



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE SELECTION OF INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

The [Social Protection Committee Indicators Sub-Group](#) (ISG) has agreed on a broad common methodological framework for the development of the portfolio of EU social indicators. This framework builds on the methodological principles agreed for the Laeken portfolio. However, it departs from the original framework in two ways: the choice of indicators is not limited to outcome indicators in order to better reflect the action and impact of policies; and, as explained below, some flexibility is introduced as how strictly the criteria are applied, notably allowing for the inclusion in the list of “commonly agreed **national** indicators” based on commonly agreed definitions and assumptions.

The selection of individual indicators should, in principle, be guided by the following minimum set of methodological criteria:

- a) An indicator should capture the essence of the problem and have a clear and accepted normative interpretation
- b) An indicator should be robust and statistically validated
- c) An indicator should provide a sufficient level of cross countries comparability, as far as practicable with the use of internationally applied definitions and data collection standards
- d) An indicator should be built on available underlying data, and be timely and susceptible to revision
- e) An indicator should be responsive to policy interventions but not subject to manipulation

Past experience in the development of indicators by the ISG has, however, shown that specific key information might be essential to capture one of the key dimensions of a commonly agreed policy objective (portfolio criteria a), while not fulfilling all criteria for the selection of indicators (e.g. comparability, normative value). In order to overcome this difficulty, the ISG has agreed to flag the indicators and statistics included in the EU portfolio of social indicators according to how they should be used. The following three categories (**EU, National, Context**) aim at warning the user of the specific purpose and limitations of each indicator in the list:

- **Commonly agreed EU indicators** contribute to a comparative assessment of Member States' progress towards the common objectives on social protection and social inclusion. These indicators might refer to social outcomes, intermediate social outcomes or outputs.
- **Commonly agreed national indicators** are based on commonly agreed definitions and assumptions that provide key information to assess the progress of Member States in relation to

certain objectives, while not allowing for a direct cross-country comparison, or not necessarily having a clear normative interpretation.

These indicators are especially suited to measure the scale and nature of policy intervention. These indicators should be interpreted jointly with the relevant background information (exact definition, assumptions, representativeness).

– **Context information**: Each portfolio will have to be assessed in the light of key context information, and by referring to past, and where relevant, future trends.

The list of context information proposed is indicative and leaves room to other background information that would be most relevant to better frame and understand the national context.