



CHILD PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

” Implementation
Guide

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for and with children



CHILD PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT TOOL

Implementation Guide

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French edition:

Outil d'évaluation de la participation des enfants: guide

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on the Child Participation Assessment Tool

Question 1: What is the Child Participation Assessment Tool?

■ **Answer:** The Council of Europe has developed a Child Participation Assessment Tool with 10 specific and measurable indicators to measure progress in the area of children's participation. The indicators can be used by states to measure progress in implementing Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18.

■ The 10 indicators are cross-cutting, rather than thematic, and reflect the three broad measures addressed in the recommendation:

- ▶ measures to protect the right to participate;
- ▶ measures to promote the right to participate;
- ▶ measures to create space for participation.

Question 2: What is children's participation?

■ **Answer:** Children's participation is the right of children to be listened to and taken seriously. It is defined by the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 as "individuals or groups of individuals having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity". This definition is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Article 12 (the child's right to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter or procedure affecting the child).

■ The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has adopted General Comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard, which explains in detail the meaning of children's participation and its implementation in practice in different settings, including education and schools, health care, in situations of violence, the family, and judicial proceedings, etc.

Question 3: Who should use the Child Participation Assessment Tool?

■ **Answer:** The Child Participation Assessment Tool is intended for member states of the Council of Europe. Ministries responsible for children's rights and welfare will lead on the assessment, but will have to involve different stakeholders, including other ministries, civil society, children's ombudspersons, organisations representing professionals working with and for children, and academics.

Question 4: Why should a state use the assessment tool, what is the added value?

■ **Answer:** The tool will enable states to:

- ▶ raise awareness and understanding of children's right to participate;
- ▶ undertake a baseline assessment of the current implementation of this right;
- ▶ identify measures needed to achieve further compliance;
- ▶ highlight and share good practice;
- ▶ measure progress over time.

Question 5: We already report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the UNCRC, including on the right of children to participate. Is the child participation assessment process not a duplication?

■ **Answer: No,** the outcomes of the child participation assessment process should be integrated into the UNCRC reporting process. A fact sheet on the link between the UNCRC reporting process and the child participation assessment process has been produced by the Council of Europe and is included in this guide (see page 23).

Question 6: Do we need to involve children and young people in the child participation assessment process?

Answer: Yes. Some of the indicators can be measured by collecting data and information that has already been published, but for several of the indicators the opinions of children and young people are required in order for member states to make a sound judgment on progress achieved. The reality of the situation on the ground, as seen by children and young people themselves, has to be an essential element of the process of self-assessment undertaken by the member state. Such feedback provides a “check and balance” to the subjective nature of the assessment. Guidance is provided to help gather children’s and young people’s views and experiences in focus group meetings, including with vulnerable children and young people.

Question 7: What is the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the child assessment process?

Answer: It is important to ensure that information used to inform the assessment process comes from a range of sources. NGOs are well placed to understand what is happening and will often have a good knowledge of the situation of vulnerable children and young people. Their input into the assessment process is very important and it can be seen to provide another “check and balance”. The optimum situation is for member states to triangulate their own evaluation of their performance with the views and experiences of NGOs, and the views and experiences of as wide a range of children and young people as possible.

Question 8: How much time does it cost to carry out the child participation assessment?

Answer: About 12 months. This includes a preparation phase with a training seminar for all stakeholders involved (two months); an implementation phase to collect data, consult with children and young people and other stakeholders (eight months), and a concluding phase and evaluation (two months).

Question 9: What do we need in order to carry out the assessment?

Answer: A national ministry representative needs to make a time commitment and the costs of appointing a national consultant need to be foreseen, as well as the cost of organising a training seminar for all stakeholders at the start of the process and at least 10 child focus group meetings led by children’s

facilitators. Additional costs would include expenses for the organisation of meetings convened with relevant stakeholders.

Question 10: What can be done with the results of the assessment?

Answer: The results should be used as a baseline assessment from which to measure progress achieved over time.

Repeating the assessment periodically to fit with the UNCRC Reporting process will enable member states to take action to build on strengths and attend to areas requiring improvement. In the final assessment report, states are expected to indicate for each indicator the areas requiring improvement and what follow-up action they are planning. Reports on the results of the CPAT assessment should be shared with stakeholders who took part in the assessment including children and young people in a child-friendly manner.¹

Experience suggests that the process of doing the assessment is as important as the outcomes. Participating countries have found that:

- ▶ it raises awareness of the meaning and significance of participation;
- ▶ it increases interest in its potential and the importance of strengthening opportunities;
- ▶ it highlights the extent of the gaps in current law and policy on the one hand and its effective implementation, on the other.

Question 11: Will the results of the child participation assessment be compared with other states?

Answer: No, the results of the assessment are solely for a state’s own use and should function as a baseline from which to measure future progress in the implementation of children’s participation within the country.

Question 12: Where do I find supporting material to carry out the child participation assessment?

Answer: On this website: www.coe.int/en/web/children/participation.

1. For Guidance on how to report back to children in a child-friendly manner consult Annex 2 of [the Council of Europe Handbook on Children’s Participation](#) “Listen – Act – Change” Annex 2: Producing Accessible Information: Guidance?

Guidance note to the Child Participation Assessment Tool

Introduction

On 28 March 2012 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2² on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18. The Child Participation Assessment Tool³ has been developed to provide specific and measurable indicators with which states can begin to measure progress in implementing the recommendation. The development of the assessment tool is part of an ongoing process initiated by the Council of Europe to ensure that all children and young people within Council of Europe member states can exercise their rights to be heard, to be taken seriously and to participate in decision making in all matters affecting them. This includes protecting the right to participate, promoting and providing information about participation and creating spaces for participation.

■ In 2014 and 2015 the draft Child Participation Assessment Tool was piloted in three Council of Europe member states: Estonia, Ireland and Romania. Between 2015 and 2019 the Council of Europe supported six other countries – Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia – to use the Tool to frame an assessment of child participation. Building on these experiences, this guidance was updated in 2021.

■ This guidance note provides directions on how to gather and analyse information on each indicator and includes suggestions as to which stakeholders should be involved and what the expected outcomes are. The guidance note should be read in combination with Appendix 1 of the Child Participation Assessment Tool – Overview of the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation and associated benchmarks.

■ The Guidance Note includes:

- ▶ what will be expected from the national authorities in terms of support and resources;

2. [Committee of Ministers Recommendation 2012\)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18](#)
3. [Council of Europe's Child Participation Assessment Tool](#)

- ▶ how to collect the information and data, for example through focus groups with children and NGOs and disaggregated data;
- ▶ guidelines on the importance of holding multi-stakeholder group meetings/hearings;
- ▶ a commentary for each indicator, identifying what the challenges are and the feedback to be given to the children and young people and the other stakeholders involved.

Process

■ A road map for how to undertake a child participation assessment has been developed which sets out a plan of action including three phases.

1. **Preparatory phase** (months 1-2): The organisation of a meeting with key stakeholders within the member state organised by the co-ordinating ministry, including training on child participation and on using the tool.
2. **Implementation phase** (months 3-10): Implementation of the tool involving all stakeholders already identified in the preparatory phase.
3. **Concluding phase and evaluation** (months 11-12): The drafting of a report containing a baseline assessment and an evaluation of the situation regarding children's participation within the country and with recommendations for further improvements.

■ Using the tool to conduct an assessment is intended to start a debate on children's participation in a Council of Europe member state, and to collect information that can be used to establish a baseline of relevant policy and practice. Further assessments should be conducted periodically to review progress. The Council of Europe recommends that these subsequent assessments of progress should be timed so as to inform and strengthen the periodic reports that states parties to the UNCRC are required to submit to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child every five years. To support the assessment process a **fact sheet** linking reporting on the UNCRC to the Council of Europe child participation assessment process is provided (see page 23).

■ The Child Participation Assessment Tool includes 10 basic indicators, which will assist states to assess the implementation of children's and young people's participation within different settings. The indicators will enable states to:

- ▶ undertake a baseline assessment of current implementation;
- ▶ help identify measures needed to achieve their compliance;
- ▶ measure progress over time.

■ The assessment should provide an overview of the progress achieved according to the 10 indicators, each of which is rated from 0 (no progress) to 3 (full compliance with the indicator). In addition, recommendations on further actions should be formulated in response to gaps identified.

■ Responsibility for carrying out the assessment process lies with a national government representative. Support from the coordinating ministry in sending out invitations to participate in the child participation assessment is crucial to ensuring the commitment of all the relevant stakeholders.

■ A national consultant should be appointed to draft the national report, which will be based on the data and information collected and the outcomes of the child focus group meetings, the online children's survey, meetings of professionals working with children and meetings with NGOs and civil society and other stakeholders.

Guidelines for collecting and analysing information on the 10 indicators

This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the Child Participation Assessment Tool, which describes each of the 10 indicators, along with possible sources from which to obtain relevant data, the assessment criteria and suggestions for particular questions to consider in respect of vulnerable children and those who are seldom heard. Disaggregated data are important so as to reveal differences in the extent to which different groups of children are enabled to express their views and have them taken seriously.

For each indicator in the Child Participation Assessment Tool, there is space to include notes made during the analysis. In addition, where a list of different settings is shown for a specific indicator, a matrix is provided to enable states to analyse each setting separately (this is the case for indicator Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9).

The table below lists the 10 indicators, summarises the way evidence should be collected, provides some notes on the analysis, the stakeholders that need to be involved and provides advice on the most appropriate methodology. While the table makes it clear that different types of information are required for assessing progress against the different indicators, as a general rule it is important that member states consider information from a range of different sources across the whole assessment. The triangulation of different types of data, from policy documents and available research, from focus groups with NGOs and other organisations working with children and young people, and from children and young people themselves (via focus groups) provides an important “check and balance” to the subjective nature of the member states’ self-assessment.

In addition, member states will want to note situations where there is limited data available (including data that is disaggregated by gender, disability and other factors) and consider including in their action plans steps that can be taken to improve the availability

of such data, for example, additional questions in any regular surveys of school-aged children.

Children and young people are increasingly engaging in decision making via online and social media, and approaches to engaging them in this way need to be considered in the assessment.

With the Children and young people’s Focus Groups, it is recommended that states undertake half of the focus groups (at least five) within schools and the other half (at least another five) in co-operation with NGOs, to ensure attention is paid to the potentially different experiences of vulnerable children and those who are seldom heard in each country. It is important to make clear to the schools and the NGOs exactly what is required.

When it comes to the analysis of the information collected, member states are advised to make their own judgements on their performance against each of the 10 indicators using specified criteria. For each indicator, member states are invited to award themselves a score of 0, 1, 2 or 3 using the assessment criteria as a guide. Exactly how a member state determines their performance along this scale will vary depending on a number of factors but where possible, member states should involve stakeholders (including children and young people) in this part of the assessment process and ensure they consider data from a range of sources.

NOTE. The terms “children” and “young people” are used throughout the assessment tool; this reflects the work undertaken by the Council of Europe in the Children’s Rights Division and the Youth Department. The meaning of “children and young people” within the assessment tool is that defined in Article 1 of the UNCRC: “For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years”. When using the assessment tool, states need to be aware that the experiences of all children below the age of 18 should be considered in the assessment process, which includes children in the youngest age range (below the age of 7).

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
<p>Indicator No. 1</p> <p>Legal protection for the right of children and young people to participate in decision making is reflected in the national constitution and legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence, including specific data from line ministries, on the legal protection of the child's right to be heard within different settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministries (including those responsible for education and schools; family decision making; criminal justice; health care; care and protection; custody and immigration and asylum proceedings) ▶ Government agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Analysis of the Constitution and all relevant legislation ▶ When analysing information against this indicator, ensure there is a specific focus on schools and education ▶ data on legislation to make the establishment of school councils mandatory – in different types of schools (pre-school, primary school, secondary school, vocational education, higher education, special education)
<p>Indicator No. 2</p> <p>A cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights explicitly includes the right of children and young people to participate in decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence of reference to the right to participate in cross-sectoral strategy, including specific evidence from line ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministries (including those for education, justice, health and social affairs) ▶ Government agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Data collection Analysis of the strategy, if one exists, to assess how comprehensive and effective it is in ensuring meaningful participation in all arenas of children and young people's lives
<p>Indicator No. 3</p> <p>An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence of mandate of children's ombudsperson, commissioner for children or equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministry and/or Ombudsoffice for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Analysis of the relevant legislation and how this is implemented in practice. In particular it will be important to analyse whether the institution is line with the "Paris Principles"
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with professionals working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Professionals working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In order to monitor implementation of this indicator it is important to find out from professionals working with children and young people, in particular, for example, teachers, social workers and lawyers, as to the role, effectiveness and visibility of the institution. This can be done through meetings, interviews or focus groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focus groups should be organised by facilitators to find out from children and young people about their knowledge, understanding and experience of the ombudsperson, whether they are aware of their role and how to get in touch with him or her.

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
<p>Indicator No. 4</p> <p>Mechanisms exist to enable children and young people to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence of relevant policies, protocols and procedures ▶ Consultations with professionals and children and young people who have experience of the justice system and administrative proceedings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministries ▶ Legal professionals working with or for children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An analysis of all relevant documentation relating to the right of children and young people to participate in judicial and administrative hearings. The analysis should assess not only the provision of the right to participate but the extent to which those processes are child-friendly. ▶ This could be undertaken through meetings with key professionals working in the judicial system or other administrative proceedings in which children and young people are directly or indirectly involved (e.g. in the case of divorce). These could be judges, lawyers, attorneys, advocates, etc. ▶ The focus should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criminal proceedings, - Family law, - Care and protection. ▶ Immigration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people ▶ Existing regional studies on access to justice for children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people with experience of the justice system, including those with experience in juvenile justice proceedings and administrative justice proceedings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people's perspectives can be sought through focus groups or individual interviews. CoE Guidelines on child-friendly justice are relevant in the context of consulting children (they are accessible in your national language(s)). ▶ The following studies provide valuable sources of data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) carried out a study: ‘Child-friendly justice perspectives and experiences of professionals on children’s participation in civil and criminal judicial proceedings in 10 EU Member States’ (2015) (countries involved are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Poland Spain and United Kingdom). The study provides a wealth of information on children’s participation in juvenile justice and it includes views of 570 professionals. ▶ The second report of the FRA research “Perspectives and experiences of children involved in judicial proceedings as victims, witnesses or parties in nine EU Member States” concentrates on the responses of the 392 children involved in judicial proceedings who were interviewed.

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The European Commission has carried out a study on children’s involvement in judicial proceedings, including three sections, children in criminal, civil and administrative proceedings. The study concentrates on the child in different roles, such as suspect/offender, witness, victim, plaintiff or otherwise the subject of judicial proceedings. Final results were published in July 2015: http://www.socialplatform.org/news/commission-study-published-on-childrens-involvement-in-justice/ ▶ The European Commission has carried out a study on the ‘Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice on child participation in the European Union’ within the 28 EU member states and includes children’s participation within legal settings. The study was published in March 2015. ▶ A study was conducted by MDAC on access to justice for children with mental disabilities funded by the EU and implemented in 10 countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. Information on the project and its outputs is available here: http://www.mdac.org/en/accessing-justice-children ▶ Two EU-funded studies were conducted by DCI-Belgium on legal aid and the role of the lawyer for children in conflict with the law in 20 EU member states. The right to access legal counsel and representation throughout criminal judicial proceedings is essential, especially for children in order to enable them to effectively enjoy and exercise their rights, namely their right to participation. Information on the project and its outputs is available here: https://lachild.eu/ and https://lachild.eu/the-projects/mylawyer-myrights/manuals/
<p>Indicator No. 5</p> <p>Child-friendly individual complaints procedures are in place⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence of complaints mechanisms in place in all services used by children and young people, as well as status of Optional Protocol 3 to the UNCRC on a communications procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministries ▶ Service including, for example, schools, hospitals, courts, housing, immigration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Analysis needs to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Whether any complaints procedures are in place? – Whether and to what extent they are used? – How effective they are at providing meaningful accountability for children and young people? ▶ Status of commitment to the Optional Protocol 3 to the UNCRC on a communications procedure and whether it has been ratified and implemented within the member state?

4. For more information on child-friendly and quality participation, see Child Participation Assessment Tool Appendix 1, *Basic Requirements for Quality Participation*, for an overview of the measures necessary to achieve a child friendly complaints procedure

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multi-sectoral consultations with professionals from different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Professionals working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations should be undertaken with professionals including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teachers and school staff, – the Justice sector (lawyers working in the area of family and civil and criminal justice, law enforcement, from relevant units, judges and prosecutors), – the Health sector (medical professionals, such as pediatric doctors and nurses) – Social workers and professionals working in care and protection services for children and young people, – Officials responsible for immigration procedures, – Academic experts, – etc. ▶ Questions should focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do complaints mechanisms exist at all and in which of the settings listed? – If they exist, are these child-friendly? – Are the child-friendly complaints mechanisms mandated by law and easily accessible to all children and young people? ▶ Children and young people's Focus Groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focus groups discussions should focus on finding out if any complaints mechanisms are known to the children and young people and if so, whether they are accessible and safe
<p>Indicator No. 6</p> <p>The right of children to participate in decision making is embedded in training programmes for professionals working with and for children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence of inclusion of the CRC and children's right to participation in the pre-service training of all professionals working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line Ministries including education, health, justice, social work, police, youth workers, etc. ▶ Academic institutions and staff designing and providing training for professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Analysis of all relevant curricula to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – whether they include the CRC as a significant component of the course? – whether they are properly assessed? – whether they are focused on acquisition of competencies, skills and knowledge?

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with professionals working with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Interviews, meetings or focus groups could be organised with groups of professionals and/or professional bodies working in the different settings, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – teachers – lawyers – judiciary – police – social workers – health care professionals – immigration officials – caregivers and residential workers – prison officers (in juvenile justice institutions if these exist) – children and youth leaders – civil servants and public officials ▶ The aim of the consultations would be to explore whether they felt they had been provided with sufficient training on the CRC and participation rights in the pre-service training they received.
<p>Indicator No. 7</p> <p>Children are provided with information about their right to participate in decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary evidence on the national curriculum ▶ Documentary evidence of campaigns, or such as health, education, justice, etc. services providing material on children's rights including participation rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The ministry of education ▶ Any government education agencies concerned with school curricula ▶ government departments concerned with information, communication and media ▶ Local and national government departments providing services to children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Analysis of national curriculum (if such exists) and also any additional optional curricula available to schools. ▶ Key questions would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What the curriculum covered in relation to children's rights, for example is there a broad human rights and democratic citizenship curriculum? – In what years of schooling was it provided? – Is it mandatory? – Is it assessed? ▶ Analysis of any local or national government department or civil society organisational investing in dissemination of information about children's rights through social media, leaflets, awareness raising campaigns, etc.

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people's organisations and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people's Focus Groups can be used to build understanding of how aware children and young people are of their rights, including the right to participate and how to exercise those rights.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people's NGO networks, schools, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children's Rights NGOs and civil society ▶ Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings should be organised with civil society, schools, local authorities, children and young people's associations to collect information on how far they consider that children and young people are informed of their rights.
<p>Indicator No. 8</p> <p>Children and young people are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people's NGO networks and national youth councils and local and regional authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children's Rights NGOs, civil society, local authorities, academics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings should be organised with representatives of national and regional youth councils and school councils, local and regional authorities to collect information. ▶ Information on what scope exists for children and young people to establish their own forums. This indicator needs to be analysed at four different levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National – Regional – Local – Schools ▶ Information could also be gathered in respect of exploring, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How many children are involved – The legal basis of these forums – The scope children and young people have to influence decision makers

Indicators	Data source	Stakeholders involved	Additional comments
Indicator No. 9 Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local authority services are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Meetings can be organised with local authorities to collect information on whether there are effective and well publicised mechanisms through which to get feedback from children and young people on their experiences of services. ▶ The consultations should focus on the seven settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – education and schools – alternative care (e.g. fostering, children’s homes) – play, recreation and sports – cultural services (e.g. museums, arts) – child protection services – support for immigration and asylum seekers – family support and pre-school services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people’s focus groups can explore whether children and young people are aware of their right to provide feedback or influence the nature of services provided for them, whether they know how to do this, and whether they would have any confidence in such systems.
Indicator No. 10 Children and young people are given support to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions (hereafter called children’s rights instruments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Documentary analysis ▶ Consultation with the government contacts responsible for reporting on the UNCRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Line ministries ▶ Government agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It would be important to review any reports outlining the process of information gathering and analysis for the UNCRC report ▶ In addition, evidence might be included in both the UNCRC government report itself as well as in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child – Conclusions of Council of Europe monitoring bodies (e.g. the European Committee of Social Rights, Lanzarote Committee, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultation with the NGO coalition (if one exists); if not, consult with an NGO (or group of NGOs) responsible for the shadow report or involved in the reporting process to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children’s Rights NGO Coalition (if it exists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A meeting could be organised with representative(s) of the children’s rights NGO coalition to identify the extent to which children and young people were meaningfully engaged in contributing to the government UNCRC report.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consultations with children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children and young people who have been involved in UNCRC reporting process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Specific focus groups could be run with children and young people involved in the reporting process to get feedback on their experience of their participation. This could be done via the NGO(s), which has involved the children in the reporting process.

Exploring children's views through focus groups

A focus group is a discussion involving a small number of participants, led by a moderator or facilitator, which seeks to gain an insight into the participants' experiences, attitudes and perceptions. Focus groups are particularly suitable for use with children and young people. For example, they create a safe peer environment and replicate the type of small group settings that children and young people are familiar with from their classroom work. The peer support provided in the small group setting can help to redress the power imbalance between adult and child that exists in one-to-one interviews. Children and young people may also be (more) encouraged to give their opinions when they hear others do so and their memory may be stimulated by the contributions of other participants.

■ The objective of the children and young people's focus groups is to facilitate input from children and young people themselves about the implementation of children and young people's participation within their country. Some member states have also organised surveys of a larger number of children and young people as well as focus groups.

■ The children and young people's focus group discussions should contribute to assessing practice against the following indicators:

- ▶ **Indicator 3:** an independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law;
- ▶ **Indicator 5:** child-friendly individual complaints mechanisms are in place;
- ▶ **Indicator 7:** children and young people are provided with information about their right to participate in decision making;
- ▶ **Indicator 8:** children and young people are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance level;
- ▶ **Indicator 9:** child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local authority services are in place.

■ In addition, the focus groups should enable consultations with groups of children and young people who have specific experience in relation to indicator Nos. 4 and 10:

- ▶ In relation to **Indicator No. 4** – mechanisms exist to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings – consultations will be carried out with specific groups of children and young people or by individual interviews with children and young people who have experience with the justice system and administrative proceedings.
- ▶ In relation to **Indicator No. 10** – children and young people are given support to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including shadow reporting), and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions (hereafter called children's rights instruments) – children and young people who have been involved in UNCRC reporting processes have to be consulted.

Number of focus groups and length of discussions

■ Experience suggests that a minimum of 10 child and young people focus groups are required to provide a meaningful sample with half of the groups organised through primary and secondary schools (possibly by involving the Council of Europe focal points on children's rights and human rights education). Another five focus groups should be organised with the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs). NGO's can be asked to facilitate the involvement of children and young people from vulnerable settings and those who are seldom heard (including disabled children, children with experience in alternative care, in health care, refugee and migrant children, etc.).

■ Sufficient time should be dedicated to organising the focus group consultations. These should preferably take one full day, and not be shorter than half a day. Sufficient breaks and energisers throughout the day. For some children and young people a one-day consultation might stretch their capacity to concentrate and fully participate and a sequence of shorter sessions might be preferable. For this reason, the consultations could also be organised in several shorter sessions after school, depending on what is practical and in the best interests of that group of children and young people.

The role of the facilitator

■ The success of the focus group discussions and the quality of the data obtained will be strongly influenced by the skills of the facilitator and his or her ability to stimulate and maintain the discussion among the participants. The facilitator has three major functions, the first of which is to make the group feel comfortable and at ease; the second, to keep the group discussion focused on the topic of interest and to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to contribute; and third, to enhance the clarity of the children and young people's contributions by seeking clarification when responses seem ambiguous or when contributions from the same child or young person appear contradictory.

■ The focus groups therefore need to be prepared by a professional facilitator (or more than one if necessary), who has experience of working with children and young people and who should be well informed about the contents of the Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool and how to use it.

■ For the facilitator, preparation will include:

- ▶ getting acquainted with the Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool, Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 and the piloting process of the tool; getting familiarised with the indicators (Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) on which the children will be consulted (estimated time needed: half a day);
- ▶ preparing the focus group consultation(s) – developing a programme, ensuring it includes sufficient breaks and energisers and that the key questions will get discussed. This can be done in various ways: through group discussions, world café discussions, theatre and role plays, creative work, etc. (estimated time needed: half a day);
- ▶ carrying out the focus group meeting (estimated time needed: one day);
- ▶ for each of the 10 focus group consultations, collection, analysis and writing up of the outcomes (estimated time needed for reporting on each focus group: one day).

Composition and selection of focus groups

■ A number of factors need to be considered when planning the composition of focus groups with children and young people. These include group size, age, gender, language and other variables relevant to the topic of discussion.

Focus groups in schools

■ The national ministry/body in charge of piloting the Child Participation Assessment Tool should select five schools from across the country. The selection of children and young people should be done in consultation with the designated schools and represent children and young people from different backgrounds, for example, those from rural and urban areas, or areas where specific minorities are present. Children and young people need to volunteer to participate in the focus groups and cannot be selected by the school management without their active consent. The designated school should be asked to select a group of volunteers (maximum 15 to 20 children and young people) from different age groups and to take gender balance into account.

Focus groups in NGO's

■ During the national induction seminar, NGOs and civil society stakeholders will be encouraged to prepare children and young people's focus groups outside of schools. This could be done by asking different NGOs to each organise a children and young people's focus group meeting, for example, NGOs which work with specific groups, such as disabled children or young people, those seeking asylum, children or young people in juvenile justice institutions, or children or young people in care. The purpose is to ensure that different groups of children and young people from particular (vulnerable) backgrounds will be able to participate in the consultations.

References on methods for organising children and young people's focus groups and children and young people's consultations

- ▶ Hennessy E. and Heary C. (2005) "[Exploring children's views through focus groups](#)", in Greene S and Hogan D. (eds) *Researching Children's Experience*, SAGE Research Methods.
- ▶ Observatory for Childhood, Youth and Youth Care of the Federation Wallonie-Bruxelles (www.oejai.cfwb.be) "[Vademecum – Children's participation in public decision making. Why should I involve children?](#)".
- ▶ Eurochild (2012), "[Speak Up! Giving a voice to European children in vulnerable situations, Methodological Framework](#)" describes in detail the conditions for running focus groups with (vulnerable) children and young people, including child protection safeguards, child-friendly environments, ground rules, tools (for example, energisers and creative activities) and the role of the facilitator.

Questions to be addressed during the children and young people's focus group consultations

Please note that these are only guiding questions for the consultations with children and young people. The facilitator needs to adapt and use those questions which are suitable to the children and young people's age and background, and ensure there are enough energisers, games, interactive exercises and other activities undertaken during the focus group consultations.

Indicator 3: an independent children's rights institution is in place and is protected by law

- ▶ Explain to the children and young people what the children's rights ombudsperson does in their country, including his or her responsibilities.
- ▶ Ask the children whether they are aware of the existence of the children's ombudsperson.
- ▶ Do they know what the children's ombudsperson functions are and whether he or she reaches out to children?
- ▶ Do they know how to get in touch with the children's ombudsperson?

Indicator 4: existence of Mechanisms to enable children and young people to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings

- ▶ Explain to the child or young person that in any judicial and administrative hearings that affect them they should be given the opportunity to express their views and have them taken into account.
- ▶ Examples of questions to be discussed with the children and young people from court proceedings:
- ▶ If the child or young person's parents went to court, for example, to get a divorce,
 - Was there a chance to express their views on where they lived or on contact with both parents?
 - Did the court take on board their views and inform them in a child-friendly manner about how they were addressed?
 - Did they feel safe talking to the judge or lawyers?
- ▶ If the child has been accused of breaking the law or had to appear in court as a witness of a crime,
 - Did he/she receive information about her/his rights in a child-friendly manner?
 - Did he/she feel he/she was properly listened to and taken seriously?
 - Did he/she have legal representation?
 - Did the representative explain fully about the court procedures and what would happen?

Indicator 5: child-friendly individual complaints procedures are in place⁵

- ▶ Explain to the children and young people that children, young people (and adults) have the right to complain if they feel that a service is not functioning well. This complaint can be made with people working in the service or with government institutions, such as the ombudsperson for children's rights.
- ▶ Discuss different types of services that are relevant for children and young people. For each service, ask the children and young people whether they know how to complain about the service if something goes wrong and they experience unjust treatment or feel discriminated against. If necessary, first explain what discrimination is. Ask the children and young people if they have ever seen posters in their schools, information leaflets or found websites about how to make a complaint about one of the following services.
- ▶ Example of a question to be discussed with children and young people:
 - Do you know how to complain if anything goes wrong at school, or at the doctor's, if you are treated unfairly or discriminated against?
 - If yes, would you feel confident to make a complaint?
 - If you have made a complaint, how was it dealt with?
 - What do you think is needed to ensure children are aware of complaints mechanisms and how to use them?

Indicator 7: children and young people are provided with information about their right to participate in decision making

- ▶ Explain that governments have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people know about their rights and how to exercise them.
- ▶ Do they know that they have the right to have their voice heard and that their opinions should be taken seriously?
- ▶ Did the children and young people learn about their right to participate at primary school and/or at secondary school? Maybe this was part of human rights or children's rights education at school? Or was there a campaign informing them? Or did they learn through an NGO or involvement, for example, in a youth council?
- ▶ If the children and young people have been informed about their right to participate, was this information clear? Do they understand the implications?

5. For more information on child friendly and quality participation, see Appendix 1 of the Child Participation Assessment Tool, Overview of the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation and associated benchmarks.

Indicator 8: children and young people are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels

- ▶ Explain to the children and young people the meaning of an association, for example, organisations that can be consulted by local, regional or national governments, such as a local children's or youth council or a school council.
- ▶ Explain to the children and young people that they have a right to set up an association.
- ▶ Ask the children and young people which organisations (consultative bodies with local, regional or national government) they are members of; if children find this a difficult question give some examples (school council; local child/youth council; regional or national child/youth councils; a child or youth advisory council to an NGO (such as a child helpline or other children's or youth organisation)).
- ▶ Ask if there are children and young people in the focus group who are not members of any of such organisations. Can they explain the reasons for this? Perhaps there are no child and youth councils where they live, or they believe that being a member doesn't make a difference? (This question aims to find out about the scope and effectiveness of child and youth councils).
- ▶ If the children and young people are members of child or youth councils, discuss whether they feel they can influence decisions and to what extent they have actually influenced decisions. Are their opinions taken seriously?
- ▶ Ask the children and young people if they believe that the different child and youth councils are representative of all children and young people in their city, region or country. Explain what representation means, for example, that equal numbers of boys and girls participate; different ages participate; children with different abilities, including children with disabilities, participate; and whether children from different backgrounds (migrants, ethnic minorities, asylum seeking children, etc.) are able to participate.

Indicator 9: child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local authority services are in place

- ▶ Explain to the children and young people that the local authorities provide various services to children and young people. After mentioning a few services, the children and young people could be asked if they can think of others. Local authority services can include alternative care (for example, fostering, children's homes), education and schools, but also play, recreation and sports, cultural services (such as museums and the arts), child protection services, support for

immigration and asylum seekers and family support and preschool services.

- ▶ Ask the children and young people if they are aware that they can express their opinion about the services if they experience poor or unjust treatment. If they are aware of an existing feedback procedure for children and young people, ask if they can explain how this works. For example, would they be able to fill in a survey or evaluation form?
- ▶ Are the feedback mechanisms accessible to all children and young people, regardless of their age, disability, nationality, background, etc. or are there groups of children and young people who are not able to use the mechanisms?
- ▶ Ask the children and young people whether they know if anything is done about their concerns after they have given feedback. For example, are they informed about any changes made in response to their feedback?

Indicator 10: Children and young people are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC and relevant Council of Europe children's rights instruments

- ▶ Consult with children and young people who have been involved in the UNCRC reporting processes – via the NGO(s) who involved children and young people.
- ▶ Ask about their experience of being involved. How they were selected to be involved? Were their priorities included in either the government's report or the shadow report?
- ▶ Can they think of ways that children's involvement could be improved? For example, by using online platforms to reach out to more children and young people.

Evaluation of the consultation process

At the end of the consultation, evaluate the consultation process itself with the children and young people. This could be done by means of a quick exercise. One such exercise involves displaying the numbers one to five around the room and asking the children to give a mark for various specific questions, for example, questions on the length of the consultation, whether it was useful, whether it was clear, how they found the facilitator, and if they learnt something about children's participation and their right to be heard. The children should also be asked to give an overall mark for the consultation process.

Children and young people can indicate their mark by walking or running to the numbers placed around the room: 1 means that they found it was not very bad and 5 means that it was very good. The facilitator can also use any other evaluation method with which he or she is familiar.

Reporting

Written reports should be provided on the child focus group consultations by the facilitator, the national rapporteur or another person allocated to this task.

The children and young people's focus group reports should include:

- ▶ background information on the children and young people who participated: the number of children or young persons, their ages, gender and background (whether they are from a large city or a rural area) and other specific information on their background (disabled children, migrant children, Traveller children, Roma children, children living in alternative care (foster care or institutional care), children who are in juvenile justice institutions, etc.);
- ▶ details of the consultation process: this needs to include information on the environment in which the consultations took place, the programme of the consultation (activities), the length of the consultation (half a day, a full day or four sessions of 1.5 hours, etc.), and the number of adults (facilitators, other adults) present;
- ▶ the outcomes of the consultations per indicator (Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Describe what the children and young people said with regard to each indicator, but also note down physical observations which were found striking, for

example if children or young people spoke about an issue with enthusiasm, with anger or with sadness. Other observations could include whether the children and young people found it very difficult to speak about specific indicators. In the descriptive part of the report, the rapporteur should draw conclusions on what he or she observed to be the key outcomes of the consultation process;

- ▶ an evaluation: describe the evaluation method used and the outcomes of the evaluation of the focus group consultations.

Reporting back

Once the reports have been finalised a summary of the key findings should be produced in a child-friendly format and sent back to all the children and young people who participated so that they can see how their views were interpreted and included. Children, young people, professionals and other stakeholders involved in the data gathering and assessment process should also be informed about the findings and how they have been used for the assessment and in developing the recommendations.

Fact sheet – Linking the UNCRC reporting process to the Council of Europe child participation assessment process

Governments are required to report regularly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the implementation of the UNCRC, including on the right of children and young people to participate. The Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool can be used to undertake an assessment that will strengthen and inform the UNCRC monitoring and reporting process in terms of the progress member states are making in implementing Article 12 of the UNCRC.

This fact sheet provides information on how the outcomes of the child participation assessment can be integrated into the UNCRC periodic reports.

UNCRC Reporting process

As stipulated in the UNCRC, each government that is party to the convention must make its first report within two years of ratification, followed by regular reports every five years thereafter. Countries first submit to (and later discuss their reports with) the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which meets in Geneva and was established in accordance with Article 43 of the convention. The Committee on the Rights of the Child is made up of 18 members from different countries and legal systems and who are of “high moral standing” and experts in the field of human rights. Deriving their mandate from the convention itself, committee members are “accountable solely to the children of the world.”

In carrying out its work, the committee seeks to engage states in constructive dialogue with a view to critically assessing the situation of children and young people and encouraging co-operation for implementation of the UNCRC.

The key aim of the international monitoring process is to guide and strengthen national capacity to ensure and monitor the realisation of children’s rights. The process enhances the realisation of children’s rights by providing a meaningful opportunity for different stakeholders, including government officials,

private institutions and independent advocates, to act together to improve the situation of children and young people. The reporting process is intended as a tool for policy development and planning and for promoting respect for children’s rights. Governments are therefore urged to involve all sectors of society in the preparation of reports.⁶

The reporting process to the committee is a continuous, cyclical process, where the actual writing and submission of reports is a natural by-product of ongoing efforts of all government departments. The responsible government department will have to initiate a consultation process with different stakeholders while preparing the report for the committee. These stakeholders include government ministries, departments, CSOs, NGOs, children and young people, professionals working with and for children and young people and academics.

The committee’s role is to monitor the state’s implementation of the UNCRC based on the state’s written report and its oral examination by the committee, together with evidence from civil society organisations, independent human rights bodies such as children’s ombudsmen, and relevant UN agencies. Following the examination, the committee drafts a series of recommendations or “concluding observations”, which include areas of non-compliance by the government with its obligations under the UNCRC and highlight actions which the government needs to take to ensure full compliance with its international obligations to children and young people under the UNCRC. Governments are obliged to give effect to these concluding observations. Though the committee does not have a formal follow-up procedure by which the implementation of the concluding observations is assessed, at each periodic review the committee does take the previous concluding observations into account. The committee compares these with progress made as outlined in the state’s report and in submissions received from other stakeholders.⁷

6. UNICEF, “Element 7 – UNCRC Reporting process”.

7. [Child Rights Connect, UNCRC Re-orting Process.](#)

Graphic showing the UNCRC reporting process



How does the child participation assessment fit into the UNCRC reporting process?

■ The child participation assessment should be initiated at the same time as, and aligned with, the UNCRC reporting process. The 10 indicators measuring the child participation situation within a state are perfectly in line with the way in which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has explained and elaborated on the meaning of Article 12 of the UNCRC on children's participation. The outcomes from the child participation assessment process can therefore be directly integrated into the state's report to the committee.

■ At the same time, outcomes of the child participation assessment process, which require further action in order to strengthen progress on specific child participation indicators will need to be monitored and followed-up on by the state. Similarly, the concluding observations of the committee will have to be given effect by the state and implemented.

■ Both the assessment and reporting processes are continuous and should not be seen merely as the serving the production of periodic, five-yearly reports, but as an ongoing process of monitoring and improving children's rights standards as laid down in the UNCRC. The Council of Europe child participation assessment process should therefore be seen not only as fully complementary to, but also as serving to improve the quality of, the report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the UNCRC.

Road map for using the Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool

The purpose of the road map is to suggest a timetable and give guidance on using the Child Participation Assessment Tool within a Council of Europe member state.

The following table sets out a plan of action for conducting the assessments during the following three key phases, which take place over the course of a year (12 months):

- 1. Preparatory phase** (months 1-2). The organisation of a meeting with key stakeholders within the member state organised by the co-ordinating ministry, including training on child participation and on using the tool.
- 2. Implementation phase** (months 3-10). Implementation of the tool involving all stakeholders identified in the preparatory phase.
- 3. Concluding phase and evaluation** (months 11-12). The drafting of a report containing a baseline assessment and an evaluation of the situation regarding children’s participation within the country and with recommendations for further improvements.

1. Preparatory phase

The preparatory phase consists of the organisation of an introductory training for key stakeholders at national level.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
2 Months		
Month 1	<p>Translation</p> <p>All supporting materials for the piloting phase of the tool should be translated into the national language(s) – that is, the tool itself and the child-friendly version of it, the guidance note accompanying the tool and the online children and young people’s survey. Translation of the guidance for children and young people’s facilitators is optional. The translations need to be ready for distribution at the training seminars held at the start of the assessment process.</p>	National authority
Month 2	<p>Appointment of national consultant and facilitators</p> <p>A national consultant or responsible person within the ministry should be appointed to collect data and outcomes from the child participation assessment process and to draft a national report.</p> <p>As well as a national consultant, one or more facilitators should be appointed to organise, lead and report on the children and young people focus groups.</p>	National authorities

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
2 Months		
Month 2	<p>Preparation of training and induction seminar</p> <p>A meeting should be organised to launch the start of the child participation assessment process. The national consultant should participate in the induction seminar.</p> <p>Invitations should be sent out by the co-ordinating body/ministry and should include relevant stakeholders, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ relevant line ministries and state agencies (including local authority administrations); ▶ CSOs and NGOs in the areas of children’s rights, child welfare and youth NGOs; ▶ children’s ombudsperson(s); ▶ children and young people themselves, including children and young people from vulnerable settings (see the section on consultation of children and young people below); ▶ relevant professional organisations (including those for teachers, health, judicial and social workers, etc.); ▶ academics working on children’s rights and child welfare issues, in particular those with expertise on children’s participation and/or involving children and young people in their research. <p>The consultations should be open to all relevant stakeholders. The coordinating body/ministry should therefore also publicly announce in an open call, for example through the ministry’s website and via professional associations, NGOs, civil society movements and academic organisations, that the child participation assessment will be carried out and that interested stakeholders are welcome to participate. Support from the coordinating ministry in sending out invitations to participate in the assessment is crucial in order to ensure participation of all the relevant stakeholders.</p>	National authority
Month 2	<p>Induction seminar</p> <p>A one-day training and induction seminar should be held for around 25-30 of the key stakeholders. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ an introduction to the Council of Europe work on child participation – the three policy reviews, development of Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 – to set the context for the child participation assessment process; ▶ an introduction to Article 12 of the UNCRC and General Comment No. 12; ▶ an introduction to the Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on child and youth participation; ▶ an introduction to the Child Participation Assessment Tool and the guidance note; ▶ case studies to illustrate the implementation of the indicators; ▶ consultations with children and young people: focus groups; ▶ expected outcomes of the consultation process and how to report; ▶ the action plan and timing of the process; ▶ discussions on: 1) what will be done with the outcomes; and 2) the necessary follow-up activities. 	National authority

2. Implementation phase

The implementation phase will include the implementation of the Assessment tool in the Council of Europe member state.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
9 Months		
Months 3-10	<p>Multi-stakeholder consultations</p> <p>During this period multi-stakeholder consultations should take place with NGO's, civil society actors, academics and line ministries. The consultations will be carried out for each indicator. Detailed guidance on which stakeholders should be consulted on which indicator(s) is given on pages 10-16.</p> <p>The consultations should be coordinated by the national authorities. For each indicator, the responsible national authority should request written information (in particular for indicator Nos. 1 and 2) and organise consultation meetings with the relevant stakeholders, as shown below.</p> <p>Indicator Nos. 1, 2, 7,10: line ministries and government agencies; Indicator Nos. 3, 5: professionals working with children; Indicator No. 4: legal professionals working with or for children; Indicator No. 6: professionals and professional associations; Indicator Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10: NGOs and civil society.</p>	National authority and National consultant
Months 3-10	<p>Consultations with children and young people</p> <p>Children and young people should be consulted only on indicator Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The other indicators involve the collection of documentary evidence, which can be done without consulting children and young people. Children and young people should be consulted by organising focus group meetings with the support of selected schools and CSOs.</p> <p>Guidance on how to conduct these focus groups is provided on pages 17-21.</p>	National authority

3. Concluding phase and evaluation

The outcome of the child participation assessment process is a national child participation assessment report. This report should include the data collected and the grade (0-3) awarded for each indicator but should also indicate gaps and challenges identified for each indicator. The report should provide a baseline assessment and an evaluation of the situation regarding children's participation in the country and include recommendations and an action plan for further improvements.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
2 Months		
By the end of Month 10	<p>Collection of national data</p> <p>The national authorities are responsible for coordinating the collection of information, data and outcomes of consultations with the different stakeholders, including the outcomes from the children's focus group consultations (written up by the facilitators) and outcomes from the consultations with adult stakeholders. All reports and information should be sent to the national consultant.</p>	National authority and National consultant

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
2 Months		
Months 11-12	<p>National Report</p> <p>All information and analysis should be compiled into a national report. A suggested template for the national report is included in Appendix (see page 31).</p>	National Consultant
Month 12	<p>Evaluation meeting</p> <p>At the end of the assessment process an evaluation meeting, involving all stakeholders involved in the process, should be organised by the national authority. The purpose of this meeting is to present the findings in a national report and discuss key outcomes and proposals for moving forward. Ideally, this meeting can be used to propose the draft 'scoring' for each indicator and provide a forum for discussion and decision making on those scores. The meeting should involve some of the children and young people who participated in the focus group discussions. Engaging stakeholders in this way will strengthen a sense of ownership in the report and ensure greater transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Feedback on the outcomes of the assessment process should also be provided to all the children and young people who have participated in the children and young people's focus groups. This should be done via the children's facilitator(s) or the schools and NGOs who have supported the organisation of the focus groups.</p>	National authority and National consultant

Induction training programme

“Guaranteeing children’s right to participate in all fields of life and measuring progress in promoting child participation”

Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool

- 9.30** **Opening and welcome, overview of rationale for the meeting**
Representative of the national ministry/body
Children’s Rights Division, Council of Europe
- 9.45** **Presentation of participants**
- 10.05** **Children’s right to participate: introduction to child participation**
Presentation on the meaning of Article 12 UNCRC and General Comment No. 12 on the children’s right to participate.
Presentation of Council of Europe work on children’s participation, including three policy reviews and the development of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on child and youth participation
Questions & answers
- 10.45** **Presentation of state of play of children’s participation in member state**
- 11.15 Coffee break
- 11.30** **Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool and the process of piloting the Tool**
Introduction to the Child Participation Assessment Tool
Presentation of the implementation process of the tool and the involvement of the different stakeholders, including children and young people
(Background documents: Child Participation Assessment Tool, road map, guidance note, document on the involvement of children in focus groups)
Questions and discussion
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30** **The impact of children participating in decision making: two evidence-based case studies**
– a European case study
– a global case study
- 13.45** **Interactive session on children’s participation**
Case Study and group-based discussions on how to involve different groups of children in decision making

14.15 Working group discussions on the Indicators of the Child Participation Assessment Tool and the consultation process

(The purpose of this session is to familiarise participants with the indicators and to form a basis for the consultation process in the country. The participants will be divided into groups to allow everyone to discuss the indicators that are relevant to their area of work and expertise. The participants will also have a chance to raise questions on the use and implementation of the different indicators in the country's context).

15.15 Coffee break

15.30 Feedback on the outcomes of the working groups, follow-up actions and conclusions

16.30 Next steps and closure of meeting

Appendix

Reporting Guidelines for National Reports on the Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool

The following headings are suggested for the structure of the narrative report that would accompany the template and provide the detail. The report should be a maximum of 50 pages (of A4). The specific numbers of pages for each section are indicative rather than definitive and provide helpful guidance.

1. **Executive summary:** always helpful and well received! 2-3 pages
2. **Introduction:** this section should provide an introduction - setting out what the report is about, what it covers, why the assessment was undertaken and what the overall objectives of the assessment are, and some general points on the approach taken and the team undertaking the assessment. 2-3 pages
3. **The assessment process:** this section should briefly describe the assessment process, giving details of the timeline and the methods used for:
 - ▶ The collection of national data, the consultations with professional (NGO and governmental) stakeholders and the consultations with children and young people;
 - ▶ The data analysis and the process for arriving at the assessment ratings for each indicator;
 - ▶ The identification of follow-up proposals/plans of action.

■ The Road map in this *Guide* provides a useful guide to the process and therefore what should be covered. If things are done differently it would be useful to say so (and the reasons why) and to reference any limitations of the methods used or any particular methodological difficulties encountered. 4-5 pages

4. **Outcomes of the Child Participation Assessment process:** this section should include for each of 10 indicators:
 - ▶ The assessment rating;
 - ▶ Comments and observations – referencing the evidence for the rating with analysis from each of the data sources (the national data, consultations with professional stakeholders and consultations with children and young people);
 - ▶ Examples of good practice ideally with links that can be shared;
 - ▶ Follow-up proposals/plans of action.

■ This Guide provides some useful advice on how to approach the analysis and reporting – for example, the importance of triangulating data from the range of different sources.

■ The section should conclude with a summary of the key outcomes – an overview of the ‘state of play’ of children’s participation within the member state, indicating what’s going well and the priorities for future action. 30-35 pages

5. **The action plan:** setting out who is doing what, by when, in response to the issues and priorities for action identified in the assessment. To include planned action for feeding back the outcomes of the assessment to all the stakeholders that participated in the process. 3-4 pages
6. **Conclusions:** to include some concluding comments on the assessment and what it has highlighted (good and not so good), future plans to progress children’s participation and some reflections on how useful the process has been. 1-2 pages
7. **Appendices:** to include a list of the stakeholders who have been involved (by category) and references for any documentation cited in the report. The appendices can also include any more detailed information on legislative data, summary examples of procedures and policies, etc.

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