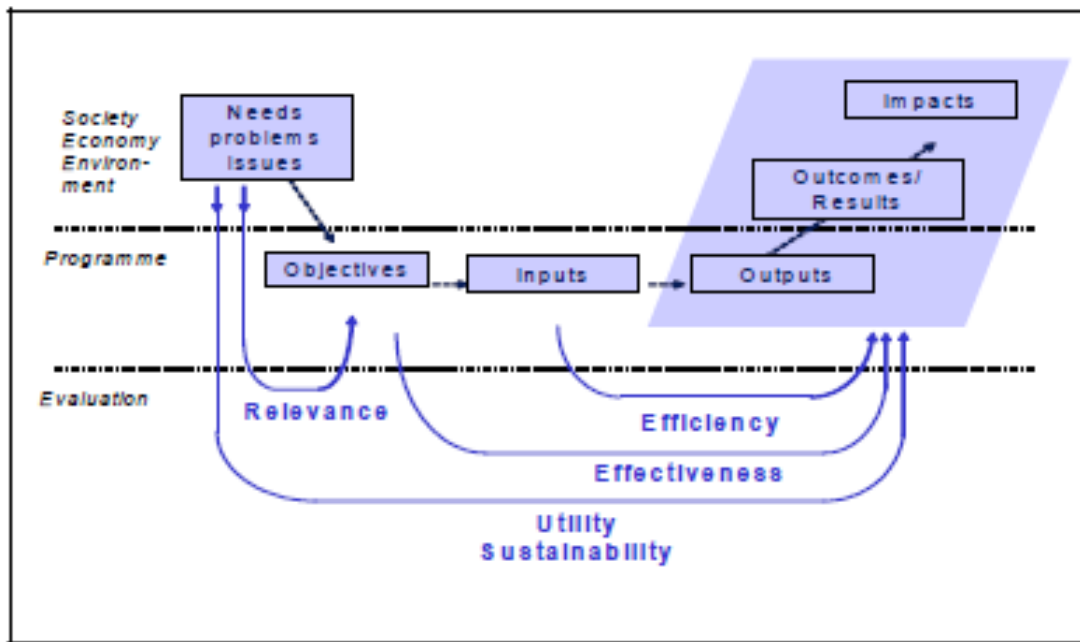


Figure 2: Logic model analysis

Annex I provides the procedures and templates to carry out the Realist Review.

2.3 Learning Dialogues

The Working Visits have three main purposes:

- to exchange knowledge between participating partners on policies and practices being applied at EU level, national level and within particular HEIs, thus contributing to the data collection and analysis effort
- to collaboratively review the results of the WP1 activities carried out (i.e. analysis and reporting on policies and practices, and benchmarking of policies and practices)
- to facilitate a common understanding between partners of what needs to be done in the next steps of the project – in particular how to effectively implement WP2 and WP3.

The proposed methodology for the Working Visits involves ‘Learning Dialogues’. These have a ‘participatory’ orientation and focus on collaboration between researchers and practitioners, and ideally with the participation of users, in order to promote ‘change through learning’. Essentially, the purpose of the Dialogues is to promote ‘sensemaking’ between the different stakeholders in this complex field, each of which has a distinctive position, perspective, ‘voice’ and power position.¹²

¹¹ Brouselle, A (2009) How about a logic analysis? A quick evaluation capitalising on best knowledge’, European Evaluation Society Conference, Praha, 2009

¹² Weick K (1995) Sensemaking in Organisations, London, Sage

The development of the approach draws on existing state of the art in theory, research and practice in collaborative learning, group learning; communities of practice and ‘action learning (Mase, Sumi & Nishimoto, 1998; Argyris and Schon).¹³ The Learning Dialogue provides a platform to enable sense-making to be implemented in practice. It incorporates an ‘Action Learning’ model to promote dialogue. Action Learning is defined as ‘an approach... which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning.’ (Pedler, 1997). Action Learning Sets essentially involve ‘role playing’ – that is getting different stakeholders to ‘step into each others shoes’. In the Learning Dialogues, participants reflect on assumptions and beliefs that shape practice in thinking about how inclusion policy and practice has evolved and where it is going. Critical reflection can be powerful because attention is directed to the root of the problem and transforms perspectives. People recognise that their perceptions may be flawed because they are filtered through views, beliefs, attitudes and feelings inherited from family, school, professional training and society. Critical thinking brings real issues to the fore and subjects them to scrutiny – allowing participants to call into question the rationale underlying their actions and to examine problems from multiple perspectives.

Annex II provides the procedures and templates to carry out the Learning Dialogues.

2.4 Triangulation

Triangulation allows for the synthesis of evidence of different types and from different sources, drawn from different kinds of research activities, in order to arrive at conclusions in situations where attributing causality is difficult (Figure 3). In particular, a key aim of triangulation is to capture and reflect the ‘voice’ of different stakeholders in order to identify and understand their different positions and perspectives. Triangulation is essential in a realist review approach for the following reasons. First, it allows for the capture of complex contextual data. Second, it avoids relying on ‘expert’ knowledge and evidence (for example that derived solely from peer-reviewed journals) and third, it provides a means to consider ideologies, values and power relations between different actors. Triangulation supports generalisability and transferability of findings in a situation like this domain, where, as noted above, the evidence base is uneven and lacks ‘robustness’. This is because it increases the ‘robustness’ and transferability of findings through cross-checking of data derived from different sources and from different actors thus helping to boost the internal validity of the research.¹⁴

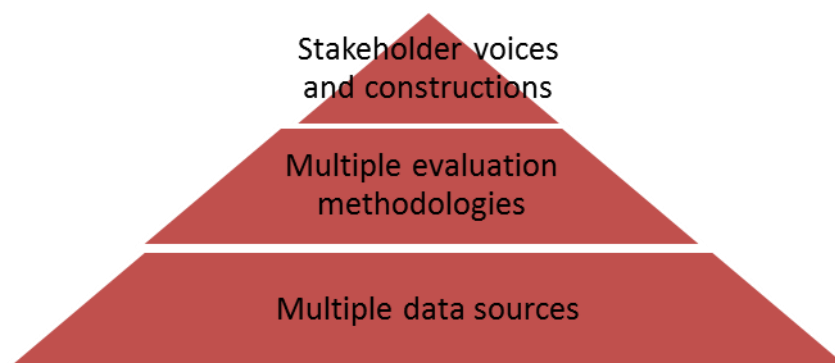


Figure 3: Triangulation

It can be seen as the penultimate stage of the ‘realist review cycle’, depicted in Figure 1 above. In line with the principles of realistic review, the analysis will identify the key success and failure

¹³ Argyris C. & Schon D. (1978) *Organisational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*, Reading MA: Addison- Wesley

¹⁴ O'Donoghue and Punch K, (2003). *O'Donoghue, T., Punch K. (2003). Qualitative Educational Research in Action: Doing and Reflecting*. Routledge

factors, key variables and enabling conditions that govern 'what works, for whom, under what conditions' with regard to support for the inclusion of students with disabilities in HEI's.

Annex III provides the procedures and templates to carry out triangulation.

2.5 Benchmarking

As noted above, work activity 1.3 focuses on the integration of the material collected and analysed in WA1.1 and 1.2, followed by a synthesis of the material to provide a consolidated view of the 'landscape' of policies and practices for the inclusion of students with disabilities in HEI's within the EU. This landscape will identify the standards and good practices that can then be used to develop and apply a benchmarking framework to enable the situation in Montenegro to be compared with the EU situation.

The overall approach proposed to benchmarking is taken from the BENVIC approach developed in collaboration with a number of organisations under the Socrates programme (Benchmarking for higher education campuses).^{15 16} The methodology is based primarily on 'Best Practice' benchmarking but reflects elements of two other approaches – process benchmarking and strategic benchmarking. Best Practice Benchmarking describes the comparison of performance data that has been obtained from studying similar processes or activities and identifying, adapting, and implementing the practices that produced the best performance results. Process benchmarking is where the initiating organisation focuses its observation and investigation of business processes with a goal of identifying and observing the best practices from one or more benchmark organisations. Strategic benchmarking involves observing how others compete.¹⁷

Benchmarking methodologies typically encompass the following methods and actions:

- Identify the subject or 'problem' area – i.e. the business/organisational processes to be assessed
- Identify other sectors that have similar processes
- Identify organizations that are leaders in these sectors
- Identify data sources for comparison
- Collect data (e.g. Survey companies for measures and practices; visit the "best practice" organisations to identify leading edge practices)
- Identify gaps between actual and desired state
- Establish future changes and targets
- Implement new and improved business practices

Since in WP1 we are working in an 'evaluation' and 'learning' mode (rather than an organisational consultancy mode) the proposed approach will emphasise the 'learning' that can be acquired from the exercise rather than the 'performance comparison' aspect. The exercise will thus not cover the last two steps of the methodology, although it will support WP2 and WP3 in establishing targets and strategies for new and improved inclusion practices.

Benchmarking indicators

A key part of the process of benchmarking is measurement and comparison. Benchmarking is essentially a way of helping organisations identify strategies and actions that will help improve their performance. In order to achieve this aim, organisations need to:

¹⁵ <http://www.benvic.odl.org/>

¹⁶ Cullen, J (2002) The BENVIC Benchmarking Indicators Manual, BENVIC Consortium, Brussels

¹⁷ The Benchmarking Book, Stapenhurst, T (2009) Elsevier

- find a method for describing and defining what kind of organisation they are (their organisational structure), and how they operate (their organisational practices), that makes sense to both themselves and other similar organisations
- find a method to assess the effectiveness of their organisational structure and practices
- choose an appropriate ‘benchmark’ (for example a similar organisation) against which to compare their structure and practices
- on the basis of this comparison, develop an action plan that is likely to lead to an improvement in organisational structure and practices.

Indicators are therefore tools to help carry out these ‘descriptive’, ‘definitional’, ‘assessment’ and ‘comparison’ tasks. This is consistent with the following ISO definition of an indicator:

“An objective attribute or characteristic of a practice or work product that supports the judgement of the performance of, or capability of, an implemented process”.

Benchmarking typically combines three types of indicator:

- structural indicators
- practice indicators
- performance indicators

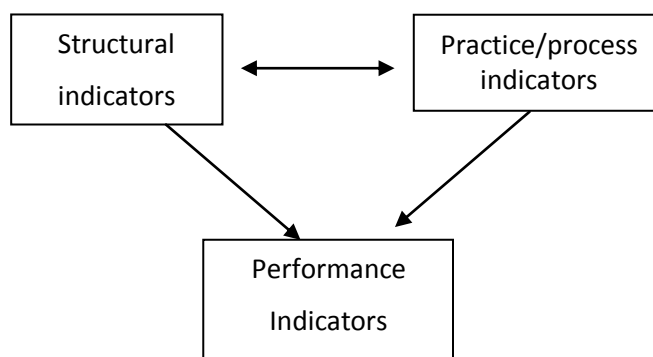
Structural indicators assess what are sometimes termed ‘enablers’. Enablers are essentially the resources available to the HEI campus to enable it to carry out its mission and objectives. They include: institutional and human competences; technology platforms and tools; governance and management structure.

Practice indicators evaluate the ways in which the HEI campus utilises its resources. They assess the work practices and processes of the campus. They focus on: the business strategy of the organisation; its targeting and access policies; its pedagogic approach.

Performance indicators assess the results of the interaction between work practices and enablers. They focus on outcomes and impacts, such as: learning outcomes; cost-benefits; technical effectiveness.

The relationship between the three types is shown in the diagram below (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Relationship between the three types of indicators



Implementing the benchmarking review in practice entails the following steps:

- Step 1: development of benchmarking framework and indicators (derived from analysis of the results of WA1.1 and WA1.2). This will specify the organisational processes to be

assessed and the criteria and indicators used to compare the Montenegrin HEIs against EU benchmarks

- Step 2: initial mapping of Montenegrin HEIs against EU benchmarks
- Step 3: Selection of EU HEI 'leaders' for benchmarking comparison
- Step 4: Benchmarking of Montenegrin HEIs against comparator HEI's
- Step 5: Analysis and identification of areas for improvement

Annex IV provides the procedures and templates to carry out the benchmarking.

3. Implementation Plan

3.1 Task allocation

Table 2 shows the detailed breakdown of tasks and activities for WA1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, together with the partners responsible.

Table 2: Task Allocation for WP1

Work activity 1.1 - Analysis and Report on EU practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education		
Task	Activities	Responsible Partners
Methodology and templates	Development of methodology and data collection and analysis templates	Arcola
Working Visit, University of Macedonia	Presentations and discussion on support for disabled students at University of Macedonia and Aristoteles University	UOM, Arcola, ME Partners
Review of Methodology and templates	Partners Meeting	All partners
Mapping and analysis of practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education, EU level	Data audit Quality and relevance analysis Content analysis	Arcola
D1.1 Report on analysis of EU practices and policies for inclusion in HE	Synthesis of EU mapping and analysis	Arcola, with inputs from all partners
Work activity 1.2 - Analysis and Report on national practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education		
Task	Activities	Responsible Partners
Mapping and analysis of practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education, national level	Data audit Quality and relevance analysis Content analysis	UW, UNIMC, UDG, UOM, UNIM, DSIS Country allocation to be decided
Working Visit to UOM, Greece	Learning Dialogue: review of D1.1; data collection of policies and practices in Greece	UOM, UDG, UNIM, IERK, AYDYM, MIS
Working Visit to UW, Poland	Learning Dialogue: review of D1.1; data collection of policies and practices in Poland	UW, UDG, IERK
Working Visit to UNIMC, Italy	Learning Dialogue: review of D1.1; data collection of policies and practices in Italy	UNIMC, UNIM, AYDYM, MIS, FMHN
D1.2 Report on analysis of national practices and policies for HE inclusion	Synthesis of national mapping and analysis	Arcola, with inputs from all partners
Work activity 1.3 - Integration of comparative analysis of EU and national practices and benchmarking of Higher Education Institutions in Montenegro against current policies and practices.		
Task	Activities	Responsible Partners
Benchmarking framework	Define assessment criteria and indicators for benchmarking	Arcola
1 st Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM: Benchmarking analysis HEIs in Montenegro	Apply benchmarking framework to assessment of analysis HEIs in Montenegro through Learning Dialogue	UOM, UW, Arcola, DSIS, UNIM
Stage 2 Benchmarking	Continue applying benchmarking framework to assessment of analysis HEIs in Montenegro through desk	UDG, UNIM, IERK, AYDYM, MIS

	research	
Stage 3 benchmarking: Comparator analysis design	Choose EU HEI 'leaders' as comparator	UDG, UNIM, IERK, AYDYM, MIS
Stage 4 benchmarking: 2nd Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM: Benchmarking comparator analysis HEIs in Montenegro	Apply benchmarking framework to assess ME institutions against their chosen comparators through Learning Dialogue	UOM, UW, Arcola, DSIS, UNIM
Stage 5 Benchmarking analysis	Report on benchmarking results	UDG, UNIM, IERK, AYDYM, MIS
3 rd Working visit to Arcola	Review of benchmarking results	UDG, UNIM, Arcola
D1.3 Report of comparative analysis of EU/national practices	Integration, synthesis and reporting of work package 1	Arcola, with inputs from all partners

3.2 Timing

The GANTT chart below shows the scheduling for the implementation plan for WP1.

	DEC 2011				JAN 2012				FEB 2012				MAR 2012			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Work activity 1.1																
Methodology and templates	■	■														
Working Visit, University of Macedonia						■										
Review of Methodology and templates						■										
Mapping and analysis, EU level				■	■	■	■									
D1.1 Report on analysis of EU practices and policies for inclusion in HE								■								
Work activity 1.2																
Mapping and analysis, national level							■	■	■	■						
Working Visit to UOM, Greece								■								
Working Visit to UW, Poland									■							
Working Visit to UNIMC, Italy										■						
D1.2 Report on analysis of national practices and policies for HE inclusion											■					
Work activity 1.3																
Benchmarking framework										■						
1 st Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM											■					
Stage 2 Benchmarking												■				
Stage 3 benchmarking: Comparator analysis design													■			
Stage 4 benchmarking: 2nd Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM													■			
Stage 5 Benchmarking analysis														■		
3 rd Working visit to Arcola															■	
D1.3 Report of comparative analysis of EU/national practices																■

Annex I: Procedures and templates for Realist Review.

1. Overview

The realist review entails the following steps:

- Step 1: The conversation
- Step 2: Searching
- Step 3: Quality and relevance appraisal
- Step 4: Content Analysis
- Step 5: Theory of Change and Logic model analysis
- Step 6: Summary Report

2. The Conversation

The review starts with identification and clarification of the research purposes, focusing on the key question on the research needs to address. This will be done via a conversation, between the research team and key stakeholders. The main aim of this conversation is to pin down and further clarify the scope of the enquiry and to specify the key question for the review. The conversation will be done as follows:

- As part of the 1st Working Visit involving Arcola, UOM and the Montenegrin partners, Arcola will co-ordinate an exploratory Discussion group. This will: clarify the key research questions for WP1; identify the underling 'theories' driving policy and practice in the field; review the proposed methodology.
- The results of this initial conversation will be further discussed in the subsequent partners Meeting.

3. Searching

The second sub-activity involves mapping and collating information on sources of material to be used in the review – i.e. a Data Audit . The data audit will identify relevant source material for mapping of policy and practice. By 'material' we mean resources of relevance to the project research questions. This will include 'content' (mainly textual material drawn from the 'formal' knowledge base, e.g. books, journal articles), but also 'grey' literature like conference papers and websites) as well as information on 'activities' (programmes, interventions, projects).

The search strategy will involve the following:

Collation of available material. This will draw on the literature reviews completed through relevant studies (e.g. Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED)).

Additional searches of bibliographic databases.

The search will cover: i) searches of bibliographic sources and databases, covering books, publications and journals in the field ii) Studies and research reports iii) Conferences and conferences iv) trans-European databases (e.g. the FP7 database of funded projects; the Lifelong Learning Programme database of projects; database of projects funded under the EQUAL programme; initiatives contained in the e-practice portal v) additional sources searched through search engines

4. Quality and relevance appraisal

This sub-activity applies a quality appraisal exercise to ensure that the most appropriate and relevant material is included in the mapping exercise. This involves checking the material for relevance and rigour from a 'fitness for purpose' perspective. Fitness for purpose is defined as: i) status regarding

inclusion and exclusion criteria - ii) relevance to the research questions iii) comprehensiveness of the material. The inclusion/exclusion criteria defines which kinds of material should be included and which should be excluded (e.g. which kinds of practices?); the geographical parameters of the review (e.g. a representative spread of countries rather than all countries in all EU regions).

The criteria will then be applied to screen the long list of material identified by the Data Audit, using two 'screeners' from the research team assessing each item against the relevance, inclusion and exclusion criteria defined above, to produce a short list of material. At this stage, the screening will involve 'light touch' screening, i.e. scanning abstracts, keywords against the criteria.

The checklist below provides a simple way of carrying out the appraisal. It consists of six assessment criteria. Apply the checklist to each item identified, ticking each of the boxes that meets the relevant criteria. Then add up the number of ticked boxes and write the total in the 'score' box at the bottom of the table.

Criteria	Question	Tick box
Domain relevance	Does the item cover inclusion of people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target Group relevance	Does the item cover students in higher education?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geographical relevance	Does the item cover countries in the EU, European Economic Area or Candidate Countries?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness	Is the item relatively recent (i.e. produced after January 2000)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality	Is the item sufficiently well-written and intelligible enough to summarise?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensiveness	Is the material extensive enough in breadth and depth to allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn?	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCORE		

The higher the checklist score, the stronger the case for selecting a particular item for subsequent analysis.

The final stage will compile a database of the shortlisted material. The list will include a basic 'profile' of each example, covering, inter alia:

- item type (e.g. policy; programme; project; practice)
- source and date of item (e.g. book; journal; website)
- type of entity/organization/network covered
- target group (e.g. all disabled; all disabled students; specific categories of disability)
- categories of theoretical concept/explanatory framework covered (e.g. social capital social inclusion, equity, social justice, social learning)
- categories of inclusion outcome/delivery covered

5. Content Analysis

The Mapping exercise will develop and apply a content analysis procedure to classify and document the residual database of items collected following the Quality Appraisal. The procedure will be based on the 'realist review' approach outlined above. Technically, this approach follows established content analysis procedures (Stemler, 2001) using "a systematic, replicable technique for

compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding”¹⁸. These explicit rules of coding entail constructing a coding frame that enables each item in the database to be systematically analysed using common constructs (Thorndike, 1971; Nuendorf, 2002).

There are two ways in practice of carrying out this content analysis: either by manual ‘inspection, or by using software, like NVivo’. It is proposed to use the first method for this review – manual inspection. This entails scanning each item of material manually, using a classification framework and coding constructs to map the occurrence of particular items, and the relationships between them. This classification frame and set of constructs are then modified and added to as the analysis develops. An initial coding frame is shown below. The coding frame is divided into two sections.

Section 1 provides details on the item (name; type of material; source; brief summary of the content).

Section 2 provides a framework for analyzing the item. Each item should be analysed across three dimensions:

- A Thematic dimension (column 1), reflecting the key themes and research questions of the project
- Each theme is broken down into a number of ‘constructs’ that should be searched for within each item being analysed (column 2)
- Codes and Examples or descriptors of how each construct is treated (described) in the material being analysed should be entered into Column 3. This could include direct quotations from the text/material to help illustrate the study research questions

Coding frame for analysis of policies and practices for disabled students in higher education

Template compiled by:		Item Name	
Item Type (policy; programme; project; practice)		Source (Where information obtained (e.g. book; website url)	
Summary (give a brief description of the content of the item)			
Content Analysis			
Theme	Construct	Code/Descriptor/Example	
Policy domain	Education policy areas		
	Inclusion policy areas		
	Disability policy areas		
	Other (e.g. youth policy)		
Evolution	Date originated		
	Original key focus and objectives		
	Changes to key focus and objectives		
Targeting strategy	Groups targeted		
	Legal basis of strategy		
	Conceptual/theoretical model underlying inclusion approach		

¹⁸ Stemler, S (2001) An introduction to content analysis

Implementation strategy	Support principles for inclusion	
	Accessibility measures: transport	
	Accessibility measures: built environment	
	Accessibility measures: ICT	
	Accessibility measures: fundamental rights	
	Accessibility standards applied	
	Representation of disabled students in HEI governance	
	Pre-entry Support services	
	Study Support	
	Post-study support services	
Outcomes and Impacts	Evaluation approach and measures	
	Outcomes identified for disabled students	
	Longer term impacts Outcomes identified for disabled students	
Good practices and learning	Innovative aspects	
	Good practices identified	
	What learning can be transferred to SINC@HE	
Other	Other	

Note that the initial coding frame is a ‘first baseline’ for the content analysis. It is expected that additional themes, constructs and descriptors will be added as the analysis develops. To remind you of this, there is space provided in the template for ‘Other’ themes.

6. Theory of change and intervention logic analysis

Theory of change analysis, as noted above, can be defined as a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes and context of a policy or intervention. It involves the specification of an explicit theory of how and why a policy or intervention might cause or have caused an effect.^{19 20} Intervention logic analysis is intended to isolate the underlying ‘logic’ of a policy or an intervention and then looks for causal pathways that link its objectives to impacts. In this review, we will combine theory of change and intervention logic modelling to explore how the conceptual and explanatory features of policies and interventions can be more explicitly linked to actual practices (i.e. the delivery of inclusion services for disabled students) and then associated with particular outcomes and impacts.²¹ The approach firstly uses content analysis of relevant documents to develop a theory of change for a specific policy/intervention (by unpacking the ‘intervention logic’ and how this relates to the underlying conceptual approach) and then constructs a ‘logic model’ to identify how the overall ‘intervention logic’ is applied; how this relates to objectives and results; the method and evidence chosen to assess results and ‘goodness of fit’ between the intervention logic and the assessment methods chosen.²² The approach is illustrated in

¹⁹ DTI (2006) Evaluating the impact of England’s Regional Development Agencies: Developing a Methodology and Evaluation Framework, DTI Occasional Paper NO 2

²⁰ Cook, Th. (2000) “The false choice between theory-based evaluation and experimentation”, New Directions in Evaluation, Fall, vol. 87

²¹ Junge, K and J Cullen (2011): Developing logics of intervention and related common indicators for the next ESFOperational Programmes: Final Report, DG EMP, Brussels

²² McLaughlin, J.A. and G.B. Jordan. 1999. Logic models: a tool for telling your program’s performance story. Evaluation and

Figure I.1.

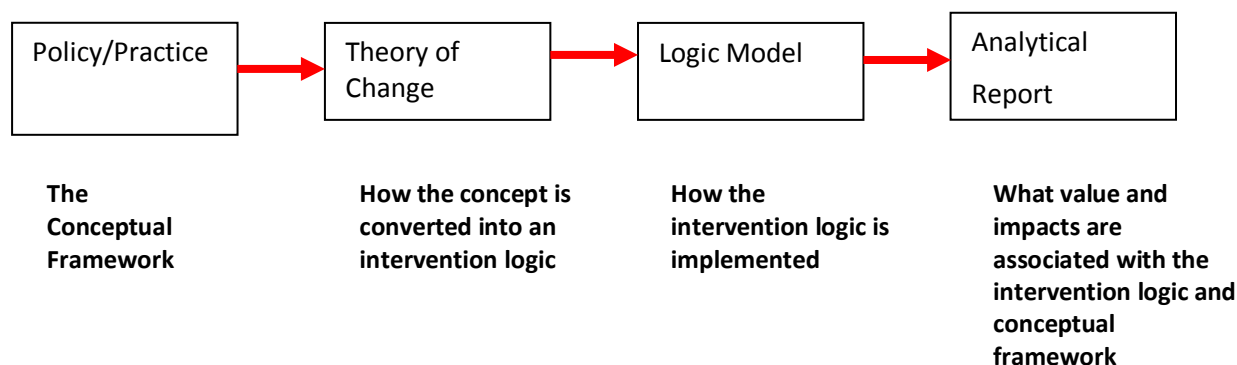


Figure I.1: Establishing ‘causal chains’ through theory of change and logic model analysis

As Figure I.1 shows, we begin with the ‘raw material’ – the policies and practices compiled through the data audit - which contains both explicit and implicit theories about how support measures can facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities. A set of indicative examples that reflect the range of items collected is then chosen. Each selected item is then scanned to identify i) the theoretical model that gives the policy or practice its main focus ii) the expected changes associated with applying this theory. Intervention logic analysis then further unpacks the theory of change, looking for the implementation mechanisms (objectives; actions; expected results; assessment choices) that operationalize the intervention logic.

The intervention logic model, as shown in the illustration below, typically contains the following components in a linear sequence that represent the logical flow from:

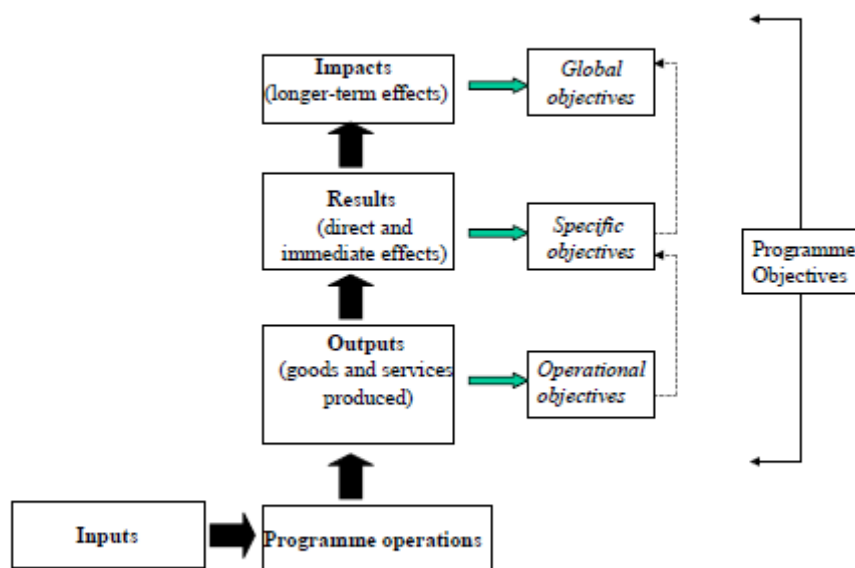
1. inputs (resources) to
2. activities, programs or processes, to
3. the immediate outputs of the activities that are delivered, to
4. outcomes or results that are the long-term consequences of delivering outputs, and which denote some change in behaviour.

In addition, logframes will contain:

- the indicators used to assess results
- the means of verification (MoV) that provide the data to apply the indicators
- ‘assumptions’ - defined as ‘external factors beyond the control of policies, programmes, projects and programme and project managers which may influence positively or negatively their goals and outcomes’. ²³ Another way of defining assumptions is ‘the external conditions that need to be fulfilled if the logic of the logical model components are to hold true’.

Planning 22:65-72.
²³ see, for example, *The Logical Framework Approach, Handbook for objectives-oriented planning*, Fourth edition, NORAD, 1999

Figure 2.2 a: The Logical Framework



For this review, we will use an analysis framework that combines theory of change with a simplified intervention logic model, as shown in the Table below.

Theory of change – intervention logic coding framework

Name of policy/practice							
Theories of change	Expected changes	Objectives/Goals	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Indicators	Means of Verification

Annex II: Procedures and templates to carry out the Learning Dialogues

Overview

The method used for the Learning Dialogues is the 'Action Learning Set'. An ALS is a means of getting stakeholders who are involved in an organization, a partnership, an initiative – or any environment in which communication, collaboration and learning are considered to be important – to work together and share ideas, experiences and perspectives. They provide a 'safe space' for review, reflection and learning. They are particularly focused on applying learning to support change, and in supporting learning and change through 'action'.

The distinctive features of Action Learning Sets are:

- They emphasise the importance of looking at a problem or issue from the different points of view of different stakeholders, and treating each different stakeholder 'voice' equally
- They typically involve 'role-playing' and 'role swapping' in order to reflect the different stakeholder voices
- They aim to promote 'sensemaking' – aligning, as far as possible, the different stakeholder perspectives in order to arrive at an agreement on ways forward
- They look at things from a 'whole systems' viewpoint – for example how change in one part of an organization or partnership affects another part

How they work

Action Learning Sets involve 'small group work' with groups representing key actors and stakeholders. Group work is co-ordinated by a facilitator in order to generate practical learning by reflecting on experiences in a structured way. There are typically three small groups, each taking on a stakeholder 'role' and 'voice' to explore the particular topic/theme selected for the Learning Dialogue. For example the three groups could represent:

- policy-makers – those responsible for designing and operationalising policies to support the inclusion of disabled students
- programme managers – those responsible for implementing policies
- beneficiaries – those who are expected to benefit from the implementation (i.e. disabled students)

Each group needs to elect a representative (an 'assessor') whose role is to visit the other groups in order to provide their group perspective on the task each group has been allocated. The aim of this 'assessor' role is to ensure that the views and positions of the different stakeholders are represented in the work that the groups do. The tasks are set according to the particular focus of the Learning Dialogue, and its themes. These are set out in the Table below.

The final session of the ALSI is a plenary session where the group as a whole discusses the outcomes of the Action Learning Set and, through critical review and discussion, produces an integrated 'Green Paper'. It is facilitated by the Learning Set Director. It involves the following activities:

- The groups come back together as a whole.
- The Director facilitates an open discussion about what has been found, and what has been learned
- The group as a whole comes to a common position on what should be presented in terms of the agreed outcomes of the Learning Dialogue.

Work activity 1.1 - Analysis and Report on EU practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education		
Learning Dialogue	Focus/Themes	Responsible Partners
Working Visit, University of Macedonia	1. Review of WP1 Methodology 2. Preliminary discussion on needs of disabled students. Illustrated by support provision at University of Macedonia and Aristoteles University	UOM, Arcola, Aristoteles University, ME Partners
Work activity 1.2 - Analysis and Report on national practices and policies for the inclusion of disabled students in Higher Education		
Task	Focus/Themes	Responsible Partners
Working Visit to UOM, Greece	1. Review of D1.1; 2. Data collection of policies and practices in Greece	UOM, UDG, UNIM, IERK, AYDYM, MIS
Working Visit to UW, Poland	1. Review of D1.1; 2. Data collection of policies and practices in Poland	UW, UDG, IERK
Working Visit to UNIMC, Italy	1. Review of D1.1; 2. Data collection of policies and practices in Italy	UNIMC, UNIM, AYDYM, MIS, FMHN
Work activity 1.3 - Integration of comparative analysis of EU and national practices and benchmarking of Higher Education Institutions in Montenegro against current policies and practices.		
Task	Focus/Themes	Responsible Partners
1 st Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM: Benchmarking analysis HEIs in Montenegro	Benchmarking of HEIs in Montenegro, set against EU standards and good practices	UOM, UW, Arcola, DSIS, UNIM
Stage 4 benchmarking: 2nd Benchmarking Working visit to UNIM: Benchmarking comparator analysis HEIs in Montenegro	Benchmarking of ME institutions against their chosen comparators	UOM, UW, Arcola, DSIS, UNIM
3 rd Working visit to Arcola	Review of benchmarking results	UDG, UNIM, Arcola

ANNEX III: Triangulation: Summary Templates for Policies and Practices

Triangulation involves integrating the data derived from the activities in work activity 1.2 – i.e. the desk research together with the Learning Dialogues – to produce an overview of the landscape of support for disabled students in HEI’s at the national level. To support EU and cross-national comparison, the template below provides a tool to summarise the situation for each of the countries covered in the review, by integrating the results of the content analysis and the Learning Dialogues

Summary Template

Country Name	
Policy and legal background	
Implementation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24)	
Implementation of Article 9 of the United Nations Convention (transport, built environments and ICTs)	
Implementation of EU Disability Action Plan 2003-2010	
Implementation of EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020	
EU Education and Training policies (ET2020) with regard to disability	
EU 2020 policies with regard to disability	
Implementation of national policies on disabled students in HEI’s	
Changes to policies and legislation in last decade	
Key Drivers	
Are there particular theories/models on social inclusion/education that are influencing policy and practice?	
What other factors are influencing policy and practice? (e.g. employment situation)	
Targeting	
Is there a specific targeting strategy adopted? (e.g. all disabled people; split into types of disability)	
Implementation	
What kinds of support measures are implemented in HEI’s for disabled students?	
Which specific areas do they cover? (e.g. accessibility; built environment; rights; governance)	

Are there support measures to help disabled students apply for higher education?	
Are there support measures to help disabled students when they have completed their studies?	
Outcomes and Impacts	
Have studies/evaluations been carried out to assess the outcomes and impacts of support for disabled students?	
What outcomes and impacts have been identified?	
Good practices and learning	
Can examples of innovation be identified?	
What good practices can be identified?	

Annex IV: Procedures and templates to carry out the Benchmarking Analysis

The benchmarking activity (work activity 1.3) is split into two parts:

- benchmarking of ME against EU standards and practices
- benchmarking of ME HEI's against comparator EU HEI's

1. Benchmarking of ME against EU standards and practices

Policy and legal standards	EU standards and good practices	ME situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Implementation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24)			
Implementation of Article 9 of the United Nations Convention (transport, built environments and ICTs)			
Implementation of EU Disability Action Plan 2003-2010			
Implementation of EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020			
EU Education and Training policies (ET2020) with regard to disability			
EU 2020 policies with regard to disability			
Implementation of national policies on disabled students in HEI's			
Targeting	EU standards and good practices	ME situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Targeting strategy adopted			
Implementation	EU standards and good practices	ME situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Support measures on rights			
Support measures on accessibility; built environment			
Support measures on governance			
Support measures on ICTs			
Pre-entry support measures			
Post-qualification support measures			
Outcomes and Impacts	EU standards and good practices	ME situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Evaluation/research carried out on policy and practice impacts			
Actual outcomes and impacts identified			

2. Benchmarking of ME HEI's against comparator EU HEI's

ME Institution Name		Comparator Institution Name	
Structural (enabling) benchmarks	Comparator Institution situation	ME institution situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Institutional competences (structures for supporting disabled students)			
Human competences (e.g. dedicated support staff)			
Technology platforms and tools to support disabled students			
Governance mechanisms (e.g. representation of disabled students)			
Management structures and practices to support disabled students			
Other (specify)			
Practices benchmarks	Comparator Institution situation	ME institution situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Implementation of UN/EU policy and legislation			
Implementation of national policy and legislation			
Support measures on rights and access			
Pedagogic support measures			
Pastoral support measures			
Post-qualification support measures			
Performance benchmarks	Comparator Institution situation	ME institution situation	Gaps and areas for improvement
Evaluation mechanisms and procedures			
Standards and SLA's in place for disabled students			
Quality Controls			
Performance measures and metrics re disabled students			
Performance outcomes			