**Challenges with ISCED 2011 mapping for NORWAY**

Implementation of the New International Education Classification ISCED is almost completed in Norway. The various programmes and qualifications (attainment) are mapped and some changes incorporated in the previous mapping. A few challenges and problem areas were encountered during the implementation of the new ISCED.

**ISCED 0**

Pre-primary education in Norway is an integrated programme with the same structure and not divided into day care and pre-school like some other countries. With the new ISCED requirement, the pre-primary education is now divided into two programmes according to age though this is mainly to satisfy the ISCED mapping conditions (age 0-2, 3-5). The challenge here is the division of expenditure and resources based on the two groups. There are currently methodologies developed to estimate resources according to the age criteria.

**ISCED 4/5**

Post-secondary vocational education (fagskoler) is one of the areas where a considerable amount of time was used in meetings, discussions to determine how to place and code the various programmes. The entry requirements to these programmes are completion of ISCED 3 and have durations of 6 months to 2 years. A final option adopted was a decision to divide the post-secondary vocational education into two main sections based on the theoretical duration of the programme. Programmes of two years duration are now classified at ISCED 5 and attainment at same level with access to university education after completion. Programmes of 6 months to 1.5 years duration are classified at ISCED 4 with ‘no access to university education’ after completion.

**ISCED 6**

Most bachelor programmes are easily classified under 3 or 4 year degree programmes. There are however the 2 year colleges (høgskolekandidater). These programmes do not satisfy the duration criteria for bachelors but are courses at bachelor levels. The solution after series of meetings and discussions with the educational authorities is coding of programmes at ISCED 6 (641 code for not sufficient for level completion) and attainment is coded at ISCED level 5. In the international data reporting for the OECD, UNESCO and Eurostat courses with codes not sufficient for level completion are excluded from the graduate tables but included in the programme and educational attainment data.

**Orientation at tertiary levels**

Programmes at ISCED levels 3-5 are classified with orientation codes. There are lots of challenges however for programmes at ISCED 6-8 levels. The international organisations OECD, UNESCO and Eurostat prefer countries to classify these programmes as either academic or professional. The educational authorities in Norway do not however share this view and are against distinction of these programmes into academic or professional. All programmes at higher education are potentially academic courses though they can be used professionally in the labour market. In our discussions with the national educational authorities we agreed not to make any distinctions. ALL programmes at ISCED 6-8 levels are therefore coded as academic courses.