



**EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE EC-UNECE PROJECT “ACTIVE AGEING INDEX II-FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION”,  
1 AUGUST 2013-30 APRIL 2016**



**FINAL REPORT, 13 March 2017**

Minoli de Bresser, External Evaluator

## Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
1 INTRODUCTION .....	7
1.1 Background Context .....	7
1.1.1 The Project.....	7
1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation.....	7
1.3 Scope of the Evaluation .....	7
1.4 Methodology of the Evaluation.....	8
1.5 Limitations of the Evaluation .....	8
2 FINDINGS.....	9
2.1 General Introduction .....	9
2.2 Project Context .....	9
2.3 Evaluation Criteria.....	9
2.3.1 Relevance .....	9
2.3.2 Effectiveness .....	10
2.3.3 Efficiency .....	19
2.3.4 Sustainability .....	19
3 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS.....	21
3.1 Recommendations .....	21
ANNEX 1 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED (FACE-TO-FACE, BY PHONE, SKYPE AND EMAIL EXCHANGE).....	23
ANNEX 2 FINAL WORKPLAN FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE EC/UNECE PROJECT....	24
ANNEX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE UNECE-EUROPEAN UNION PROJECT ACTIVE AGEING INDEX II – FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION.....	25
ANNEX 4 FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AS AT 3 DECEMBER 2016 .....	30
ANNEX 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	33

### TABLE OF BOXES

Box 1: Definition of active ageing.....	9
Box 2: AAI in a nutshell.....	9
Box 3: AAI Translating to Policymaking .....	12
Box 5: BISCAY/BIZKAIA's experience with the AAI.....	16
Box 6: Italy's Experience with the AAI .....	17
Box 7: Poland's Experience with the AAI.....	18

## ACRONYMS

AA	Active Ageing
AAI	Active Ageing Index
DG-EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EC	European Commission
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EG	Expert Group (on the AAI)
HDI	Human Development Index
LFS	EU Labour Force Survey
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
PMU	Project Management Unit
RIS	(UNECE) Regional Implementation Strategy
SILC	EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background and Context

In the majority of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member countries people are already relatively old compared to the rest of the world and this trend is likely to continue. By 2050, the percentage of this age cohort is predicted to rise from a current 14% to nearly 25% of the total population.<sup>1</sup> Clearly this will place huge pressure on labour markets, social protection systems, the environment and other aspects of life in the region.

The United Nations recognised this challenge and placed it on the global policy agenda as far back as in 1982 when it convened the World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna. Twenty years after that in 2002 the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Later that year the UNECE member countries agreed on the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the MIPAA.

The importance of addressing the challenges of population ageing was given even more political impetus when 2012 was declared as the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations” and 50 UNECE member countries re-affirmed their commitment to the MIPAA/RIS by adopting the Vienna Ministerial Declaration “Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing”.

In 2012, a joint project between the European Commission (EC) and the UNECE – the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project – was launched. Its first phase (January 2012–February 2013) focussed on the development of the AAI and its computation for 27 European Union (EU) member States. Within the project under evaluation – the second phase of the AAI project – the index coverage was extended to include Croatia (28<sup>th</sup> EU member as of July 2013) and several non-EU countries.

The second phase of the AAI project had the following two objectives:

1. To mainstream the use and applicability of the AAI for evidence-based policymaking
2. To promote the AAI as a useful instrument for related analytical work and advocacy on active ageing issues.

In order to achieve these two objectives the project undertook the following main sets of activities:

**Research:** further refinement and calculation of the AAI for more recent years and for additional countries; analysis of trend results for the AAI, implementation of three pilot studies for calculating the AAI at both national and subnational levels.

**Outreach:** maintaining the Expert Group on the AAI, collaborating with the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics and the Working Group on Ageing, and organising seminars for policymakers and researchers.

**Communication and advocacy:** development and maintenance of a website/Wiki-space on the AAI, presentation of AAI results at international conferences and seminars, and preparing policy briefs and reports on the AAI.

## Purpose, Scope, Methodology and Limitations of the Evaluation

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) the **primary purpose** of this evaluation is to assess the project entitled “Active Ageing Index II – Further Development and Dissemination” (hereinafter referred to as the project) against the following criteria: *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability*. The period covered by the evaluation is from 1 August 2013 to 30 April 2016.

The second purpose of the evaluation is to extract lessons learned from the findings that will assist UNECE's Population Unit and project stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their future work on the AAI.

The project was intended to benefit all the UNECE member countries; however, in line with the TOR the evaluation has focussed on those countries that have directly worked with and been involved in the AAI project.

In terms of **substantive scope**, it was agreed with the Population Unit/Statistical Division that the objective of this evaluation was not to examine in-depth the *technical* aspects of the AAI but rather to assess its use and applicability in the broader context of policy influence, monitoring and programme development on active ageing.

**Gender and human rights considerations** are also examined to the extent possible and depending on data availability.

The **methodology** consisted of using three sources of information: a home-based desk review of all relevant reports and studies, an online survey questionnaire and individual interviews conducted face-to-face, by phone and Skype. Information and data from all three sources were analysed and triangulated to arrive at the findings and overall conclusions.

The evaluation faced certain **limitations** the main one being the end-year timing for the evaluation which was not ideal. Stakeholders were extremely busy, and as a result the response rate to the online survey was very poor<sup>2</sup> which limited the evidence base for the findings. At the same time interviewees were very helpful and forthcoming in their responses.

That being said, the *combination of responses* from the desk review, the online survey and the interviews reflects feedback from 17 EU and non-EU countries.<sup>3</sup> This has generated a rich body of information that reflects diverse and common views and trends from representatives from national governments, statistical institutes, academic institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGO)/civil society platforms.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ensuring a Society for All Ages. Promoting quality of life and active ageing, Proceedings, Ministerial Conference on Ageing, Vienna, September 2012

<sup>2</sup> Out of 50 invitations sent out only 15 respondents completed the survey fully and another 10 partially

<sup>3</sup> Austria, Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Biscay province of Spain

## Findings from the Evaluation

### Relevance

- The project is very relevant to the mandates of the two contributing organisations – EC and UNECE – in addressing the serious challenges of population ageing in their member States. The project has been relevant at both international and national levels in helping to move the discourse on ageing from purely economic and employment impacts of ageing to more socially inclusive aspects.
- The majority of country stakeholders consider that the project was very relevant or relevant to their country's development needs and priorities in order to address the challenges of population ageing. It was also relevant in helping them develop their respective policies, road maps and action plans on Active Ageing as part of their commitment to the MIPAA/RIS. Thirdly, cross-country national comparisons within the UNECE region motivated them to do better on collecting data-based evidence on active ageing issues.

### Effectiveness

- Based on the feedback from the online survey and interviews, the majority of stakeholders (90%) consider that the two objectives of the project have been or are being achieved and are satisfied with the project's contributions. There are some variations in the extent of satisfaction among the different stakeholders concerning the use and applicability of the AAI in a particular country context.
- All those stakeholders that were interviewed (from government, research institutes, NGO platforms) and some survey respondents were in agreement that the project activities and the AAI itself have changed the way stakeholders, and policymakers in particular, think about the situation of older people in society. The development of the AAI concept and methodology has highlighted the *potential contributions* of older people to many different facets of society, rather than viewing them as a socio-economic burden.
- The discourse on the AAI concept and methodology (being a composite index consisting of 22 indicators) has also raised awareness on the *multidimensional nature of active ageing* that requires a multisectoral and coordinated response to addressing the challenges of ageing in the EU/UNECE region.
- Through its research activities the project has promoted the idea of *evidence-based* policy making on active ageing and has helped countries to supplement or establish their own national-level databases on AA that allows for cross-country comparisons. At the same time, there are continuous and ongoing discussions about the different aspects of the AAI: the methodology, the indicators, the weightings, the goalposts etc.
- In terms of influencing the monitoring of national and international policies on active ageing, the picture is mixed and the responses were nuanced depending on the organisation that the stakeholder represented. There was certainly a link between the AAI work and the monitoring of the MIPAA/RIS, but there were few examples of a similar direct link between AAI trend data being used to directly monitor national policies on active ageing. This linkage is often influenced by enabling environment factors that the project cannot influence.
- There are several good examples of where the project has contributed to national policy formulation related to active ageing. One of the main influencing factors is the universal mandate and political framework provided by the MIPAA/RIS which (though non-binding) "pushes" countries and their governments to commit to and examine their own performance in pursuing active ageing goals. The next challenge concerns whether the many strategies and action plans that have resulted from the project's support will be implemented by country governments. This is beyond the influence and scope of the project under evaluation.
- A large majority of survey respondents and interviewees noted that while national level AAI data calculations were interesting for cross-country comparisons, it was necessary to take the methodology to the subnational levels i.e. regional and local/municipal. The main reason for this is because the funding for and the implementation of specific AA policy measures and programmes is available and takes place at subnational levels.
- Noting that active ageing is a multidimensional issue, there is insufficient coordination amongst the many government and non-government entities involved in coordinating a comprehensive and holistic response. This results in "silos" of uncoordinated individual interventions as for example in the domain of healthy and independent living for older persons.
- The project has been very active at multiple levels in knowledge exchange, outreach, communication and advocacy and these have been most appreciated by all the stakeholders. At the same time it is important to note that the project is of relatively short duration and that *attitudinal change to active ageing, which also impacts on policies and programmes* is a long-term process that requires more time and support.
- The project, with the support of the Expert Group on the AAI, has done an excellent job of mainstreaming gender considerations into all its activities. Gender aspects are systematically discussed in all meetings and data and trends by sex are collected and analysed for all 22 AAI indicators.
- Regarding human rights, the project does not apply an explicit, systematic human rights-based approach throughout its activities. Part of the reason is that the rights of older people to lead a healthy, secure and independent life is implicit in all of the AA discussions.

## Efficiency

- Based on the feedback from the interviewees and survey respondents, the project has implemented its activities in an efficient, cost-effective and timely manner. Local institutions and senior experts have been engaged to ensure cost-effectiveness and to support capacity-building at country level.

## Sustainability

- For many country stakeholders the AAI constitutes a flexible analytical framework which can be adapted to differing country contexts and to the extent that data are available. Therefore it is likely that *elements* of the AAI methodology will continue to be used. Some countries in the Eastern European region, Caucasus, Central Asia, and Western Balkans have also started to collect AAI data; however other countries in these regions are likely to require funding support and technical expertise to develop the AAI.
- Other elements of the project's activities are also likely to be continued as for example the development of new policies and action plans on AA. Several countries have used their own resources to further develop the AAI at regional and subnational levels, which reflects their interest and commitment. However there are several external and enabling environment factors that will affect the extent to which these policies and plans are implemented, and therefore their uptake and sustainability.

## Overall Conclusion and Recommendations

### Overall Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the AAI project has largely achieved its two main objectives: to mainstream the use and applicability of the AAI for evidence-based policymaking; and to promote the AAI as a useful instrument for related analytical work and advocacy on active ageing issues, for a number of EU and non-EU countries in the UNECE region. All the related activities specified in the EU-UNECE agreement have been implemented at high quality and in a timely, cost-effective manner. As a result, awareness has been raised about the AA concept and the AAI itself, stakeholders have been sensitised to the potential use of the AAI, country-level capacity to collect and analyse AA-related data has been improved, gender differences have been highlighted and a network of good practice exchanges has been established.

As also indicated in the findings, there is room for improvement in certain aspects of the project and the following recommendations are presented for that purpose.

### Recommendations

- The EC and UNECE should continue to support the project in a new phase to expand its geographical coverage and substantive scope. This could entail the project's 1) focussing further on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Western Balkans and Central Asia 2) continuing to respond to EU member States that show initiative to pursue their work on the AAI 3) continuing to fine-tune the AAI methodology and giving increased attention to AAI calculations at the subnational levels and 4) undertaking deeper analyses of AAI results for specific population groups, based on country demand.
- The project should continue to improve the technical and management aspects of the project by 1) maintaining its support to the Expert Group on the AAI 2) continuing to engage high-level international experts and consultants for specific substantive and technical contributions and 3) maintaining at the minimum the current structure of the project team/PMU
- In terms of knowledge management, the project should continue to support and facilitate the various forms of knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices on the AAI i.e. international seminars, country workshops, peer reviews, easy-to-understand publications and the Wiki-space
- The project should pursue a more visible dissemination and communication strategy for publicising the AAI concept and methodology. This could involve 1) giving more visibility at global and international events where there is a high level of government and political representation and 2) promoting the AAI-related work on social media platforms and by using modern ICT visualisation techniques.
- Given the increasing interest of countries in the UNECE region in the AAI, the project should intensify and expand resource mobilisation efforts by seeking more collaborative partnerships to enable this expansion and to maintain an adequate-sized project management unit.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background Context

Worldwide the population of those aged 65 years and over is growing faster than all other age groups and is predicted to reach 1.5 billion people by 2050.

In the majority of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member countries people are already relatively old compared to the rest of the world and this trend is likely to continue. By 2050, the percentage of this age cohort is predicted to rise from a current 14% to nearly 25% of the total population.<sup>4</sup> Clearly this will place huge pressure on labour markets, social protection systems, the environment and other aspects of life in the region.

The United Nations recognised this challenge and placed it on the global policy agenda as far back as in 1982 when it convened the World Assembly on Ageing in Vienna. Twenty years after that in 2002 the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) was adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Later that year the UNECE member countries agreed on the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) of the MIPAA.

The importance of addressing the challenges of population ageing was given even more political impetus when 2012 was declared as the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations” and 50 UNECE member countries re-affirmed their commitment to the MIPAA/RIS by adopting the Vienna Ministerial Declaration “Ensuring a society for all ages: promoting quality of life and active ageing”.

Another outcome of 2012 was the launch of the Active Ageing Index – a tool to measure the untapped potential of older persons to contribute to the economy and to society.

### 1.1.1 The Project

In 2012, a joint project between the European Commission (EC) and the UNECE – the Active Ageing Index (AAI) project – was launched. Its first phase (January 2012–February 2013) focussed on the development of the AAI and its computation for 27 European Union (EU) member States. Within the project under evaluation – the second phase of the AAI project – the index coverage was extended to include Croatia (28<sup>th</sup> EU member as of July 2013) and several non-EU countries.

The second phase of the AAI project had the following two objectives:

1. To mainstream the use and applicability of the AAI for evidence-based policymaking
2. To promote the AAI as a useful instrument for related analytical work and advocacy on active ageing issues

In order to achieve these two objectives the project undertook the following main sets of activities:

**Research:** further refinement and calculation of the AAI for more recent years and for additional countries; analysis of trend results for the AAI, implementation of three pilot studies for calculating the AAI at both national and subnational levels.

**Outreach:** maintaining the Expert Group on the AAI, collaborating with the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics and the Working Group on Ageing, and organising seminars for policymakers, researchers and non-government organisations/civil society.

**Communication and advocacy:** development and maintenance of a website/Wiki-space on the AAI, presentation of AAI results at international conferences and seminars, and preparing policy briefs and reports on the AAI.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

In accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) the primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the project entitled “Active Ageing Index II – Further Development and Dissemination” (hereinafter referred to as the project) against the following criteria: *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability*. The period covered by the evaluation is from 1 August 2013 to 30 April 2016.

The second purpose of the evaluation is to extract lessons learned from the findings that will assist UNECE Population Unit and project stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their future work on the AAI.

It should be noted that the evaluation follows the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation<sup>5</sup> and UNECE policy on evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The project was intended to benefit all the UNECE member countries; however, in line with the TOR the evaluation has focussed on those countries that have directly worked with and been involved in the AAI project. This refers to countries that expressed interest to learn about the AAI, responded quickly to approaches by the project team, took

---

<sup>4</sup> Source: Ensuring a Society for All Ages. Promoting quality of life and active ageing, Proceedings, Ministerial Conference on Ageing, Vienna, September 2012

<sup>5</sup> UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016

<sup>6</sup> UNECE Evaluation Policy, May 2014

initiative to approach the project team themselves and even used their own resources to collect and analyse data for the development of their countries' subnational AAI trends e.g. Biscay province of Spain, Italy, Poland. In terms of substantive scope, it was agreed with the UNECE Population Unit/Statistical Division that the objective of this evaluation was not to examine in-depth the *technical* aspects of the AAI but rather to assess its use and applicability in the broader context of policy influence, monitoring and programme development on active ageing. However, stakeholder feedback on more general aspects of the AAI could be recorded as areas for further improvement. Gender and human rights considerations are also examined to the extent possible and depending on data availability.

## 1.4 Methodology of the Evaluation

In accordance with UNEG principles, every effort has been made to conduct this evaluation in an objective, impartial and participatory manner. The duration of the evaluation was from mid-November 2016 to end February 2017, with part-time inputs from the evaluator/consultant. At the outset the consultant prepared a *work plan*<sup>7</sup> for the assignment which was approved by UNECE Population Unit and Project Management Unit (PMU). In line with the TOR, the evaluator collected both quantitative and qualitative evidence in order to assess the project against the four criteria mentioned in section 1.2 above. The following evaluation tools were used to collect data and information:

- A home-based desk review of all relevant reports, policy briefs, resource materials and other relevant documents was conducted.<sup>8</sup>
- A tailored online survey using SurveyMonkey was sent to 50 national focal points – government and non-government – at the end of November 2016 and kept open until end January 2017 (see Annex 4 for the questionnaire). The survey questions were developed by the evaluator and approved by the Population Unit and PMU.
- Face-to face interviews were conducted in Geneva during the meeting of the Working Group on Ageing, 21-22 November 2016 with 1) at the UNECE, representatives of the Population Unit working on the project, the representative of the PMU in charge of evaluation, the Executive Officer; 2) the EU representative for the project; and 3) a representative from the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Family of the Republic of Moldova.
- Interviews via telephone and Skype calls were conducted with key project partners and stakeholders from November 2016 to January 2017. Every interviewee received a short list of key questions to target the interviews and to guide them in their responses (see Annex 3 for the list of interviewees).

## 1.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

Although concerted efforts were made to collect robust and comprehensive evidence, also with the full support of the UNECE Population Unit/project team, this evaluation faced the following constraints which are common to many evaluation exercises.

Firstly, due to budget constraints, there was no budget for travel and therefore most of the interviews had to be conducted from home base by phone or Skype. While this was not an insuperable obstacle, it did make a difference to the extent to which the evaluator could probe responses in-depth to arrive at root causes. Many of the interviewees were very busy people and had limited time for an interview, yet all of them without exception were extremely forthcoming and helpful.

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the timing of the evaluation which took place in a period when all the project stakeholders were extremely busy with other deadlines and priorities, was not ideal. As a result, the response rate to the online survey was very poor (only 15 fully completed the questionnaire out of 50 invitations sent out) despite two follow-ups from both the evaluator and the Population Unit and extension of the survey deadline to end January 2017. Therefore the quantitative evidence to support the findings is less robust and comprehensive than it could have been.

Thirdly, this evaluation has taken place *post facto* in that the project's activities ended formally in April 2016 and a third phase of the AAI project is already being implemented. In this scenario, concern was expressed by the evaluator as to the usefulness of recommendations; in response the project team explained that there was flexibility and room for adjustments as far as the activities under the third phase were concerned.

That being said, the *combination of responses* from the study of relevant reports/documents, the online survey and the interviews reflects feedback from 17 EU and non-EU countries.<sup>9</sup> This has generated a rich body of information that reflects diverse and common views and trends from representatives from national governments, statistical institutes, academic institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGO)/civil society platforms.

---

<sup>7</sup> Attached as Annex 2

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 5 for the bibliography

<sup>9</sup> Austria, Belarus, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Biscay/Bizkaia province of Spain



## 2 FINDINGS

### 2.1 General Introduction

The findings of this evaluation respond to the questions specified for the four criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability* in the TOR.<sup>10</sup> It should be mentioned that some of the questions in the TOR overlap with each other and therefore while answering the questions, the evaluator also aims to avoid unnecessary repetition.

As mentioned above, the qualitative and quantitative information gathered from the desk review of relevant documents, the responses to the online questionnaire and the phone and Skype interviews have been analysed and triangulated to arrive at the findings and overall conclusions.

### 2.2 Project Context

To ensure that there is a common understanding of the term “active ageing”, this report uses the following definition:

---

*Active ageing means growing older in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs and social engagements, more independent in our daily lives and more engaged as citizens*

*Source: UNECE/EC, 2015*

---

#### Box 1: Definition of active ageing

Within the framework of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, the EC funded the first phase of the AAI project from January 2012 to February 2013 to carry out research and develop a composite Active Ageing Index to measure the contributions and potential of the older population (Box 2). This research work was led by the European Centre for Social Welfare and Policy Research in Vienna under the leadership of Professor A. Zaidi. The research team was supported by an Expert Group on the AAI consisting of technical specialists, statisticians, researchers and academicians and representatives from NGO/civil society, the EC<sup>11</sup>, OECD and UNECE.

---

*The AAI is a toolkit that consists of twenty-two indicators grouped into four domains:*

*-Employment*

*-Participation in society*

*-Independent, healthy and secure living*

*-Capacity and enabling environment for active ageing.*

*The age of population covered by the AAI ranges from 55 years to 74 years for many of the indicators; other indicators such as those related to independent living go beyond 75 years (i.e. do not have an upper limit).*

*The AAI is constructed in such a way that scores range from 1 to 100 with the best performing country being closest to 100. During phases 1 and 2 of the AAI project three waves of the index calculation were implemented based on data sets from 2008, 2010 and 2012. These results, as well as datasets and related documents can be easily accessed by everyone on the Wiki-space of the project.*

---

#### Box 2: AAI in a nutshell

### 2.3 Evaluation Criteria

#### 2.3.1 Relevance

The criterion of relevance is assessed at two different levels (international and national) and from the perspective of the two sponsoring institutions (the EC and UNECE) and the beneficiary stakeholders at country level. In this context, relevance refers to whether the project is consistent with the mandates and missions of the sponsoring agencies; it also refers to whether the project meets the development needs and priorities of stakeholder countries and for the UNECE region as a whole.

#### Finding 1: EC and UNECE

---

<sup>10</sup> As defined in the Support Guide for Conducting Evaluation, UNECE, May 2014

<sup>11</sup> Represented by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG-EMPL)

**The project is very relevant to the mandates of the two contributing organisations (EC and UNECE) in addressing the serious challenges of population ageing in their member States. The project has been relevant at both international and national levels in helping to move the discourse on ageing from purely economic and employment impacts of ageing to more socially inclusive aspects.**

Population ageing demographics, accompanied by labour market changes, migration dynamics and widespread financial constraints are posing many serious challenges for the older population groups in all EU and non-EU countries.

This challenge was recognised by the EC as far back as 2006 when the idea of an active ageing agenda was formalised among the EU member states. The EC interest was to be more proactive against age discrimination by encouraging its member States to agree on the issues and determine where they stood in terms of collecting relevant data, monitoring active ageing data trends and developing policies to address gaps. The EC considered that comparisons among countries was an appropriate and healthy way for countries to improve their performance in this area. Therefore the objectives of this project are very close to EC concerns, priorities and policies.

The UNECE region consists of 56 member countries (including the 28 EU countries) and its mission is to promote economic cooperation and integration among these member countries. The project was approved by the UNECE Executive Committee thus reflecting the relevance and importance of this initiative for the region. The project's activities are in line with and aimed at accomplishing the objectives set out in the biennial programme plan for 2014-2015 for the UNECE Sub-Programme on Housing, Land Management and Population.<sup>12</sup>

The specific mission of the Population Unit is to "promote policy dialogue on various aspects of demographic change across the UNECE region, with a particular focus on ageing"<sup>13</sup>. In addition this Unit is responsible for coordinating country responses to implementing the MIPAA/RIS and for monitoring its progress and is also the secretariat for the UNECE Working Group on Ageing. The Active Ageing Index project is therefore highly relevant to the work of UNECE and the Population Unit in undertaking these responsibilities.

### **Finding 2: Country stakeholders**

**Firstly, the majority of country stakeholders consider that the project was relevant or very relevant to their country's development needs and priorities in order to address the challenges of population ageing. Secondly, it was relevant in helping them develop their respective policies, road maps and action plans on Active Ageing as part of their commitment to the MIPAA/RIS. Thirdly, cross-country national comparisons within the UNECE region motivated them to do better on collecting data-based evidence on active ageing issues.**

Clearly there are wide differences in the socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts of the countries in this large region which have an influence on the extent to which the project is relevant to each of them. This divergence was particularly reflected in the responses to the survey questionnaire.

- In the survey 76% of country stakeholders responded that the project was relevant or somewhat relevant to both the MIPAA/RIS and the development needs and priorities in their own country. All those interviewed noted that the project was very relevant to their country's situation. This indicates that even countries with well-established databases and regular survey systems, e.g. Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom, find the AAI project very relevant in promoting the AA concept; however they view it as "one of several reference tools".<sup>14</sup>
- It was interesting to note that a small percentage (12%) of survey respondents from government, academic institutions and statistical offices informed that the project was not relevant or that they did not know. Three main reasons were given for not being relevant: one country apparently does not give active ageing high priority in its overall development priorities, two other high-income countries have been collecting active ageing-related indicators well before the advent of the AAI; another larger country noted that AAI calculations at subnational and regional levels would be more relevant for policymaking. Those two statistical institutions that did not know if it was relevant conveyed that their main responsibility is confined to collecting and analysing data/statistics.

### **2.3.2 Effectiveness**

The criterion of effectiveness examines whether the project has achieved its stated objectives<sup>15</sup> and the factors, both positive and negative, that have influenced the achievement (or non-achievement) of these objectives. It should be emphasised that the evaluation focuses on the outcome level of the objectives and not on individual outputs and activities. Outputs and activities are used as examples of good practices that have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes<sup>16</sup>. It should also be noted that this section presents some findings which are not specifically mentioned in the TOR and which the evaluator considers to be important outcomes as part of an evaluative process.

### **Finding 3**

**Based on the feedback from the online survey and interviews, the majority of stakeholders (90%) consider that the two objectives of the project have been or are being achieved and are satisfied with the project's**

<sup>12</sup> As per the General assembly document Ref: A/68/6 (Sect.20) of 12 April 2013

<sup>13</sup> Taken from [www.unece.org/pau](http://www.unece.org/pau)

<sup>14</sup> In the words of 3 interviewees

<sup>15</sup> Refer to EU Contribution Agreement with an International Organisation No VS/2013/0268 (SI2.658499), 3 October 2013

<sup>16</sup> Since the TOR asks questions about 2 specific outputs/activities, the evaluation responds accordingly.

**contributions. There are some variations in the extent of satisfaction among the different stakeholders concerning the use and applicability of the AAI in a particular country context.**

Given that the project was supporting a wide range of EU and non-EU countries, it is understandable that most of the country stakeholders do not have an overview of the project's objectives and therefore could comment only on their specific involvement. In general, researchers were positive about the AAI as a tool for trend analysis on active ageing aspects but were also able to point out its limitations. Policymakers were also positive about the AAI as one of many indices e.g. OECD Quality of Life Index, or "frames of reference" that allows for cross-country comparisons and national-level monitoring; however they were more interested in its applicability at the subnational levels where policy measure and programme *implementation* takes place.

#### **Finding 4**

**All those stakeholders that were interviewed (from government, research institutes, NGO platform) and some survey respondents were in agreement that the project activities and the AAI itself have changed the way a wide range of stakeholders, and policymakers in particular, think about the situation of older people in society. In the past older people were seen as a "burden" who had to be "helped" with pensions and social protection programmes; discourse on the AAI methodology has reversed this trend by highlighting the *potential contributions* of older people to many different facets of society.**

An important achievement of the project has been to introduce the AAI methodology to UNECE member countries as a means of raising awareness and advocating for a change in attitude about the situation of older people in these countries. This has been particularly true for countries with a lower GDP per capita e.g. Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Romania; however even higher income countries e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Sweden have appreciated the project and the AAI because it reflects the *potential of older people* and maintains attention on population ageing challenges. The project has raised awareness and carried out advocacy by presenting the AAI and its results at numerous international and country-level fora, for example, the annual meetings of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing, peer review meetings, research seminars, national seminars and stakeholder workshops. This is a *continuous* process of awareness raising and advocacy which the project team clearly understands as being necessary if there is to be sustained attitudinal change on the issue of active ageing.

#### **Finding 5**

**In terms of added value the project has contributed noticeably to broadening and re-defining the concept "active ageing" to go beyond "healthy life expectations and physical security"; secondly it has promoted the concept of active ageing as a *multidimensional challenge* that requires a coordinated, multisectoral response that involves interventions at both societal and individual levels; thirdly it has promoted the approach of *evidence-based policymaking*.**

All the interviewees and 67% of the survey respondents observed that the project had indeed added value to their work. As noted earlier the AAI is a composite index that comprises data from four inter-related facets of active ageing and therefore is multisectoral by its very nature. The project has promoted the multidimensional nature of active ageing by ensuring that in all its activities, stakeholders from government, academia, research institutes, statistical offices, international development agencies and civil society are represented.

#### **Finding 6**

**Through its research activities the project has established a national-level evidence base on AA that allows for cross-country comparisons. At the same time, there are continuous and ongoing discussions about the different aspects of the AAI: the methodology, the indicators, the weightings, the goalposts etc. This is normal and continuous refinement is to be expected when dealing with such a complex development challenge and the applicability of the AAI in so many varied country scenarios.**

As mentioned earlier it is not within the scope of this evaluation to examine the AAI in its substantive and technical content as this is the continuous task of the project team and Expert Group on the AAI. However, the following common points were made by several stakeholders which are worth noting for follow-up.

Definitions for some indicators vary from country to country when looking at the subnational level or outside of the EU (e.g. mental well-being); certain country data sources need to be carefully used (e.g. police data sources); the AAI composite index is "too complex" for some countries; rankings are numerical and do not reflect historical or contextual factors that may affect where a country is currently placed in one domain (e.g. the case of women in formal employment in Malta); the usefulness of a composite index as opposed to a "dashboard of individual indicators"<sup>17</sup> for policymaking is under discussion in the EC Social Protection Committee. Some policymakers prefer one dimensional indicators, for example on elderly peoples' participation in employment; finally, there is some debate on the comparative usefulness of national AAI trends and subnational level AAI data/trends.

The project supports this intellectual process through the implementation of continuous research (engaging specialists for various studies), consultations with the Expert Group on the AAI, consultations with other stakeholders in international and national seminars and peer reviews.

#### **Finding 7**

**Regarding the project's objective of influencing the monitoring of national and international policies on active ageing, the picture is mixed and the responses were nuanced depending on the organisation that the stakeholder represented. There was certainly a link between the AAI work and the monitoring of the**

---

<sup>17</sup> Quote by a representative of a donor organisation

**MIPAA/RIS but there were few examples of a similar direct link between AAI trend data being used to directly monitor national policies on active ageing. This linkage is often influenced by enabling environment factors that the project cannot influence.**

60% of the survey respondents noted that there was a partial link with the monitoring of national policies and some examples were given during the interviews e.g. Estonia, Republic of Moldova. Some countries with a higher GDP per capita noted that they were already collecting data on ageing and even taking steps to revise their policies prior to the AAI project e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Sweden. Other countries responded that they use the AAI as a “reference tool”<sup>18</sup> to supplement the data they already have and to help them identify the areas/gaps that need more attention e.g. formal employment, improved child care services, improved home-based care facilities, IT literacy.

The project has had a more significant contribution in using the AAI as one of the data sets to monitor the implementation of MIPAA/RIS and as a result of its advocacy efforts, the AAI forms a core of the statistical annex of national reports on the third review and appraisal cycle of the MIPAA/RIS 2012-2017. This has generated strong interest from UNECE member countries for further support in calculating the AAI.

In order to promote the integration of the AAI in national statistical databases the project also collaborates closely with the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics, attending and contributing to its meetings during the project period.

### **Finding 8**

**There are several examples of where the project has contributed to national policy formulation related to active ageing. One of the main influencing factors is the universal mandate and political framework provided by the MIPAA/RIS which (though non-binding) “pushes” countries and their governments to commit to and examine their own performance in pursuing active ageing goals.**

The responses in the survey and from the interviews generated many examples of where the project and the introduction of the AAI concept and methodology have resulted in countries reviewing their existing AA policies and/or developing new policies and action plans. Some examples are cited in Box 3 below.

#### **Box 3: AAI Translating to Policymaking**

- 
- *Biscay/Bizkaia provincial government prepared a new strategy for the elderly in 2013 which was approved by the Council of Deputies*
  - *Estonia has included AAI data in its Welfare Development Plan*
  - *Germany has developed a plan “The Covenant for Active Ageing”*
  - *Latvia has developed an active ageing strategy for 2010-2016*
  - *Lithuania gained useful inputs into the preparation of a new “social model” after hosting a national seminar*
  - *Malta’s Prime Minister launched the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014 to increase by one third each participation in the labour market, social participation and independent living*
  - *Poland: its low ranking was a “wake up” call for the national and regional governments who have boosted their programmes and policies to promote active ageing of the elderly e.g. Government’s long-term senior policy for 2014-2020*
  - *Republic of Moldova has prepared an action plan for implementing its road map for mainstreaming ageing into its policies*
  - *Ukraine has developed a draft active ageing strategy*
- 

The remaining challenge now is to what extent individual country governments will commit adequate resources to *implement* these various strategies, policies and action plans in a timely manner to address the more urgent challenges of population ageing. It is beyond the scope and capacity of this project to directly support the implementation of country policies/plans on active ageing as this involves a much more complex context and factors that such a project, with its limited resources, cannot influence.

### **Finding 9**

**There are significant political aspects to what indicators are collected and how trends are analysed and used related to composite indices such as the AAI. Although this may be *implicitly* known, it is rarely mentioned in project-related documents. Although the project cannot influence political and other external factors, it *is* important to acknowledge them as they affect the extent of project outcomes (e.g. implementation) and of sustainability.**

It was very refreshing to hear several interviewees mention political aspects about the production of comparative indices, including the AAI e.g. Germany, Malta, Poland, Biscay/Bizkaia provincial government. Firstly, the point was made that governments do not necessarily like cross-country comparisons especially if their country is low in the

---

<sup>18</sup> Quote by 3 interviewees

overall ranking; secondly, research and statistical institutions take a more neutral stance on the AAI, seeing it as an intellectually interesting methodological tool (in one researcher's words it is "inspiring, innovative and influential"); thirdly, government partner institutions see it as reflection of performance and may not view it as constructively; finally, survey results indicating that "Active Ageing is one of many competing national priorities" was the third top factor that affected the project's implementation and outcomes. This last-mentioned factor clearly influences the level of commitment and allocation of resources for AA policies and programmes.

#### **Finding 10**

**A large majority of survey respondents and interviewees noted that while national level AAI calculations were interesting for cross-country comparisons, it was necessary to take the methodology to the subnational levels i.e. regional and local/municipal. The main reason for this is because the funding for and the implementation of specific AA policy measures and programmes is available and takes place at subnational levels. Therefore regional and local governments need to have this evidence to address the gaps in the current provision of social and economic services to elderly people.**

In recognition of this need, the project has supported a pilot study at subnational levels in Germany. Italy, Poland and Biscay/Bizkaia province of Spain took their own initiative to calculate the AAI at subnational levels with their own resources. It has been concluded that the application of the AAI methodology can be flexibly adapted depending on the size and population of each country as well as users' needs. As a result of these different studies at subnational level, some important constraints have been identified: lack of available data, including in some cases gender disaggregated data, limited capacity and expertise at local levels and lack of funding resources for implementing programmes.

#### **Finding 11**

**Noting that active ageing is a multidimensional issue, there is insufficient coordination amongst the many government and non-government entities involved in coordinating a comprehensive and holistic response. This results in "silos" of uncoordinated individual interventions as for example in the domain of healthy and independent living for older persons.**

This finding is supported by the fact that 70% of the survey respondents noted this as *the top factor* that affected the project's implementation and outcomes and it was also mentioned by some interviewees. Academic and statistical institutions carry out the research and calculations of the AAI but not all of them have a structured and direct access to high-level, national policymakers and politicians; it is often the reverse order situation where the demand for data comes from the policymaker. In two cases e.g. Germany, Poland, the researcher is also a well-known and respected expert and therefore has access and influence in the relevant ministry.

A second factor is that in many countries, ministries of social welfare are often responsible for "disadvantaged groups" which often include the elderly, whereas active ageing is a multidimensional issue where strong linkages are needed with multiple ministries, including labour/employment, health, finance etc. Links with and coordination among the various related institutions and sectors are essential for the project objective of influencing policy monitoring and policymaking to be fully achieved.

It should be noted that these are largely enabling environment factors that the project cannot directly influence or change; however, these are well recognised by the project which brings together relevant parties from a variety of sectors and institutions into every major activity that it supports (seminars, peer reviews, workshops, presentations at international events).

#### **Finding 12**

**The work of the Expert Group on the AAI and the valuable advice and expertise it brings to the project's activities have been very much appreciated. Stakeholders particularly appreciated the multisectoral nature of the Group, which includes largely technical specialists, researchers and academics, international development agencies i.e. OECD, NGO/ Civil society platforms and policymakers.**

Most survey respondents (86%) were aware of the work of the Expert Group and several interviewees were members of the Group.

Since the onset of the first phase of the AAI project in January 2012 up to the end of phase 2 in April 2016 the Expert Group has met six times. During phase 1 the main focus of its discussions was on technical and substantive aspects of the AAI methodology. During phase 2 these expanded to include discussions on how to link the AAI to policy monitoring and policy development and how to disseminate and communicate it to a wider audience.

#### **Finding 13**

**The project has been very active at multiple levels in terms of outreach, communication and advocacy and it is commendable to note that this has been done with a very limited budget and staff resources. It is also commendable that several countries took the initiative to use their own resources to implement AAI-related activities in their own countries<sup>19</sup> and to attend project events. At the same time it is important to note that the project is of relatively short duration and that *attitudinal change to active ageing, which also impacts on policies and programmes* is a long-term process that requires more time and support.**

The project has introduced and supported several tools and processes to promote the AAI at international and national levels. These are briefly mentioned as follows.

---

<sup>19</sup> Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Spain/Biscay provincial government, Turkey

The Wiki-space for the project is well appreciated by stakeholders especially the fact that it allows for open and transparent access to the AAI methodology and data for all participating countries. The majority of survey respondents (65%) access AAI-related data occasionally and find the information useful or somewhat useful. Some researchers use the information on the Wiki-space for their lectures and articles. 25% of the survey respondents did not find it useful but unfortunately did not explain why in the comments section. The final report of the project notes that over 100,000 visits were made to the Wiki-space from October 2013 to May 2016. A deeper analysis of who the users are and of their needs would be useful to ensure optimal use and continued broader relevance to active ageing issues e.g. within the UNECE region and its sub-regions.

Interviewees observed that the activities that are most appreciated and have the greatest impact *involve face-to-face contact* i.e. the international research seminar held in Brussels, April 2015, the national seminar held in Vilnius, Lithuania in May 2015, the peer review meetings organised by the EC in Krakow, October 2014 and in Berlin, April 2016, the two stakeholder workshops on the AAI, one held in Geneva in 2015 and the other held in Minsk, Belarus in June 2016<sup>20</sup> and the regular Expert Group meetings. In total nearly 500 people have participated and benefitted from such knowledge exchanges and their awareness and knowledge of the AAI methodology are likely to have a multiplier effect in the countries that they represent.

These activities have brought together numerous stakeholders from across the UNECE region and from many relevant sectors – policymakers from government, researchers and academics, NGO/civil society platforms and international agencies – *and have raised awareness* about the concept and use of the AAI, refinement of the methodology, its applicability at subnational levels and its use for policy monitoring and policy development.

Such activities also allowed for *the exchange of good practices* among countries and for learning from the countries who are further ahead with developing and implementing AA policies and programmes. Finally, they enabled participants to *establish useful contacts and networks* with others who are working on the same issues and to share good practices.

#### **Finding 14**

**The project has done an excellent job in mainstreaming gender considerations into all its activities. The project, supported by the Expert Group on the AAI, discusses, collects and analyses systematically AAI data and trends by sex for all 22 AAI indicators.**

Nearly 70% of the survey respondents and the majority of those interviewed responded that the project had effectively mainstreamed gender into the AAI work. The rationale for this is obvious to everyone in that men and women experience the challenges of active ageing differently and may have different priorities in later life. To support this finding, it should firstly be noted that all the AAI indicator data are collected and analysed by gender. Secondly, AAI results and findings are presented in analytical reports by gender<sup>21</sup>. Thirdly, all interviewees noted that gender aspects are consistently discussed in the Expert Group on the AAI and at the other national and international events. For example key topics of discussion are the trade-off between women's role as care-giver and as workers in the workplace<sup>22</sup> and how to stimulate more female participation in formal employment.

#### **Finding 15**

**Regarding human rights, the project does not apply an explicit, systematic human rights-based approach throughout its activities. Part of the reason is that the rights of elderly people to lead a healthy, secure and independent life is implicit in all of the AA discussions.**

Feedback from the survey respondents and from interviewees indicated that the human-rights based approach is not explicitly applied to the various discussions and consultations for the reason given above. The AAI concept in fact reflects the rights-based approach by examining the contributions and potentials of elderly people on the one hand and the role of the "duty bearers" i.e. government and civil society on the other. One set of stakeholders that are missing are trade unions/employers federations and the private sector, which are worthwhile to bring into the dialogue and should be discussed further with the project team.

#### **Finding 16**

Based on the feedback from the survey respondents and the interviewees, the main constraints and challenges faced by the project and the country stakeholders are summarised below in Box 4:

#### **Box 4 Main Constraints and Challenges faced by the Project in Promoting the AAI**

---

<sup>20</sup> Details of all these activities are available in the Final Project Report and on the Wiki-space [www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI](http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI)

<sup>21</sup> UNECE/European Commission (2015)

<sup>22</sup> See Expert Group meeting reports

- 
- *lack of coordination among the different government and non-government agencies dealing with AA issues is a key challenge at the country level*
  - *competing national development priorities and the fact that at local level governments are not always convinced about the utility of the AAI*
  - *limited funding for implementing AA policies and programmes at the country level*
  - *lack of good quality data especially at subnational levels to calculate the AAI*
  - *limited capacity and expertise at country level for data collection and computation of the AAI, especially in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and Western Balkans*
  - *attitudinal and behavioural change that impacts on policy change is a long-term process*
- 

#### 2.3.2.4 Good Practice Country Experiences

The evaluator considered that it would be useful to analyse in more depth and describe in more detail a few country experiences with developing the AAI at national and subnational levels and the impact this work has had on policymaking. The following three boxes (Boxes 5, 6 and 7) describe the experiences of three countries/regions: Biscay/Bizkaia province of Spain, Italy and Poland. It needs to be stressed that these are far from the only good practice experiences and several other countries in the UNECE region, both EU and non-EU, have good examples of how the AAI was adapted and used. The choice for these three countries/regions was made based on a reflection of socio-economic, political and historical contexts, population size and readily available information from stakeholders who were either interviewed or responded to the survey.

Biscay or Bizkaia is one of the three provinces of the Basque Country in Northern Spain. In 2014, its population was nearly 1.2 million inhabitants, 20.7% of which was above 65 years old (23.5% of women and 17.7% of men). Life expectancy is high in Biscay, having reached 85.1 years for women and 78.2 years for men. Secondly, its birth rate stands at a minimum level of 9.2 births per 1000 inhabitants which is lower than the EU average of 10.6 births per 1000 people. The migrant or foreign population represents 8% of the population. Its dependency rate is 0.30, which means that for every 100 people aged 16-64, there are 30 people over 65.

Socio-economically, Biscay's GDP per capita reached 29,249 euros in 2013 which is higher than for Spain; however as a result of the overall economic recession in Europe, the unemployment rate was 16.1% for men and 15.8% for women in 2014.

These demographics and socio-economic factors combined together set the context for the Biscay provincial government in addressing active ageing challenges. In 2010, active ageing issues were highlighted in the political arena and there emerged a need to *measure this trend*. As part of the activities developed by the Observatory for the Elderly of Biscay – a participatory organisation that brings together social, economic and political agents related to the elderly in Biscay – the Provincial Council of Biscay proposed and promoted in 2013 the calculation of the Active Ageing Index as a tool for the diagnosis and monitoring of active ageing among the elderly population of Biscay. In collaboration with the Department of Sociology of the University of the Basque Country, the index has been calculated for 2014 and 2015 based on a telephone survey of 1000 people and using their own resources. The results were used to support evidence-based decision-making and to help develop a long-term strategic plan to improve the quality of life and potentials of the elderly population.

These were reflected in the *Strategic Plan for Older People in Biscay, approved by the Council for Older people in Bizkaia in December 2013*. The Strategic Plan explicitly recognises the concept of active ageing and highlights the following key strategic areas:

- Multidimensional focus of active ageing with inter-governmental collaboration and coordination
- Innovative social initiatives for older people
- Making Biscay a more “age friendly place” at local level

The Observatory for the Elderly was designated to monitor and evaluate the Strategy.

#### **Lessons Learned**

- The discussions about active ageing among the stakeholders changed from activity-based debates to measurable results-oriented debates.
- Measuring with a European standard has given a sound evidence base for active ageing policies.
- Silos were more easily broken when a common objective was established that was not only connected to one policy area.
- The detail of the indicators within the index helped to identify areas for potential improvement and from which regions/states could learn from.

Source: Mr. S. Murillo Corzo, Director-General, Dept. of Social Development, Provincial Government of Biscay/Bizkaia

#### **Box 4: BISCAY/BIZKAIA's experience with the AAI**



## Box 5: Italy's Experience with the AAI

Italy's total population currently stands at about 60 million. Its population growth had been stagnating between 1981 and 2001 and then showed a modest increase, mainly due to migration inflows. At the same time life expectancy has been increasing to 78.6 years for men and 84.0 years for women. Another contributing factor is that Italy's birth rate has been drastically declining and is now one of the lowest in the world. It was 9.3% in 2010 equivalent to 1.41 children born per woman. Some compensation for this decline is made by the migration inflows.

The number of residents aged over 65 years represents nearly 22% of the current population and it is estimated this will rise to 32% by 2056. The old age dependency ratio is also predicted to rise from 30% in 2011 to 60% by 2056. Therefore Italy's active younger population will not only have to take care of their own children but will also have to take care of the elderly in their families. This will place great challenges for both society and the Government.

Within this country context, the concept of an active ageing composite index was considered to be a potentially very interesting tool to measure AA-related matters towards the objective of "a more equal society in which the elderly are no longer seen as a liability but as one of its main assets".

Italy's National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) carried out the research to develop AAI indicators at national and subnational levels and considered it to be a "superb experience" working with a multisectoral/dimensional task force in a continuous exchange of ideas and initiatives. Methodological challenges were experienced and were addressed systematically among the team colleagues and the set of indicators most appropriate to Italy's context was selected. The 2014 AAI calculations at national level placed Italy just above the EU average: 34.0 against 33.9 points and 14<sup>th</sup> out of the total 28 EU countries. This stimulated discussion as to whether regional differences could explain this ranking, especially in a country like Italy which is characterised by wide historical regional disparities. Additionally, in Italy the local authorities (regions and municipalities) are responsible for implementing programmes and policies on active ageing and therefore need to know where the gaps are.

Thus ISTAT took up the challenge of calculating the AAI in all of Italy's 16 regions for 2007 and 2012. Research on the AAI calculation was harmonised with several other existing European and multipurpose surveys which have sample sizes that allow the AAI to be calculated at regional level, including by gender and age.

This experimental work "**Greying Italy: Across time, space and gender**" was presented at the international seminar on building evidence on AA for policymaking, in Brussels, April 2015 and also to the authorities in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region. It is planned that an update of this work will be presented to the Marche region in 2017.

At the same time, ISTAT has set up its own online thematic system on ageing [www.istat.it/it/anziani](http://www.istat.it/it/anziani) where information and data on ageing is continuously available and further calculation of AAI trends will also be made available for policy monitoring and policymaking follow-up actions.

### Lessons learned

- The AAI adopts a holistic perspective and for the first time, allows for the operationalisation of a multidimensional concept of active ageing
- The work on the AAI is helping to "throw out" the dominant paradigm that older people are a burden to society and to activate a "life cycle approach" focussing on their potential contributions
- While national level AAI data is useful for cross-country comparisons, regional and local level data are necessary for identifying welfare gaps and re-directing policies and policy implementation
- This type of multidimensional research and dialogue involving many different actors is inspiring and useful and the creation of an evidence base is essential to convince policymakers to view active ageing as a national priority
- The AAI has been innovative in that it has highlighted gender disparities at national and subnational level supported by *evidence*. For example the research showed that the gender gap is the southern regions remain higher than in the northern regions
- Active ageing policies appear particularly difficult to implement due to a variety of reasons (complex, fragmentary, "political convenience", limited budget allocations for strategy implementation etc.)

Source: L. Quatrociochi, M. Tibbaldi, V. Buratta, National Institute of Statistics, Italy

Poland has a current population of 38 million residents. Current projections by Poland's Central Statistical Office indicate that the percentage of elderly people 65+ will increase by 11% from 16% in 2007 to 26.7% in 2035.

Before 2012, there was no active ageing policy in Poland. For Poland, the European Year 2012 of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and especially its last position in the first edition of the AAI of the EU countries was an obvious motivation for stimulating government initiatives in the area of an active ageing policy such as:

- *The Government Programme for 50+ – labour market participation of 50+ and 60+;*
- *The Government Programme for Social Participation of Senior Citizens for 2012-2013 and the second edition for years 2014-2020*
- *Long-term Senior Policy Approach for 2014-2020.*

In particular, the Government programme for social participation of senior citizens was aiming to engage the non-governmental organisations into actions, which will give older people more opportunities in the areas of education, social integration and social services. This Programme has been in operation since September 2012 with a budget of 60 million zlotys for 2012-2013.

Additionally, in 2013 this overall low result of the AAI for Poland provided an incentive to see what the value of the AAI could be at the regional (subnational) level and whether the differences between Polish regions were significant and could give clearer directions for better shaping regional policies in responding to population ageing. The idea behind a regional AAI for Poland was to identify those regions where active ageing is weakly supported, so that regional and local authorities could be encouraged to intervene and possibly make changes to the policy.

The Polish research project was supported by international expertise from the project and the Expert Group on the AAI. It was financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and undertaken in cooperation with the Central Statistical Office. The regional AAI for Poland followed the original approach of the Active Ageing Index, using most of the original indicators. The Polish regional extension of the AAI was first prepared for 2013. Then at the end of 2014 and most recently a follow-up has been carried out in 2016 which gives the possibility to examine changes from 2013 to 2015. In 2017, the Polish government plans to launch the AAI for all 16 regions.

As a result of this subnational application of the AAI in Poland, in October 2014, a Peer Review on the Active Ageing Index and its extension to the regional level was organised in Krakow in 2014. The peer review approach was extremely useful in exchange of experiences among countries on their use and application of the AAI with the focus on the subnational levels.

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Cross-country comparisons are useful to motivate countries to individually improve their policies towards active ageing
- The calculation of the AAI and trend analysis are also needed at the subnational levels to enable local government policymakers to identify gaps and target policy/programme implementation more effectively
- Participation in the Expert Group on the AAI and peer review meetings has had invaluable benefit to allow open debates on the AAI as a tool for measuring active ageing as well as for sharing country experiences
- Informal and personal contacts, links and networks are very important for policy monitoring and policymaking e.g. with ministries, statistical offices, civil society

Source: J. Perek-Białas, Discussion Paper Peer Review Active Ageing Index at the local level (Berlin, 14–15 April 2016) Active Ageing Index at the local level as a tool for better designed age-related policies, also [www.senior.gov.pl](http://www.senior.gov.pl) and others

#### **Box 6: Poland's Experience with the AAI**

### 2.3.3 Efficiency

In the context of this project and referring to the TOR, efficiency examines whether the relationship between project costs and outcomes was reasonable (i.e. “value for money”); whether the resources were sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes and whether they were used cost-effectively; and whether the outcomes were achieved on time.

The total budget for the project was 487,710 euros for the period August 2013 to December 2015. Out of this total, the EC funded 360,000 euros and UNECE contributed in kind the amount of 127,710 euros to the project. The implementation period of the project was extended to the formal end date of April 2016 (reference to the second amendment to the Contribution Agreement) in order to carry out an additional activity – a pilot study at local level in Germany.

The main components of the project budget were: contractual services for consultants, experts and research institutions; travel of experts, seminar participants and UNECE staff, meeting facilitation, interpretation and translation for meetings, and general operating costs.

The project manager was able to complete all the project activities with the funds fully utilised i.e. 100% delivery.

#### Finding 16

**According to the survey respondents and the interviewees the project was implemented in a very efficient and cost-effective manner. All the deliverables were implemented at high quality and in a timely manner.**

The project team is to be commended for this positive assessment. There are several noteworthy reasons for this feedback as follows.

- Although the topic of active ageing is complex and multidimensional, the project itself is relatively simple in that it focuses entirely on one main deliverable, the AAI, and two interventions which are 1) the further refinement of the AAI methodology and 2) advocacy and dissemination of the AAI for policy monitoring and policymaking. In this sense the project is *focussed* and does not try to “do too many things all over the place”.<sup>23</sup>
- The project was able to mobilise small amounts of cost-sharing funds from country governments and international agencies for certain activities e.g. the government of Lithuania sponsored the national seminar, the EC organised the two peer reviews on the AAI in Poland and Germany, hosted respectively by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Marshal Office of Malopolska region, and by the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. In Turkey, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy hosted a meeting of stakeholders in connection with the AAI pilot study in Turkey.
- The project consistently used local institutions and experts to implement the activities and in this way, it was not only cost-effective but it also built up local know-how and capacity.
- The AAI has been developed using *existing data sets and surveys* e.g. EU-LFS, EU-SILC, EQLS, ESS and others, and this has contributed significantly to the cost-effectiveness of project support. Researchers stressed that it would be much more costly and probably beyond their budgets if they had to collect new statistics.
- Regarding the pilot study in Germany, there had been some delay in implementation of the activity due to the lack of data, including gender disaggregated data, at the subnational level but this was beyond the control of the project. Since then the final report for the pilot study has been completed.

### 2.3.4 Sustainability

The sustainability criterion assesses the extent to which the stakeholders will continue to benefit from the project beyond the financial and other support of the project. As mentioned before, it should be borne in mind that a third phase of the AAI project, with EC funding, commenced implementation in May 2016 and is due to end in April 2019, independent of the results of this evaluation. This third phase of the AAI project builds on the work of the previous two phases and has three main objectives with related activities already identified; therefore it may be that some of the points made in this section will be superfluous.

#### Finding 17

**The AAI project’s phased approach – first developing and introducing the AAI methodology and index in phase 1, and further refining and adapting it to the subnational level, linking it as an evidence base for policy monitoring and policymaking in phase 2<sup>24</sup> – has been very appropriate for increasing the potential for sustainability.**

75% of the survey respondents noted that sustainability of the project’s activities was very likely or likely. Through its activities, the project has raised wide interest amongst a broad range of stakeholders in several of the UNECE member countries about this multifaceted measurement of active ageing. Examples of how the project has supported several countries to develop their own strategies, policies and action plans on active ageing have been given in Box 3 on page 12 and provide the evidence that the AAI concept has taken root among the project’s stakeholders. These stakeholders are in turn advocating and influencing their countries to revise or adopt new policies on active ageing and in this way the activities of the project related to the AAI are achieving a level of sustainability at county level.

At the same time, the more in-depth discussions in the interviews reflected a more nuanced and mixed view which also reflected the extent to which interviewees had a more holistic view of the project. In most cases interviewees

---

<sup>23</sup> Quote by one interviewee

<sup>24</sup> The project under evaluation

could answer the evaluation question based only on their country experience and to a lesser extent, on their attendance at international gatherings or Expert Group meetings. As a result they did not have an overview of the project as a whole. These are presented in the following findings.

#### **Finding 18**

- **For many country stakeholders the AAI constitutes a flexible analytical framework which can be adapted to differing country contexts and to the extent that data are available. Therefore it is likely that *elements* of the AAI methodology will continue to be used, as supported by 75% of the survey respondents and a majority of the interviewees. Some countries (e.g. Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation) in the Eastern European region, Caucasus, Central Asia, and Western Balkans have also started to collect AAI data; however other countries in these regions are likely to require funding support and technical expertise to develop the AAI.**

Interviewees noted that countries are likely to select those domains and indicators that they consider to be relevant to their specific development context and would collect and analyse data on these. They also confirmed data availability is a constraint for sustainability at subnational levels and in non-EU countries. At the same time, they also noted that proxies could be identified to replace missing data, as long as the core concept of a multidimensional index is maintained.

#### **Finding 19**

**Research on AAI calculations and trend analysis at the subnational levels (regional and local/municipal) have generally more relevance for the stakeholder countries and therefore more potential for being linked up to policy and programme implementation which in turn leads to sustainability.**

The reasons for this have already been explained in detail in Finding 10 on page 12.

#### **Finding 20**

**The project's capacity-building approach of partnering with national institutions and using experts from the UNECE region has helped to embed the AAI concept and methodology at country level and create potential for sustainability. However, the link between research and statistical institutions and relevant policymaking government entities is not uniformly strong in all countries and this is likely to affect uptake.**

In the survey one country's statistical institute noted that their sole responsibility was to collect statistical data and that they were not responsible for policies; another interviewee noted that her specialist reputation in this field gave her personal access to the relevant ministry. In some countries the statistical institute is directly under the prime minister's office, giving it more political influence. These are different country contexts which the project cannot influence but it may be able to *facilitate* this linkage and interaction further and in this sense, there is a continued role for UNECE.

#### **Finding 21**

**Although a great deal of project activities were implemented to communicate the AAI concept and methodology at both international and national levels, more needs to be done to bring the index into political debates, if it is to gain wider acceptance as a means of influencing policymaking on active ageing.**

During the project, the main strategies for promoting the AAI concept and methodology were outreach (especially to policymakers), dissemination and communication. Numerous activities and presentations world-wide were made by the project team, engaged consultants and some Expert Group members, which have already been mentioned in the findings on "Effectiveness".

Some interviewees have mentioned that the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing to be held in Portugal in September 2017, will be an ideal opportunity for the project to profile the AAI at a higher level. Its ongoing interaction with the UNECE Working Group on Ageing is also another important mechanism and the project team regularly presents AAI results and information about the project at its meetings.

## 3 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings above, the AAI project has largely achieved its two main objectives: to mainstream the use and applicability of the AAI for evidence-based policymaking; and to promote the AAI as a useful instrument for related analytical work and advocacy on active ageing issues, for a number of EU and non-EU countries in the UNECE region. All the related activities specified in the EU-UNECE Contribution Agreement have been implemented at high quality and in a timely, cost-effective manner. As a result, awareness has been raised about the AA concept and the AAI itself, stakeholders have been sensitised to the potential use of the AAI, country-level capacity to collect and analyse AA-related data has been improved, gender differences have been highlighted and a network of good practice exchanges has been established.

Under the project, the calculations of the AAI at national level for the 28 EU member States and for 6 non-EU countries (Canada, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and under pilot studies for Serbia and Turkey) have been made. At the same time some countries took the initiative to calculate their own AAI at both national and subnational levels e.g. Belarus, Italy, Poland, Republic of Moldova. Additionally, two workshops for non-EU countries to calculate the AAI indicators for their reporting under the MIPAA framework were organised-a total of 17 non-EU countries took part in these workshops.

As mentioned in section 2 on Findings there is still room for improvement in some aspects of the project and the following recommendations are presented for this purpose.

### 3.1 Recommendations

Bearing in mind that the project's objectives and related activities are inter-linked, the recommendations are presented generally and not against each evaluation criteria as this would lead to substantial repetition. Secondly, as already mentioned in previous sections, the phase 3 of the AAI project is being implemented and therefore some recommendations will have already been integrated into this phase.

#### **Recommendation 1. The current contributors should continue to support the project to expand its geographical coverage and to deepen its substantive scope. This could entail:**

- The EC and UNECE should continue supporting the project 1) to expand its coverage to Eastern European countries, Caucasus, Western Balkans and Central Asia and at the same time 2) to continue to respond to EU member States that show initiative to pursue their work on the AAI.
- While still continuing to fine-tune the AAI methodology, the project's attention should be drawn more to supporting countries in the calculation and analysis of the AAI at subnational levels and to strengthen the linkages with policy monitoring and policymaking, because this is what the vast majority of stakeholders are asking for.
- Efforts should be made to deepen the analysis of the AAI within specific domains that countries are interested to examine further. Examples given were: further analysis on employment/income earning potential (as employment is seen as a *means* to a better quality of life); the study of challenges facing specific groups such as that of unskilled workers and poor population groups.
- The project should continue its noteworthy and systematic work on mainstreaming gender aspects into the AAI work and as part of its introduction to other countries in the UNECE region. As mentioned in the findings a specific study on the employment potential of older women and women long out of the workforce would be very useful, if funding for this could be made available.
- On human rights considerations, given the reality of limited resources and no in-house expertise in the project team, the current approach of discussing the "rights of the elderly and ageing" within the four AAI domains, should be maintained.

#### **Recommendation 2. The project team should continue to improve the technical and management aspects of the project (in support of Recommendation 1) in the following ways:**

- The Expert Group should be maintained as a key substantive instrument for the refinement of the AAI. At the same time, it is recommended that the composition of the group be expanded to include more policymakers (4-5). Since policymakers may not have the time to participate in technical discussions on the AAI, consideration could be given to allocating one day with them at the end of the technical discussions to focus on how to link the AAI with their specific country policies. A rotating arrangement with policymakers could also be considered to bring more contextual variety into the discussions.
- The project should continue to make efforts to engage high-level experts and consultants to provide specific technical and substantive contributions to the future work on the AAI. This is important for ensuring the relevancy of the AAI in comparison with other composite indices (such as the Global AgeWatch Index) and in promoting the AAI internationally and bringing it into higher-level debates; members of the Expert Group should continue promoting the AAI (as is already the case).
- The project team structure should be maintained and possibly enhanced (reference Recommendation 5) to continuously monitor the project's activities and to provide substantive and management support to the project.

**Recommendation 3. The project should continue and improve the knowledge management function of the project taking into account the specific suggestions listed below:**

- Continue to facilitate and support the various forms of knowledge and good practice exchanges and expand these to other countries, as these are highly appreciated by all the stakeholders. These include the national seminars and workshops, the peer reviews and participation in international meetings such as the Working Group on Ageing. Some innovative and useful suggestions have been mentioned by stakeholders: produce short policy briefs on the use of the AAI for policymaking with concrete examples; include international experts in the national seminars to bring good practices on active ageing from other countries; noting that some countries expressed difficulties in using large information sets in English, consider translating some information and materials into other languages..
- Continue to maintain the Wiki-space as it is very useful to the project's stakeholders. The content should be regularly examined in consultation with user stakeholders to ensure that the information remains useful and relevant.

**Recommendation 4. The project should pursue a more visible dissemination and communication strategy for publicising the AAI concept and methodological tool. This could entail:**

- The use of modern and interactive ICT techniques and social media if applicable. In the words of one interviewee "the project has done a lot of good work and this needs to be publicised". As an example, the AAI Analytical Report of April 2015 is very attractively presented and more of this type of document in a shortened leaflet form should be produced, including in some other languages. Inspirational speakers and champion policymakers should be invited to present and facilitate debates on AAI results.

**Recommendation 5. The project should intensify resource mobilisation efforts to enable the expansion of the work on the AAI in the UNECE region and to maintain an adequate sized project management unit**

- Given the expanding interest in the AAI and the likely need for more support in additional UNECE member countries, the project should intensify its resource mobilisation efforts by expanding its collaboration with potential partner agencies. For example, UNFPA has a mandate in population and demographic statistics and UNDP is paying more attention to ageing issues in the work sphere<sup>25</sup>. Both these are funds and programmes of the United Nations system and may be interested to partner the EU and UNECE on this issue of common concern. Private foundations and elderly peoples' networks may also be another funding source. Since this is a substantial task, consideration should be given to recruiting a junior professional to map out the numerous funding programmes and initiatives on active ageing<sup>26</sup> and identify potential partners for collaboration and joint partnerships.

---

<sup>25</sup> See Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development

<sup>26</sup> Even within the EC there are several programmes/projects that have a component on active ageing e.g. The Cohesion Fund, Lifelong Learning Programme, European Research, Innovation and ICT Fund, JASPERS etc.

**ANNEX 1 LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED (FACE-TO-FACE, BY PHONE, SKYPE AND EMAIL EXCHANGE)**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich	AAI Project Manager; Chief, Population Unit, Statistical Division	UNECE, Geneva
Ms. Olga Kharitonova	Team Assistant, Population Unit, Statistical Division	UNECE, Geneva
Ms. Paola Deda	Evaluation Officer, Project Management Unit	UNECE, Geneva
Mr. Michael Sylver	Executive Officer	UNECE, Geneva
Mr. Ettore Marchetti	Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	European Commission, Brussels
Mr. Ralf Jacob	Head of Unit, Dept for Retail, Financial Services and Payments	European Commission, Brussels
Mr. Asghar Zaidi	Professor International Social Policy/Senior Adviser	University of Southampton, United Kingdom
Ms. Eszter Zolyomi	Researcher	European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna
Ms. Jolanta Peres-Bialas	Researcher/Statistician and Economist	Warsaw School of Economics/Jagiellonian University, Krakow
Mr. Jürgen Bauknecht	Independent Researcher, Dept of Older People	University of Dortmund, Germany
Ms. Anne-Sophie Parent	Secretary-General	AGE Platform Europe
Ms. Anne Sonnet	Senior Economist, Employment Analysis and Policy Division	OECD, Paris
Mr. Peter Kupferschmid	Head of Unit for AA Policies	Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany
Ms. Aliona Cretu	Head, Dept of Migration and Demographic Policies	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social Protection and Family, Republic of Moldova
Mr. Marvin Formosa	Head, Dept of Gerontology, Faculty of Well-Being	University of Malta, Malta
Ms. Ilze Zvidrina	Deputy Director, Dept of Labour Market Policy	Ministry of Welfare, Latvia
Ms. Krista Brantevica	Senior Expert	Ministry of Welfare, Latvia
Mr. Sergio Murillo Corzo	Director-General, Dept of Social Development	Government of Bizkaia/Biscay
Ms. Vittoria Buratta Ms. Luciana Quattrociochi Mr. Mauro Tibbaldi	Researchers/Statisticians Directorate for Social Statistics and Population Census	National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), Italy
Mr. Eduard Jongstra	Regional Population and Development Technical Adviser, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office	UNFPA

## ANNEX 2 FINAL WORKPLAN FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE EC/UNECE PROJECT

### **Active Ageing Index II — Further Development and Dissemination**

Timing	Activity/task	Responsible organisation/ person	Comments
10 November	Formal start of the evaluation		
10 November onwards	Home based review of all relevant documents, including those on Wiki-Space	Evaluator/MdB	UNECE to provide progress and review reports and other ad hoc documents etc.
10-20 November	Develop list of potential interviewees with email, telephone contacts and Skype names  Make a selection of the interviewees to be approached  Officially inform project stakeholders that evaluation is taking place with TOR and inform that MdB will be contacting them for interviews in a certain period	UNECE Vitalija/Olga  Evaluator/MdB in consultation with Olga  Email from UNECE	
13-15 November	Draft questionnaire in response to TOR questions	Evaluator/MdB	
16 November	Send draft questionnaire to UNECE for review	Paola/Vitalija/Olga	
21-23 November	Finalise questionnaire and send to UNECE to distribute to EU country stakeholders with a deadline of 15 December	Evaluator/MdB UNECE/Olga	Survey Monkey is to be used for the questionnaire.
23 November-15 January 2017	Data collection through: -Skype interviews -telephone interviews -follow-up on response to questionnaire -study of documents contd.	Evaluator/MdB	There will be a break in the work between 20 December 2016 and 6 January 2017
15-31 January 2017	Continue interviews to ensure all parties have been consulted Analyse and triangulate all data and information received from different sources.	Evaluator/MdB	
1-10 February 2017	Draft final evaluation report, Version 1 and send to UNECE for review	Evaluator/MdB	
13-17 February	Review the draft final report and send comments to MdB by 17 February	UNECE/Paola/Vitalija/Olga	
17-23 February	Finalise evaluation report to reflect comments and in accordance with UNECE guidelines and send to UNECE for distribution	Evaluator/MdB	Contract duration is until 28 February which allows some flexibility for eventual delays



## ANNEX 3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE UNECE-EUROPEAN UNION PROJECT ACTIVE AGEING INDEX II – FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION

### I. Background

The Active Ageing Index (AAI) is a composite measure of the untapped potential of older people to contribute to economy and society through employment, social participation, and living independently. It measures also the extent to which the environment older people live in enables them to age in an active manner. The project “Active Ageing Index II — Further Development and Dissemination” had as its main objectives (i) mainstreaming the use and applicability of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) for evidence-based policymaking; and (ii) promoting AAI as a useful instrument for related analytical work and advocacy. The project is implemented by the UNECE Population Unit (Statistical Division) and covers the period from 1 August 2013 to 30 April 2016 (implementation period).

The project builds on the work implemented under the one-year project “Active Ageing Index” undertaken in 2012, during which AAI was constructed and calculated for 27 countries of the European Union (based mainly on the data for 2010).

The main activities of the project AAI-II are:

- Research, including
  - calculation of AAI for the most recent years (using the data for 2012), and for previous years (based on the data for 2008)
  - calculation of AAI for additional countries, this includes the new EU member — Croatia, and four non-EU countries: Canada, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland
  - implementation of an analysis of trends in AAI results
  - implementation of pilot studies in Germany, Serbia, and Turkey
- Outreach to stakeholders, including
  - maintaining the Expert Group on AAI, created during the first phase of the project
  - collaboration with the UNECE Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics
  - organisation of a research seminar
- Communication and promotion of AAI use, including
  - development and maintenance of a website on AAI
  - presentation of the AAI results at relevant meetings and events
  - briefs and reports on the AAI results

More information on the project can be found at the wiki-space devoted to the index at <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>.

All relevant documentation will be provided to the evaluation consultant.

## II. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the *relevance* of the project for the implementation of the Population component of the UNECE Sub-Programme Housing, Land Management and Population and its *effectiveness* in enhancing national policy formulation on population ageing and intergenerational and gender relations. The evaluation will also address the *efficiency* and *sustainability* of the project and its activities, in order to learn how to maintain the beneficial effects of the project after its conclusion.

The evaluation will assess whether the project succeeded in contributing to building the evidence base for the countries covered by the project to shape or adjust their policies on ageing in accordance with the goals of the Vienna Ministerial Declaration and to monitor policy implementation.

The evaluation should also identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project and issues that need further attention and that could lead to the revision of working modalities of similar projects and develop practical recommendations for the UNECE Population Unit and project partners on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future work on AAI, specifically under the project “Extending the relevance of the Active Ageing Index: Cooperation with UNECE” which began in May 2016 and will continue until the end of April 2019.

## III. Scope

The evaluation will cover the organizational contribution of the UNECE Population Unit throughout the project period from 1 August 2013 to 30 April 2016.

The project is intended for the benefit of all the UNECE countries, however, the evaluation will focus on countries which have been working directly with / involved in the AAI project. These will include: (i) pilot study countries: Germany, Serbia, and Turkey; (ii) the country where a national seminar on AAI results took place: Lithuania; (iii) a number of countries and regions which calculated and used AAI for their purposes at national and subnational levels, namely Italy, Malta, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain (focus on Biscay province). The evaluation will also involve other stakeholders including: (i) selected members of the Expert Group on AAI; (ii) counterparts in the European Commission involved in the project; (iii) World Bank representatives dealing with AAI; (iv) representatives of the AgePlatform Europe; (v) national focal points on ageing and experts dealing with AAI in the named countries.

To focus the evaluation on the specific impacts of this project, interviews will be undertaken and feedback collected only from people dealing directly with the index.

The thematic area of the evaluation is the evidence base for the population ageing policies.

The evaluation framework covers this project only, and excludes other activities carried out by the UNECE Statistical Division.

Gender and human rights aspects will be also covered by the evaluation, taking into account guidance provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group on the matter (available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980> and <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>).

## IV. Issues

The evaluation will seek to report on the *effectiveness* of the project in achieving its objectives and its *sustainability*; the *efficiency* of the project, in particular to evaluate how the inputs and resources (funds, staff, time) were utilized in achieving the outputs, and the *relevance* of the

project to the priorities and needs of its recipients and the consistency with the attainment of its overall objective. Key questions that the evaluation seeks to answer include:

### ***Effectiveness***

1. To what extent were the objectives of the project achieved? In particular:
  - 1.1. How did the project contribute to the increased use of AAI for ageing policy monitoring?
  - 1.2. How did the project contribute to a wider recognition of AAI as a useful tool for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy in ageing-related areas?
2. How did the project enhance national policy formulation on population ageing in selected UNECE countries?
3. How did countries adjust their policies or introduced new measures for implementation of MIPAA/RIS?
4. To what extent and for what purposes is AAI used by the various stakeholders?
5. To what extent did the planned activities contribute to achieving the objectives and the expected accomplishments? In particular:
  - 5.1. To what extent did the research activities under the project contribute to building the evidence base on ageing?
  - 5.2. How did the work of the Expert group help to promote the use of AAI among relevant stakeholders?
  - 5.3. How did the research seminar contribute to the promotion of AAI use at different levels and in a large variety of countries?
  - 5.4. To what extent was the national seminar in Lithuania helpful to the local stakeholders in offering an insight into the active ageing situation in the country from the AAI perspective?
  - 5.5. How did presenting AAI, maintaining the wiki-space devoted to the index, and the publication of briefs and reports on the AAI results contribute to better informing the stakeholders and wider recognition of AAI?
6. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the expected results?
7. What has prevented to achieve the desired results?

### ***Sustainability***

1. What is the likelihood that the beneficiaries of the project will continue using AAI in their work related to ageing policies?
2. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries “own” the outcomes of the work?
3. How has the project built in resilience to future risks?
4. What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?

## **Efficiency**

1. Were the resources sufficient for achieving the results?
2. Was the relationship between cost and results reasonable?
3. Were the resources used economically? How could the use of resources be improved?
4. Were the results achieved on time?
5. Were there differences between planned and actual expenditures? And if yes, were they reasonably justified?
6. Where there any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones?
7. How do the costs and use of resources compare with similar projects (within UNECE or by other United Nations agencies)?

## **Relevance**

1. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries? How relevant was it to the target groups' needs and priorities?
2. How relevant was the project for the UNECE region needs and priorities?
3. Is the work under the project consistent with the UNECE mandate and the objectives of the UNECE Subprogramme Housing, Land Management and Population (as per the General Assembly document Ref: A/68/6 (Sect. 20) of 12 April 2013)?
4. What is the relevance of the project for the work of UNECE?

## **V. Methodology**

The evaluation will include a desk review of existing documents and a questionnaire, followed by targeted interviews to further elaborate the findings of the survey. The UNECE project manager will provide the list with contact details of the relevant stakeholders.

The **desk review** will be based on project reports and material available including:

- Project plan
- Project progress and final reports
- Project wiki-space
- Reports from the meetings of the Expert Group on AAI and other relevant meetings as needed
- Minutes of the teleconferences held with the donor and the research consultants
- Other documents that the evaluator deems necessary for this exercise.

The UNECE project manager will provide support and further explanation by Skype or phone to the evaluation consultant when needed.

A tailored **questionnaire** will be sent to the specialists working on/with AAI in the pilot study countries, namely, Germany, Serbia, and Turkey; national focal points on ageing and experts dealing with AAI in a number of countries and regions which took the initiative of calculating and using AAI for their purposes at national and subnational levels, namely Italy, Malta, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation (research), Biscay province (Spain). Other stakeholders to be approached are selected members of the Expert Group on AAI; counterparts

in the European Commission involved in the project; consultants who had worked under the project; World Bank representatives dealing with AAI; respective representatives of the AgePlatform Europe; representatives of the country where a national seminar on AAI results took place — Lithuania.

The questionnaire will include open and closed questions (in English). To ensure an objective approach, the questionnaire will be prepared by the evaluation consultant, and will be reviewed by the UNECE project manager. It will be based on questions listed in section IV, formulated in a way the evaluation consultant finds best according to his/her previous evaluation experience and expertise in the region.

The **interviews** will take place via phone or Skype.

The evaluation consultant will write a **report** on the results of the evaluation based on these terms of reference.

## **VI. Evaluation Schedule**

*A. Preliminary research:* September 2016 (by evaluation consultant)

*B. Data Collection:* project documents (by UNECE project manager), questionnaire and interviews (by evaluation consultant): October 2016

*C. Data Analysis:* November 2016 (by evaluation consultant)

*D. Draft Report.* November 2016 (by evaluation consultant)

*E. Final Report:* January 2017 (by evaluation consultant)

## **VII. Resources**

An external evaluation consultant identified through the UNECE evaluation roster will be hired and receive support from the UNECE project manager. The UNECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance on the process for the preparation of the evaluation.

## **VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps**

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE evaluation policy. The results will be used to adjust (if necessary) the above-mentioned project “Extending the relevance of the Active Ageing Index: Cooperation with UNECE” and the planning and implementation of future similar projects.

## **IX. Criteria for Evaluators**

The evaluator should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management and social statistics.
- Good knowledge of and experience in population ageing issues, possibly with a specific knowledge of social policy and its monitoring.
- Relevant professional experience in design and management of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, project planning, monitoring and management.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.

- Working languages (written and spoken proficiency): English.

## ANNEX 4 FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AS AT 3 DECEMBER 2016

### **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with UNECE policy on evaluation, UNECE has selected Ms. Minoli de Bresser, Evaluation Specialist (Netherlands) to carry out a final evaluation of **the Phase 2 project “Active Ageing Index II-Further Development and Dissemination” (2013-2016)**. This survey questionnaire is one of the key tools to collect feedback from the project’s beneficiaries and therefore your timely response is much appreciated. It should take you about 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire and please note that your response will be treated as confidential. The deadline for closure of the questionnaire is 20 December 2016.

#### **Question 1 (tick off box)**

Are you located in an EU country?  
Are you located in a non-EU country?

#### **Question 2 (tick off box)**

Do you represent: Government - NGO/CSO - Research/Academic Institution? Other?

Comment box: If “other” please clarify

#### **Question 3 Relevance**

a. Is the project relevant to helping your country implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing/Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) objectives?

Scale: Relevant, somewhat relevant, not relevant, do not know

b. Is the project relevant to your country’s development priorities and needs?

Scale: Relevant, somewhat relevant, not relevant, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice

#### **Question 4 Effectiveness**

c. Has the project contributed to helping your country/organisation implement the MIPAA/RIS objectives?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

Comment Box: Please explain your choice

d. To what extent has the project objective of providing an evidence base on active ageing been achieved for your country?

Scale: Achieved, being achieved, not achieved?

Comment box: Please explain your choice

e. Has the project provided added value to related work going on in your country/region on active ageing?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice

e. Has the AAI data and trend analysis influenced the *monitoring* of policies and programmes on ageing in your region/country/organisation?

Scale: Yes, partially, not at all, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice with examples

f. Has the AAI data and trend analysis contributed to the *revision* of existing policies and programmes on ageing in your region/country/organisation?

Scale: Yes, partially, not at all, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice with examples

g. Was it relevant for the project to work on the AAI at subnational (i.e. regional and/or local) levels?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

h. How effectively has the project facilitated work on the AAI at subnational levels?

Scale: Very effectively, somewhat effectively, not effectively, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice

i. To what extent have the knowledge products generated by the project (e.g. policy briefs, analytical reports) been useful in raising awareness and advocating for better active ageing policies?

Scale: Very useful, useful, somewhat useful, not useful

Comment box: Please make recommendations for improvement

j. How often do you use the project's Wiki-space

(<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/+Ageing+Index+Home>)?

Scale: Often, occasionally, not at all

k. How useful is the information on the project's Wiki-space to your work on active ageing?

Scale: Very useful, useful, not useful

Comment Box: Please give examples if useful/not useful and areas for improvement

l. How aware are you of the work and input of the Expert Group on the AAI to the project?

Scale: Very aware, aware, not aware

**SKIP LOGIC here:** If aware, go to next question m; if not aware skip to question n

m. Has the Expert Group on the AAI contributed to achieving the project's objectives?

Scale: Contributed greatly, contributed partially, not contributed

Comment box: Please explain your choice

n. What are the factors affecting the implementation of the project? Tick off the 3 most challenging ones in the boxes below:

- Lack of political will by policymakers/governments to addressing ageing challenges
- An ageing population is not seen as a critical development challenge
- Competing national priorities and development needs
- Lack of data for calculating the AAI
- Limited country capacity and expertise to collect and analyse data on ageing trends
- Link between the research/statistical institutions and policymaking institutions is not strong
- Lack of funding for collecting and analysing data on ageing
- Lack of funding for developing and implementing active ageing programmes
- Lack of coordination among several national/subnational agencies involved in ageing issues
- Other

Comment box: Please explain "other" factors

o. Overall how satisfied are you with the project's results/outcomes?

Scale: Very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied

Comment box: Please explain your choice

### Question 5 Gender and Human Rights

p. Have gender equality considerations (e.g. sex-disaggregated data, analysis of AAI trends for both men and women) been mainstreamed into the project's activities?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

q. How effective have project activities been to ensure that gender aspects of active ageing are continuously discussed and monitored?

Scale: Very effective, somewhat effective, not effective, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice with examples

r. Has a human rights-based approach been taken into account in the project's activities (e.g. non-discriminatory data collection)?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

s. How often have human rights issues been discussed and monitored in the active ageing discourse?

Scale: Often, occasionally, not often, do not know

Comment box: Please explain your choice with examples

#### **Question 6 Efficiency**

t. Has the project been efficient in delivering inputs and activities in a timely and cost-effective manner?

Scale: Very efficient, efficient, not efficient, do not know

Comment box: If your rating is "very efficient" please give an example. If your rating is "not efficient" please give an example.

u. Could the project have delivered the same results in a more efficient way?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

Comment box: If yes, please give suggestions for improvement.

#### **Question 7 Sustainability**

v. What is the likelihood that stakeholders in your country or organisation will continue using the AAI in their work on ageing policies?

Scale: Very likely, likely, unlikely, do not know

Comment box: If "unlikely" please explain why

w. Had arrangements been made in your country/organisation to continue the work on AAI after completion of phase 2?

Scale: Yes, no, do not know

Comment box: Please explain the factors that affect sustainability in your context

#### **ANY OTHER COMMENTS BOX**



## ANNEX 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AAI 2012 Concept, Methodology and Final Results, European Centre for Social Policy, Vienna, March 2012.  
[www.euro.centre.org/data](http://www.euro.centre.org/data)
- AAI Pilot Studies for Serbia and Turkey, UNECE Population Unit, March 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Active Ageing Index at the Regional Level, Synthesis Report, J. Perek-Bialas and M. Breza, Poland, October 2014  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Active Ageing Index at the Local Level, Synthesis Report, J. Perek-Bialas, Germany, April 2015  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Ageing and Development: Putting Gender back in the Agenda, Bennet and Zaidi, International Journal on Ageing in Developing countries, 2016
- Composite Indices as International Approaches to Elderly Population Well-Being Evaluation: Evidence from Russia, EpSBS, Abstract, 2016
- EU Contribution Agreement with UNECE, 3 October 2013
- EU Amendment E147 No 1 to Contribution Agreement with UNECE, 9 March 2015
- EU Contribution Agreement: Extending the Policy Relevance of the AAI III, May 2016-April 2019, 24 Nov. 2015
- Extending the AAI to the Local Level in Germany, Pilot Study, August 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Expert Group on the AAI, Reports of five meetings held between 2012 and 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Greying in Italy: Across time, space and gender, Quatrochiocci, Squillante and Tibaldi, April 2015
- Individual Presentations at the International Meeting on the AAI-potential for evidence-based policy development, a dialogue for policymakers, Brussels, November 2014  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Italy and the Ageing Society: Overview of demographic trends and formal/informal resources for care of older persons, Gagliardi, Melchiorre, Spazzafumo and Marcellini, An Abstract, 2012
- Project Progress Report on AAI Project II, 30 June 2014  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Project Final Report AAI Project II, 30 June 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Report of the First Workshop on AAI Indicators, Geneva, November 2015  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Report of the Second Workshop on AAI Indicators, Minsk, June 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Report on the Peer Review on the AAI at Regional Level, Krakow, October 2014  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Report on the Peer Review of the Active Ageing Index at Local Level, Germany, April 2016  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- Support Guide for Conducting Evaluation, UNECE, May 2014
- UNECE/EU Policy Brief on Introducing the Active Ageing Index, April 2013  
[www.unece.org/population/policy\\_briefs.html](http://www.unece.org/population/policy_briefs.html)
- UNECE/EU Policy Brief AAI 2014, Active Ageing Index for 28 European Union Countries, November 2014  
[www.unece.org/popualtion/policy\\_briefs.html](http://www.unece.org/popualtion/policy_briefs.html)
- UNECE/ European Commission (2015) "Active Ageing Index 2014: Analytical Report" , Report prepared by Asghar Zaidi of Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton and David Stanton, under contract with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), co-funded by European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Brussels).  
<http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>