



## Third policy learning forum

### Defining, writing and using learning outcomes

#### Guidelines for working group session

Learning outcomes can be understood as result-oriented, definite, objective and measurable; they can also be understood as process-oriented, open-ended and with limited measurability. This tension, rooted in different conceptual traditions, can significantly influence the way learning outcomes are used by policy-makers, education and training practitioners, as well as learners. The working group session will look at this tension, and the associated conceptual issues, from the perspective of national stakeholders involved in implementing learning outcomes. Focus will be on two particular levels of implementation and the relationship between them:

- learning outcomes as a tool for governance/management of education and training;
- learning outcomes as a tool for influencing teaching/assessment and learning.

The working group aims to explore this reciprocal relationship. While the conceptual point of departure is important, working group discussions should take into account other factors influencing the take-up of the learning outcomes approach: developing commitment and implementation capacities, raising the motivation of key actors, creating enabling forces, and removing obstacles <sup>(1)</sup>. These factors should also be taken into account when discussing national and international experiences.

#### Guiding questions

- (a) To what extent is the implementation of the learning outcomes approach based on an explicit conceptual perspective?
- What is the conceptual point of departure in your national context?
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses?
- (b) How is the tension between 'learning outcomes as result-oriented, measurable and objective' and 'learning outcomes as process-oriented, open to negotiation and only partly measurable' addressed in your national context?

---

<sup>(1)</sup> Cedefop (2016). *Application of learning outcomes approaches across Europe*.  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3074>

- (c) Which factors positively/negatively influence the use of learning-outcomes in governance and policy-making?
- (d) Which factors positively/negatively influence the use of learning outcomes for teaching and learning?
- (e) How can international cooperation on the definition and use of learning outcomes be strengthened?

### **Structure of the working group sessions**

The working group session will address these questions from a national perspective, showing how the conceptual shaping of learning outcomes influences their use in policy and practice (in the actual national context), and how it outlines challenges, enablers, and barriers.

The discussion will be divided into two main parts:

#### **14.00 - 15.30**

- (a) Presentation of focus questions reflecting handbook messages
- (b) Presentation of two countries in each working group followed by a Q&A session (50 minutes).
- (c) Initial discussion.

#### **15.30 - 16.00**

Coffee break

#### **16.00 - 18.00**

- (d) Discussion continued in small groups of three to four participants (60 minutes).
- (e) Summary of discussions (15 minutes).
- (f) Presentation of main findings and observations by small groups (30 minutes).
- (g) Identification of main issues, challenges, and opportunities by WGs (summarised in five to seven key points).
- (h) Reporting back to the plenary the next day.