



Understanding the Key Revisions in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)

THE GLOBAL ISCED CONSULTATION

The global consultation on the draft **International Standard Classification of Education** (ISCED) 2011 aims to gain the perspective of every country across the globe as well as regional and international agencies that use and produce education data. These inputs will be reviewed by the ISCED Technical Advisory Panel and incorporated in the text. The panel will submit the revised classification to the UNESCO General Conference for approval in early 2011.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GLOBAL CONSULTATION?

Participants in the global consultation are requested to send in their feedback by **31 October 2010**. Feedback can be sent electronically, faxed or mailed to the following addresses:

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We welcome your feedback on the changes described in Section I of this document or any other section on the ISCED 2011 draft – especially as they apply to your country, region, field or the work of your organization. You may wish to consider the following factors when providing feedback:

- Improvement of classification criteria
- Relevance to recent changes and trends in education systems
- Transparency in international statistics on education
- Consistency in international comparison

The first part of this document summarizes the main changes and additions to the ISCED to help the reader navigate through the proposed ISCED 2011 text. The text is the result of consensus at the global and regional levels, hence a brief description of the discussions that led to the consensus is provided as well. The main changes include: a new coding system, an improved definition of the unit of classification, a revised definition of formal and non-formal education, new complementary dimensions, changes to ISCED levels and a new definition of educational attainment.

The second part of this document describes the procedure and timeline used to develop the revised ISCED – from the 2007 General Conference until the launch of the global consultation in June 2010. The process included collaborative work with the ISCED review Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) and experts from the ISCED Regional Expert Meetings.

I. SUMMARY OF ISCED 2011 KEY REVISIONS

The ISCED 2011 text consists of three main parts: i) the “general” part which covers the basic concepts in ISCED, its scope and the type of data to which it applies; ii) the “levels” portion which describes the characteristics and classification criteria for each one of the ISCED levels (ISCED 0-8); and iii) the “fields of education” part retained from ISCED 1997, which defines 25 fields of education categorized into 7 broad groups.

The revisions to ISCED 2011 provide a more detailed explanation of the general concepts and classification criteria of the ISCED levels. The additional content in the 2011 revised version will result in a significantly larger ISCED edition, including 299 paragraphs (versus 109 in the 1997 version). ISCED 2011 will include a detailed correspondence table to compare between the structures of the ISCED 1997 and 2011 to ensure the continuity in the data time series (see paragraph 297 on pages 52-53 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

The key revisions are:

1. The new coding system;
2. The unit of classification;
3. The definition of formal and non-formal education;
4. ISCED Level 0 – early childhood education;
5. The redefinition of the complementary dimensions for ISCED Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5;
6. New structure for tertiary education (ISCED Levels 5-8); and
7. Educational attainment and ISCED.

1. The new coding system

Differing from its predecessor, ISCED 2011 provides a coherent system of 3-digit level classification codes to be used in combination with the numeric codes for fields of study. The system of codes aims to standardize the use of ISCED in national and international datasets and improve the exchange and reporting of data.

The ISCED 2011 classification consists of 9 levels of education. Within each level, complementary dimensions are used to identify further categories and subcategories, if applicable. In the 3-digit classification coding system, the first digit represents the ISCED level. The second digit reflects 'programme orientation' at Levels 2-5 and the 'position in the national degree/qualifications structure' and 'programme duration' for Levels 6 and 7 (see paragraph 95 on page 14 of the ISCED draft). The third digit is used for ISCED Levels 2-5 to indicate the subcategories within the complementary dimensions that combine *level completed* with *access to higher level programmes* (refer to paragraph 297 for the third digit structure on pages 52-53 of the ISCED 2011 draft). Together, the three numeric digits in ISCED represent all the potential combinations in education classification, although not all combinations exist in reality or will be relevant to statistical reporting.

2. The unit of classification

The educational programme remains the unit of classification and is the basis for the reporting of statistics on education systems (e.g. enrolments, entrants, teachers and other personnel, and finance). In order to improve reporting on outcomes in educational attainment and data on graduates, qualifications corresponding to an educational programme were added as a derived unit of classification (refer to paragraphs 29-33 on pages 4-5 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

3. The definition of formal and non-formal education

The 2011 draft improves on the definition of the scope of education in ISCED. In the new proposal, both formal education and non-formal education (NFE) are included in the scope of ISCED while informal education or learning is excluded.

The definitions of formal and non-formal education in ISCED 2011 have also been improved (see paragraphs 17-23 on pages 3-4 of the ISCED draft). *Formal education* is defined as education that is institutionalized and recognized by the relevant national authorities. The awarding of credentials or certificates and the existence of a teacher-student relationship are two key criteria in formal education.

Non-formal education is defined as an addition or an alternative to formal education. Its defining characteristic is that it is not recognized as formal education and it can be provided by a number of bodies (e.g. private enterprises, non-governmental organizations and public or semi-public organizations). Therefore, ISCED 2011 provides a positive definition of this term contrary to the inadequate one in ISCED 1997 which was not conducive to classifying these programmes as it did not aid in determining their equivalency to formal education.

Regarding the educational attainment of individuals, ISCED 2011 specifies that this can only be determined by formal education credentials and certificates. As programmes for adults can take on different formats, once again the scope of ISCED is better defined in the latest draft. The 2011 proposal states that, if available, national or regional qualification frameworks or schemes can be useful tools for distinguishing skills related to educational programmes in the formal and non-formal sector as well as for accrediting non-formal programmes for recognition in the formal system. All these changes would facilitate the classification of a non-formal programme in terms of determining equivalency within the formal education system (see paragraphs 24-26 on page 4 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

The ISCED 2011 draft also explains why informal or incidental learning does not fall within the scope of ISCED (see paragraphs 27-28 on page 4 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

Summary of the consensus-building process

The platform for the regional ISCED expert discussions was the document entitled *Review of the definition of non-formal education in ISCED* prepared by the TAP (available on the UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED).

In the sessions on NFE, participants in all regional meetings emphasized the importance of such programmes across all regions, mainly to fill gaps in the formal education systems. In fact, in the Arab States, African and Latin American meetings it was suggested that the NFE should be defined in relation to formal education.

The initiative to improve the current definition of NFE took into consideration the current definition of the term by the European Classification of Learning Activities (CLA), however, the regional experts expressed concern as the CLA requires national qualification frameworks, which does not exist across all regions. The Caribbean region was the exception as these frameworks do exist in this region and can be used to distinguish between formal and non-formal education. Asian and Latin American experts drew attention to the existence of legal documents and standards that helped distinguish between formal and non-formal education. All experts requested that the term 'institutionalized' was clarified in the revised ISCED draft as it could have different definitions depending on the country. The discussions resulted in a more extended section on NFE in the 2011 ISCED. Future work should include the creation of a classification for NFE programmes and activities. These future efforts could draw on the discussions by the Asian, African, Caribbean and Latin American experts for potential criteria to be considered in the classification of NFE.

4. ISCED Level 0 – early childhood education

The changes to ISCED Level 0 in the 2011 revision reflect the rapid expansion of early childhood education programmes all around the world. As a result, ISCED Level 0 was extended beyond pre-primary education to cover the whole of early childhood education. It now includes two categories and the criteria have been streamlined.

The new category targets children younger than 3 years (early childhood development) while the category for pre-primary education programmes remains the same as in the previous version (ISCED 1997) to maintain the time series. This change now makes ISCED 2011 inclusive for all ages. ISCED 0, however, still refers to educational programmes only (i.e. programmes in early childhood care and education (ECCE) that have an education component, excluding programmes that consist of a care component only).

While the criteria for ISCED Level 0 have been better defined, the major change in the draft proposal includes a definition for the main criteria *educational properties of the programme*: 'ISCED Level 0 programmes have as one of their objectives to offer an organized and purposeful set of learning activities, accounting for at least 2 hours per day and 100 days a year'. These criteria are already in use in monitoring progress towards *Education for All* (EFA) and its inclusion in ISCED 2011 ensures consistency in the time series with EFA data reporting. Furthermore, ISCED 2011 specifies that the existence of a reference or regulatory framework issued or recognized by public

authorities could be considered as a proxy criterion for an educational programme. This would include guidelines, standards or instructions that pertain to the learning opportunities provided to young children (refer to paragraphs 106-126 on pages 17-19 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

Summary of the consensus-building process

The platform for the regional ISCED expert discussions was the document entitled *Proposal on the revision of ISCED 0 and early childhood and education programmes*, prepared by the TAP (available on the UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED).

At the regional meetings, participants in all discussions noted the rapid expansion of ECCE programmes around the world. The agreement was unanimous in favour of the proposed definition for the *educational properties of the programme* in order to ensure a good distinction between care and education. Regarding the criteria of *centre-based education*, all regional experts agreed that a definition would be required given that education at this level can be provided in different environments. African experts, however, warned against considering this as part of the main criteria. Experts in all regions agreed that teachers' qualifications should remain a secondary criteria in the classification of programmes as these may not be necessary everywhere. All regional experts proposed that ISCED also classifies early childhood education programmes for children below 3 years of age – provided that there is an education component.

5. The redefinition of the complementary dimensions for ISCED Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5

The complementary dimensions in ISCED 2011 for Levels 2-5 are: i) programme orientation (general/vocational); and ii) completion and access to further education.

ISCED 1997 had up to three complementary dimensions at secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education – destination, orientation and duration. However, understanding these dimensions and applying them to programme classifications was often found confusing for both data users and producers. In ISCED 2011, the number of potential combinations of categories across dimensions would be substantially reduced, facilitating the reporting of data.

In ISCED 2011, 'programme orientation' only differentiates between vocational programmes (according to the definition in ISCED 1997 which was only slightly amended) and general programmes (basically, all programmes not required for a

specific occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades). Pre-vocational programmes, which are not considered to provide participants with labour-market relevant qualifications and have predominantly general content, will be reported together with general programmes (refer to paragraphs 43-47 on pages 6-7 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

The ISCED 2011 proposal still emphasizes the orientation dimension at ISCED Levels 2-5 (general/vocational education). This emphasis on the orientation dimension highlights the vocational training and the direct labour market qualifications as provided by the educational systems (see **Table 1** below).

In the ISCED 2011 draft, the dimension 'completion and access to further education' replaces the dimensions of subsequent education or destination and duration in ISCED 1997. In the revised ISCED, destination criteria are less prominent because pathways in education systems are becoming more flexible and are adapting to the needs of the individual. The 'level completion' dimension is added in ISCED 2011 as it is necessary, especially for educational attainment data. Level completion and access are combined to create the following categories:

0. no completion of level and no access to higher education;
1. level completion with no access to higher education; and
2. level completion and access to higher education.

It is thus considered that all programmes granting access to a higher ISCED level automatically qualify for 'level completion'. Duration criteria are only specified for terminal programmes to clarify which programmes qualify for 'level completion'. Likewise, there is a provision for adult education programmes – usually of shorter duration than regular educational programmes – which are considered completed if they grant a credential that is equivalent to that of a programme in the regular education system (refer to paragraphs 48-56 on pages 7-8 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

Sub-section D for ISCED Levels 2-5 explains the use of the new complementary dimensions in ISCED 2011.

It should be noted that complementary dimensions vary across the new ISCED Levels 2-5. This reflects the complexity of the ISCED structure as we move up from lower to upper levels. Table 1 below summarizes the structure of the ISCED using the new complementary dimensions.

Table 1: Summary of complementary dimensions across ISCED Levels 2-5

ISCED level	Complementary dimension
ISCED 2	Orientation (general/vocational) Level completion and access to a higher level of education
ISCED 3	Orientation (general/vocational) Level completion and access to a higher level of education
ISCED 4	Orientation Access to a higher level of education
ISCED 5	Orientation Level completion

Summary of the consensus-building process

The platform for the regional ISCED expert discussions were the documents entitled *Recommendations from the ISCED Technical Advisory Panel for the review of TVET as part of the orientation dimension* and *Proposal on the classification of secondary education programmes in ISCED and Recommendations from the ISCED Technical Advisory Panel for the review of TVET as part of the orientation dimension*. Both were prepared by the TAP and are available on the UIS website (www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED).

The proposal to simplify the orientation and destination categories was well received in the regions. All regions except one (Arab States) reached an agreement to simplify the orientation categories into 'general' and 'vocational'. Programmes previously classified as pre-vocational will need to be classified according to the new criteria – most of them are expected to be included as 'general' programmes for the reporting of statistics. Latin American regional experts proposed that the pre-vocational category continue to be used in the ISCED mappings. The destination dimension was simplified to differentiate between those programmes that allow access to the next level of education and those that do not provide this access (terminal programmes). In the Arab States and the Latin American and Caribbean regions, experts noted the increasing tendency of terminal programmes to disappear, especially at ISCED 3, as educational policies are concentrating on extending the provision of programmes with access to higher education. Regional experts deemed it important to distinguish between programmes within the destination dimension. They advised that identifying programmes with different durations would help systematize the reporting of long and short programmes at ISCED Levels 2 and 3, especially when reporting on educational attainment.

6. New structure for tertiary education (ISCED Levels 5-8)

The new structure for tertiary education in the ISCED 2011 proposal responds to the demands of data users and producers to better reflect a hierarchy of post-secondary education programmes. While ISCED 1997 did provide for this possibility by implicitly using sub-categories within the old ISCED Level 5, ISCED 2011 minimizes the use of subcategories and clarifies the hierarchy between levels. Furthermore, the new version avoids a notion of hierarchy between academic and occupational programmes to ensure the appropriate classification of occupational programmes. Tertiary education now comprises four ISCED levels (Levels 5, 6, 7 and 8), allowing for the accurate identification of programmes in separate levels, independent of the academic or occupational programme orientation:

- Level 5 – short-cycle tertiary education or equivalent;
- Level 6 – bachelor level education or equivalent;
- Level 7 – master level education or equivalent; and
- Level 8 – doctoral level education or equivalent.

In the new ISCED Level 5, programmes can be differentiated as general or vocational (refer to paragraphs 225-227 on page 38 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

The new ISCED Levels 6 and 7 include programmes that lead to qualifications equivalent to bachelor and master levels, respectively. They also include occupational oriented programmes of longer durations that can be regarded as equivalent to the bachelor (ISCED 6) or the master (ISCED 7) level. Countries or regions may have to refer to their internal equivalence rules (e.g. by using their national or regional qualification framework, if applicable) to generate the correct classification of programmes. The ISCED Level 8 includes programmes of doctoral level or their equivalent and corresponds to Level 6 in the ISCED 1997.

A detailed correspondence table between the ISCED 2011 and the ISCED 1997 levels, categories and subcategories is presented on paragraph 297 on pages 52-53 of the ISCED 2011 draft.

Summary of the consensus-building process

The platform for the regional ISCED expert discussions was the document entitled *Proposal on the revision of ISCED 97 Levels 4, 5 and 6 for the UIS regional expert meetings 2009/2010* prepared by the TAP (available on the UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED).

The TAP prepared an inventory of higher education programmes presented in a set of groupings or 'blocks'. Different scenarios were proposed on how the blocks would be reflected in the new ISCED levels. Agreement was unanimous in favour of scenarios that made it possible to clearly distinguish between Bachelor's and Master's programmes (in different ISCED levels) as well as for programmes with different durations within them. At the meetings in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States, experts argued in favour of fewer ISCED levels, citing a lack of detailed data. Furthermore, experts from the Arab States stated that the distinction between the new ISCED Levels 4 and 5 were almost non-existent. Nevertheless, experts from other regions argued that this distinction was necessary to guarantee international comparability, advising that careful attention be paid to the ISCED mappings on a case-by-case basis. One option presented by the TAP was to eliminate ISCED Level 4. In regional meetings, however, it was decided that Level 4 be retained with the understanding that the mix of programmes worldwide that are currently classified under it would need to be reviewed. It was agreed that qualifications that were considered equivalent to those awarded in ISCED 3 be re-classified into ISCED 3. Programmes that require ISCED 3 for entry will have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis as they could either fall under ISCED Level 4 or the new ISCED tertiary levels.

As an important step to ensure a smooth transition from ISCED 1997 to the 2011 edition, a table was prepared to show the correspondence between the ISCED 1997 levels and the new ISCED levels and subcategories (see paragraph 297 on pages 52-53 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

7. Educational attainment and ISCED

The ISCED 2011 proposal introduces a definition of educational attainment and a specific coding system for the treatment of educational attainment data. ISCED 2011 differentiates the use of ISCED for reporting data on programmes (i.e. enrolments and resources) as opposed to individuals (i.e. graduates and educational attainment) (see paragraphs 83-90 on pages 12-13 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

In the ISCED 2011 draft, Section G in each ISCED level provides information on how to classify educational attainment. Using the complementary dimension of level completion, ISCED 2011 indicates in which cases an educational qualification needs to be classified at a different ISCED level than the ISCED level of the corresponding educational programme.

Since educational attainment data are usually collected for individuals of varying age groups, rules are provided to determine the attainment of educational qualifications in the past (i.e. when educational systems may have been designed differently). These programmes need to be included in the national ISCED mappings and the ISCED criteria should be applied in the same way as for 'current' programmes.

Summary of the consensus-building process

The platform for the regional ISCED expert discussions were the documents entitled *Recommendations on the Definition of Educational Attainment in ISCED* prepared by the TAP and *Recommendations on the Measurement of Educational Attainment* prepared by Eurostat. Both documents are available on the UIS website (www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED).

Discussions on this topic proved challenging as ISCED is designed to classify programmes and experts had to shape the classification needs to fit the education of individuals. An initial proposal in the first meetings in Bangkok and Nairobi (i.e. East Asia and the Pacific and the sub-Saharan Africa regions) led the TAP to better clarify the definition of the terms used for educational attainment. Expert discussions in the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean regions were more focused but also recognized that educational attainment data is difficult to compare internationally. During the discussions in the latter regions, it became obvious that there is a need to explicitly classify qualifications in addition to programmes. Finally, it was concluded that an improved international definition of educational attainment should include the notions of ISCED levels. The Caribbean experts speculated that the most challenging part of the work would occur at the implementation stage.

II. THE ISCED REVIEW PROCESS

The review of the concepts, structure and implementation of the ISCED was initiated in 2007 by UNESCO Member States in light of major changes in education since the last revision of the standard in 1997.¹ The review of the ISCED includes the following actions: production of ISCED mappings; joint work between the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Statistics Office (Eurostat) to identify key issues; the creation of an ISCED Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to define the scope of the review work; and ISCED regional discussions. An interim report on the progress of the review of the ISCED was submitted to the UNESCO General Conference at its 35th session in October 2009. The revised version will be presented at the 36th session in October 2011.

a) ISCED mappings and joint work with data collection agencies

ISCED mappings are produced for all countries in the world. They demonstrate the correspondence between national systems and the structure of the ISCED. These mappings are the result of the collaborative work between national statisticians and international organizations in charge of education data collection. ISCED concepts and the classification of programmes are discussed during the regular annual (or bi-annual) international statistical meetings organized by the UIS, OECD and Eurostat in all the regions of the world.

In response to countries' demands for clarification of the ISCED 1997 concepts and implementation practices and to improve the international comparability of education statistics, the three international organizations (UIS, OECD and Eurostat) identified and organized a series of conceptual and implementation issues to be addressed in the ISCED review.

b) Expertise: The ISCED review Technical Advisory Panel

In early 2009, the UIS established the ISCED TAP to provide guidance on the review strategy, take part in regional meetings, assist in targeting research and make recommendations for revisions to the current standard. The panel consists of 14 international and regional experts specializing in comparative education statistics and classification systems (for a list of members see Annex 1 available on the ISCED Consultation website as per the details in the Consultation letter). The panel met three times in 2009 and once in 2010.

¹ UNESCO General Conference, 34th Session, October 2007. UNESCO 34C/DR. 25

At the first TAP meeting in January 2009, the panel reviewed existing classification issues and identified new ones. With the 2011 General Conference as a target deadline and given the broad list of issues to tackle,² the panel deemed it necessary to prioritize the following topics: the redefinition of the structure of post-secondary education; the clarification of the destination and orientation categories in ISCED Levels 2, 3 and 4; reaching an international definition for the measurement of educational attainment; and improving the current definition of non-formal education (NFE) in ISCED. Members of the panel were assigned the responsibility of preparing proposals in their areas of expertise. The following five proposals were prepared and discussed during the second TAP meeting in July 2009: post-secondary education (two proposals); coverage of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and ISCED 0; Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in ISCED and educational attainment. NFE was also discussed in relation to the Classification of Learning Activities (CLA).³ Also, the panel defined the approach for the ISCED regional expert meetings to be held in the fall of 2009 and early 2010 – where the proposals would be discussed by regional experts who would provide substantive feedback to the panel from all parts of the world.

In setting out the scope of the work for the revision, the ISCED TAP recognized that not all the potential issues could be covered. The TAP acknowledges the growing numbers of programmes and activities in the NFE sector around the world, including various technical and vocational programmes. However, given the complexity of classifying programmes of such diversity, there was insufficient time to both review the current ISCED structure as well as develop a classification for NFE programmes. Nonetheless, the latter should be addressed following the ISCED approval at the 2011 UNESCO General Conference. Currently, the ISCED 2011 text includes a section on how to classify NFE programmes that may not fulfil the current ISCED classification criteria (see paragraphs 21-28 on page 4 of the ISCED 2011 draft).

The update of the fields of education classification is also considered an important issue to address. Given the timeframe, the TAP recommended that the Fields of Education and Training manual (a 3-digit classification) of 1999 developed by UNESCO and Eurostat should be updated and submitted for adoption after the new ISCED is approved.

During the third TAP meeting in Geneva in December 2009, the panel reviewed the results of the different regional discussions on ISCED and further refined the proposals.

² See “Conceptual and Implementation issues for the ISCED Review”. ISCED Technical Advisory Panel (1st Meeting). Meeting Document. UIS, Montreal, January 2009.

³ European Commission, Classification of Learning Activities (CLA), Luxembourg: Eurostat 2005.

Also, an editorial board was created to drive the preparation of the revised ISCED text. The editorial board includes representatives from the UIS, Eurostat and OECD as well as three additional TAP members. The editorial board met twice prior to the fourth TAP meeting in April 2010 when the first draft of the new ISCED 2011 text was discussed. The feedback from the regional meetings proved crucial to the discussions at the global level. The editorial board, and later the UIS, incorporated the necessary changes into the document that formed the basis for the global consultation in June 2010.⁴

The global consultation feedback and comments will be processed and incorporated into the draft ISCED proposal by the fifth TAP meeting in December 2011. The panel will then submit the revised classification to the UNESCO General Conference for approval in 2011.

The following topics have been identified for development after the submission of the 2011 revision to the UNESCO General Conference:

- Implementation manual: a guide explaining how to use the ISCED 2011 criteria to classify education programmes in the ISCED levels. The international organizations involved are currently focused on improving the availability and accuracy of the ISCED mappings which will be used in the creation of the implementation manual.
- The classification of NFE programmes and learning activities: Eurostat will report on the results of the Adult Education Survey that uses the CLA.
- The fields of education and training detailed classification (3-digit level): this needs to be updated to reflect the creation of new fields (e.g. Biotechnology) and proposed for approval by the UNESCO General Conference.

c) Regional feedback: expert meetings and discussions

Regional expert meetings and discussions were an important step in the review process prior to the production of the new ISCED draft text. Only once the regional needs were understood could the full breadth of issues be addressed. A number of experts on the different topics included in the ISCED review participated in the meetings (for a list of participants see Annex 2 available on the ISCED Consultation website as per the details in the Consultation letter). Regional meetings took place in all regions of the world: Africa

⁴Technical Advisory Panel Meeting Agendas and Meeting Summaries are available here: www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED

(Nairobi, Kenya, November 2009), the Arab States (Doha, Qatar, February 2010), Asia (Bangkok, Thailand, October 2009), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Montreal, Canada, March 2010).

The meetings allowed regional experts to provide feedback on the key proposals prepared by the TAP to ensure that the modifications proposed to the ISCED responded to national needs within the regions. They also provided the TAP members with first-hand information on how national education systems had changed since 1997 as well as ensured that region-specific issues would be well-understood and included in the global discussions and decisions.

To gain feedback from OECD and European countries, the review topics were discussed at the ISCED seminar sponsored by Eurostat in September 2008 in Paris. As well, ISCED sessions were held during the statistical meetings of the International Indicators of Education Systems (INES) Working Party chaired by the OECD in 2009 (Paris and Berlin) and 2010 (Paris) and at the Education and Training Statistics Working Group chaired by Eurostat in 2009 and 2010 (Luxembourg). The educational attainment topic was also discussed during the INES Network on Labour Market, Economic and Social Outcomes of Learning (LSO) in 2009 (Rotterdam and Paris) and 2010 (Copenhagen). Similarly, their input was duly noted at the different TAP meetings and is now reflected in the new ISCED 2011 text.

The proposals prepared by the TAP formed the basis for the regional expert ISCED discussions. These included: the redefinition of the ISCED levels for higher education and secondary education (including orientation and destination), the review of ECCE and ISCED 0, recommendations for the definition of the measurement of educational attainment and a new definition of NFE (available on the UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org/ISCED). The TAP recommendations were translated into the different languages and circulated prior to each meeting. There was also a session dedicated to discussing “emerging” issues in relation to ISCED that may not have already been considered by the TAP. A common issue was the classification of new education programmes such as transnational programmes, distance education or job- or skill-based education. It was noted that ISCED should specify the boundary between programmes that are considered education and those that are considered solely on-the-job training. It also should be decided if on-the-job training should be considered in ISCED. Meeting reports for each regional discussion are available upon request (contact the UIS at isced2011consultation@uis.unesco.org).