

A Toolkit for Developing, Implementing and Monitoring Adult Education Strategies



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Adult Education Strategies



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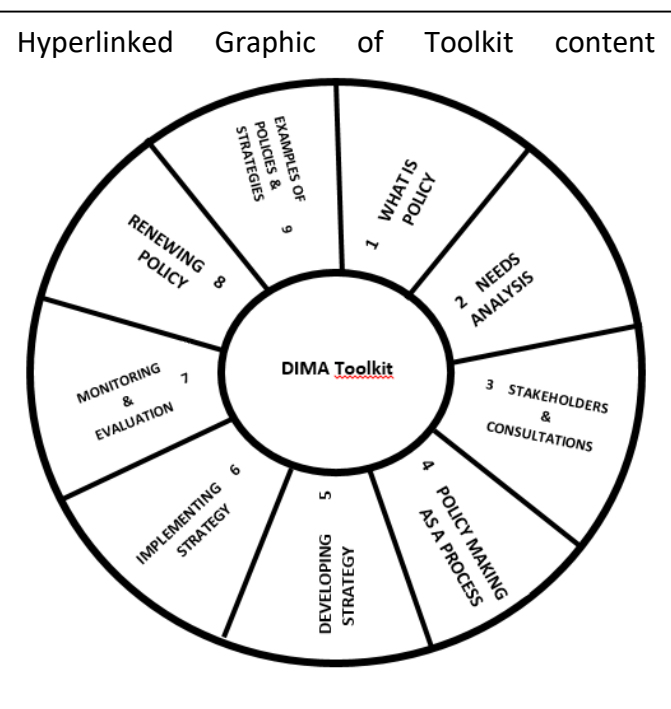
Toolkit Overview

This Tool-Kit is a product of the DIMA project ‘A Toolkit for Developing, Implementing and Monitoring Adult Education Strategies’. Research was carried out across six European countries: Cyprus, Ireland, Slovenia, Slovakia and a Pan-European Partner based in Brussels. The project emerged in response to the findings of the report arising from a consultation by the European Commission with member countries in June 2014 "Towards a European area of skills and Qualifications"¹, and a 2012 report titled “Mind the Gap: Education Inequality across EU Regions”² that highlighted the regional disparities in Adult Education provision.

Both these documents acknowledge a trend towards decreasing adult education participation exacerbated by demographic trends and financial challenges. Participation in adult learning has continued to fall, from 9.8 % of the 25-64 age group population in 2005 to 9.1 % in 2010.

Participation in adult learning now stands at 10.7 % (2015), thus making the increased Strategic framework – Education & Training 2020 (ET2020)³ target of 15 % adult education participation across the EU by 2020 a greater challenge. Yet the ET2020 framework for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth acknowledges lifelong learning and skills development as key elements in response to the current economic and demographic challenges. The strategy highlights the major role of adult learning in achieving the Europe 2020 goals by enabling adults, particularly the low-skilled and older workers, to improve their ability to adapt to labour market and societal changes.

Project partners developed country profiles on the basis of qualitative data gathered in each country. From this data a state of the art report was produced ([http://dima-](http://dima-project.eu/images/documents/DIMAComparativeReportFinal.pdf)



[project.eu/images/documents/DIMAComparativeReportFinal.pdf](http://dima-project.eu/images/documents/DIMAComparativeReportFinal.pdf)). The instruments in this Toolkit emerged from that report and elements of practice garnered from country profiles.

Within this toolkit there are nine modules (See figure). Toolkit modules relate to the online curriculum and course that accompanies the toolkit. As a result of reading the toolkit and engaging with the course high level policy makers, area/regional adult education managers, and adult education practitioners delivering programs will have greater knowledge and enhanced skills as set out in figure.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/consultations/documents/skills-results_en.pdf

² <http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/mind-the-gap-1>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en

Toolkit overview	What will you learn from each module
Nine Modules	At the end of each module the reader will be better able to ...
1. What is Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ confidently define policy ✓ list the components of a policy
2. Needs Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ identify two suitable means of needs identification for policy making ✓ demonstrate capacity to undertake needs analysis
3. Stakeholders & Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ list 3 consultation methods ✓ argue why consultation is/is not an essential component of policy making
4. Policy making as a Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ defend the 'policy as a process' concept rather than 'policy as a product'
5. Developing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ list the schedule of steps in developing strategy ✓ list the components of a strategy
6. Implementing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify three challenges when implementing an adult education strategy ✓ suggest how each can be addressed
7. Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ select one monitoring and evaluation tool that combines qualitative and quantitative feedback ✓ write 100 words on why monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential for the policy making process
8. Renewing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ answer 2 questions 1. "What is rolling policy making?" and 2. "What is incremental policy making?" related to module 8
9. Examples of policies and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ discuss the examples provided in module 9

	After perusing this toolkit readers will be better able to...
Course on Adult Education Policy Making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidently define policy 2. Demonstrate capacity to undertake needs analysis 3. Undertake consultation for policy making 4. Understand the concept of 'policy as a process' 5. Know the steps in developing strategy

6. Recognize the challenges in implementing a strategy
7. Know why monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential for the policy making process
8. Understand that policy is incremental
9. Be informed by examples provided in module 9

Each section contains background narrative and template/pro-forma checklists to guide high level policy makers, area/regional adult education managers, and adult education practitioners enhance their engagement with adult education policy making. The outcome of the toolkit is:

1. A greater understanding of the public policy making in the adult education
2. A greater coherence between policies at European, national and regional levels
3. Advancement towards the 15% participation in adult education target across the European Union by 2020
4. Greater provision of planned, integrated, accessible and needs driven adult education for a wider population.
5. Enhanced practice, management and performance evaluation.

Comments and feedback are welcome to DIMA at:

1. Website: <http://dima-project.eu/en/>
2. Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/dimaprojecteu/?fref=ts>
3. Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/AdultStrategy>

Project Partners	Country	Website
Ministry of Education and Culture	Cyprus	http://www.moec.gov.cy/
Centre For Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology Ltd-CARDET	Cyprus	http://www.cardet.org/
Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University	Ireland	https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/adult-and-community-education
Andragoski Center Republike Slovenije	Slovenia	www.acs.si
Narodny Ustav Celozivotneho Vzdelavania	Slovakia	www.nuczv.sk
European Association for the Education of Adults	Belgium	www.eaea.org

1. What and Why Policy Making in Adult Education

Introduction

When we speak about policy most people show a distinct lack of interest. The statements “Policy is boring!” or “Policy is not relevant to me!” is indicative of how ill-defined and contested our understanding of policy is. Therefore, this module will offer a definition of policy and why policy making is relevant to any adult educator.

What is policy?

Policy applies to a particular settings ranging from macro (big picture) to micro (local level delivery). There are policy statements attributed to global organizations and equally valid policy statements attributed to the most local and proximate local groupings. The notion of policy making presented in this toolkit is universal and intends to be inclusive and relevant. Every adult education agent/agency should publish policy statements that inform their target group, membership, stakeholders, and public. The published policy should guide the action of the adult education agent/agency.

Policy can be defined as a set of principles underpinning and guiding decision making within an adult education agent/agency. Policy may be a comprehensive statement providing an overarching structure from signal of intent to the final outcome. The policy of the adult education agent/agency should underpin the achievement of outcomes for that agent/agency. However, where policy does not result in expected outcomes, policy statements remain valid as an intent.

Policies have intended and unintended consequences for society. Policy determines who gets what, when they get it, and how they get it. Policies are usually perceived as the document, but may actually to be evident in a range of outputs. Policies are revealed through texts, discourses, symbols and practices evidenced in regulations, laws, processes, services, actions and other positively or negatively applied attributes.

Policies are ideally the outcome of a dynamic process and not stultified by static regulations. Policy is continuously interpreted and refined by those who put policy into effect through the selections and decisions they make. This aspect of policy making, though it may be unconscious or not explicitly recorded, suggests that policy is made by all stakeholders in their process of implementation. Therefore, policy making is valid at all actors at all levels of adult education engagement.

Who makes policy

Everyone is a policy maker somewhere on the continuum from concept to delivery of adult education. In general, persons not designated as policy makers or policy officers do not consider themselves to have a role in policy-making. Therefore usually and by default, policy making becomes an unchallenged preserve of a political and executive elite who normalize an exclusive reserved powerful policy making function. The reserved elite nature of policy making also normalizes the exclusion of the masses; particularly those most affected by the policy.

The reserved nature of policy making is in keeping with the notion of a semi-sovereign public. The semi-sovereign public concept suggests that because of the nebulous complexity of policy making most policy making

happens without meaningful public attention, and happens removed from the communities and networks that are impacted by that policy. The reserved nature of policy making also emphasizes the expectation and implementation gap between top level policy makers and street or local level implementers.

A compounding outcome of the expectation and implementation gap is a further consolidation of the exclusive notion of policy making. Policy making increasingly becomes the preserve of those who are nominated policy makers exacerbated by the self-exclusion of others. In modern society, policy making is de-facto delegated to government and its executive who make policy in the name of the public. The implicit delegation to an elite and the normalization of a semi-sovereign public results in the othering⁴ of those who make policy.

The process of policy making

Policy makers receive inputs in the form of information, submissions, and pressures. Policy makers produce outputs in the form of laws, regulations, and other statements of policy. While theoretically relatively simple, policy making can be a staggeringly complex process (Sabatir & Weible 2014), complicated by increased horizontal and vertical separation of power, and multilevel governance. The six step policy making cycle frequently used to describe policy making over simplifies the fluid unbounded nature of policy making in modern society.

Instruments of policy making have also become more complex over time. Theories such as *Institutional theory*, *Process theory*, *Group theory*, *Elite theory*, *Rational theory*, *Incremental theory*, *Game theory*, and *Systems theory* (Dye 1995) assist us to understand the theoretical underpinning of policy making. Policy making models such as the *Multiple Stream Analysis Model*, the *Advocacy Coalition Framework Model*, and the *Knot Model* (Lindblom 1993) seek to explain how effective policy making can happen within the context of political ambiguity, empirical uncertainty, and the difficulty in forecasting policy impacts.

Hence, the DIMA Project is responding to an identified need to provide a policy making toolkit that empowers adult educators at all levels to find a common but customizable template for policy making.

A template for policy making in your organization

The process of policy making should be underpinned by a considered framework addressing how policy is made by the adult education agent/agency. In each context the policy making agent/agency should demonstrate exemplary practice by preparing a policy on how policy-making is encouraged and supported by that agent/agency in that setting at that time.

The following checklist applies to adult education organizations that take to themselves the right and the power to make policy as it applies to the target population with whom they work.

The checklist offers eight points for the agent/agency to check its own policy framework as a prequel to contributing to adult education policy making inside or outside their organization. The checklist is bounded by two reflection text-boxes on why the agent/agency is making this policy contribution (1) and what was learned

⁴ By “othering”, we mean any action by which an individual or group becomes mentally classified in somebody’s mind as “not one of us”.

from previous contributing efforts (3). The reflection may be undertaken individually or collectively by the adult education agent/agency.

Checklist for the “What and Why of Policy Making in Adult Education”

1. Why should this agent/agency contribute to Adult Education policy at this time?

2. Aspects of policy making framework	Yes	No	Needs Revision
Is the mission or vision statement of agent/agency stated?			
Are the aims of agent/agency stated?			
Are the objectives/targets (short & medium term) of the agent/agency stated?			
Are the core principles underpinning policy implementation stated?			
Are the stakeholders for consultation in policy making listed?			
Is an annual report or a recent historical statement of agent/agency activities published?			
Is a statement of the agent/agency's adult education targets published?			
Are other policies and strategies relevant to national/regional policy interpretation listed and available within the agent/agency?			

3. If this agent/agency contributed to policy making previously, what could be done differently on this occasion?

References:

Dye, Thomas. (1995). Understanding Public Policy. Prentice Hall.

Lindblom, Charles. (1993). The Policy Making Process (3rd Ed.), Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Sabatier, Paul A., and Christopher M. Weible. (Eds.) (2014). Theories of the Policy Process. Westview Press.

2. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis in general is defined as a formal process focused on how a product addresses the needs of a human. Needs analysis in adult education can be defined as a formal process conducted in order to provide data about the needs and the gaps in adult education, and support the selection of the best solutions to address these needs.

Needs analysis is an essential part of policy making in adult education. The aim of the needs analysis, either on company or on national level, is to provide data about the needs and the gaps in adult education, i.e. to identify the gaps between *What Is* and *What Should Be* (or *what was intended*) in particular company or country.

What is?	↔	What should be?
The results of the company/country	↔	Company/country standards
Existing knowledge and skills of employees/citizens	↔	Required knowledge and skills of employees/citizens
The current performance of individuals	↔	Targets or performance standards

The process of needs analysis

In the process of needs analysis it is necessary to plan the most appropriate information collection approach. To this usually involves the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The choice of whether to use qualitative or quantitative techniques should be based on the nature of the issue on which the policy making is focused and the existing knowledge about the problem. In most cases, both techniques complement each other well.

Quantitative research

The objective of research through quantitative techniques is to measure a specific problem and try to estimate the occurrence of certain events. Based on structured data collection methods and analysis using statistical models / methods the actual and predicted occurrence of each aspect is measurable. Quantitative research facilitates the comparison of two or more sub populations and the provision of the control population.

This kind of research is useful when researchers want, for example, to know how many people are participating in adult education in the country, region or educational institution; how many people use guidance services in adult education; how many people are using the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes system etc. In quantitative research, researchers seek, on the basis of the population studied, to provide generalizable answers. However, such generalisation is only useful if the sample population is representative of the population as a whole.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is usually less structured and based on smaller samples. However, qualitative research provides greater insight into a problem and allows for deeper understanding. Qualitative research is particularly useful when it is necessary to understand the social and psychological processes as perception, interpretation, opinions, motivation, emotions, and decision-making processes. Measurement is not its main aim. An example is seeking to determine if people are interested in adult education in a researched country/region, what motivates them to participate in adult education, etc.

The qualitative research structure is flexible and seeks to enhance interaction with the field. On one hand this is an advantage, because of individual difference and qualitative research engagement deepens the researchers understanding of the issues in a positive manner. On the other hand, the disadvantage is the financial and non-financial cost is higher and results are more difficult to compare. Qualitative research can be conducted in the form of focus groups or in-depth interviews.

	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE
OBJECTIVES	Obtaining qualitative understanding of the reasons for action and motivation	Quantifying the data and generalising the results of the sample
SELECTION	Small, not representative	Large, representative
DATA COLLECTION	Structured/semi-structured/ Unstructured	Structured
ANALYSIS	Non-statistical	Statistical
OUTCOMES	Understanding the problem	Recommending definitive procedure

Checklist for needs analysis

Checklist for data collection/what data to collect/company level	Yes	No	Needs Revision
1. Has the adult education agency needs analysis plan?			
2. Does the needs analysis incorporate qualitative and quantitative data collection?			
3. Is there a method for data analysis?			
4. What has been learned from previous needs analyses?			
5. How are the outcomes of the needs analysis presented?			

Checklist for data collection/what data to collect/national level	Yes	No	Needs Revision
1. Has the country reached the participation benchmark recommended by EU?			
2. What are the training needs of employed adults - Do they require further training in their professions?			
3. Are the employers involved in the formulation of policies and strategies in adult education?			
4. Are employers involved in the needs analysis?			
5. Are employers involved in the creation of educational programs?			
6. Is there a system of quality evaluation of adult education?			
7. Are the guidance services used in the country?			
8. Is there an established system of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in the country?			
9. Is it used by adults?			
10. Were data collected regarding the profile of adult learners? (preferences, age, profession, gender, SES, etc.?)			
11. Were data regarding the labour market employment/unemployment and professions in demand collected?			
12. What are the training needs of employed adults?			
13. What are the needs with regards to skills of the labour market?			
14. What are the EU and global trends with regards to adult education provision?			
15. Were all stakeholders consulted during data analysis? (primary-secondary)			
16. Were needs and gaps clearly defined?			
17. Were the needs prioritized?			

3. Stakeholders & Consultations

Introduction

This toolkit module will introduce the reader to Consultation & Stakeholder Engagement and the range of methods that are available to policy makers to engage a wide range of stakeholders in adult education policy making.

Consultation & stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement may be formal or informal and may use any communication means that enhances information flows. Stakeholders are defined as individual or group entities without whose support the organisation or agency would cease to exist. Stakeholders can be classified as *Primary Stakeholders* - usually key parties in the functioning of the organisation or agency, *Secondary Stakeholders* – parties, though not key to the functioning of the organisation or agency are affected by or can affect its actions. *Excluded Stakeholders* are parties that are not primary or secondary stakeholders and who are excluded by default or by intent from affecting or being affected by the organisation or agency.

Consultation and stakeholder engagement works best when it is an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships to build and strengthened over time. Individual consultation and stakeholder engagement events should be designed with this in mind and aim to contribute to the overall aims of the policy making process. Stakeholder individuals and groups may want to participate at a range of levels, from providing advice to co-designing the process, and from undertaking some aspects of the engagement to delivering projects to meet some of the outcomes. There may be a challenge in managing expectations of a range of stakeholders in a participative process but the buy-in⁵ benefits of ongoing engagement far out-weight the potential difficulties.

Thinking through the following questions and issues will help in the planning and design of community consultation.

1. What level of engagement is expected?
2. Who will be consulted (*Primary Stakeholders* and *Secondary Stakeholders*)?
3. Who may be the *Excluded Stakeholders*?
4. How are stakeholders identified?
5. What is the range of consultation communications available?
6. What stages will the consultation process go through?
7. What resources for stakeholder consultation are available?
8. What methods and tools for consultation can be utilized?
9. What are the limitations in community and stakeholder consultation?

⁵ Buy-in implies a greater commitment to the mission and/or goals of the organization/agency/process, and/or finds the opportunity for consultative engagement personally resonant.

What is the purpose and scope of the consultation process?

From the outset be clear about the scope and purpose of the consultation process. For example, is the process designed to:

1. Identify or prioritize the priorities for adult education programs?
2. Develop a consensus on a proposal or plan?
3. Inform the policy and decision makers of an organization, agency, or community?
4. Continue an existing process or initiate a new consultation process?
5. Develop new collaborative ways of engaging stakeholders?
6. Review progress of program implementation or identify emerging needs?

Agreeing a clear purpose will assist identify the consultation objectives, expected outcomes and help to determine the scope and depth of the consultation. Providing information on policy proposals, adult education plans or services, and processes in other jurisdictions is part of any consultation & stakeholder engagement communication plan. Often policy makers will need support to help them engage meaningfully. The skills for participative stakeholder consultative engagement is a great strength of the adult education sector but usually the sector lacks the resources to so implement the required consultation.

Consultation:

1. Stimulates expansion of the range of options of a policy, collects new data and information required for the analysis and subsequent verification of its results.
2. Ensures efficiency with more information, consultation and participation in policy making process.
3. Guarantees higher viability and duration of the policy through contribution of different sectors, policy experts and the public.
4. Ensures transparency by providing access to the policy making process and increases transparency in decision-making and administrative processes.
5. Ensures legitimacy which in turn increases credibility.
6. Enhances public accountability as citizens' views and responses are included in the policy making process.
7. Willingness to participate in the implementation and compliance is increased.

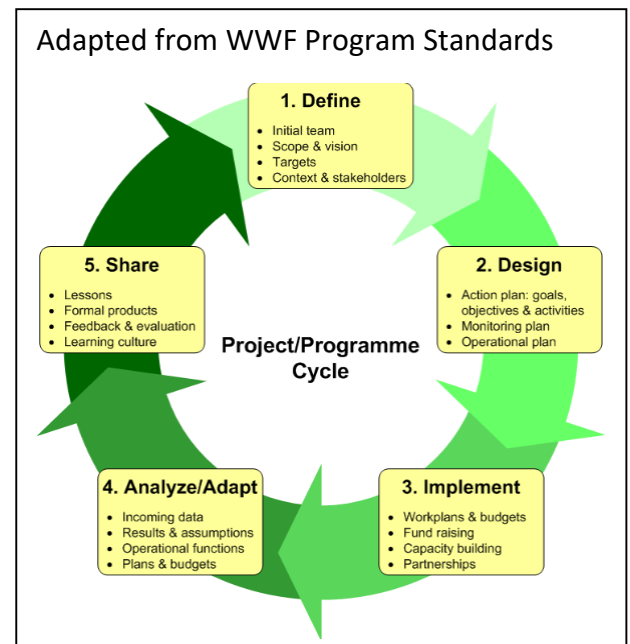
Overcoming consultation barriers

When planning a consultation process factors leading to exclusion, bias against diversity, limited participant engagement skills, and a wide range of potential social/cultural/economic barriers need to be recognized. The consultation & stakeholder engagement process design should prioritize minimizing barriers.

Potential barriers to consider

1. The capacity and ability of different stakeholders to participate
2. How to consult with hard to reach groups; such as young people, older people, minority groups or socially excluded groups

3. Levels of community infrastructure
4. Contested or divided communities
5. Rural isolation
6. Gaps in information
7. Literacy and numeracy levels among / within stakeholder communities and dominance of oral culture
8. Exclusionary or conformist consultation techniques and methods
9. Need for independent facilitation
10. Location and accessibility of consultation venues
11. The number and type of consultation events
12. Use of online access for consultation
13. Transport requirements for access to consultation venues
14. Childcare and vulnerable person care needs
15. Format and content of publicity / information materials
16. Use of sign language interpreters
17. Need for outreach activities as part of the consultation & stakeholder engagement



The stage of the consultation process?

The process of any consultation & stakeholder engagement is a project in itself that follows the project cycle steps (See figure). Each stage must be planned, reviewed and adapted for optimum engagement. Different forms of communication, information and consultation methods will be more appropriate depending on the particular stage of your consultation process.

Communications

Communication materials used for consultation should be jargon free and in plain language, available in accessible formats and provided in a range of appropriate media. Existing community and organizational networks and forums should be used to publicize events. Identify opportunities to align or synergize events for greater effect. Using examples or case studies may assist engagement but care should be taken that such modes do not exert a leading influence.

Checklist for consultation & stakeholders engagement methods

The following checklist is a list of methods that can be used, individually or in combination, for stakeholder consultation. Each method has particular strengths and weaknesses. These methods should be selected as part of a comprehensive consultation plan.

Individual	✓	Group	✓
Interview		Focus Group/Public/General meeting	
Walk about/Street or market stall		Street or market stall/Soap-box	
Phone in/Phone out		Radio/TV Broadcast phone/text in	
Text/email		Text/Email/Social media	
Case study/story board		Drama/performance/exhibition	
Video/audio documentary		Video/Audio Documentary viewing	
Tours/visits		Tours/visits	
Individual questionnaire		Group questionnaire	
Suggestion box		Visit meetings of organizations	
Go to people		Participating in Community events	
Meet experts individually		Meet expert groups	
Invite stakeholders to meet you		Invite stakeholders to meet each other and you	
Use interpreters and signers		Use of interpreters and signers	
Brief local informants to meet specific stakeholders		Brief local informants to meet local groups	
Post-its/Notice boards/Graffiti walls		Post-its/Notice boards/Graffiti walls	
Work with individuals to gain greater understanding		Work with groups to gain greater understanding	
Attend social gatherings to meet individuals		Attend social gatherings to meet groups	
Undertake outreach activities		Undertake outreach activities	
Promote online discussion		Promote online discussion	
Other		Other	

4. Policy making as a Process

In the field of adult education today policy making is perceived as a process rather than an isolated decision. Policy making in adult education is a long process containing several particularities depending on the country in which it is conducted. It is a process of reviewing all the factors that may affect the development of the country, region or a particular entity (an educational institution) and the subsequent adoption of recommendations concerning the next steps in the field of adult education.

It is also important to stress that there is a clear distinction between the terms policy making and development strategy in the field of adult education. The outcome of the policy making process is general as it only determines the direction of adult education, whether at national/regional level or in private sector. In contrast, the development strategy is a specific document which sets out concrete measures to be implemented in the sector of adult education for the state, regional or private educational institutions.

Consultation and coordination in the policy-making process

Complexity of all the measures and reforms requires active involvement not only of the competent department, but also of many other actors. Consultation and coordination in public policy is not solely about providing information and processing suggestions. It is also about the possibility of active participation of other sectors and individuals to shape its final form.

Policy makers need to take into account a number of factors whilst making important decisions. One of the crucial factors are the results of consultation.

The consultation process is built on three main pillars:

1. Providing information: actors of policy making facilitate the flow of information to the experts, citizens and interest groups so that participants of consultations have access to vital information.
2. Processing suggestions: actors of policy making are actively looking for and processing new suggestions during the entire policy cycle.
3. Active participation of interest groups, citizens and other entities (e.g. working groups, commissions, forums, etc.)

An essential part of the consultation is coordinating the process itself. This is to make sure that consultation is useful and effective and proceeds without unnecessary delays, duplication or omission of important partners.

Consultation process should include the widest possible range of organizations and individuals:

1. Different departments: most public policies affect several departments
2. Particular sectors: e.g. all institutions providing services in education
3. Experts from the field of education
4. Experts appointed by various political parties
5. Interest groups: trade unions, employers' organizations, professional and trade associations, NGOs
6. Adult education providers
7. Public: people with a direct interest in the subject or the general public

Checklist for policy making process

Steps involved in the policy making process in AE	Yes	No	Needs Revision
<p>1. Becoming familiar with policies on adult education at European level, national level and regional level – in case of policy making carried out by regional stakeholders. On an individual level – where policy making is within purview of specific educational institution.</p>			
<p>2. Launching a consultation process and gathering relevant stakeholders at national/regional level. At the level of a particular institution – gathering a team of educators, managers of further education, lecturers and employers' representatives in the region</p>			
<p>3. Outcome of the consultation process</p>			
<p>Determining priorities of the country with respect to its economic growth and potential investors, to ensure compliance with the orientations of European policies based on a consultation process between different stakeholders in particular country</p>			
<p>Determining priorities for the region considering its economic growth, potential investors, to ensure the accordance of national and European policies based on a consultation process involving government, employers and educational institutions</p>			
<p>Setting a working group made of further education managers, lecturers and employers in the region in which it operates to assess current issues at all levels, including the economic development of the region and the needs of the labour market. Setting policy for the near future in the direction the educational institution will head</p>			
<p>4. Creating thesis from the results of the consultation and policy making process</p>			
<p>5. Conducting a policy approval process in a way relevant for particular country, region or institution</p>			

5. Developing Strategy

Introduction

This module aims to support strategy development and empower key stakeholders (Policy Makers, Adult Education Providers) to develop Adult Education strategies, action plans and programs. The main areas addressed in this module are:

1. Developing vision and mission
2. Defining SMART objectives
3. Defining action plan
4. Monitoring and evaluation (high level – more on Unit 8)

Develop vision and mission

The **vision** is the aspiration of the organization - what it would like to be in the future. In the case of DIMA, the vision will define the optimal future state of Adult Education in a country or region.

The **mission** is a realistic goal, indicating what the stakeholders representing the sector would like the adult education sector to look like after the Strategy/Policy implemented. The mission takes account of the current situation of the area (strongly linked to the situation analysis), builds on achievements (e.g. past successful policies and development program), and establishes the main strategic objectives and the expected results of the development strategy.

An example:

From: http://www.nysmsa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/mission_statement_booklet.pdf

“Lodish recommends a three-step approach to developing a Mission Statement: 1. Organize a steering committee of five to ten people, representing various branches of the school community. Any decisions should be made by consensus. 2. Collect information on those things people want to continue, those things people want to change, and what things are currently occurring in the school. Develop an initial draft that reflects those areas of greatest consensus agreement. 3. Reconcile those areas where there are divergent views. Develop a more refined draft to be presented to and discussed with all groups in the school community.”

For example visit also:

Source: University of the State of New York The State Education Department.(n.d). Retrieved from: http://www.nysmsa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/mission_statement_booklet.pdf

Source: Judith A. Alamprese, Abt Associate, Chrys Limardo, Kratos Learning. Submitted by Kratos Learning.(2012). POLICY to PERFORMANCE Toolkit. Retrieved from: https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/Toolkit_final_November2012.pdf

Source: Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. (2016). Developing Strategic and Action Plans. Retrieved from: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans>

Source: Craig Van Korlaar. (2012). Guide to Creating Mission & Vision Statements. Retrieved from: <https://topnonprofits.com/vision-mission/>

Source: International HIV/AIDS Alliance. (2007). How to Develop a Strategic Plan: A Tool for NGOs and CBOs. Retrieved from: <https://www.k4health.org/toolkits/leadershipmgmt/how-develop-strategic-plan-tool-ngos-and-cbos>

Define SMART objectives

In order to ensure that the strategy will be implemented you need to develop clear and SMART objectives. Objectives are the specific statements indicating what is expected to be achieved in order for **the vision and mission to be achieved**. Defining SMART objectives means that they *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound*.

S. = Specific - Make sure you are setting specific enough objectives. Try to answer these five "Wh" questions: *Who? What? Where? Which? Why?*

M. = Measurable - It is important to include clear indicators and concrete criteria for each objective.

A. = Attainable – Objectives need to be attainable.

R. = Realistic – The objectives need to be realistic, make sense, and aligned with the vision and mission of the strategy.

T. = Time-bound - The objectives need to have a clearly defined timeframe and deadlines - what will be achieved by when.

The objectives need to be clearly targeting the gaps identified in the Needs Analysis and the priorities defined.

For examples and resources on how to define SMART objectives, visit:

Source: William Bryan, Joseph DiMartino. Center for Secondary Scholl Redesing. (2010). Writing Goals and Objectives. A Guide for Grantees of the Smaller Learning Communities Program. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/slc-wgandobj-book-f.pdf>

Source: Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. (2016). Developing Strategic and Action Plans. Retrieved from: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans>

Source: European Commission. (2015). How to set objectives. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/tool_13_en.htm#sdfootnote113sym

Source: Connie Champnoise. (2007). Workforce Planning Tool Kit: Evaluating Workforce Planning. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpshr.us/workforceplanning/documents/ToolKitEvaluation.pdf>

Source: Division of STD Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.(2014). Describe the Program. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/std/program/pupestd/Step2_0215.pdf

Source: Henry Cothran, Allen Wysocki, Derek Farnsworth, and Jennifer L. Clark. (n.d). Developing SMART Goals for your Organization. Retrieved from: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/fe/fe57700.pdf>

Define action plan

An action plan needs to identify the following components:

1. **Objectives** - statements indicating what is expected to be achieved.
2. **Outputs (Deliverables)** are the tangible products for achieving the objectives.
3. **Indicators** – clearly specified indicators that will indicate when an objective is met.
4. **Activities** (often called actions) are the necessary actions for achieving an output and respective objective. There can be one or several activities in order to achieve each output.
5. **Timeframe** – **which will clearly define what will be done by when.**
6. **Responsibilities** – who is responsible for each objective, output and activity
7. **Budget** – define the resources needed for each of the activities.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation of policy development is an integral component of the policy making and strategy development. Policy monitoring and evaluation can improve policy information, collaboration among stakeholders, and the use of evaluation techniques to provide feedback to reframe and revise policies. For details refer to Unit 8.

Develop the strategy document

In reaching this stage you should be familiar with the components in strategy development. Applying these tools will enable you to prepare a coherent strategy document. We suggest a strategy document table of contents will include the sections listed in the checklist below.

Checklist for developing strategy⁶

⁶ Resource: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_planning

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cost-effectiveness_analysis

<http://betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/CostEffectivenessAnalysis>

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans>

<http://www.esi-intl.co.uk/blogs/pmoperspectives/index.php/how-to-create-a-project-budget/>

Checklist for the Strategy Document				
Title	Description	Yes	No	Needs Revision
Political Commitment	Clearly stating the political commitment for the strategy to be implemented.			
The partnership	An overview of the partners involved and their contribution to the strategy development.			
Team members	An overview of the team members, roles and responsibilities.			
Current/past Strategies/Policies	A brief overview of relevant past and current strategies and policies.			
Needs Analysis	The needs analysis and stakeholder description are clearly described.			
Gaps and Priorities	The gaps identified and the priorities defined are clearly stated.			
Vision/Mission	A detailed description of the Strategy/Policy Vision and Mission.			
Objectives	SMART objectives are defined.			
Outputs	The tangible outputs for achieving the objectives.			
Indicators	Clear indicators for measuring the achievement of objectives.			
Activities	The necessary actions for achieving an output and respective objective are defined.			
Timeframe	The timeframe within which each activity will take place.			
Responsibilities	The responsibilities for each team member and partner are clearly defined.			
Monitoring and Evaluation	Processes for monitoring and evaluation are clearly defined.			
Budget	Overview of the budget and resources needed for activities to materialize.			

6. Implementing Strategy

Introduction

The following template suggests some basic concepts of using adequate instruments and procedures for successful implementation of elements structured in the defined strategy of AE policy development.

Definition

Strategy implementation is a policy-making process which lies in the translation of chosen strategy into organizational action to achieving strategic goals and objectives.

Process

1. *Strategy articulation* - Consensus agreement of the strategic objectives to be achieved;
2. *Strategy communication* - Engaging with stakeholders;
3. *Strategy translation* - Converting strategic objectives into clear short-term operating objectives;
4. *Strategy monitoring and controlling* - Monitoring the progress and controlling the strategic objectives are being achieved;
5. *Strategy engagement* – Keeping stakeholders engaged by achieving the strategy⁷.

Managing and controlling

It is crucial to assign responsibility for specific tasks or processes to specific individuals or groups. *Accountability* is critical to the action plan process. In this respect a feedback loop for control processes should be created.

Strategy implementation also involves *managing* the overall process. Process management comprises monitoring results, measuring benchmarks, following best practices, evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of the process, controlling for variances and making adjustments to the process as necessary. When an organization implements specific programs, it must acquire the requisite resources, develop the process, train, and perform process testing, documentation, and integration with legacy processes.⁸

Management functions, applied in the implementation process (Higgins):

1. planning,
2. controlling,
3. organizing,
4. motivating,
5. leading,
6. directing,
7. integrating,

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategy_implementation

⁸ <https://www.boundless.com/management/textbooks/boundless-management-textbook/strategic-management-12/creating-strategy-common-approaches-89/implementing-strategy-432-6613/>

8. communicating, and
9. innovation.

Checklist for implementing strategy

Checklist for Implementation the Strategy	Yes	No	Needs Revision
1. Are stakeholders informed about strategic goals?			
2. Is the executive manager, responsible for the implementation of the strategy appointed?			
3. Are adequate resources (human, instrumental and financial) guaranteed for the implementation of the strategy?			
4. Who is responsible for providing these resources?			
5. Are strategic objectives clearly converted into short-term operating tasks?			
6. Are defined tasks assigned to specific individuals or groups?			
7. Are these individuals or groups properly trained and informed to be competent for accomplishing assigned tasks?			
8. Who is responsible for providing these trainings and who is responsible for assessment of training outcomes?			
9. Since most tasks and procedures should be implemented subsequently, is there an adequate feedback loop created for control processes?			
10. Are procedures for interim testing, reporting, evaluating and assessing the implementation defined?			
11. Is the group for discussing the interim report appointed and their responsibilities in this respect assigned?			
12. Does interim reporting involve all stakeholders as well?			
13. Are decisions making communication channels defined for enabling interventions, changes, adaptations, or alike to be introduced in the implementation process if required?			
14. Is there a procedure and responsibilities determined for declaring the successful accomplishment of the implementation of the strategy?			
15. Are there clear follow up procedures and instruments defined for <i>Monitoring and Evaluation?</i> (see module 8)			

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Introduction

The following template suggests the basic concepts for planning, designing and implementing the monitoring and evaluation of the AE policy.

Why monitor and evaluate?

The main reasons for monitoring and evaluation in general are to find out what is the state-of the art in the certain area (AE policy), to judge the correctness of our operation/function/activities and to find out if we progress in the “right” /previously outlined direction. The results of monitoring and evaluation process enable us to improve and correct our previous decisions.

What are monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring is the systematic process of collecting, analysing and using information to track a programme’s progress toward reaching its objectives and guiding management decisions. Monitoring usually focuses on processes, such as when and where activities occur, who delivers them and how many people or entities they reach. Monitoring is conducted after a programme has begun and continues throughout the programme implementation period. Monitoring is sometimes referred to as process, performance or formative evaluation.

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution’s performance. Evaluation focuses on the expected and the achieved accomplishments. It is examining the results chain (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts), processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or a lack of them. Evaluation aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions and the contributions of the intervention to the results achieved.

Aim of monitoring and evaluation

1. To consider if the priority objectives stated in the AE strategic document were realized.
2. To check if the benchmarks were achieved.
3. To consider if the target groups specified in the AE policy are addressed effectively.
4. To review if the appropriate quality of AE (programmes and support services) was assured.
5. To consider if adequate resources (financial, material, technological and human) were invested for realization of the objectives stated in the AE strategic document.

Who monitors and evaluates?

The responsible players/stakeholders for monitoring and evaluation should be defined already in the AE strategic document with their tasks, responsibilities and reporting procedures.

The core principles of monitoring and evaluation

1. Inclusion
2. Continuity
3. Proportional breadth and depth
4. Transparency
5. Inbuilt feedback procedure
6. Ethicality
7. Confidentiality

Stages of monitoring and evaluation process

1. Defining Monitoring and Evaluation in Agenda
2. Designing Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan
3. Implementation of Monitoring and Evaluation Process
8. Reporting and Feedback to confirm, reframe or revise the defined AE policies

The process of monitoring and evaluation

1. *Monitoring and Evaluation set in Agenda:*

Decision that monitoring and evaluation are needed and will be implemented should be already included in the AE strategic document defining the responsible players/stakeholders with their tasks, responsibilities and reporting procedures in general.
2. *Designing of the Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan:*

The Action Plan should be prepared on conceptual and technical level.

On *conceptual level* the Plan should define more in details who is responsible for its realization, who are the players (observed units), what is the basic scope of the Plan, and when the Evaluation should be done.

On *technical level* the Plan should define – which data are needed; which of these are already gathered/available; which will have to be gathered especially for the needs of the planned Evaluation; which quantitative and/or qualitative methods will be used (on-line questionnaires, interviews, focus groups discussion, peer review etc.) and what other resources are needed and/or available etc.
3. The Monitoring and Evaluation processes are implemented simultaneously.
4. On the basis of Monitoring, the Evaluation results are reported according to defined procedures in order to enable the policymakers to confirm, reframe or revise the AE policy.

Checklist for monitoring and evaluation

Checklist for Monitoring and Evaluation processes and procedures:	Yes	No	Needs Revision
1. Are monitoring procedures defined in the policy document?			
2. Are bodies, institutions or experts responsible for conducting monitoring processes defined in the document?			
3. Is the scope of monitoring (stakeholders, processes, programmes provision, learning outcomes, approaching benchmarks progress) precisely defined in the document?			
4. Are required data and other sources for monitoring processes precisely defined in the document?			
5. Are methods and instruments used for monitoring precisely defined in the document?			
6. Is there a standardized template designed for summarizing monitoring findings?			
7. Is the body, institution or expert responsible for preparing evaluation report based on monitoring process findings defined in the document?			
8. Are the reporter and the addressee of the evaluation report defined in the document?			
9. Are the procedures and responsibilities of implementing evaluation findings in confirming, reframing or revising the AE policy defined in the document?			

For further explanations visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monitoring_and_Evaluation

<https://www.oecd.org/derec/worldbankgroup/35281194.pdf>

<http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/330-what-is-monitoring-and-evaluation-.html>

8. Renewing Policy

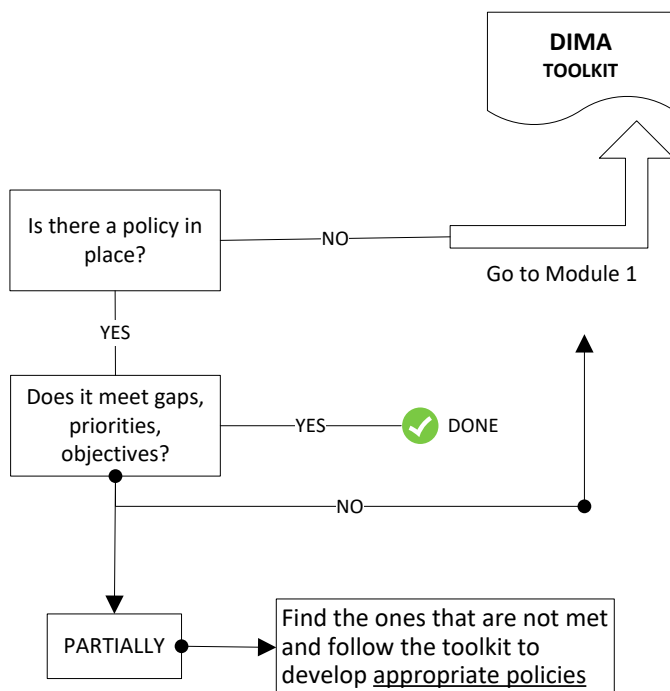
Introduction

This Module briefly presents the process for renewing policies and keeping them up-to-date. Policy should be developed in an incremental way. Usually, there are some policies in place that are not sufficient or have gone out of date. To keep policy fresh there needs to be a process for renewing the policy and updating. It is important to note that this Module Renewing Policy should be read in conjunction with Module 8 (Monitoring and Evaluation). The outcomes of policy monitoring and evaluation will be decisions on the required updates and adjustments.

The basic steps are listed in the diagram below:

- Using data from regular monitoring and evaluation to decide if the policy and strategies need revisions.
- If there is no policy in place, then consult toolkit module 1.
- If there is a policy in place it should be regularly evaluated to ensure it meets its objectives, gaps, and priorities. If it meets its objectives, there is no need for action.
- If it does not meet at all the objectives, go to toolkit module 1.
- If it partially meets its objectives and priorities, implement toolkit steps for those priorities not met, and clearly develop the relevant policy according to the guidelines in this toolkit.

Diagram 9.1. Decision making flowchart for updating policy.



9. Learning from the Experience of Policy-making. Examples of Policies and Strategies

[The European Agenda for Adult Learning](#) (2011) constitutes the most recent and comprehensive document describing the current aims, objectives and benchmarks in the field of adult education in Europe. The four main objectives of the Agenda are as follows:

1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning
4. Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments.

While not all EU countries have harmonized their policies with the European Agenda, many include similar objectives. For the purpose of this toolkit, we will look at examples of policies covering several aims and objectives of AE policies that directly or indirectly correspond to those of the Agenda.

Do you need to reach out to specific target groups (such as low-skilled adults, migrants)? – [go to section 1](#)

Would you like your policy to contribute to active citizenship through adult learning? – [go to section 2](#)

Are you interested in tackling quality and transparency? – [go to section 3](#)

Do you need a policy that clearly lays out the funding conditions? – [go to section 4](#)

Are you looking for an example highlighting policy dialogue? – [go to section 5](#)

Would you like to learn more about policy coherence? – [go to section 6](#)

Outreach

The Austrian Initiative for Adult Education is an example of a policy targeting mainly low-skilled adults. Resulting from a cooperation of the Federal Ministry of Education and nine provinces in Austria, it aimed to allow adults who lack basic skills to continue their education. Supported by national funding and the European Social Fund, it ensured that the courses are provided free of charge. A detailed evaluation of the first phase (2012-2014) is available [online](#) (in German). Find out more about the programme in [English](#) and [French](#).

In Sweden, the 2009 Labour Market Introduction Act aims to make it quicker for newcomers to learn Swedish, to find or create a job matching their skills ('individual responsibility with professional support'). The 2009 Discrimination Act creates single comprehensive law, also ensuring that adult migrants have access to education. Find out more about the Swedish integration policy [here](#), read [the Discrimination Act](#) and consult [the Migrant Integration Policy Index](#) for more information.

The Outreach Empowerment Diversity project produced [policy recommendations](#), directed both to European and national policy-makers, showing concrete steps that can be taken to reach out to learners.

Active citizenship

The Declaration on promoting citizenship and common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, adopted by European ministers of education in Paris in March 2015, calls for a larger role of citizenship and societal competences in education. Find out more about how these aims can be supported at the national and European level by consulting the full text of [the Declaration](#).

In 2013, Europe celebrated the European Year of Citizens. To learn more about best practices in adult education and active citizenship, look at the collection of projects from [the 2013 Grundtvig Award](#).

Quality and transparency

The Adult Education Act of Iceland (2010) specifies the requirements that adult education providers must meet to receive accreditation from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Find out more from Chapter II of [the Act](#).

Adult Education Law in Serbia provides clear conditions about how adult education institutions should be certified and what they should provide to keep their status. Find out more from Chapter II of [the Adult Education Law](#).

The [“Overall Framework of quality for Adult Education Austria”](#) (Ö-CERT or AT-CERT), prepared by education experts and public administration, aims to increase the transparency for learners and public authorities, simplify administration and improve quality in AE. Since launching the framework in 2012, providers must fulfil certain requirements to be granted Ö-Cert. The framework has received general praise due to the clarity of the requirements, such as maintaining quality management systems listed in the Ö-Cert List. More information (in English) is available [here](#) and [here](#), as well as on the official [website](#) of Ö-Cert (in German).

[The European Quality Mark](#) is a result of a two-year Leonardo da Vinci project called RECALL – Recognition of Quality in Lifelong Learning. The EQM was developed by organisations from eight countries across Europe. Find out more here.

Financing adult education

The Adult Education Law in Serbia details how public funding is allocated within Adult Education. The document differentiates between the national, regional and local level. Read more from Chapter IX of [the Adult Education Law](#).

Chapter III of the Adult Education Act of Iceland (2010) specifies how adult education is funded, with clear explanations of the role of the Education and Training Boards in the process. Find out more [here](#).

The Adult Education Act of Estonia (2015) lays out the organisation of financing adult education, including the provision of state-commissioned continuing education. Find out more from Chapter 5 of the Act [here](#).

Why should public authorities invest in adult learning? Read [an article](#) on the topic, drafted as a part of the FinALE project on Financing Adult Education.

Policy dialogue

The Irish Further Education and Training Strategy foresees the establishment of a forum for adult learners, which would help adult learners influence policy decisions. Their experiences are now used to gather qualitative data and inform national policy. Consult the full text of the strategy [here](#) and read about the public view on it from the EAEA report.

Finland has a “Liberal Adult Education Cooperation Group/Body”, which includes representatives of different stakeholders in adult education: Ministry of education and Culture, National Board of Education, Association of Finnish local and regional Authorities and Finnish Adult Education. The body does not have a systematic meeting plan, but congregates a couple of times a year to discuss issues of mutual interest.

In Portugal, there was an open discussion with public on the law that created and implemented the new *Qualifica* centres (the validation centres of the XXI Government Program) and the participatory budgets in municipalities. There are also best practices of regions that self-organised networks to promote adult education, especially in the area of validation and training.

Policy coherence

The Master Adult Education Plan (2013-2020) in Slovenia defines program, activities, monitoring instruments and scope of funding. The Plan is coordinated and evaluated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, but includes six other ministries. Find out more from the DIMA State of the Art report.

The *Tel mee met Taal* (Count on Skills) action programme is a joint policy response of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment aiming to prevent people with limited literacy skills from marginalisation. Different ministries are engaged to show that language plays a key role in several fields. Clear benchmarks will help to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. [This](#) document presents the main objectives of the programme (from 2016 to 2018), three domains Count on Skills tackles (family, employment market and healthcare) and 5 action lines.

Regional policy making in adult education

The project started in October 2013 and ended in October 2015. It targeted adult learning policy makers and various groups of stakeholders involved in these processes to pinpoint drivers and inhibitors of policy making for adult learning at regional level. In doing so, it carried out a comparative analysis of adult learning policy initiatives at regional level across the EU (21 regions in six countries) to extrapolate key success factors of regional adult learning policy making. (See <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/regional-policy-making-adult-education>).

The main results of the project were published in the form of country profiles of all six countries under research, a [comparative analysis](#) (link is external) of regional policy making for adult learning in 21 regions in six countries, as well as a policy making [toolkit](#) (link is external) to support evidence-based policies for adult learning. There is also a book, “Policy Making in Adult education: A Comparative Report Across 21 regions”.

