

# Guidelines for the preparation of a diagnosis on school supervision



# Group assignment

..... PREPARING A NATIONAL DIAGNOSIS OF  
SCHOOL SUPERVISION

Some guidelines

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## Objective

This document presents the group assignment of the distance course on “Reforming school supervision for quality improvement”.

The overall purpose of this assignment is to undertake a diagnosis of the actual situation of school supervision services in your country, to discuss its main strengths and weaknesses and to propose possible reforms to improve the effectiveness of supervision.

The diagnosis, which will be discussed here, should focus on the role and the organization of school supervision as a service and on several management issues. You are also being asked to give some attention to the daily operation of the service and to the work that supervisors actually undertake.

The outline of the diagnosis therefore consists of the following sections (*in each case, we have indicated the approximate length of the section*):

- An introduction: a brief history of school supervision and what are the different supervision services in your country (*about 1 to 1 ½ page*)
- The role of the supervision services (*about 2 pages*)
- The organization of the service (*about 2 to 3 pages*)
- Some basic facts and critical issues concerning the management of supervision staff (*about 3 to 4 pages*)
- Some key facts on the daily operation of the service, including school visits, reports and follow up to reports (*about 3 to 4 pages*)
- The role played by school-level actors in supervision (*about 2 pages*)
- An assessment of the effectiveness and impact of supervision (*about 2 to 3 pages*)



## Suggested methodology

Throughout the course, your team will progressively elaborate the diagnosis of your national supervision system. Your team will be asked to prepare specific chapters of the diagnosis for each training module of the course (except for 1 and 7), which should be sent to the instructors for comments. The instructors' feedback is meant to push your reflections further and enrich your work. Using this feedback, your team will then finalize the diagnosis the last week of the course (21-25 March), and submit a final version to the instructors for marking. Corrections and scores will be sent to each team within three weeks of submission.

Regarding the information needed to complete the diagnosis, your team can rely mainly, if not exclusively, on a perusal of the available literature, reports, official documents and statistical data. There is no need for any original data collection.

The purpose of this diagnosis, however, is to go beyond the description of the "official" situation. We would like you to highlight challenges and also indicate where reforms could be useful. In particular for chapter 5, we would like to gain a concrete insight in the work supervisors actually undertake and the challenges they experience when they are in their office or visiting schools. Your diagnosis cannot, therefore, be based simply on official documents, but needs to build on additional information. The experience of your team members will of course be of great use. You may also want to foresee some informal discussions or interviews with practising supervision personnel (or with those who in their career occupied such posts) if you feel you need more information or would like a different perspective.



# 1. Introduction

## Section 1 An identification of the supervision services

During this course, we work with an **operational definition** of the term 'supervision services' in order to define clearly which services we are discussing and to make sure that in every country we are talking about a similar service.

We have suggested that this term be understood as covering

*all those services ...*

*whose main function is to inspect, control, evaluate and/or advise, assist and support ...*

*schools, principals and/or teachers and ...*

*who are expected to do so through regular school visits.*

The main focus of the diagnosis will be on external supervision, that is to say on the work of inspectors, supervisors, advisers, counsellors, etc. located outside the school at local, regional or central levels. A common characteristic of all these officers is that regular visits to schools are an essential part of their mandate. Some may focus on individual teachers, others on the school as a whole.

In this section, you should draw up a list of those services that, according to the above definition, qualify as 'supervision services' and will be included in the diagnosis. At this stage, you should simply list and name these services.

## Section 2 A very brief history

In this section, you should give a brief indication about the origin of supervision structures in the country: When were they created? What were the main stages in their development?

You should also indicate the most recent reforms (if any occurred recently), but you are not asked here to enter into detail on the description or analysis of these reforms.



***The introduction should be of about 1 to 1 ½ page***

1 or 1 ½ Pages

## 2. The role of the supervision services

### Section 1 The official functions of supervision services

In this section, you should give a fairly detailed description of the official functions of each of the services presented in the introduction. You should describe in particular if their functions relate more to supervision and control or to advice and support. You should also indicate if the main object of the supervision is the “school” or the “teacher” or, in some cases, the “education system” as a whole. You may also indicate if their focus is expected to be more on pedagogical or on administrative matters (including financial ones).

Official texts or decrees which mention the functions and job descriptions could be added in annex, if those exist.

### Section 2 An analysis of the role of the supervision services

We would like you to critically discuss the information presented under section 1. This could be done in one or two stages.

Firstly, when re-examining the official functions of the respective services, you should indicate the logic (or lack of logic) in the distribution of responsibilities between them, highlighting complementarities, possible overlaps and areas which are not covered. The matrix which is presented in module 2, can be helpful in this regard.

Secondly, if recently any reforms were planned or undertaken in the domain of school supervision, it would be useful to examine if and how they intended to change the role of the supervision services. What are the main objectives of these reforms as far as the role of the supervision service is concerned, and do they lead to improvement? *(In countries where no such reforms took place, this part of the analysis will not be feasible)*



***This chapter should be of about two pages.***

2 Pages

### 3. The organization of the supervision services

#### Section 1 The overall structure of supervision

This section should cover three points.

Firstly, it should present the overall structure of the supervision services: where are they located (within which ministries) and at what levels e.g. at central, regional and/or district level. How do they relate to each other? It could be helpful to prepare a graph which summarizes this information.

Secondly, you should also describe the internal structure. Is supervision organized by levels of education, by subject area, by groups of schools, by type of school (public – private)? What are the hierarchical relationships between the different staff? It would be useful to include organizational charts to illustrate your presentation. Indicate precise titles of different services and personnel, using the original terminology. Where necessary, you may refer to a glossary, to be put in annex, which explains the meaning of these terms and of any acronyms used.

Thirdly, you may need to highlight the status and authority of the different services. Are they simple departments of the ministry or do they have a specific status and some form of autonomy?

#### Section 2 Relations with other pedagogical services

As mentioned in *Module 1*, external supervision is only one important component of the different services explicitly aiming at improving pedagogical practices in the classroom. Among the other services, one can mention pedagogical research services, teacher training institutions, curriculum centres, evaluation units, etc. In this section, a brief picture should be presented of how officers in charge of external supervision relate to the specific services in charge of the following support activities:

- teacher pre-service and in-service training;
- pedagogical research;
- curriculum development and implementation; and
- examination and testing.

It is not necessary to give a presentation of these different services. The central question here is: what is the role played by different categories of supervisors in relation to the above-mentioned functions?

#### Section 3 An analysis of the organization of supervision

We would like you to critically discuss the information presented under sections 1 and 2. This could be done in one or two stages.

Firstly, when re-examining the organization of the supervision service, you may want to look at the level of complexity of the structure and at the logic of the present structure. Are the services placed where they can be most effective? Is there sufficient communication and coordination between services? How are their

relationships with the other services in charge of quality monitoring and improvement?

Secondly, if any reforms were recently planned or undertaken in the domain of school supervision, it would be useful to examine if and how they intended to change the structure of the supervision services. What are the main objectives of these reforms as far as the structure of the service is concerned, and do they lead to improvement? *(In countries where no such reforms took place, this part of the analysis will not be feasible)*



***This chapter should be of about two to three pages.***

2 to 3 Pages



## 4. The management of supervision staff

### Section 1 A few basic facts and figures

With regard to the personnel identified as external supervision staff in the introduction, basic statistical data should be presented and commented upon in relation to the following:

- total numbers of professionals working in the different services;
- average number of schools and/or teachers per category of supervisor;
- distribution of supervisors by gender;
- distribution by age.

These data should be presented for the latest year available, and the relevant year should be mentioned. Whenever possible, regional breakdowns should be provided in addition to national data.

Also indicate here whether a statistical database on supervision services exists. If so, where is it located and which data does it contain?

### Section 2 Some critical issues in the management of supervision staff

For each of the issues mentioned hereafter, the corresponding section should present the official rules, regulations and procedures, and comment on how they are implemented.

#### (a) *Recruitment*

How are different categories of supervisors recruited: exam, promotion or interview? What are the official requirements for candidates (is any teaching or teacher training experience needed)? What are the criteria for selection? Who is in charge of selection? How often do recruitments take place? Are there many candidates for these posts? What are their motivations for applying?

#### (b) *Training*

What kind of induction and in-service training activities are organized for different categories of supervisors? How are they organized: type of programmes, duration and resource persons? Do training programmes exist specifically for supervision staff or are they combined with training for other categories of personnel? Who is in charge of the training? Who attends?

#### (c) *Support*

In general, what kind of professional support (other than training) is available to the supervisors themselves? Who is in charge of this? Are precise supervision guidelines and guidebooks available? Are they being used? Does a code of conduct exist, either in the form of an official code or in other forms: e.g. circular letters, advice from professional associations? Are standard forms available for reporting (if yes, add a copy)? Are they being used?

(d) *Career development*

What are the career prospects for different types of supervisors? Promotion possibilities within the supervision services? Promotion possibilities outside? Dismissal rules and practices?

(e) *Monitoring and evaluation of supervisors*

How are supervisors themselves monitored? By whom? What are the criteria used for evaluating them? Do performance indicators exist? What are they? How are they applied? What role do they play in promotion?

### **Section 3      An analysis of supervision staff management**

We would like you to critically discuss the information presented under sections 1 and 2.

Firstly, you should assess the effectiveness of the management of supervision staff and highlight the main problems. It may be easiest to use the same areas as under section 2.

Secondly, if any reforms were recently planned or undertaken, you could examine their impact on this area. *(In countries where no such reforms took place, this part of the analysis will not be feasible)*



***This chapter should be of about 3 to 4 pages.***

3 to 4 Pages

## 5. The daily functioning of supervision services

### Section 1 Planning and workload

How are the activities of supervisors planned? Do they have any weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual work programmes? Are these plans being implemented?

Are there any norms and regulations defining the workload of different categories of supervisors? Number of schools and/or teachers to be visited? Frequency of visits? Percentage of time (e.g. per year, semester or month) to be devoted to different activities (school visits, report writing, organizing meetings...)?

To what extent are these norms and regulations respected? How much time is actually devoted to different types of activities?

### Section 2 School visits

How regularly can supervision staff visit schools? How many times per year are schools and teachers supervised? Are there official criteria for the selection of schools to be visited? In practice, which schools get most visits?

Are school visits announced in advance? Are schools / teachers informed of the visit's nature and objectives?

Do there exist different types of school visits (e.g. school inspection, teacher evaluation...)? What are the objectives of each type? Are visits undertaken by a single member of staff or by a group? How is such a group constituted?

How long do the different types of school visits last? Who takes part in it? What precisely does such a school visit entail? How much time is spent on class observation, on discussions with the headteacher, the teachers, the parents, community organizations, the students, on perusing official school documents? Which data are collected during school visits?

### Section 3 Reporting

Do reports have to be written after school visits? Are they actually written? Are reports elaborated according to a standardized format?

With whom are they discussed before their finalization (teachers, headteacher, parents, other education officials)? What influence do such discussions have on the report's final version?

To whom are reports addressed and disseminated?

### Section 4 Follow-up, including use of reports

Are reports published? If so, in which form?

Does any unit or person have official responsibility for monitoring the use of the reports? Which units, if any, are responsible for acting on the report's recommendations?

To what extent is supervision staff involved in following up on the conclusions and recommendations of the reports?

What impact do reports actually have on, for example, the allocation of resources, promotion of teachers, teacher training, curriculum development?  
How are reports filed? What is the filing system?

## **Section 5     An analysis of the daily functioning of the supervision service**

This section should critically discuss the information in sections 1 to 4.

Firstly, you could highlight the main problems related to the daily functioning of the supervision service.

Secondly, if any reforms were recently planned or undertaken, you could examine their impact on this area. *(In countries where no such reforms took place, this part of the analysis will not be feasible)*



***This chapter should be of about 3 to 4 pages.***

3 to 4 Pages

## 6. School-site supervision

### Section 1 The role of the principal

Do principals have official teacher supervision (support and/or control) tasks? If so, how are they expected to undertake these (classroom observation, regular teacher assessment reports...)?

Are principals trained for these tasks? Do they have access to any manuals or guidelines or standard forms?

Do supervisors, when they visit the school, take into account the findings of internal supervision by the principal?

### Section 2 The role of the community

Are there any official structures which represent or include members of the community (such as a School Management Committee)? Do these structures have the authority to supervise the school?

If so, what are they allowed to control and how do they exercise this authority?

### Section 3 The effectiveness of school-site supervision

We would like you to critically discuss the information presented under sections 1 and 2.

Firstly, you should assess the effectiveness of the school-site supervision and highlight the main problems. In this regard, you may also want to indicate the nature of the relationships between these mechanisms and the classical supervision services.

Secondly, if any reforms were recently planned or undertaken, you could examine their impact on this area. *(In countries where no such reforms took place, this part of the analysis will not be feasible)*



***This chapter should be of about two pages.***

2 Pages

## 7. Overall assessment

This concluding section should present a general appreciation of the way in which supervision services function, the role they play in monitoring the quality of schools, the challenges they encounter and any innovations or reforms taking place. It could therefore consist of three parts:

### 1. Synthesis of main problems

This chapter should offer a synthesis of the main problems experienced by supervision structures, in particular in relation to the role they are expected to play in improving school functioning and education quality. They may include: the management issues mentioned above (recruitment, training, support, monitoring, career development); material working conditions; workload; job satisfaction; and co-ordination between services and attitudes of supervisory staff.

### 2. Present trends and innovations

The modules identified several significant trends emerging in a growing number of countries in the field of supervision. This chapter should address the issue of to what extent these trends – and others – have had an impact on supervision practices on the ground, in other words to what extent these practices have undergone change, and, if so, in what direction. It should also examine what influence these changes have on the quality and functioning of schools.

### 3. Proposals for reforms

Throughout this diagnosis, you have been asked to identify the main problems and challenges in various areas. In this final section, we would like you to propose a few significant reforms which could help overcome these challenges. You are asked to present three or four such reforms, to describe them in quite some detail and to explain which problems they are expected to address.



***This chapter should be of about two to three pages.***

2 to 3 Pages

## **Annexes to be provided (optional)**

The following annexes could be provided with the diagnosis:

Annex 1            Glossary of terms and acronyms used in the diagnosis

Annex 2            Organizational charts of supervision services

- overall structure
- internal structure of different services

Annex 3            Official job descriptions

Annex 4            Standard reporting forms