ISCED Review Panel Recommendations

Education Data and Statistics Commission (EDSC) 11:

27-28 February 2025

Background

ISCED governance according to the ISCED 2011 Manual

"an ISCED Committee should be formed in order to advise UIS regarding the classification of national programmes and qualifications, to review the current version of ISCED and to identify potential areas for further development, although ISCED revisions are not expected to be within its remit […]" (p.23)

ISCED Review Panel (RP)

- Established by UIS in June 2023.

- **Objective**: Advise UIS on the classification of national programmes and qualifications, review ISCED, and identify potential areas for further development.

- **Composition**: 16 experts from six Member States and seven international organizations, ensuring geographic and technical diversity.

- **Scope of work**: ISCED 2011 (programmes - ISCED-P, attainment - ISCED-A) and ISCED-F 2013 (fields of education and training).

- **Key Tasks:**
  - Evaluate issues arising from a decade of ISCED 2011 and ISCED-F 2013 implementation.
  - Identify necessary refinements in definitions, scope, and application.
  - Provide recommendations on possible revisions and enhancements.
  - Review quality assurance mechanisms, national ISCED mappings, and manuals.

- **Activities:**
  - Five formal meetings from September 2023 to September 2024.
  - Comprehensive review of working documents, expert discussions, and issue identification.

- **Decision process:** Examined UIS-prepared documents, evaluated national ISCED implementation issues (16 key issues) using the following decision framework

Type	ISCED	Decision	Action	Level
1- Definition/scope	1-All	1-To be considered for amendment/revision	Change proposed	
2- Implementation	2-ISCED-P	2-Additional information/work needed	Roadmap	
3- Methodology	3-ISCED-A	3-Not to be considered for revision	Not applicable	0 to 8
4- Guidance on application	4-ISCED-F			
5- Other				

EDSC 10 meeting (11 December 2023)

UIS presented the document "Implementation of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): Challenges and Solutions Forward (https://ces.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/10/ISCED_2023.touse_.pdf)

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ISCED Review Panel: items discussed and recommendations (overview)

Item #	Label	Type	ISCED	Level	Final recommendation
1	Classification of early childhood educational development (ECED) programmes as formal and non-formal or informal	1-Definition/scope	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	01	To be considered for amendment/revision
2	Classification of early childhood education (ECE) programmes: distinction between ISCED 01 and ISCED 02	1-Definition/scope, 2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	0	To be considered for amendment/revision
3	Classification of programmes spanning ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 (e.g., basic education)	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	1 and 2	To be considered for amendment/revision
4	Programmes spanning ISCED 3, 4 and 5	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	3, 4, and 5	To be considered for amendment/revision
5	ISCED 3 programmes classified as ISCED 4 (e.g. A-level programmes in some countries)	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	3 and 4	To be considered for amendment/revision
6	ISCED 4 programmes classified as ISCED 5	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	4 and 5	To be considered for amendment/revision
7	Long first degrees at Master's level classified as long first-degrees at Bachelor's level	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	6 and 7	To be considered for amendment/revision
8	Second degree programme at Bachelor's level classified at Master's level.	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	6 and 7	To be considered for amendment/revision
9	Second degree programmes at Master's level classified at Doctoral level	2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	7 and 8	To be considered for amendment/revision
10	Define professional/occupational and academic programmes for ISCED levels 6 to 8	1-Definition/scope	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	6 to 8	To be considered for amendment/revision
11	Define the categories of non-formal learning and their relationship to formal learning	1-Definition/scope	All	2 to 5	To be considered for amendment/revision
12	Incorporate in ISCED the definitions of work-based learning, particularly as a form of non-formal and informal learning	1-Definition/scope	All	2 to 5	To be considered for amendment/revision
13	Define the boundaries between work-based learning in formal and non-formal education and its relation to technical and vocational education programmes	1-Definition/scope, 4- Guidance on application	All	2 to 5	To be considered for amendment/revision
14	Review the boundaries of education levels to provide a clearer guidance and limit misclassification	1. Definition/scope, 2. Implementation, 4. Guidance on application	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	3 to 7	To be considered for amendment/revision
15	Refine guidelines/criteria to determine which duration to use for indicators' calculation (general vs vocational programmes ISCED levels 2, 3)	1. Definition/scope, 3. Methodology	ISCED-P, ISCED-A	2 and 3	**NOT** to be considered for amendment/revision
16	Changes to field of education in ISCED-F 2013	1-Definition/scope	ISCED-F	3 to 8	To be considered for amendment/revision

Item#1: Classification of early childhood educational development (ECED) programmes as formal, non-formal, or informal

Issues:

o **Classification challenges**: difficulty in categorizing home schooling within ISCED 2011, as it must meet criteria like legal recognition, structured programmes, and formal assessments to be considered formal education.

o **Inconsistencies across countries**: variability in early childhood education practices worldwide makes it challenging to consistently apply ISCED 2011 classifications.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #1)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #1.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 on ECED.
Pros	Improve classification of ECED programmes as formal, non-formal, or informal. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from ECED experts and Member States consultation.	Outdated (more than 10 years) classification of ECED programmes.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#2: Classification of Early Childhood Education (ECE) (ISCED 0) programmes: distinction between ISCED 01 and ISCED 02

Issues:

o **Overlap between ISCED 01 and ISCED 02**: some early childhood programmes share characteristics of both categories, making it difficult to distinguish between holistic development (ISCED 01) and structured pre-primary education (ISCED 02).

o **Need for clearer classification criteria**: additional guidance is required to help countries consistently classify programmes based on factors like age range, educational goals, curriculum structure, and intended outcomes.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #2)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #2.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 on ECED.
Pros	Allows for better cross-country comparisons of enrolment and participation in early childhood education. May also support a better policy development and resource allocation, by enabling governments to target policies and funding by distinguishing between care-focused (ISCED 01) and education-focused (ISCED 02) programmes. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from ECE experts and Member States consultation.	Outdated (more than 10 years) classification criteria of ECE programmes, i.e. possibly 'poor' distinction between ISCED 01 and ISCED 02.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#3: Classification of programmes spanning ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 (e.g., basic education)

Issues:

o **Difficulty in classifying integrated basic education programmes**: some programmes combine ISCED 1 (primary) and ISCED 2 (lower secondary) into a continuous system, making transitions between levels unclear.

o **Lack of alignment with ISCED classifications**: limited information on programme structure, including cycles or stages, complicates their classification within the ISCED framework.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #3)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #3.	NA
Pros	Clearer classification would enhance comparability across countries, especially for SDG 4 indicators on ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 education access, completion, and learning outcomes. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2025.	
Cons	Addressing this issue requires: (1) researching the cycles or stages within combined programmes, focusing on characteristics such as duration, target age group, and qualifications awarded at completion, to help delineate and classify such programmes, (2) proposing guidelines to ensure consistent mapping of basic education programmes across countries.	
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#4: Classification of programmes spanning ISCED 3, 4, and 5

Issues:

o **Challenges in classifying integrated programmes**: programmes spanning ISCED 3, 4, and 5 combine secondary education, vocational training, and tertiary qualifications, making international classification difficult.

o **Seamless progression without clear transitions**: students move through secondary, vocational, and tertiary levels in a single pathway, complicating distinctions between ISCED levels.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #4)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #4.	NA
Pros	Align reporting with the intended purpose and structure of ISCED levels, reducing misclassification of programmes that do not fit the established criteria. Improves data quality for monitoring SDG 4 indicators, particularly those related to post-secondary education. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2025.	
Cons	Addressing this issue requires: (1) Conduct research on the characteristics and differences of ISCED levels 3, 4, and 5 programmes that impact their consistent classification across countries, (2) Develop guidelines to ensure consistent mapping of these programmes across different national contexts.	
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#5: ISCED 3 programmes classified as ISCED 4 (e.g. A-level programmes)

Issues:

o **Variability in structure and specialization**: A-level programmes differ across countries in terms of sequencing, academic depth, and duration, affecting their classification within secondary education.

o **Inconsistent ISCED classification**: while the UK classifies A-levels as ISCED 3, other countries categorize them as ISCED 4, with international analysis showing a 34%-66% split, highlighting classification discrepancies.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #5)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #5.	NA
Pros	A-Level and similar programmes are primarily designed for direct progression to higher education rather than as terminal post-secondary qualifications, making ISCED 3 a more appropriate classification. Ensure that ISCED 4 remains reserved for programmes that provide labor-market-oriented qualifications or additional preparation for tertiary education. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2025.	
Cons	The item relates to a complex issue and there was an attempt to address it during the ISCED 1997 revision. Addressing this issue requires: (1) to conduct research on the characteristics of A-level programmes and their differences across countries, which affect consistent international classification. (2) to propose guidelines to ensure consistent mapping of such programmes across different countries.	
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#6: ISCED 4 programmes classified as ISCED 5

Issues:

o **Frequent misclassification of ISCED 4 as ISCED 5**: some ISCED 4 programmes are mistakenly categorized as tertiary education due to their perceived complexity, vocational depth, or preparatory role for higher studies.

o **Need for clearer classification guidelines**: to prevent inconsistencies, clearer distinctions are required between ISCED 4 and ISCED 5, particularly for advanced vocational training, technical diplomas, and preparatory programmes.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #6)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #6.	NA
Pros	Help countries align their education data for ISCED 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary) and ISCED 5 (short-cycle tertiary) programmes with ISCED guidelines, reducing inconsistencies in reporting. Ultimately, improve data quality for monitoring SDG 4 indicators, particularly those related to post-secondary education. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2025.	
Cons	Addressing this issue requires: (1) research into the characteristics and differences between ISCED 4 and 5 programmes that affect their consistent classification across countries. (2) developing guidelines to ensure adherence to the specific criteria set by ISCED for each level. This includes recognizing ISCED 4 programmes for their role in bridging secondary and tertiary education, while ensuring ISCED 5 programmes meet the academic and theoretical standards required for short-cycle tertiary education.	
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#7: Long first degrees at Master's or equivalent level classified as long first-degrees at Bachelor's or equivalent level

Issues:

o **Challenges in classifying long first-degree programmes**: integrated Master's, extended Bachelor's, and professional degrees (e.g., MBBS, LLB) often blur the boundary between undergraduate and graduate education, leading to inconsistencies in classification.

o **Misalignment with ISCED due to national practices**: regional variations, historical naming conventions, and administrative simplifications result in Master's-level programmes being classified as Bachelor's, creating discrepancies in international education statistics.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #7)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #7.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 (parts related to the classification of long first degrees at bachelor's or equivalent level and Master's or equivalent level).
Pros	Ensures that long first-degree programmes that meet the criteria for ISCED 7 (Master's level) are correctly classified, preventing underestimation of graduate-level education. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Countries or institutions that previously classified these degrees as ISCED 6 may need to update historical records, leading to inconsistencies in trend data. Tight roadmap: the amendment process required contributions from tertiary education programmes experts and Member States consultation.	Possibly outdated (more than 10 years) classification criteria of long first degrees at bachelor's or equivalent level and Master's or equivalent level.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#8: Second degree programme at bachelor's or equivalent level classified at Master's or equivalent level

Issues:

o **Misclassification risks**: second-degree Bachelor's programmes, such as accelerated nursing or professional conversion degrees, are often mistaken for Master's due to their shorter duration, advanced coursework, and prior degree requirement.

o **Need for clearer classification**: the distinction between second-degree Bachelor's and Master's programmes need to be reinforced, considering their unique purpose, industry alignment, and curriculum structure.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #8)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #8.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 (parts related to the classification of second degree programmes at bachelor's or equivalent level and Master's or equivalent level).
Pros	Improve accuracy of educational statistics by ensuring that 2nd-degree bachelor's programmes or equivalent are correctly classified, preventing inflation of Master's-level enrolment and graduation statistics. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Potential resistance from countries or institutions. Those of them that have previously classified 2nd-degree bachelor's programmes or equivalent at the master's level may need to revise historical data, leading to inconsistencies in long-term trends. Tight roadmap: the amendment process required contributions from tertiary education programmes experts and Member States consultation.	Possibly outdated (more than 10 years) classification criteria of second degree programmes at bachelor's or equivalent level and Master's or equivalent level.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#9: Second degree programmes at Master's or equivalent level classified at Doctoral or equivalent level

Issues:

o **Classification challenge**: programmes between Master's and Doctoral levels, focused on advanced coursework rather than research, are difficult to categorize due to their hybrid nature.

o **Professional focus**: these programmes, often found in high-income countries, prioritize career advancement over academic research, further complicating their classification within ISCED.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #9)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #9.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 (parts related to the classification of second degree programmes at Master's or equivalent level and Doctoral or equivalent level).
Pros	Improve accuracy of educational statistics by ensuring that 2nd-degree master's programmes are correctly classified, preventing inflation of doctoral-level enrolment and graduation statistics. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Countries or institutions that have previously classified 2nd-degree master's programmes at the doctoral level may need to revise historical data, leading to inconsistencies in long-term trends. Tight roadmap: the amendment process required contributions from tertiary education programmes experts and Member States consultation.	Possibly outdated (more than 10 years) classification criteria of second-degree programmes at Master's or equivalent level and Doctoral or equivalent level.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#10: Define professional/occupational and academic programmes for ISCED levels 6 to 8

Issues:

o **Professional vs. Academic focus**: ISCED 6–8 professional programmes prioritize career-specific training and licensure, while academic programmes emphasize theoretical knowledge and research.

o **Differing outcomes**: professional programmes lead to industry certification and employment, whereas academic pathways often prepare students for further education or research careers.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #10)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #10.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011 which does not include a definition for professional/ occupational and academic programmes for ISCED levels 6 to 8.
Pros	Clearly distinguishing between academic and professional/occupational programmes at ISCED levels 6 (Bachelor's), 7 (Master's), and 8 (Doctoral) would improve cross-country comparability of education systems and help avoid misclassification of programmes with different objectives and structures. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from higher education experts and Member States consultation.	Many countries already have different ways of classifying professional vs. academic programmes. Creating an ISCED-wide definition may be difficult to standardize globally, and may fail to capture hybrid or interdisciplinary programmes.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Items#11, 12, 13: Include Work-Based Learning (WBL) in ISCED

Issues:

o **Classification challenge**: ISCED lacks clear guidelines on how to classify Work-Based Learning (WBL), especially when it overlaps with formal and non-formal education.

o **Need for integration:** as WBL becomes more prominent, there is a need to refine ISCED's definition and classification to better classify WBL programmes.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #11)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #11.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011, which do not include WBL.
Pros	Many education systems incorporate WBL as part of formal and non-formal education (e.g., apprenticeships, dual education systems). Including WBL in ISCED ensures these learning pathways are recognized and classified consistently. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from WBL (formal and non-formal) and tertiary education experts, and Member States consultation.	WBL varies widely across countries (e.g., apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education). Establishing clear criteria for what qualifies as WBL within ISCED may be complex and challenging for global outreach.
Proposed decision	Recommends: - Incorporating WBL into ISCED, addressing issues related to its classification and its relationship to TVET and to broader education structures. - Including definitions of WBL, particularly as part of non-formal and informal learning. - Defining categories of non-formal learning and their relationship to formal learning. - Establishing clear boundaries between WBL in formal and non-formal education and its relation to TVET programmes. - Assessing the need for a new digit coding to split TVET programmes between WBL in formal education and non-formal education. - Conducting additional research on WBL to inform these changes. -Item to be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#14: Review the boundaries of education levels to provide clearer guidance and limit misclassification

Issues:

o **Inconsistent classification**: misclassification of educational programmes arises from overlapping characteristics, particularly in long first-degree programmes (ISCED 6 vs. ISCED 7) and advanced-level programmes, leading to challenges in international comparability.

o **Blurred boundaries:** the distinctions between ISCED 4 and ISCED 5 are not very clear for preparatory and short-cycle tertiary programmes, causing inconsistencies in data reporting.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #12)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #12.	Maintain unchanged the current version of ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.
Pros	Clearer guidelines would help ensure uniform classification of education levels, and enhance comparability, particularly for monitoring SDG 4 indicators. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from relevant experts and Member States consultation.	Refining levels boundaries could make historical education data incomparable to future datasets. Countries would need to reclassify past data, which may lead to statistical inconsistencies.
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#15: Refine guidelines/criteria to determine which duration to use for indicators' calculation (general versus vocational programmes at ISCED levels 2 and 3)

Issues:
o **Rising vocational enrolment:** in some countries, vocational programmes now have higher enrolment than general education, shifting historical trends.
o **Challenges in indicator calculation:** traditional methods of using general education duration for calculating indicators like enrolment, completion, and transition rates may no longer be suitable in countries where vocational education is dominant.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #13)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #13.	NA
Pros	Improved accuracy in education indicators and their comparability across countries.	
Cons	If programme durations are redefined, past indicators may not be directly comparable with newly calculated values, creating challenges in comparability with historical time series data. They may also be a potential resistance from countries and institutions.	
Proposed decision	Recommends that this item is to **NOT** be considered for amendments to ISCED-P and ISCED-A 2011.	
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Item#16: Changes to field of education in ISCED-F 2013

Issues:

o Addressing growing skills mismatch: ISCED-F 2013 needs revision to align with evolving labor market demands and emerging qualifications.
o Ensuring global consistency: clearer definitions are needed to improve cross-country comparability and support accurate education data collection.
o Adaptability to change: the classification must be flexible enough to accommodate future developments without frequent overhauls.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #14)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #14.	Maintain unchanged the current version of fields of education in ISCED-F 2013.
Pros	Improved alignment with emerging disciplines, which include new fields (e.g. artificial intelligence, data science, and sustainability studies), which are gaining prominence but are not clearly reflected in ISCED-F 2013. Many countries have national classifications that differ from ISCED-F 2013, leading to inconsistencies in international reporting. The amended version of the classification is expected to be ready for presentation to UNESCO General Conference in 2027.	Status quo.
Cons	Tight roadmap: amendment process required contributions from relevant experts and Member States consultation.	Revising ISCED-F could make it difficult to compare historical data with newly classified fields. Countries would need to reclassify past education data, which may lead to inconsistencies in trend analysis.
Proposed decision	Recommends the Revision of ISCED-F 2013 to address these issues and ensure its relevance for future educational and labor market demands.	
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Improving ISCED implementation in international education data collection

Issues:
o Maintaining updated manuals and guidelines while validating national mappings (e.g., through peer reviews) to align with classification criteria.
o Refining indicator calculation methodologies to enhance the accuracy and comparability of education statistics across countries.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #15)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #15.	NA
Pros	Improve data comparability across countries. More accurate ISCED mapping and measurement of national education systems, contributing to a better monitoring of global education goals.	
Cons	Requires training, capacity-building, and technical support to ensure national survey respondents and national statistical offices correctly apply ISCED classifications.	
Proposed decision	Recommends - Regular updates to guidelines: continuously update ISCED implementation guidelines by incorporating feedback from Member States and stakeholders. These updates should include clear instructions and practical examples to ensure consistent application across countries. - Validation and peer review mechanisms: establish formal mechanisms for validating and peer-reviewing ISCED mappings at regional or global levels. This process should involve regular evaluations of national education systems and programme attributes against ISCED classification criteria by levels. Expert reviews and quality assurance protocols should be developed to address discrepancies and align with international standards. - Development of support tools: create tools to aid ISCED implementation and meet evolving international reporting needs. These tools would help countries proactively identify and resolve challenges specific to their education systems. - Standardized indicator guidelines: develop clear and standardized guidelines for calculating education indicators, particularly for general and vocational programmes. Baseline criteria should be defined to enhance reporting consistency and enable precise cross-country comparisons of education data.	
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Establishing a regular review process

o Regular review for relevance: ongoing ISCED updates are necessary to keep the classification aligned with evolving education systems and ensure accurate international comparisons.

o Adapting to changing programmes: technical, vocational, and non-formal education require systematic reviews to prevent misclassification as these fields develop.

o Ensuring global consistency: a dynamic ISCED framework helps standardize national education data into internationally recognized categories for meaningful cross-national comparisons.

Decision points (ISCED Review Panel recommendation #16)

	Option 1	Option 2
Description	Endorse the ISCED Review Panel recommendation #16.	Do not endorse recommendation #16
Pros	Improved accuracy and relevance of ISCED as it will stay aligned with evolving education systems, reduce misclassification, and increase cross-national comparability of education statistics.	Reduces costs and administrative burden.
Cons	Regular review should take into account relevance/necessity. In addition, ISCED revisions will require significant financial, technical, and human resources, which may burden countries and international organizations. It may also imply adjustments to national ISCED mappings leading to inconsistencies in long-term trend analysis.	Outdated classification, misalignment with evolving education systems leading to misclassification.
Proposed decision	Recommends 1. To form a group that could oversees amendments to ISCED 2011 (i.e. ISCED-P and ISCED-A) and revision of ISCED-F 2013 and collaborate with the ISCED working group of the Education Data and Statistics Commission (EDSC). 2. To develop an implementation plan for the review. 3. To develop a research agenda to address ongoing complex issues. 4. To establish a more regular review mechanism.	
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