

# Evaluation Report

## Final Evaluation: Extending policy relevance of the Active Ageing Index (AAI): Cooperation with UNECE

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## List of Acronyms

AAI	Active Ageing Index
CSR	Country-Specific Recommendations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (see below)
EC	European Commission
ES	European Semester
EU	European Union
DG EMPL	European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RIS	Regional Implementation Strategy
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNECE	The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

## **Acknowledgements**

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Sincere thanks to Shauna Spillane for her help in designing the evaluation survey, helping to administer it, and in helping to present the results graphically. She was always on hand to check the survey responses, and ensure that it ran smoothly.

Una Murray, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2019

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## Executive Summary

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**Introduction:** The multidimensional concept of ‘active ageing’ was developed to better understand the circumstance under which the process of population ageing can also offer opportunities (WHO, 2002). With four domains and 22 indicators to estimate the experience of active ageing, when calculated, the Active Ageing Index (AAI) provides evidence to monitor (and compare) ageing outcomes, and indicate the potential of older people for more active participation in economic and social life. Elaborated in alignment with the main objectives of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), the AAI helps policymakers monitor national ageing programmes.

Building from two earlier projects, the EC in collaboration with UNECE co-funded and collaborated on Phase 3 of the AAI project, which was operational from 1 May 2016 to 31 August 2019. The main objectives of Phase 3 were to further work on the AAI, enhance its flexibility and use, promote it and support countries to apply it.

**Evaluation methodology:** This final evaluation took place between July and September 2019, examining progress towards achievement of the objectives, through interviews with thirty stakeholders, analysing 72 quantitative and qualitative responses from an evaluation survey.

**Findings:** The AAI was found to be highly relevant to UNECE governments’ needs and priorities, although some countries, particularly those with concerns about the sustainability of their pension systems, took on the measurement of active ageing more than others (e.g. Italy, Republic of Moldova, Spain). Because the AAI disaggregates by sex, it identifies gender gaps, but such gaps require more analysis, as occurred in studies from Germany, Italy and Poland. The project was very relevant to UNECE programme of work, in particular the work of the Population Unit.

The project was designed around 12 tasks, which overlapped across the three project objectives. All tasks were completed with the exception of a communications task to be completed by the EU by December 2020. A webpage and a Wiki Space are currently maintained by the UNECE Population Unit.

The project focused on further development of the AAI methodology to ensure increased flexibility and wider implementation (objective 1). No modifications were made to the original AAI. Proxy indicators were suggested for non-EU countries and for calculating the AAI at the subnational level. Countries such as Italy, Poland contributing to the AAI extension, its greater visibility and recognition (Objective 2). AAI results were used in the elaboration of a plan to mainstream ageing in the Republic of Moldova’s National Strategy (2020-2030). Several regions of Spain are using the AAI to monitor their strategies (Basque Country, La Mancha, Navarra). Some Italian regions are calculating the AAI at subnational level. Italy is working on development of a law on ageing at national level and AAI is likely to be the monitoring tool. The subnational level was considered by many interviewees as particularly important in identifying ageing-related inequalities, where subnational governance can subsequently put in place changes.

Partnerships set up with institutions were relevant with individuals providing intellectual and methodological inputs to the AAI methodology. Likewise, the Expert Group maintained under the project allowed for in-depth discussions, and provided support to various countries and regions (Objective 3). There was a polarization of views as to whether the Index should essentially use the same indicators in each country or region, with some advocating for cultural adaptation, and changing the original weighting and domains of the Index. During the project, States that are comparable were clustered, rather than a focus only on overall comparison. The normative value judgment of ‘the higher the AAI score the better’ is not so much applied (particularly in the 2018 Analytical Report produced under this project), and calculations are being used to look deeper into some specific indicators.

The project staff, and the Expert Group played a significant role in helping develop the AAI methodology further. Perhaps there could have been more than one representative of older persons associations in this Expert Group. Support provided by UNECE staff (Objective 3) to member States was reported as excellent by all interviewed.

Whether or not countries will continue to use the AAI often depends on political factors. Undoubtedly the policy process is complex and differs across countries. Politicians want “quick wins” for re-election. The national level is generally more important overall for ageing policy implementation. Thanks to this AAI project’s sub-national level focus, users, advocates and policymakers can see what parts of the ageing puzzle are missing and whether there are resources to accomplish change for older persons at different levels. Another major achievement is that AAI results were included in a statistical annex of the UNECE 2017 synthesis report on the implementation of the MIPAA. The AAI project does not explicitly emphasize the human rights of older persons, and was developed before the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became the overarching framework for social and economic development. Serious attempts were undertaken to present SDG-AAI linkages.

The AAI can be misinterpreted and harshly criticised for allegedly advocating for 100% employment of older persons. The objectives of calculating the AAI must always be clearly outlined in communications. Conceptually some felt there was a need for some modification of the original index. Others felt that the project fell short on sharing good ageing policies, (not actually an objective of the project, but would generate interest amongst policymakers). Yet overall, more promotion of the AAI could have taken place. Although the AAI project put in place many activities to ensure a wider recognition of the AAI, it did not live up to the expectation that more EC policymakers would use it as a monitoring tool. The collaborating partner, DG EMPL failed to get it recognized as a valid index with DG EMPL Social Protection Committee. With a mandate from an international organisation, the AAI could continue to be used to highlight similarities and differences across countries and clusters of countries sharing common features, and trends over time. Within the EC, much might depend on the new Commissioner appointed and the corresponding level of interest in demographics and ageing.

Undoubtedly, the AAI project contributed to measuring active ageing and has created a discourse around ageing that did not exist previously, moving away from the biomedical model of ageing. Many stakeholders commented that it was a great project and they were grateful for being involved. Others commented that although not perfect, the AAI is an important, and useful tool; and that they would like the measurement of active ageing to continue.

**Conclusions:** It is important that the AAI does not fade in importance. Ageing demographics remain a salient issue in Europe. There is still considerable value in continuing to calculate and update the index. It is thus important that the EU revisits who can fund or resource the AAI initiative. If housed in a research institution rather than the UNECE, the challenge is connection to policymakers. Because the AAI is based on data already produced, marginal costs are not high to calculate the index. Irrespective of whether more funding is obtained from the EC, UNECE is likely to do its best to continue to do something on the AAI. Extra budgetary funding would still be required by UNECE, to for example organize workshops, pay for staff to attend AAI events, communications, and so on.

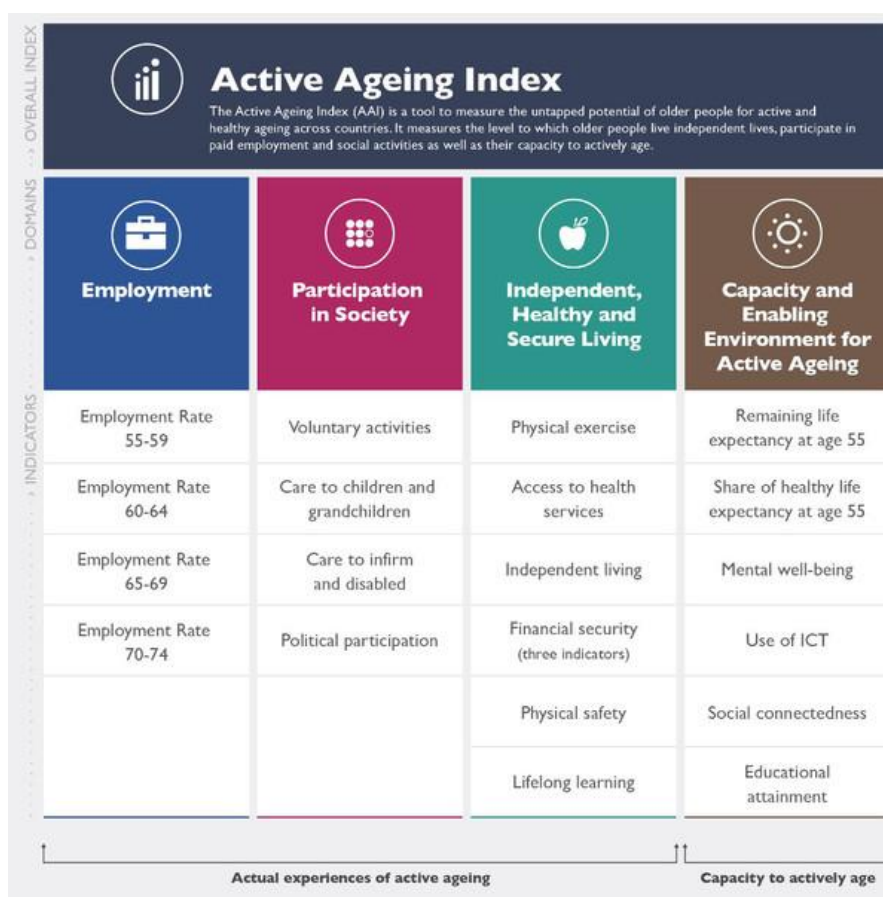
**Evaluation recommendations are as follows:** Improve alignment with SDGs; review Table 11 that contains elements of an Action Plan for follow up; continue to make the AAI more topical by aligning it to upcoming goals/ priorities (e.g. Europe 2020 or the WHO decade of healthy ageing 2020-2030); more academic focus should be encouraged; document more examples of the application of the index in a way that is relevant for policymakers; ensure the AAI is linked in UNECE policy briefs. The EC (and UNECE) should use the communications tool when completed to conduct publicity (within DG EMPL); and keep an official centralized recalculation every two years. Develop a concept note to obtain funding for subnational calculations. Complementary qualitative studies could be commissioned in partnership with other projects.



## 1. Introduction

This report relates to an independent evaluation of the cooperation on the Active Ageing Index (AAI) between the UNECE Population Unit and the European Commission’s Directorate Gender for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EC DG EMPL). The project was operational from 1 May 2016 to 31 August 2019.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identified ‘active ageing’ as the ‘process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security, in order to enhance quality of life as people age’ (WHO, 2002). The Active Ageing Index (AAI) is a composite measure of the untapped potential of older people to contribute to the economy and society through employment, social participation, and living independently. The AAI is composed of four domains (employment; participation in society; independent, health and secure living; and capacity and enabling environment for active ageing). The four domains are the result of the weighted combination of a set of 22 indicators, all identified as covering an important component of active ageing. See Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Active Ageing Index, UNECE<sup>1</sup>**

The AAI was developed within the framework of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Cooperation between the UNECE Population Unit and the European Commission’s (EC) Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) made possible the development and extension of the AAI.

<sup>1</sup> <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

The *Extending Policy Relevance of the Active Ageing Index: Cooperation with UNECE* (hereafter called AAI project) builds on two previous phases of cooperation on the AAI between the UNECE Population Unit and the EC DG EMPL. Phase 1 of cooperation (between January 2012 and February 2013) facilitated the development of the AAI and the release of AAI results for 27 European Union countries. The main developer of the 2012 AAI was the European Centres for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna.

Phase 2 of cooperation (August 2013 to April 2016) extended coverage of the AAI to Croatia and four non-EU countries (Canada, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). Two pilot studies at national level were carried out for Serbia and Turkey, and a pilot study at local level was implemented in Germany. An international seminar was organised in April 2015, a national seminar in Lithuania in May 2015, two peer reviews on subnational application of AAI took place. The AAI indicators were included into the statistical annex to national reports on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). The objectives of Phase 3 were to:

1. Further work to develop the AAI methodology, in particular to enhance its flexibility and enable wider implementation.
2. Further promote use of AAI as a flexible tool providing evidence base for policymaking, analytical work and advocacy.
3. Provide support to countries in their attempt to apply AAI for their needs at both national and subnational levels.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objectives of the project were achieved. Another purpose is to support learning in the UNECE. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in enhancing national policy formulation on population ageing as well as gender relations.

## **Scope**

The geographical focus for the AAI project was all UNECE countries. The evaluation covered the countries/regions where the AAI has been applied or for which it had been calculated and analysed. This included 28 EU countries, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Switzerland.

The evaluation focused on assessing progress made in furthering the development of the AAI methodology, in particular whether the methodology has been enhanced to ensure its flexibility for wider implementation. The evaluation assessed how useful the AAI proved to be as a tool for providing evidence to be used in policymaking, analytical work and advocacy. Furthermore, the evaluation examined how the AAI project provided support to countries in applying the AAI. The scope included all elements of the AAI project logical framework as outlined in the Grant Agreement. The evaluation covered all tasks that were implemented under phase 3 of the project (between May 2016 and August 2019).<sup>2</sup> A range of cross cutting issues was considered in the evaluation including gender equality and policy processes. There was a particular focus on stakeholders' views on the sustainability of the AAI.

## **Methodology**

The principles and approach adopted during the evaluation were in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria

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<sup>2</sup> The original project was for 36 months, but a 4-month no-cost extension was agreed.

for international development evaluation.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation also followed UNECE October 2014 Evaluation Policy. The evaluation complied with the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), and followed ethical safeguards. Addressing all the questions in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), the evaluation examined the evaluation criteria: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; and likelihood of sustainability. Gender equality and non-discrimination were considered in this evaluation as was human rights due diligence in terms of how the project addressed human rights impacts. The evaluator obtained information about the progress of AAI project activities and examined the monitoring system in place, along with data and reports shared at the UNECE AAI Wiki.<sup>4</sup>

An evaluation instrument was prepared to guide the evaluation. The evaluation methodology encompassed:

- A desk review of relevant project reports and materials (Annex 2). This included the agreement with the donor, interim and draft final reports on project implementation to the donor, the project wiki-space; reports from meetings of the Expert group on AAI, and other documents.
- An inception report discussed with the UNECE.
- An evaluation instrument to document and analyse progress towards activities and project objectives (included in the inception report).
- A tailored on-line questionnaire for UNECE national ageing focal points, and stakeholders working on/with AAI (Annex 3). The survey was sent to a list of 230 stakeholders identified by UNECE Population Unit, which included those who attended seminars, workshops, engaged in the project Expert Group (EG), as well as national focal points. There was a 31 per cent response rate (72 responses), which the evaluator found very high, given that the survey was sent during August, a typical holiday period in the European region. There were a lower proportion of male respondents who contributed (40% of the overall responses; with 60% of the 72 respondents female).
- Interviews with selected stakeholders via phone or Skype. Annex 4 contains the list of all interviewed. All members of the Expert Group were invited for interview, and a large number agreed. Interviews also took place with the EC DG EMPL and UNECE staff.

The methodology drew from a range of tools available for use in social research including key informant interviews, observations and a review of existing secondary data. The evaluator triangulated across data sources. Both primary and secondary sources of information were used. For the latter documents and AAI project progress reports (2), and other documents also reviewed. For primary sources of information, interviews – with both opened-ended and semi-structured questions were undertaken. Interviews were mainly with key informants. Subjective sampling of interviewees was based on discussions with the UNECE Population Unit, and focused mainly on the Expert Group, which worked under the project. Sampling criteria are based on interviewees' involvement in the AAI project (purposive sampling). Some interviewees were those with an institutional agreement for work on the AAI project.

The methodological approach used quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Qualitative information was obtained through interviews with various stakeholders and qualitative questions in the evaluation survey. Interviews were content-analysed to determine patterns of responses, and themes. Quantitative information was collected through multiple choice survey responses from the 72 survey results.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

## **Limitations**

In term of assessing the AAI project across the three objectives, all interviews were done by Skype or phone calls, without meeting any UNECE staff face to face. The large response from survey respondents, and the detailed comments they provided was unexpected and it took longer than anticipated to analyse these results. All members of the Expert Group were invited to be interviewed, and it is likely that some declined to be interviewed due to vacation. It was not possible to comment on the effectiveness of the costs and use of resources compared with similar projects as such information was not available to the evaluator.

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## 2. Findings

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### 2.1 Relevance

#### Relevance of the project to the target groups' needs and priorities

By 2050, the world's population aged 60 years and older is expected to total 2 billion, up from 900 million in 2015 (WHO, 2018). In 2019, almost 98 million in the EU 28 countries are aged 65 years, over 19.2 per cent of the total population.<sup>5</sup> In the UNECE member States, by 2017, the number of people who were 65 years old and above had risen to almost 195 million among the region's population of 1.27 billion (15 per cent) (UNECE, 2017). This compares to approximately 155 million people in this age group in 2002 (13 per cent of the region's total population). Ageing is thus a demographic phenomenon in UNECE member States, characterised by a decrease in fertility, a decrease in mortality rate, and a higher life expectancy among (some) member State populations.

Key challenges of ageing for the EU/UNECE Member States include: adjusting to an ageing and shrinking workforce; achieving access to healthcare for all older persons; and ensuring the financial viability of healthcare systems.

The AAI has been calculated in EU countries since 2012. Generally tracking the ageing experience is considered positive and relevant, but how we frame it can be controversial. Debates on the framing of how to measure ageing took place in earlier AAI projects and also during this AAI project.

Some wish to move away from the healthy ageing concept that sends out messages inferring that an individual is responsible for his or her own health. The policy relevance of ageing is raised considerably when politicians consider state pensions systems. Quantifying paid work is an important measurement for a national economy, alongside the belief that those who work, age better. Governments are forced to make unpopular choices with regard to pensions and require data to back it up. An individual representing ageing civil society organisation thought that some countries would prefer not to highlight the negative effects of pension reform.

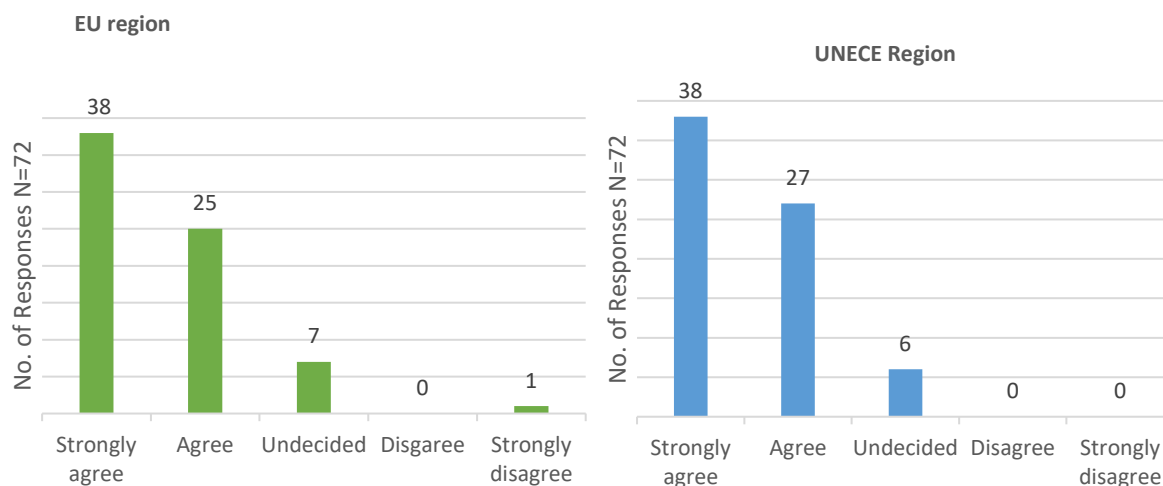
Survey respondents were asked to rate the relevance of the AAI project to both the UNECE Region and to the EU Region (N=72). An overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AAI project was relevant to the UNECE and EU region's needs and priorities see Figure 2 and Figure 3 below.

Fifty-two survey respondents provided further insight as to why they felt that AAI project was relevant for the EU and UNECE region. A third of these respondents mentioned demographics, with comments such as *“Europe is ageing fast”* or *“an ageing population is the main challenge in the EU”*, with some noting differences in the region. Others noted that dealing with ageing populations requires key actors at the local level, indicating the relevance of the subnational level focus of the project. Five respondents mentioned that the project aligns with European policy priorities but only one respondent linked to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). Respondents (8) highlighted the relevance of the project as increasing awareness of ageing amongst policymakers, or drawing attention to the concept of active ageing. Eleven responses outlined the relevance in terms of providing a framework for measuring, monitoring or comparing situations on ageing. A typical comment was:

*“helps to detect bottlenecks in social inclusion for the elderly”* or *“policies of active ageing need a measurable tool”* or *“it provides an evidence base”*.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unece.org/info/media/presscurrent-press-h/population/2019/unece-and-european-commission-report-on-active-ageing-highlights-strongest-progress-for-women/doc.html>



**Figures 2 & 3: Relevance to the EU/UNECE region**

**Do you agree or disagree that the AAI project was relevant to the EU region’s needs and priorities?**

**Do you agree or disagree that the AAI project was relevant to UNECE Region priorities?**

A lead researcher on the AAI stated that smaller countries showed more interest in the AAI than larger countries. According to another researcher interviewed, the urgency of ageing depends on the country in Europe. Some countries experienced a baby boom early after the war (Scandinavian countries), whereas others (such as Italy) experienced this later. The effects of an ageing population were thus noted earlier in some countries (such as Nordic countries), whereas ageing is becoming more prominent an issue now in others (Austria). Thus, the relevance of ageing differs in Europe, and can vary depending on the country. Some countries, such as Poland and Austria still have a differential retirement age for men and women (65 and 60 respectively), although they are moving towards parity. Active ageing is also relevant to organisations representing the elderly.

Interviews with representatives from the German National Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO) and AGE Platform Europe confirmed that Active ageing is also relevant to organisations representing the elderly. For example, AGE Platform Europe are currently using the AAI in a smaller project called *Age Barometer*. *Age Barometer* annually publishes an assessment of the socio-economic situation of older people across the EU and how this situation underpins the respect of their human rights. Annual assessments are linked to the monitoring of policy processes at EU and national levels in regard to ageing under the European Semester.<sup>6</sup> The German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) and EuroHealthNet developed a report in 2012 that identified a range of policies, programmes, and projects taking place across Europe (and in Canada) concluding that many of the policies and initiatives recognise the need for holistic approaches that address and improve the health of older people, ranging from encouraging and improving the employability of older people; providing older people with opportunities to share and develop their knowledge and Skills; providing opportunities for life-long-learning etc. Many of these approaches are measured by the AAI.

<sup>6</sup> Important policy processes for AgePlatform include for example the EU Pillar of Social Rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Linking the AAI project to these was considered very helpful.

### **Conclusion: Relevance to region**

Because of ageing related concerns amongst most countries covered by this project, it can be concluded that the project was highly relevant to UNECE governments' needs and priorities. The project was relevant to those who represent senior citizen groups, who wish to promote a healthy and active ageing process. Being active whilst ageing was also noted to be endorsed in journal articles reviewed for this evaluation.

The majority of survey respondents strongly agreed that active ageing is relevant to the EU and UNECE. It can be concluding that in the context of ageing populations and related challenges (adequacy of social protection systems, healthcare, care or employment standards), the AAI was relevant to countries in the UNECE region in terms of identifying gaps, raising awareness on such gaps, and in some cases, monitoring policies to implement active ageing.

### **The extent to which the project related to UNECE programme of work**

UNECE major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration, for the 56 member States. The Population Unit of the UNECE work to promote policy dialogue on various facets of demographic change across the UNECE region, with a particular focus on ageing. The MIPAA (2002) provides a framework for addressing ageing, with an ECE Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) also in place. The AAI project fits under Subprogramme 8 (Housing, land management and population) in the UN biennial plans.<sup>7</sup> The 2012 UNECE Ministerial declaration (ECE/AC.30/2012/3) "Ensuring a society for all ages: Promoting quality of life and active ageing" provides a mandate for active ageing in UNECE programme or work following decision ECE/AC.30/2007/2 and the Report of the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing: "A Society for All Ages: Challenges and Opportunities" (UN, 2017; 2015).

The UNECE Working Group on Ageing assists countries in the implementation of MIPAA by fostering regional collaboration and exchange of strategies and good practice. A UNECE official stressed how the AAI methodology was developed in parallel to a Vienna Ministerial Declaration on ageing, which is important to note. It was not developed out of curiosity, but because a measurement was required to complement the MIPAA and in 2015 the UNECE Working Group on Ageing recommended that countries in the region use the AAI indicators to report on progress of the third cycle of the MIPAA/RIS. Conversely, for follow up, representatives from ministries for foreign affairs usually work at the UNECE level, and may not be as concerned with concepts such as Active Ageing, compared to ministries that represent social protection or other ageing-related areas.

In addition to the MIPAA/RIS, UNECE supports countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Evidently the UNECE assists member States in achieving better results by supporting programmes in accordance with the SDGs. The EU must implement United Nations agreements, which means they should promote the SDGs, resulting in a common policy for countries in the EU and beyond. At the time of AAI development, the SDGs were not yet defined. However, the UNECE saw the relevance of the AAI to the SDG and outlined overlaps.

Linking the MIPAA/RIS<sup>8</sup> with the SDGs and the European Pillar of Social Rights marks a turning point in how the region addresses ageing according to an interviewee working on advocacy for older persons. This was one of the many positive aspects of the AAI project she noted.

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<sup>7</sup> UN biennial plans for 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 (SP8): <https://undocs.org/a/69/6/Rev.1> and <https://undocs.org/a/71/6/Rev.1>

<sup>8</sup> The Madrid Plan of Action focuses on three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

### Box 1: Linkage between AAI and the SDGs

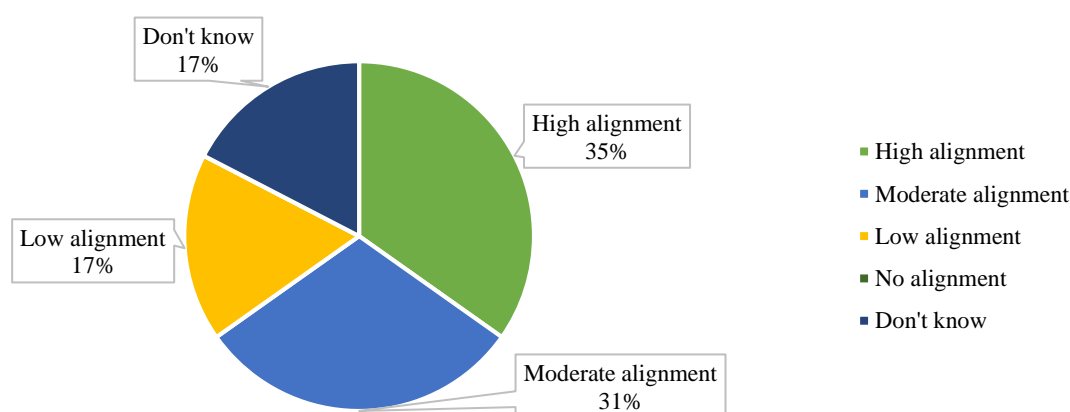
#### The AAI and the SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seeks to ensure that *'all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment'*. All UNECE member States have pledged that *'no one will be left behind'*. Evidently it is necessary to ensure that the situation of older persons is considered as one cohort amongst different categories of population groups, and their concerns are addressed in the 2030 national implementation and review processes.

Realizing the potential of older persons contributes to the implementation of the SDGs, the UNECE systematically outlined the linkages between the AAI indicators and the SDG targets. UNECE is supporting countries to address key sustainable development challenges through an integrated approach leveraging UNECE norms, standards and conventions, and by building capacities and providing policy assistance. The focus is on helping drive progress towards nine core SDGs where UNECE has particular strengths, namely SDGs 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15. Partnerships (SDG 17) and gender equality (SDG 5).<sup>9</sup>

The UNECE organized a Seminar (21 November) in 2018 in Geneva, where such linkages were presented amongst other issues related to the SDGs. Thirty-eight individuals from 30 UNECE countries were present. A session that connected MIPAA/RIS and the 2030 Agenda in terms of policy integration focused on the linkages between the *'ageing'* and *'sustainable development'* agendas. Another session focused on the *'how to?'* The AAI indicators mapped against the SDG targets were presented at this seminar.<sup>10</sup> The contributions that the AAI can provide for ageing-related policies and measures to support older persons were stressed. This policy seminar helped national focal points on ageing reflect on connections, and see the overlaps between the SDG and the AAI.

Survey respondents were asked to *rate the alignment of the AAI project towards the SDGs*. Just over a third of respondents stated there is a high alignment between the AAI project and the SDGs. Roughly a third of respondents answered that they believed there was a moderate alignment. 17% thought there is a low alignment and the same number did not know.



**Figure 4: Alignment of AAI with SDGs**  
**How do you rate the alignment of the AAI towards the SDGs N= 72 Respondents**

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://www.unece.org/high-impact-areas/general-introduction.html>

<sup>10</sup> The AAI covers aspects of goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17 and more specifically targets 1.2, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 5.4, 5.5, 8.5, 10.2, 10.4, 11.7, 16.1, 16.7, and 17.8.



Comments from survey respondents included the following:

- AAI indicators can be directly linked to some SDG targets, but more work needs to be done in linking the AAI to specific SDGs.
- SDG 8 that links to decent work is not included in the AAI; therefore, the conditions in which older people work are not considered.
- More linkages could be made to older persons living in a sustainable city/area; with clean energy or having good health conditions and less pollution as these are important for people's health. It may be interesting to include this as part of the AAI fourth domain, if modifications are being made.
- The SDG's are broader, and the aims are different. The AAI has a much more specific focus.

### **Conclusion: Relevance to UNECE programme of work**

The concept of active ageing is very relevant to UNECE programme of work, in particular, the Population Unit's work to promote policy dialogue on various facets of demographic change across the UNECE region, with a particular focus on ageing. The AAI also complements the MIPAA/RIS. The alignment to SDGs is newer, and not easy to see by itself, but the potential of alignment of the AAI to the SDGs could be highlighted more. The relevance of active ageing to the 2030 Agenda was illustrated by mapping indicators of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) against corresponding goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. It is perhaps inevitable that if the AAI continues to be used as a measurement, then stronger linkages between the AAI and the SDGs must be stressed in the near future, building on work already undertaken by UNECE. The SDGs themselves, could better consider older people as one of the reference population groups.

### **Relevance of the project design interventions for meeting the project objectives**

The third phase of the AAI project (AAI-III) continued the work undertaken under the first two phases. Three objectives were outlined in the Grant Agreement between the UNECE and EU as follows:

- Objective 1:** Further work to develop the AAI methodology, in particular to enhance its flexibility and enable wider implementation.
- Objective 2:** Further promote use of AAI as a flexible tool providing evidence base for policymaking, analytical work and advocacy.
- Objective 3:** Provide support to countries in their attempt to apply AAI for their needs at both national and subnational levels.

The project was designed to meet the above three objectives. Recommendations from the evaluation of the AAI Phase II were mainly in line with the activities decided in Phase III, such as expanding the geographical coverage and deepening the AAI substantive scope. Ten activities and twelve tasks were specified in the Grant Agreement between the EC DG EMPL and UNECE. Some of these tasks related to methodology (objective 1); some were clearly linked to promoting the tool (objective 2); or providing support to countries (objective 3). Many of the tasks crossed two or three objectives as outlined in Table 1.

**Objective 1:** The EU (and the UNECE) considered it important that the AAI was also calculated outside the EU, and within countries at the subnational level, where possible. Enhancing the flexibility

of the AAI was important to ensure countries beyond the EU could use the AAI, in particular with proxy data for some of the 22 indicators not easily available in non-EU countries. Beyond the EU 28 countries, most UNECE countries do not have the wealth of data across all the indicators (according to an interviewee responsible for *European Quality of Life Surveys - EQLS*). Thus the AAI had to be flexible. The 2018 Guidelines produced under the project for the AAI in non-EU countries and for subnational level, was according to some interviewees the most important activity planned in relation to the extending the methodology and demonstrating flexibility.<sup>11</sup> Although not finalised until January 2019, these Guidelines provided instruction on adjusting the methodology of the AAI. Alternative variables (proxies) for the AAI indicators were shared, when statistical sources were unavailable. The proxies recommended were also to ensure the AAI preserved its core concept, structure and functionality.

**Objective 2:** National and sub-regional seminars as well as the International Seminar and the Stakeholder meeting were planned to disseminate and advocate for the use of the AAI. A leaflet (flyer) on the AAI was designed to spread information on the AAI. The major product summarising the work implemented over the eight years and analysing AAI results at different levels was the 2018 AAI Analytical report launched at the Stakeholder meeting. Presentations on the AAI in relevant fora, the visualization tool and a Wiki space on the AAI were planned carefully by UNECE project staff. The visualisation tool originally was planned to be prepared within the project with its development foreseen for the year 2018. However, the EC decided to develop the visualization tool themselves in-house. The UNECE was no longer in control of planning this activity. The visualization tool was not completed during the project period; perhaps it should have been planned earlier. Some of the reports currently on the Wiki were not available until towards the end of the project. The evaluator was unable to understand the extent to which social media was used to promote the AAI.

Some interviewees mentioned that more representatives of older persons associations could have been engaged in promoting the AAI. Academics and ‘critical gerontologists’ stress how older persons should be closely involved in determining how active ageing is defined (e.g. Formosa, 2017). The project had a representative (Director) from AGE Platform Europe in the Expert Group. Apart from this NGO representative, greater involvement of older persons’ organisations may have been beneficial to the project. A researcher from Italy reported that involving organisations that represent ‘seniors’ is very important for policy change itself, so targets are set with their involvement. Arguably, such involvement of older person’s organisations is dependent on the particular country developing policy.

**Objective 3:** Activities to provide support to countries were planned using available technical assistance from the Population Unit at UNECE, as well as the Statistical Division of UNECE. Technical support was provided when pilot studies were being undertaken in Romania or Spain for instance, but also to Norway, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Annecy Agglomeration (France). The Guidelines for calculation of the AAI at sub-national level was also designed to provide support. Technical advice was also offered through national or sub-regional seminars held throughout the project.

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<sup>11</sup> This entailed revising methodology description; assessing and stabilizing goalposts; Exploring use of SHARE; the preparing methodology note on usage of proxies.

**Table 1: Design of project activities mapped to project objectives**

<b>10 activities &amp; 12 tasks (T) outlined in the Grant Agreement between the EC DG EMPL and UNECE.</b>	<b>How they relate to the project objectives</b>
<b>1. Calculation of 2016 AAI and 2018 AAI and continuation of the trend analysis</b> T1: Calculation of 2016 AAI and 2018 AAI T2: Implementing specific analysis of AAI results	Objective 1 Objective 3
<b>2. Further geographical extension</b> T3: Calculation of AAI for additional countries	Objective 1
<b>3. Pilot studies of AAI in selected UNECE countries</b> T4: Developing guidelines for calculation of AAI at subnational level	Objective 1, Objective 3 Objective 3
<b>1. Continue methodology fine-tuning</b> T5: Further fine-tuning of methodology	Objective 1
<b>2. Retaining the Expert Group on the AAI</b> T7: Coordinating activities and organising meetings of Expert Group on AAI	Objective 1, Objective 2, Objective 3 Objective 3
<b>3. Holding at least one national or sub regional seminar a year</b> T10: Organising national or sub regional seminars on AAI; and Organising a stakeholder meeting (Brussels) on AAI (as per the Amendment to the Agreement)	Objective 2 Objective 3 Objective 2
<b>4. Organising an international seminar or other activity to involve researchers</b> T9: Holding an international seminar on AAI	Objective 2
<b>5. Organising a side event on AAI during the Ministerial conference on ageing in 2017</b> T11: Organising this side event	Objective 2
<b>6. Further communication and promotion of AAI use</b> T6: Two papers on AAI results and trends T8: Presenting the AAI results	Objective 2 Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 2
<b>7. Visualisation tool (possibly under a separate subcontract)</b> T12: Maintaining a wiki space on AAI and improving AAI visualisation	Objective 2 Objective 2

### **Conclusion: Relevance of project design**

The project was designed around a range of activities, with many tasks overlapping across the three objectives. The objective to enhance the flexibility of the AAI methodology was pertinent, as was the objective to further promote the use of the AAI, although more representatives of older persons associations could have engaged. Activities to support countries (objective 3) was also relevant in the project design.

### **Relevance with regards to gender equality and empowerment of women**

Many academics and practitioners working on ageing, stress how it is important to note that older persons are not a homogenous group, and can be disaggregated by, for instance, sex, age, income and education levels. The AAI clearly shows differences between women and men, however more in-depth analysis is required to understand why differences exist. Three studies were carried out to identify inequalities beyond between men and women. This evaluation noted from interviews that there was a

strong interest in looking at inequalities beyond male and female, for example to try to see how differences may relate to education.<sup>12</sup>

The AAI project worked under the UN gender equality mandate. Whilst the project staff acknowledged the social differences and relations between men and women, (which have variations both within and, between UNECE countries), it is UNECE countries' duty to develop or adjust ageing policy in line with the evidence from AAI gender score differences. Project activities did not specifically appear to be designed with a focus on the empowerment of women, probably because the project had a more upstream focus than working with women on the ground. Empowerment is generally described as an expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001). This evaluation report contains a full sub-section (under *Section 2.2 Effectiveness of the project*) outlining the extent to which gender mainstreaming was incorporated into the project implementation.

### **Relevance of partnerships**

The key partnership for the AAI Project Phase III was the cooperation between the UNECE and the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). UNECE staff worked almost daily with a representative from DG EMPL, collaborating and making joint decisions. Although a donor-grantee relationship, with DG EMPL providing UNECE with extra budgetary funds to work in collaboration with the DG EMPL on the AAI, UNECE also contributed up to \$238,095 worth of resources (including human resources) to the project. The Director of the Statistical Division at UNECE felt that the project was an excellent example of partnership between these two international organisations. The UNECE brought political clout to the project. Although researchers and specific research centres across Europe hold the expertise to develop the AAI methodology, international organisations such as UNECE and the EU can make the AAI politically relevant, and in this circumstance, integrated it into official documents. Multilateral agencies bring prestige, are listened to by many governments, and can be the intersection between policy and research.

An EU Agency for the improvement of living and working conditions Eurofound, helped with data from one of their key surveys, the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). The Joint Research Centre within the EC took on the task alone of developing the visualization tool (Activity 10 in Table 1 above). Some interviewed indicated that it was unlikely that their government would have taken on board calculating the AAI at the subnational level, without the EC/UNECE status behind the index, indicating the importance of these international organisations.

Although DG EMPL was a collaboration partner, the evaluation did not find that the EU consistently followed through a focus on the AAI in other work on healthy or positive ageing. For example, a scoping paper on transforming the future of ageing in 2018 does not mention linkages to the AAI or the AAI domains, nor the UNECE.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, if we consider employment indicators, another United Nations agency in Geneva, the International Labour Organization (ILO) mention 'Active

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<sup>12</sup> According to the 2018 AAI Analytical Report, men have higher results in all EU countries with the exception of Estonia, Finland and France where women's overall AAI scores exceed were slightly higher than men. Between 2008 and 2016 the overall increase in the active ageing score for women has exceeded that of men in most countries (with the exception of Austria, Hungary, Malta, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal), indicating a narrowing of the gender gap over time. The largest gender gaps were in employment, given men's higher employment rates. In Spanish regions, physical components (life expectancy, mental health) are higher among women, but educational training and their capacity to engage in activities related to information and communication technologies predispose men in a better position.

<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/index.cfm?pg=ageing>

Ageing' in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 108<sup>th</sup> session in June 2019.<sup>14</sup>

Partnerships were also significant within the UNECE itself. Work across different ECE sub-programmes was very much encouraged and appreciated by the UNECE. Internally within the UNECE, collaboration between three different units within the Statistical Division of UNECE was effective (the Population Unit, the Economic Statistics Unit, and the Social and Demographic Statistics Section) and continued from earlier phases. The latter provided advice on statistical solutions for the aggregation of indicators into the index. Indeed, collaboration with the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit was also good, particularly around the SDGs (rather than on gender).

Nationally, partnerships were created between ministries who deal with ageing and national statistical offices. A knock-on effect of some national seminars was that those working in national statistical officers got to know those working in relevant ministries, where previously they did not collaborate.<sup>15</sup>

The project also sustained, and in some cases, created new partnerships with academic institutes concerned with ageing (see Table 2 below). There were no specific comments or criticisms of these partnerships during the evaluation. The partnership with the University of Southampton ceased earlier than expected due to the lead researcher leaving the University, and the University did not have the staff to replace him nor a team who could implement the tasks envisaged assigned in the terms of reference.

**Table 2: Summary of partnerships with other entities**

<b>UNECE partnerships with institutional consultants</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
The Technical University of Dortmund, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a study to calculate AAI for specific population groups and analyse results</li> </ul>
Warsaw School of Economics, Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a study to calculate AAI for specific population groups and analyse results</li> </ul>
The National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing, Ancona, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of a study to calculate AAI for specific population groups and analyse results</li> </ul>
The University of Southampton, United Kingdom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started to carry out a broad range of research activities</li> </ul>
The University of the Basque Country, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued outstanding research tasks from University of Southampton from December 2018</li> <li>• Co-organised the second international seminar on AAI</li> </ul>
Government of Biscay, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-organised the second international seminar on AAI</li> </ul>
Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-organiser of the second international seminar</li> <li>• Helped to publish a special issue of the Journal of population ageing in 2017 devoted to AAI including papers from the first international seminar on AAI<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>
Ministries in Poland, Romania and Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborated with UNECE to host national seminars on the AAI</li> </ul>
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country offices (in Belarus, the Republic of Moldova)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between UNECE and UNFPA strong on the ground</li> </ul>

<sup>14</sup> See Section II (v) in the Declaration. <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/mission-and-objectives/centenary-declaration/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>15</sup> according to the author of the Guidelines on calculation of AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level

<sup>16</sup> <https://rd.springer.com/journal/12062/10/1>

**Conclusion: Relevance of partnerships**

A range of good institutional partnership was in place with researchers focused on ageing. Partnerships with other entities seemed to run smoothly apart from an unexpected early exit of collaboration with the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom, due to the movement of one researcher to another location, indicating perhaps the need to ensure that institutional arrangements are not led by one person alone, but others engage, and their capacities are utilized or built.

Collaboration between the EU and UNECE was strong and provided prestige to the project. Although a member of a civil society organisation on ageing was represented in the Expert Group, the evaluation concluded that more partnerships could have been forged with civil society groups representing the elderly. The project presented a good example of cross-sectoral cooperation and work between two UNECE sub-programmes – Statistical sub-programme and Population, which also involved statistical experts and representatives of national statistical offices in this work.

**2.2 Effectiveness**

The evaluation considered how the AAI project attained the objectives outlined in the Grant Agreement, and as much as possible assessed the extent to which the project achieved impact, mainly on policies for ageing. It was noted by many interviewed (both internally in UNECE and externally), that the AAI project had clearly defined goals from the beginning. Apart from the development of a ‘visualization tool’ (Activity 10), all tasks and activities were completed, as outlined in Table 3 below. How these tasks and activities led to the achievement of project objectives is subsequently discussed (by project objective).

**Table 3: Achievement of project objectives**

<b>Activities &amp; tasks (T) outlined in the Grant Agreement between EC DG EMPL and UNECE</b>	<b>Linked objectives</b>	<b>Details reported in UNECE final project report 2019</b>
<b>1. Calculation of 2016 AAI and 2018 AAI and continuation of the trend analysis</b> T1: Calculation of 2016 AAI and 2018 AAI T2: Implementing specific analysis of AAI results	Objective 1 Objective 3	The UNECE Wiki has published the 2016 and 2018 results Country reports from Germany, Poland and Italy published
<b>2. Further geographical extension</b> T3: Calculation of AAI for additional countries	Objective 1	Results from Iceland, Norway, Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia are available on the Wiki
<b>3. Pilot studies of AAI in selected UNECE countries</b> T4: Developing guidelines for calculation of AAI at subnational level	Objective 1 Objective 3	Pilot studies for Romania and Spain are published Guidelines are published on the Wiki
<b>4. Continue methodology fine-tuning</b> T5: Further fine-tuning of methodology	Objective 1	This entailed revising methodology description; assessing and stabilising goalposts; Exploring use of SHARE; the preparing methodology note on usage of proxies.

Activities & tasks (T) outlined in the Grant Agreement between EC DG EMPL and UNECE	Linked objectives	Details reported in UNECE final project report 2019
		<p>The methodology explanation was revised on the wiki, with a note prepared by the University of the Basque Country.</p> <p>Note summarising the work on the goalposts by the University of the Basque Country completed.</p> <p>Note summarising the attempt to use SHARE as the single source for AAI calculation by the University of the Basque Country prepared.</p>
<p><b>5. Retaining the Expert Group on the AAI</b> T7: Coordinating activities and organising meetings of the Expert Group on AAI</p>	<p>Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 3</p>	<p>6<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Oct 2016 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in Oct 2017 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in Sept 2018 9<sup>th</sup> in June 2019</p>
<p><b>6. Holding at least one national or sub regional seminar a year</b> T10: Organising national or sub regional seminars on AAI; and Organising a stakeholder meeting (Brussels) on AAI (as per the Amendment to the Agreement)</p>	<p>Objective 2  Objective 3  Objective 2</p>	<p>Completed  Completed</p>
<p><b>7. Organising an international seminar or other activity to involve researchers</b> T9: Holding an international seminar on AAI</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>	<p>The Second international seminar on AAI in Bilbao, Spain, took place on 27–28 September 2018. The seminar attracted 144 participants from 37 countries. UNECE jointly with the DG EMPL, the University of the Basque Country, Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, with the support of the Government of Biscay (Spain) organised the seminar.</p>
<p><b>8. Organising a side event on AAI during the Ministerial conference on ageing in 2017</b> T11: Organising this side event</p>	<p>Objective 2</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p><b>9. Further communication and promotion of AAI use</b> T6: Two papers on AAI results and trends  T8: Presenting the AAI results</p>	<p>Objective 2  Objective 1 Objective 2 Objective 2</p>	<p>A note summarising 2010–2018 AAI results was prepared by the University of the Basque Country and is available from the wiki</p> <p>The 2018 Analytical Report is published on the wiki. It was launched at the Stakeholder meeting in Brussels, 17 June 2019.</p>
<p><b>10. Visualisation tool (possibly under a separate subcontract).</b> T12: Maintaining a wiki space on AAI and improving AAI visualisation</p>	<p>Objective 2  Objective 2</p>	<p>On-going and undertaken by EU Joint Research Centre due in November 2019</p> <p>On-going and updated at the end of the project</p>

### The extent to which the objectives of the project were achieved

In a survey administered to AAI Project Stakeholders, respondents were asked to give their view on the most important achievements of the AAI, from the past 2-3 years. Many listed multiple achievements.

The 72 responses were categorized as they related to the objectives of the project. These, along with interviews and results from the AAI project documents reviewed, are outlined in this section

### **Objective 1: AAI methodology development, increased flexibility and wider implementation**

A range of different achievements regarding Objective 1 were noted when content analysing interviews for the evaluation and in analysing survey responses. Evaluations results were summarized and categorized into points that related to: i) clarifying the concept of AAI, including advantages and concerns in relation to the AAI original methodology<sup>17</sup>; ii) developing the methodology further in particular, efforts by the project to ensure calculations could be made at subnational levels; and iii) extending geographical coverage.

#### **i. Methodology / AAI concept**

The four AAI domains<sup>18</sup> did not change during the project, nor did their weightings. The 22 indicators which make up the four domains did not change in their importance. They remained as components of the Active Ageing Index, although some slight changes were made, following changes in questions used in underlying surveys (e.g. EQLS).

The lead Researcher on the AAI (from 2012), outlined how aspects of the methodology did not change in the way researchers and academics would intellectually expect change. The Expert Group decided to stick to the original methodology, even with feedback and new insights on these aspects from numerous presentations and comments. The reason for not making major modifications was to be able to measure across time, compare countries, and monitor change. This aspect, which many policymakers value, was considered more important than embarking on something new and adjusting the original index too much. Eighteen respondents to the survey made positive comments regarding the further development of the AAI methodology, such as work on suitable indicators, or keeping the approach basic and relatively simple. Nine survey respondents thought the most important achievements of the AAI in the past years related to clarifying the concept of Active Ageing, in (as one respondent stated) a way that lends itself to be a comparable statistical measurement that is straightforward to interpret. Others mentioned providing a *“holistic picture of ageing”*, promoting a *“multi-dimensional view of ageing”*, and *“advancing knowledge regarding determinants of active ageing”*.

Depending on where you are situated (a researcher<sup>19</sup> or a policymaker), this aspect of the AAI project is a failure, or an advantage. Many noted that the UNECE and the EU were not willing to further develop the AAI in its conceptual interpretation of active ageing. A researcher from Austria reiterated that for researchers, flexibility and experimentation are important.

According to one author of the Guidelines on calculation of AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level, if regional attempts at calculating the AAI are too flexible and modify too many indicators, although valuable for policymaking, it should be clarified that this is not actually the ‘Active Ageing Index’ per se, but an abbreviated version. Direct comparisons with the national level calculations cannot be made. This interviewee stressed how it is vital to preserve the structure of the AAI. Yet others stressed that certain AAI indicators may not be as important as they were in 2012 and others could be added. Conceptual criticisms that relate to the Active Ageing Index itself were beyond the scope of the

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<sup>17</sup> Going back a decade or so, the index was developed after the economic crisis of 2007/8, where employment was a major issue. The index was built within the context of policy discourse following this crisis, where many member countries wished to expand the labour market, address the issue of people retiring early and extend working life.

<sup>18</sup> The domains are employment; participation in society; independent, health and secure living; and capacity and enabling environment for active ageing

<sup>19</sup> Research involves developing a concept, getting feedback, revisiting, and further development.



evaluation, but in some ways relate to Objective 1, further developing the AAI methodology to enhance its flexibility. These criticisms are summarised and outlined in Box 5 in Annex 10.

## **ii. Calculating the AAI at subnational level**

The subnational level usage of the index is an achievement during this project timeframe. With the help of UNECE hired consultants, pilot studies were carried out at the subnational level in two countries: Romania and Spain. Sample sizes from EQLS and the European Social Survey (ESS) were not adequate for reliable calculations for Spanish regions, thus, data from different studies were used for 8 out of the 22 indicators. Similarly, in Romania, two ESS indicators were replaced. Other subnational level attempts were mentioned in interviews, without details of when exactly they were conducted:

- Italy conducted the survey at subnational level.
- Germany tried also to implement the AAI at subnational level via Dortmund University calculating the index for a number of regions rather than all of them (before Phase III of the AAI project).
- A Researcher from Austria stressed how at subnational level methods are not comparable. Data is not representative.

Eighteen respondents (out of 72) made positive comments in the survey about extending the AAI to the subnational level. Typical comments indicated that Phase III achievements were exploring the AAI application at the subnational, regional and city levels; or inspiring or starting elaborations of AAI at subnational level.

The project developed subnational guidelines for the calculation of the index, see Annex 11 and Box 6. Although useful, they came quite late. Some country teams were unable to use them during the project period. However, the Guidelines are aimed at a broader audience than immediate stakeholders from the AAI Project Phase III, and were developed to help others calculate the AAI in the future. Users interviewed reported the guidelines to be clear and useful in computing the index, containing a lot of information on how to calculate the AAI at subnational level. The only issue reported that may limit their use at subnational level is locating representative data. Sample sizes from some surveys are not representative as they are designed as national surveys, rather than for using samples at subnational level. Another factor is the quality of national statistics, and the ability of researchers to use good proxy indicators.

## **iii. Using the AAI outside the EU**

Extending the AAI outside the EU was very much facilitated politically by the UNECE. When the UNECE Working Group on Ageing agreed to use 22 indicators of the AAI in reporting on the third cycle of the MIPAA<sup>20</sup>, 56 member states were asked to submit data for 22 AAI indicators for three data points (2005, 2010 and 2015). UNECE did not calculate the index, but countries attempted to provide indicators. Data for the EU countries, plus Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, i.e. those with all 22 indicators, came from the AAI project.<sup>21</sup>

UNECE organised two workshops, one during this phase of the project (in Minsk, June 2016, which was actually reported on under the project Phase II) to fill data gaps. The Republic of Moldova (amongst other countries such as Belarus, Kyrgyzstan) took part in workshops provided data using sources available to them. Workshops got into the detail of data analysis using excel sheets, graphs, and

<sup>20</sup> The UNECE synthesis report on MIPAA implementation is produced every five years.

<sup>21</sup> See Statistical Annex to Chapter VI *Synthesis Report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the ECE region between 2012 and 2017* in UNECE (2017) Proceedings of the 2017 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing ( <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48046>)

analytical methods to cross tabulate. UNECE also helped suggesting proxy indicators for AAI indicators that were not available outside the EU and encouraged countries to calculate the AAI. UNECE carried out AAI calculations for the Republic of North Macedonia.

The extension of the AAI to non-EU countries was mentioned as an achievement of the project in 11 survey responses. Comments from survey respondents indicated that opening the AAI to other countries and extension to countries in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Socialist republics, was positive. As a Serbian survey respondent stated there was an “*increased number of regions and countries which participate in AAI implementation*”. Specific uses of the AAI outside the EU noted in interviews and survey responses include:

- The Republic of Moldova worked with the UNECE Population Unit to revise the AAI results obtained in 2015 and were keen to do calculations and comparisons between urban and rural areas. These differences were demonstrated in their AAI report.
- The national statistical office in the Republic of Serbia, have recently sent UNECE a new wave of AAI calculations. The AAI has not been used widely yet, but the statistical office plan to present the idea of AAI and to compare AAI results for Serbia with the EU or with individual countries in the rankings. An official believes that this would be the beginning of familiarizing the general public with AAI and its use.
- Following a request from the Ministry of Health, UNECE worked with Norway’s statistical office to calculate the AAI.
- Through UNFPA, UNECE also supported Azerbaijan in preliminary consultations on identifying data gaps.
- The Russian Federation has undertaken national calculation without UNECE support.

### **Conclusion: Effectiveness of activities towards Objective 1**

The AAI project provided a methodology that in reality, represented ‘*a ready to implement structure*’ to provide evidence that could frame policy aimed at the older citizens. Slight modifications were made to the overall index (e.g. based on feedback to slightly modify the aggregation method). This evaluation can conclude that any changes did not necessarily mean the index improved, rather calculations improved. Although rich in experiences from countries who applied the AAI at subnational level, the Guidelines for AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level came late in the Project, but with promotion, could be better used to enable wider implementation of this tool to measure active ageing. A subnational measurement using a modified index, should explicitly state that it is not the complete AAI, but an ‘AAI light’ or a cultural adaptation of the original index.

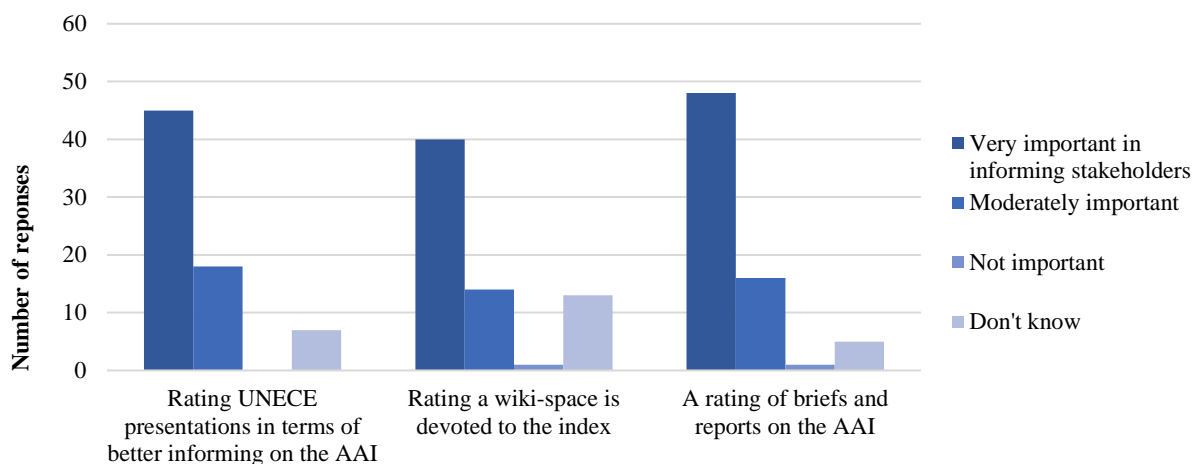
### **Objective 2: Contributions to the increased use of the AAI for ageing policy monitoring**

During the project period, the AAI was presented at various fora, an international conference was held, and a stakeholder meeting took place and also various national seminars. Some members of the Expert Group (under the project) promoted the AAI in their countries. Certain types of research institutions played a role in ensuring the wider recognition of the AAI as a tool for policy monitoring on ageing-related areas. The project improved the knowledge management function during the period under evaluation. UNECE has been publishing information on AAI using the wiki-space developed for this purpose and used its Twitter account. A visualization tool is still under development by the EU. Interviewees and survey respondents (72) reported and rated how the project contributed to different

aspects of Objective 2 (i) below, followed by a review of project activities with regard to ii) seminars and events; (iii) promotions; and (iv) reports produced.

### i. Rating project activities towards Objective 2

Figure 5 below presents a summary of how survey respondents ranked the importance of project activities to disseminate information on the AAI. Presentations, the wiki space and briefs and reports on the AAI were all ranked as more or less as equally important in informing stakeholders. The briefs and reports were ranked marginally more frequently as very important for informing stakeholders.



**Figure 5: Activities toward information dissemination**

## Rate AAI project activities towards the dissemination of information for wider recognition of AAI

### ii. Presentations, seminars, high level events

Presentations on AAI have been regularly given at relevant events involving policymakers. Annex 8 contains details of presentations, seminars and high-level events where the AAI was discussed. At many events, countries with good statistics presented results, and other countries were able to learn how to deepen their analysis for different sub-categories of population (e.g. those with different levels of education, or by gender).

Survey respondents were asked to rate a range of planned activities organised through the project in terms of whether they provided insight into the active ageing situation either in their country or internationally. Table 4 below shows the results from 72 survey respondents.

Some survey respondents provided detailed comments. For example, a few mentioned that these were great events with good discussions on the use of AAI about ageing policies at country/sub-national level events, which is very much needed for local persons, and local policymakers. The events were well organised, awards and poster sessions had good ideas. The second International Seminar in Bilbao (see Box 2 in Annex 8) connected a range of related initiatives and insights (World Bank, OECD, WHO etc.) and explored the AAI application at different scales and outside Europe. Events provided good insight into how AAI is being used, for what purposes countries are using it, and how can it be useful going forward, even with the project being wound down. A couple of respondents stated that the Stakeholder meeting in Brussels was very useful in terms of promoting the AAI. Another stated that this meeting broadened the view on the need to include more qualitative data in measuring ageing. On the negative side, one respondent stated there is a marketing problem. Another stated that it is necessary to organise workshops for different levels of policymakers so they can understand how the AAI can be used in policy implementation and monitoring.

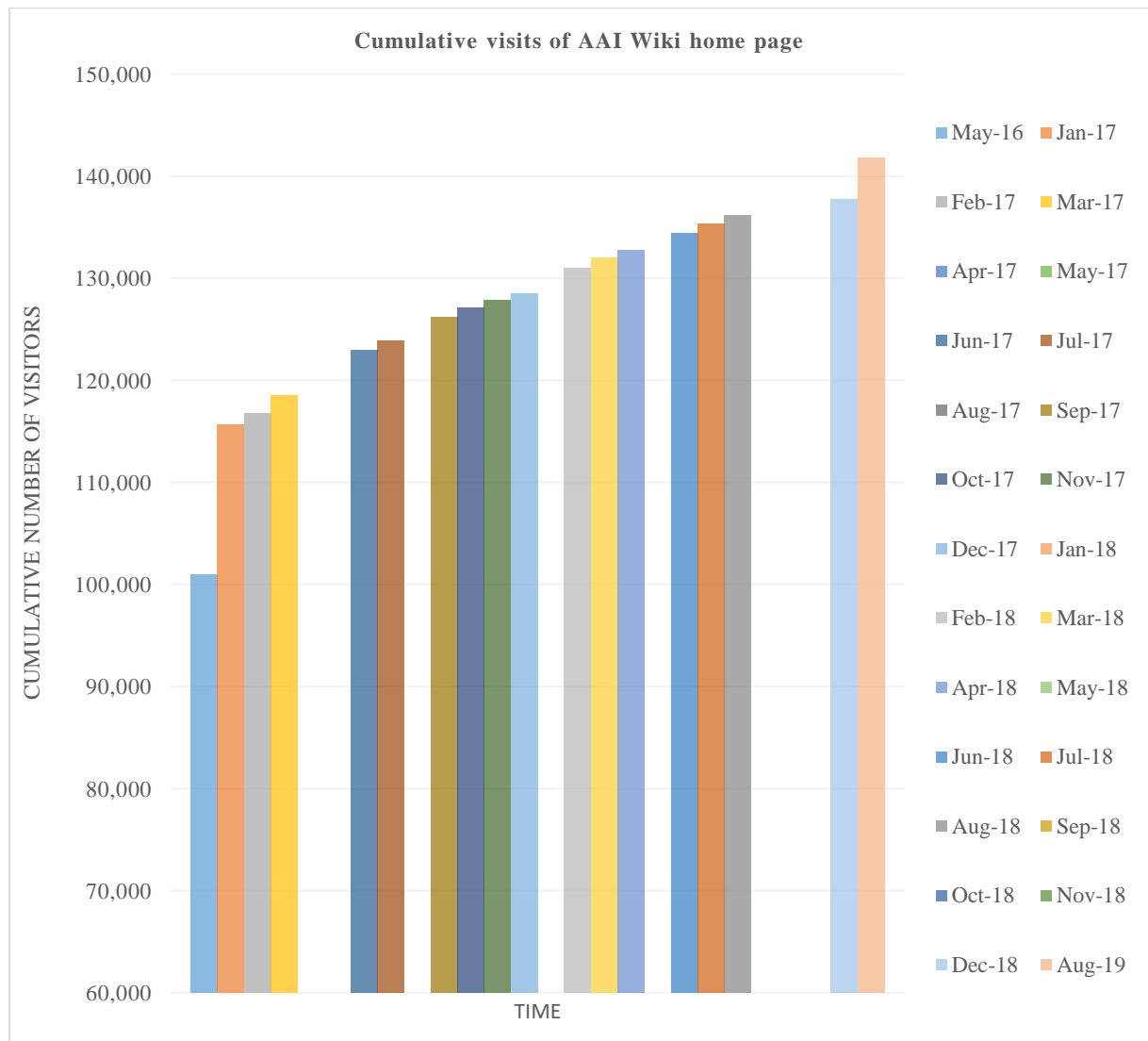
**Table 4: Rating events and activities carried out by the AAI project**

Event organised through the AAI Project Phase III	Rated the event as helpful in providing insight into active ageing situation	Rated the event as somewhat helpful, or did not know
The June 2019 Stakeholder Meeting on the AAI, Brussels.	Roughly half of respondents (32 out of 65) said that the June 2019 Stakeholder meeting on the AAI in Brussels contributed a great deal towards providing insight into the active ageing situation.	21 of the respondents stated they did not know, while 10 responded that they believed it somewhat contributed to providing insight.
The Side Event at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, on the 21st of September 2017 in Lisbon.	16% responded that the Side Event in Lisbon contributed a great deal (10 of 61), this figure was similar to the number of respondents who felt it contributed somewhat (9 of 61 respondents).	The majority of respondents (over fifty per cent) said they did not know if the Ministerial conference in Lisbon contributed to providing insight into the AAI situation (39 of 61 responses)
The Second International Seminar on AAI in Bilbao, Spain 27-28 September 2018.	The majority or 41 of 66 respondents thought that the international seminar in Bilbao contributed a great deal to providing insight into the AAI situation.	11 believed it somewhat contributed. No respondents believed it provided very little insight.
The National Seminar in Italy on the 11th of May 2017. The National Seminar in Poland on the 18th of June 2018. The National Seminar in Romania on the 30th of May 2019.	<i>Note: Many survey respondents would not have attended these.</i>	A large majority of respondents (52 out of 61) said they did not know whether these Seminars in Italy, Poland, or Romania provided insight.
	<b>The Event helped to promote the use of the AAI</b>	<b>Less helpful in promoting use of AAI</b>
The June 2019 Stakeholder Meeting on the AAI, Brussels.	Two thirds of respondents said that the meeting helped promote the use of the AAI to a great extent (29 out of 43).	22 out of the 63 respondents said they did not know, while 12 believed it promoted the AAI somewhat.
The Side Event at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, on the 21st of September 2017 in Lisbon.	8 responded reported that it promoted the AAI to a great extent	40 out of 61 respondents stated they did not know if the conference helped promote the use of the AAI, while 10 responded it did somewhat.
The Second International Seminar on AAI in Bilbao, Spain 27-28 September 2018.	Over half of respondents stated that the second international seminar in Bilbao contributed to a great extent towards promoting the use of the AAI (35 out of 66).	13 stated it promoted the use of the AAI somewhat, while 16 said they did not know.
The National Seminar in Italy on the 11th of May 2017, The National Seminar in Poland on the 18th of June 2018, The National Seminar in Romania on the 30th of May 2019.	<i>Note: Many survey respondents would not have attended these.</i>	A large majority of respondents (roughly 50) said they did not know whether the National Seminar in Italy, Poland, or Romania helped promote the use of the AAI.

**iii. Promotions and information dissemination methods**

The AAI project had a communications and visibility plan, with specific objectives. All the planned activities took place under this plan (except the visualization tool). The project was expected to keep records on different aspects such as the number of additional countries/regions that compute the AAI, and the numbers of participants at organized meetings. The Wiki-space on AAI has been continually maintained and updated with new publications, papers, information about meetings etc. The steady increase in visits to the Wiki-space is indicated in the Figure 6 below.

A researcher acknowledged that although the guidelines (for calculations of AAI) are available electronically on UNECE Wiki, nowadays we cannot passively offer guidelines or tools. Regional and national governments need to know the Guidelines and tools exist. These Guidelines have to be actively proposed to policymakers. Short briefs are also useful — the project prepared a two-page leaflet on AAI, which was disseminated on the Wiki, and as a hard copy at every event related to ageing the UNECE attended. It is not known where or how widely the leaflet was disseminated by the EC.



**Figure 6: Wiki usage**

In order to pursue a more visible dissemination and communication strategy for publicizing the AAI concept and methodological tool, the UNECE population unit planned to engage a contractor to develop

professional visualization tools for the index (an interactive tool for presenting AAI results). Because the EC had the expertise in their Research Centre, the EC decided to develop the visualization tool ‘in-house’. The UNECE was happy to agree, in particular because the UNECE cannot host such a visualization tool. More specifically, DG EMPL approached the Joint Research Centre to start this work, which although started, has not yet been completed.<sup>22</sup> The visualization web-tool is expected to be launched towards the end of 2019. Taking on board the visualization tool indicates that the EC are committed to promoting the AAI, via their Joint Research Centre (JRC).

#### iv. Reports produced by the project

UNECE staff worked to increase the use of the AAI. For example:

- The Statistics Division in UNECE included the AAI in an Annex on their publication *Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators (2018)*. The AAI is included as one of 7 examples in these Guidelines.
- The June 2019 Analytical Report on the AAI demonstrates various possibilities to use the AAI tool as a practical support in monitoring experiences and progress in the implementation of active ageing policies (see Box 3, Annex 8).

Table 5 below summarises comments on the AAI project achievements from survey respondents, as they relate to Objective 2. Issues raised as important for Objective 2 by the 72 survey respondents included assisting policymaking or policymakers; providing an actual way to measure ageing as well as providing the actual data on ageing; allowing for discussion on ageing, raising awareness; and having a tool that can provide comparisons and monitor trends. Achievements related to policy are quite significant representing over a third of survey respondents. Only four survey respondents mentioned that highlighting inequalities as an achievement. As one survey respondent stated, the index is an example of excellent tool that indicates the need for further analysis.

**Table 5: Categorization of AAI project achievements as they relate to Objective 2**

Categorisation of survey responses as they related to AAI project Objective 2	# responses that indicated this issue
Achievement related to policy, such as helping in policymaking, or using it to convince policymakers that tools like AAI are needed or how it provides an <b>evidence base for policy</b> .	28
The use of the AAI for <b>monitoring</b> ageing trends	11
<b>Comparison</b> between countries as an important achievement, such as making it possible to show differences inside countries and between countries	8
The project increased <b>ageing-related discussions</b> and raised awareness about the elderly, ageing, or measures of active ageing	8
<b>Data generated</b> by the project was an achievement	7
<b>AAI tools</b> provided through the project including the AAI tools itself	7
The <b>promotion</b> of the AAI as an important achievement of the project	7
An achievement was highlighting <b>gender based gaps</b> , or <b>social inequalities</b> .	4

<sup>22</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en>

## **Conclusion: Effectiveness of activities towards Objective 2**

UNECE staff were great ‘champions’ promoting the use of the AAI Index. The UNECE Population Unit made efforts at stakeholder meetings, international seminars and workshops to promote the use of the AAI. These events allowed researchers as well as others to learn more about the scope and flexibility of the AAI. The AAI project conferences in Brussels and in Bilbao were both useful for stimulating people to use the AAI.

Many interviewees felt it is up to each country to use the AAI in their policy process and ageing monitoring, other felt it was up to the UNECE or the EU to politically push the Index. The UNECE can influence national statistical officers to collect data ideally required in the index. The EC can request countries to provide them with calculations. As might be expected, it is also important to consult and involve the national central statistics offices. Their participation in different workshops proved crucial during the project.

A key question was how to generate interest amongst subnational authorities. The UNECE cannot directly reach this level. A number of smaller projects were initiated to demonstrate what could be done at this level. National seminars provided insight into the ageing situation in Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain.

Although the AAI project put in place many activities to ensure a wider recognition of the AAI as a useful flexible tool for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy on ageing-related areas, the project fell short in that it did not live up to the expectation that EC policymakers would use it to identify appropriate policies or use the AAI as a monitoring tool (even with some good examples). It would appear that the best way to reach policymakers is to provide good examples that demonstrate active ageing policies in place. The project did not share good information on appropriate policies that are working, indeed, this was not an objective of the project.

To really connect with public policymaking, it could be argued that the Index perhaps needed to mature a bit more. The Index has to be seen as robust for evidence-based policy, before policymakers will rely on it. Visuals nowadays are very important to reach policymakers. The Visualisation tool being developed by the EC Joint Research Centre will be important in this regard, and provide a space to demonstrate. Although both the UNECE and the EC collaborators worked hard to bring attention to the AAI, it could be argued that the EC is missing a high-level champion internally.

## **Objective 3: Support provided to countries**

The third objective of the AAI project was to provide support to countries in their attempt to apply the AAI for their needs at both national and subnational levels. Consultations to some countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Western Balkans and Central Asia were provided upon request, as well as to the EU members at national and subnational levels. Additional seminars and conferences provided opportunities to share experiences and learn from expert researchers. For example, consultations with the Norwegian national statistical office.

Ten survey respondents commented on the good support provided by UNECE as an achievement of the AAI project. Many interviewees commented on the dedication of the original lead researcher and UNECE staff, and how committed they were to ensuring support was provided. Some examples of comments include:

- UNECE staff worked hard, gave quick, useful and consistent feedback, and overall were supportive.

- Support from UNECE was excellent, with staff always willing to respond quickly to queries.
- Technically, the UNECE project team helped a lot.
- Staff, and consultants (which included researchers from different countries) were a real resource to countries, and very helpful. They had good knowledge and a good sense of what the index could do.
- Great support received from the UNECE (Republic of Moldova), supporting them at every level.
- The UNECE team were always on hand to respond to queries.
- A lot of support came directly from the UNECE, such as important comments on drafts, providing new information and so on.
- The EU provided useful opinions and was able to advise on data comparability within the European countries.

Ten survey respondents (out of 72) reported that an important achievement of the AAI project was linking or learning from researchers, the academic community on ageing, or those interested in measuring active ageing. A researcher from Italy felt that the development of the guidelines for calculations of AAI at a subnational level, was a great achievement and formed part of the support provided to countries. Even though these Guidelines could be considered a normative approach to using the AAI, the Guidelines advise on how to adapt the AAI to regions own needs and to different country contexts. On the other hand, a national focal point on ageing, thought that connecting their national statistical office with UNECE staff and researchers was difficult.

### **Conclusion: Effectiveness of activities towards Objective 3**

Evidently, support from the UNECE, the EU, the Expert Group and contracted researchers were well appreciated by AAI project beneficiaries. Because it was easier to calculate at the subnational level in some countries rather than others, certain countries are likely to have received more support than others. It can be concluded that the project did the best it could, given the available human resources.

### **Use of the AAI by various stakeholders**

Many engaged in ageing related areas find the AAI results useful and relevant. A government can try to monitor ageing trends using the index as a starting point. Thus, it seems that the AAI was used as a monitoring tool, but also to demonstrate cross-country comparisons in active ageing scores, or to investigate further gaps in active ageing. Ultimately, the AAI results should feed into ageing policy.

The extent to which the AAI is being used was at the forefront of all interviews and also in survey questions. Two thirds (48/72) of survey respondents provided examples of how the AAI contributed to policy. The results are presented in the Table 6. Notably, Italy and Spain were recorded by survey respondents most frequently for their use of the AAI. Some countries used the AAI to formulate their policies (e.g. Slovenia, Bulgaria used AAI for structuring their ageing strategies). Some good examples of the AAI being calculated as a tool for policy analytical work, and policy monitoring come from Malta, Slovenia and Italy, according to the lead Researcher on the AAI.

Examples of how the project enhanced national policy formulation on population ageing in selected UNECE countries are provided in the Table below. Table 6 provides examples from the survey undertaken for this evaluation on the use of the AAI to enhance national policy formulation on population ageing. Views also came from interviewees and the documentation review.



**Table 6: Examples of AAI contributing to countries policies**

Country referenced + # respondents	Example of AAI contributing to country policies
Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistics providing available information given to the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, for policies of ageing.</li> </ul>
Austria (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of AAI for monitoring MIPAA and RIS achievements and national strategies.</li> </ul>
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is underway to introduce the AAI methodology.</li> </ul>
Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy prepared a National Strategy on Active Ageing, in March 2019 and the AAI will be the tool to measure its achievements.</li> </ul>
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning to use AAI for comparisons of the counties.</li> </ul>
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Round table on active ageing took place to discuss different measures and possibilities to promote an active ageing.</li> </ul>
Ireland (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was referenced in the National Positive Ageing Strategy.</li> <li>Integration with another survey in Ireland - that is underpinning policy development in relation to age-friendly housing (joint policy statement from ministry for Health and ministry of environment).</li> </ul>
Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping program developers as a result of international comparison.</li> <li>The AAI to be presented in September 2019 in a Health policy conference about inequalities in active ageing. An international comparison will be published in a professional journal in Israel.</li> </ul>
Italy (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The active ageing tool at sub-national level has stimulated public debate and the update of the regional regulatory provision to promote a different way of ageing.</li> <li>The AAI is a monitoring tool mentioned in a regional law in Italy on the promotion of active ageing (Law of the Marche Region 1/2019). The AAI is a monitoring tool used within another on-going national intervention project to build a national active ageing strategy in Italy, funded by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.</li> <li>The AAI is starting to be used as a monitoring tool by some Regional Governments developing active ageing laws and interventions - or adopted as one of the main tools to monitor progress in AA policies adopted at regional level.</li> </ul>
Poland (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AAI was included in a strategic document of the Prime Minister (on ageing), and noted by a respondent, that there is a need for the Department of Senior Policy to have this tool.</li> <li>The AAI 'ready to implement structure' was used for local policy measures in Poland.</li> <li>The AAI results contributed in the design of policies directly related to the labour market and to social participation of older persons. Some policies were introduced to limit early-retirement or establish special funds for projects aimed at supporting learning activities and increasing social and voluntary participation among citizens aged 60+.</li> </ul> <p>It was also mentioned that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decision of the national government on which region should get how much money for programs to enhance active ageing was influenced by the regional values of the AAI and its components.</li> </ul>
Republic of Moldova (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AAI results were used in the elaboration of the Action Plan on the implementation of the Road Map for mainstreaming ageing in policies (or active ageing) (2018-2021), approved by the Government Decision no. 1477 from December 20, 2017.</li> <li>A small Grants Program is dedicated to supporting and promoting active ageing in the Republic of Moldova.</li> <li>The National Prize for the Elders '<i>for an active life at any age</i>', is a competition that started on July 26, 2019. Competition for the selection of the NGOs for organizing the testing of work-friendly practices for the elderly in 30 companies / institutions in</li> </ul>

Country referenced + # respondents	Example of AAI contributing to country policies
	<p>the Republic of Moldova in (2019). In March 2019, there were 6 winning NGOs that will promote/implemented various activities for the elderly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small grants programme for older entrepreneurs to start businesses (see also Box 4).</li> </ul>
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results of the AAI at national level had been used by the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and the World Bank in drafting the diagnostic analysis and the national strategy on elderly protection and active ageing, approved by a Government decision.</li> <li>• The results of the recent pilot project for calculating AAI at regional level, so far have only been disseminated during the AAI seminar in Bucharest in May 2019.</li> </ul>
Russia (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AAI was used as a normative model and as an example to develop recommendations for improving strategy of socio-economic development in the Tomsk Region.</li> <li>• The AAI was used in Russia for the federal strategy (to design interventions for independent and secure living).</li> </ul>
Spain (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing regional indices and some public plans has included AAI as a reference tool. Mention made of Madrid, Biscay, Bilbao, Navarre. Policymakers look at AAI and, when the Index results is low, start action to increase it.</li> <li>• In the Basque Country it was the tool used to measure the implementation of the Basque Active Ageing Strategy 2015-2020. The lower employment rate of older age groups has focused the attention on the conditions of elderly people in the labour market and how the extension of the working lives should be encouraged.</li> <li>• Biscay officials visited Nacka in Sweden in 2015 to learn about some indicators, and adapted its policy after that visit.</li> <li>• In 2016 the Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy of Navarre was launched. The AAI was calculated, the results communicated to the press, and most the indicators of the index were selected as outcome indicators to evaluate the Action Plan.</li> </ul>
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to a non-Slovenia respondent, the national Strategy on Ageing in Slovenia was developed following the AAI framework.</li> </ul>
Turkey (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies on active ageing have been initiated</li> <li>• Calculating AAI at subnational level was entered into strategic plans for older populations. Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services is giving importance to this issue.</li> </ul>

### Interview comments on the use of the AAI

Interview comments collected during the evaluation on the uses of the AAI are contained in Annex 5. Many found the AAI useful as a monitoring tool; AAI results are used widely to demonstrate the relative score of a country; and to synthesize ageing information. Interestingly, countries tended to be more interested in the results of the tool when they came close to the bottom in ranking. The Survey asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the AAI is used by different stakeholders and for what it is being used (producing evidence; advocacy work; or for methodological discussion on ageing). Results are presented in a range of Figures in Annex 5. In summary, those engaged in research on ageing use the AAI the most for ageing policy monitoring, for analytical work and for methodological discussions on ageing. Policymakers were rated as only ‘somewhat using’ the AAI index. Those engaged in advocacy work on ageing did not appear to use the AAI to a great extent. Most survey respondents did not know whether EC staff used the Index. The extent to which studies on inequalities in three countries (Germany, Italy, Poland) and the development of Guidelines are used are outlined in Annex 7 with no significant findings from the survey.

### **Conclusion: Uses of the AAI by various stakeholders**

Some examples of success are evident (Italy, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Spain,). Extending the methodology to the UNECE countries and requesting them to report against it was positively received, and may have helped increase its use. Policies and practices change slowly - seeing and feeling their results and impacts can take a long time. Sometimes evidence only reach the policy level leading up to a crisis. For example, if ageing became an emergency issue because of a burden on public budgets.

### **The work of the Expert Group**

The Expert Group (EG) on the Active Ageing Index, established under the first phase of the project in 2012 was maintained throughout Phase III. The expert group provided oversight on the AAI project, discussed challenges, and provided strategic direction. The EG brought together leading researchers, statisticians, government and civil society representatives. Members of the Expert Group came from UNECE, the EU and many important research institutes focused on gerontology, with some individuals representing policymakers, who provided a reality check on what is required by those in government. In addition, there was one representative of an ageing civil society group, who was expected to provide insight on those groups advocating for older people. Individual members helped a lot to promote the AAI and the AAI project. The UNECE are proud of the involvement of the Expert Group throughout this project. Many put considerable time and worked hard. There was a core group who were involved from the start. Some interviewees appreciated being a member of the Expert group from the start, as they were able to influence the project consistently. Individuals within the EG stated that they will strive to maintain the group.

Major discussions were reported to take place regarding the weights given to each indicator. An interviewee from Italy felt that some of the criticisms (as outlined in the de São José, et al. 2017 critique of the AAI in the *Journal of Ageing Studies*), should have been discussed in more depth in the Expert Group. In particular, he mentioned the criticism that the AAI is a top down tool, and policy on active ageing requires a better link with individuals. Whether or not the purpose of calculations of the AAI was to compare EU member states or for national policymaking or both was discussed in earlier phases of the project. Many did not think the AAI results should be comparable between member states, but others interviewed still feel this was an important function of the AAI. It was noted that earlier (prior to this phase of the AAI project), there was a much stronger focus on comparisons between member states, rather than how member states are improving on certain indicators adopting a cluster approach to comparing countries. Some researchers felt that it is inevitable that the AAI will change over time, be adapted and evolve as tested widely and implemented in different cultural contexts. Other comments on the Expert Group:

- The Expert Group was great experience. There was always respect to different views, opinions and arguments, and compromises were reached. Lots of inputs from different researchers working on ageing, every new development was discussed at length.
- Expert Group discussions were very rich. For example, the EG discussed at length whether there should be a benchmark for each indicator.
- Having EU officials at meetings was very important.
- The Expert Group's role was more technical than political – in other words, it was not their role to bring the AAI to policymakers.
- There could be more discussion or description of policies that were used elsewhere to improve certain indicators.

### Conclusion: Expert Group contributions

It can be concluded that the Expert Group with representatives from UNECE, government and academia were an excellent advisory group and represented good value for money. Academic experts were highly considered in their field. The Expert Group allowed for a diversity of perspectives (from academics, researchers, multilateral staff, NGOs and policymakers), and allowed for consultation on the AAI project, joint decisions, and self-evaluation of progress.

### Challenges/obstacles to achieving the expected results

There is now a demand for broader indicators of well-being and indicators that show how a group feels about the market or economy, quantifying how current beliefs and positions affect future behaviour (sentiment indicators) (according to an UNECE official). Nevertheless, a range of challenges was identified relating to the achievement of results with regard to the inclusion of Active Ageing Index in policy in general. Some such challenges related to conceptual discussions on the index itself, with criticisms coming from both survey respondents and interviewees.

There is ambivalence however, with regard to an understanding to what the index is actually measuring. A multi-dimensional and composite index is often difficult to understand. Thus, issues were raised with regard to deriving behaviour to a standard or norm or the perceived normative aspect of the Index.

Other challenges related more technically to data availability and representation of samples. Challenges were also raised with regard to getting evidence to policy or to the policymaking process or policymakers themselves, who should be implementing actions on active ageing. Sustainability challenges are outlined later. Many interviewees and about 15 detailed responses in the survey outlined challenges or criticisms with regard to the conceptual approach to measuring active ageing, indicating that all are not on the same page with regard to concepts behind the AAI. These are summarized in Box 5 in Annex 10. Table 7 below presents opinions from interviewees and survey respondents, on how they view challenges with regard to increasing the use of the AAI for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy. It is important to bear in mind that not all opinions from interviewees and survey respondents are fully informed, so some opinions may relate to issues that were not within the parameters of the AAI project phase III, with other views not exactly factually correct. However, it remains important to present such views.

**Table 7: Challenges with achieving results for AAI Project Objectives, criticism of the AAI**

<b>Challenges regarding increasing the use of the AAI for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy, according to the views of those interviewed and stakeholder survey respondents</b>	
<b>AAI project linking with the 'right' national stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better linkages with national statistical offices are required. They have the capacity to calculate the AAI, may know about the AAI, but may not understand the importance for this particular aspect of social policy, and have competing demands.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to also link with the middle level bureaucrats at subnational levels. Sometimes they are preparing the text of regional laws, or allocating funding for public works. They also understand the reality on the ground. With federal states there is a need to talk to regional politicians to convince them to calculate and run the AAI.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the project attempted to do this, two National Focal Points on Ageing felt that the project should have linked better with national ageing focal points.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champions in countries such as Spain, ensured the AAI moved forward. However, not all countries have champions. A few interviewees mentioned the earlier EU EG member, who was a champion for the AAI.</li> </ul>

<b>Challenges regarding increasing the use of the AAI for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy, according to the views of those interviewed and stakeholder survey respondents</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A National Focal Point interviewed strongly felt that the AAI should be better anchored in the research community. More researchers should get to know and accept the Index for it to increase in usage. This implies that more peer reviewed academic articles are published on the AAI, and those who work with the UNECE are always fully acknowledged for their contributions, even when citations are under UNECE. Although some United Nations agencies have particular rules on intellectual property, United Nations offices must also understand incentives of researchers to provide their intellectual inputs, which is beyond payment. Researcher careers are measured on their publication outputs, and can only obtain grants for further research based on their citation index. Bearing in mind that many reports must be cited as UNECE, if the United Nations wishes to collaborate with good quality researchers, they must better consider intellectual acknowledgement within the realms of a United Nations report, wherever possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Linking with other approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project required a stronger connection to the SDGs and information about the environment. For example, the AAI can provide possibilities to support regional development in relation to 'smart, healthy and age-friendly environments'.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other tools exist that cover issues better or in more detail than the AAI (i.e. EU Social Scoreboard or Gender Equality Index). <i>Although this comment was made, many of these indices do not focus on older population groups.</i></li> <li>Alternative indicators are being pushed by other international organisations, e.g. the EU-SILC is a harmonised survey with a centralised team overseeing it. <i>However, it was noted that the EU-SILC indicators are included in the AAI.</i></li> <li>The AAI has a different purpose in not trying to be a welfare indicator but rather measure the contribution of the older population to society, this aspect could have been emphasized even more since it is what makes the AAI unique and relevant.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project should have linked the AAI more with indicators in the Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE).<sup>23</sup> <i>However, it was noted that SHARE did not even cover half of the EU countries when the project began.</i></li> </ul>
<b>More promotion should have taken place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A National Focal point stated that the project should have organized better marketing activities. The view was that the Quality of Life Index<sup>24</sup> and the Happiness Index<sup>25</sup> get more headlines. This interviewee felt that more promotion of the AAI was required and this aspect was not sufficiently discussed at meetings.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many survey respondents noted that there is a need for better awareness amongst policymakers on why we need to promote active ageing. In some UNECE countries, knowledge of ageing amongst those who make policy is still low, making the job of the project difficult.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A large number of respondents outlined specific challenges with regard to the wider recognition of the AAI. If the results are low for a particular country, there can be a reluctance to publish the results.</li> </ul>
<b>Inadequate modification of original index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fact that the AAI project decided not to extend/add new indicators/domains for the sake of keeping it a stable tool to monitor trends over time is regarded by some as a limiting factor.</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> SHARE is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of about 140,000 individuals aged 50 or older (around 380,000 interviews). SHARE covers 27 European countries and Israel. <http://www.share-project.org/home0.html>

<sup>24</sup> Now called the where-to-be-born index (or QLI) measures through a subjective life-satisfaction survey and also uses objective determinants, which country will provide the best opportunities for a healthy, safe and prosperous life (Economist Intelligence Unit).

<sup>25</sup> Rankings of national happiness are based on respondents rating of their own lives, and the **World Happiness Report** is an annual publication of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

<b>Challenges regarding increasing the use of the AAI for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy, according to the views of those interviewed and stakeholder survey respondents</b>	
<b>Inadequate modification of original index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Expert Group there was a tendency to stick to the original indicators, in order to have a longitudinal comparison. However it was noted that it is easier to criticize the choice of indicators (someone will always find something missing), than have indicators that suit every context.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• Many interviewed argued that there must be some refinement of indicators (see Box 5). Four survey respondents mentioned the need for health and well-being to be better addressed.</li> <li>• The AAI can be compared across countries using a common methodology, with a global or European set of indicators. However, to do more substantive analysis, it needs to adapt at the national level. The project fell short of this flexibility aspect in the methodology.</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of data a challenge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An issue frequently mentioned in interviews and by 9 survey respondents, was limited data; or the difficulty in obtaining data; or adapting data on some AAI indicators, particularly at the subnational level.<sup>27</sup> For example some countries do not have data on voluntary activities or physical exercise. In Biscay for instance, although many older people care for their grandchildren, there was no data on this.</li> </ul>
<b>View that the index is complex and may not have helped in increasing use of the tool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lead Researcher on the AAI stated that the weighting in the Index could be perceived as complex, whereas policymakers want simple and straightforward evidence. Policymakers have a short attention span and have a short timeframe to get things done.</li> <li>• A Provincial Government representative felt that if an index is too academic, and difficult to communicate to citizens, particularly individuals at the regional level are not interested in details of calculation.</li> <li>• A Researcher noted that it is important to stress a simple ‘people-centred’ focus that can also be measurable. This can be done by demonstrating the results of policies linked back to indicators and how the score links back to economic allocations and decisions made with funding to regions.</li> </ul>
<b>More focus on policy required in the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although not necessarily within the scope of this project, there was a comment that there should have been more discussions on policies to achieve active ageing rather than only measuring it. For example, many policymakers (culturally) do not encourage older people to be active; and older people themselves know very little about the benefits of active ageing.</li> <li>• Not many indicators that link to or measure social protection. Dealing with ageing depends on welfare systems in many countries, along with political will.</li> <li>• With an overdependence on the AAI in the development of policies on ageing, policies may be skewed to a particular outcome and may not consider the entire country situation.</li> </ul>
<b>The project fell short on sharing good ageing policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One interviewee from a research organisation felt that the project fell short on learning or sharing good ageing policies across Member States. If the aim were to monitor how the country is improving over time with regard to certain indicators, then sharing examples from elsewhere would help.</li> <li>• A composite index is a measuring tool, which by itself evidently gives no direct information on what to do. Policymakers must connect the results of the indicators to the national and regional context, but often require more capacity on how to use the evidence.</li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> E.g. one suggestion was that religious attendance is a form of social connectedness should be included as an indicator.

<sup>27</sup> Interviewees reported the importance of being able to use proxy indicators, however.

<b>Challenges regarding increasing the use of the AAI for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy, according to the views of those interviewed and stakeholder survey respondents</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AAI should be used to compare actions in a region over time, rather than compare regions or countries. For instance, it could be used to monitor a new policy that was put in place in a city or region. Case studies that demonstrate how policy affects changes would be useful.</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding of policy process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the AAI may contribute to building the evidence at sub-national level, whether attention is paid to such evidence depends on the political system.<sup>28</sup> Much depends on the level of autonomy at the subnational level, and the competencies to implement ageing policies. For example, in Spain, the legal framework for employment is decided nationally, therefore at the subnational level, provincial government can only have control of less than 75% of the indicator results.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A challenge is that politicians who require a quick return while they are in power decide most policies. Longer-term planning is more difficult. Creating linkages between what is required at national level with local level realities is important. For example, although e-health options may be available, rural areas may not have broadband coverage. On the other hand, some initiatives that can only be created locally are analysed by a national indicator. For example, creating age-friendly spaces.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the use of the AAI for ageing policy monitoring, emphasis could have been on how the subnational level can develop their own index, that links to national level indicators (health, housing, independent living and even employment). National politicians can thus see what is lacking at the subnational level. Monitoring active ageing can possibly create a stronger coherence between national and regional authorities.</li> </ul>

### **Conclusion: Challenges**

Many challenges of the project related to acceptance of the indicators in the index itself, and the weighting of these indicators. These challenges related to culture which in turn affect results on ageing and the conceptual definition of active ageing, as well as the purpose of its measurement. For example, a high figure of the employment rate after the normal retirement age might indicate in some countries a positive climate towards the employment of older people but, in other areas, it is a reflection of insufficient pensions. It was noted by some that the Expert Group was open to discussions on the indicators; others felt this was not the case. For cross-country comparison, there can be no flexibility with weightings. Thus, ranking of countries and weighting of indicators depends on the objective of the AAI, is it for cross-country comparison or not? It is difficult to have flexibility of an index on the one hand, and comparability over time on the other. In conclusion it is acknowledged that the debate with regard to weighting and ranking indicators cannot really be resolved.

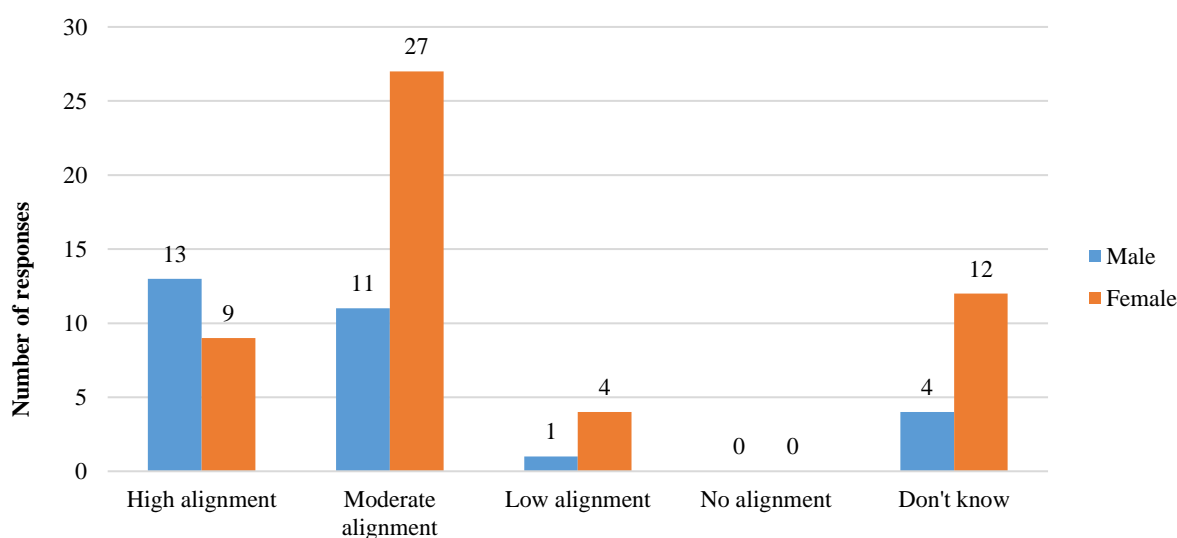
### **The extent to which gender mainstreaming was incorporated into the project implementation**

AAI data are being disaggregated by sex in the implementation of the project, and an analysis is being made on gender-related trends in ageing. For example, the 2018 Analytical Report stated that the gap between the scores of women and men in terms of overall AAI decreased in the 2008-2016 period.

<sup>28</sup> In a more centrally organized political system, funding can be allocated to the regional level, to help them to foster their AAI.

The Evaluation Survey asked respondents to rate the alignment of the AAI project’s activities to gender equality. There were 71 responses to this question see Figure 7. The most common answer was that there is a ‘moderate alignment’ with 28 respondents choosing this option, the majority of which were female. Close second, was that there is a ‘high alignment’ with 22 respondents. No respondent indicated that there was ‘no alignment’ in the AAI project’s activities to gender equality. There was a notable difference between the answers provided by males and females for the response “don’t know”.

Where asked to explain their rating further, 14 (out of 71) respondents made comments generally how the AAI disaggregates by sex, and commented generally on the importance of this, or that data was well reported along male/female lines. Six provided general comments with regard to the importance of disaggregating by sex, or specific comments on differences in a country. In Italy for example, it was stated that women are especially affected by loneliness and abuse; whereas in Turkey it was noted that re-employment rates are significantly different by sex. Three respondents noted the important role of EC and UNECE in highlighting the differences between ageing for women and for men, with one stating that a gender perspective was strongly underlined in the third phase of the project. Four examples were given of action following disaggregation of the index, two from the Russian Federation, where results acted as a trigger to try to understand the origin of the differences. Ageing women tend to be single due to premature deaths, which are higher for men. In the Republic of Moldova policymakers having noted the visible gender gaps, attempted to pay attention to them. Another comment was that pension reforms can have a greater effect on women, and in some cases can increase the pension gap, rather than narrow it down.



**Figure 7: Alignment of the AAI project to gender equality**  
**How do you rate the alignment of the AAI project’s activities towards gender equality?**

Whilst many survey respondents noted that the AAI disaggregates by sex, most comments to the survey related to the fact that more analysis is required beyond disaggregation (17 comments on this aspect). Respondents for example stated that there was little discussion on the implications and connections to policy for inequalities in caring; different weights should be given for the various activities for women and men; or gender equality measures must be more related to ‘empowerment’ measures. For instance, why in some countries (11 out of 28) do more women volunteer? Does this relate to a definition of volunteering?



### **Conclusion: Gender equality and empowerment of women**

Identifying gender differences is the first step, and it is important that such data are collected in the AAI. Although it is necessary to continue to insist on such disaggregation, the more important aspect is to analyse the reasons behind these differences. Perhaps linkages to other tools that measure inequalities may help in this regard such as the Gender Equality Index by EIGE. It can be concluded that even more analysis of gender differences is required, with regard how ageing is experienced by women and men.

### **Human rights and extent to which the project contributed to accountability systems**

A human rights-based approach is not strongly evident from the AAI project, and it could be argued that it is missing an explicit mention throughout the AAI project documents. The project did not identify specific obstacles that duty-bearers face in exercising their obligations, but it did provide evidence for rights-holders (older persons), and allow rights-holders to compare with other regions if they so wished. To understand the extent to which the project has contributed to establishing accountability and oversight systems between right holders and duty-bearers would require research to take place at ground level, or with associations and groups representing elderly persons.

Establishing accountability and oversight systems between right holders and duty-bearers, requires a different type of project, in order to ground the work within a framework of specific human rights entitlements and corresponding obligations (established under international law). Other tools exist for rights-based approaches. For example, one survey respondent mentioned the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research have developed an index - a rights-based approach to care and support for older persons. It may be interesting to see this index and the AAI align or can complement each other.

Going back to the theory behind the AAI, 'active ageing' is the 'process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security, in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, 2002). Activity theory claims that staying mentally and physically active preserves older adult's happiness. In contrast, disengagement theory, although now largely discredited particularly by a more 'positivist gerontologist approach' (Michael & Sadana, 2017) or in the 'critical gerontology' field, claims that it is natural and acceptable for older adults to withdraw from society and relationships as they age. The conceptual origins stem from the WHO active ageing concept, and the need to try to measure this concept. The index is not a measure for individuals, a measure of welfare but a measure of active ageing; or a measure of contribution. The project objective was not to look at human rights, or well-being, but measured what people are doing, and what they could be doing. Many interviewees from the Expert Group stressed that the AAI is just that, and the contribution aspect has to be reiterated again and again.

Some interviewees discussed critiques of the AAI because of its emphasis on contributing, rather than rights of older persons. A Professor of Gerontology stated that sometimes we can be too technocratic in our approach to measuring ageing, and can fall down on the less tangible aspects such as inclusion, respect and also human rights. An individual representing a civil society in Germany felt that the AAI neglects subjective feelings of older people (in contrast she said that the German Ageing Survey, which includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators). A key question to ask is why are we measure ageing. Is it to focus on human rights of older persons? Is it to tackle equality? Or, are we measuring in order to work on inclusion? Can we measure loneliness? Framing what we measure is critical.

The index is not attempting to state that it is great when people are working in their 70s, rather highlight this issue. More analysis is required to understand why they are working in their 70s. The index is most valuable when a second round of analysis is undertaken some time later and compared with what they

are entitled to in terms of rights in the country. These points are not always understood and lead to misconceptions.

A theoretical approach put forward by those critical of AAI as a measure is the capabilities approach, which relates more to human rights. The capabilities approach draws on a person's freedoms or opportunities to achieve functionings.<sup>29</sup> However as outlined by the author of the Guidelines on calculation of the AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level, we cannot measure options available because no statistics are available on options. Rather we measure outputs. If we do not see contributions (as measured in the AAI), it is more often than not because no opportunities are available. For example, lifelong learning is often low in value, when there are no opportunities available to do this. With a low score on something like lifelong learning, attention is raised, and ideally qualitative research should take place to understand the reason behind this low number. The value of the indicator does not substitute for in-depth research on the indicator. An indicator is just that, a measure, and a pointer.

The European Pillar of Social Rights is a set of principles in the EU and concerns delivering new and more effective rights for citizens. The European Pillar of Social Rights is accompanied by a 'social scoreboard' to officially monitor the implementation of the Pillar. These are individual indicators on a dashboard, rather than a synthetic measure.<sup>30</sup> Old age income and pensions are one of the 20 pillars. AgePlatform outlined how linking the AAI to the European Social Charter is important for accountability for right holders.<sup>31</sup>

### **Conclusion: Human rights focus**

There can be insufficient understanding of what is actually understood by “active and healthy ageing”. Yet these concepts are still used. On the positive side, the AAI project contributes to measuring active ageing and has created a discourse around ageing that did not exist previously, moving away from the biomedical model of ageing. On the negative side, the AAI orientation was not explicitly focused on Human Rights. The AAI is positive about the contributions of older people. Transparency and easy to understand communications on the index are required. It is important for whoever uses the index is clear on what exactly they wish to measure. It can be difficult to convince NGOs and researchers that the AAI is about contributions. The AAI does not force older persons to contribute, but recognize that they do contribute.

A Human Rights focus would allow those engaged to link different international policies and European Age related rights, charters and frameworks, allowing a dialogue between rights holders and duty-bearers (such as linking more the European Pillar on Social Rights). It could be argued that the project raised awareness of *rights* of elderly persons. The project did not *develop* the capacities of *duty-bearers* at national local levels to fulfil their obligations. However, it provided evidence on the contributions of older persons (which some would argue, only allows for planning, rather than rights-based approaches).

<sup>29</sup> Functionings refer to the various states of human beings and activities that a person can undertake, for example travelling or voting. Some functionings require capability. For example travelling requires opportunity and capability to travel. The distinction between functionings and capabilities is between the realized and the effectively possible, in other words, between achievements, on the one hand, and freedoms or valuable opportunities from which one can choose, on the other.

<sup>30</sup> The scoreboard tracks trends and performances across EU countries in 12 areas across three dimensions, (i) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market (5 indicators); (ii) Dynamic labour markets and fair working conditions (3 indicators); and (iii) Public support / Social protection and inclusion", (4 indicators).

<sup>31</sup> The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights as a counterpart to the European Convention on Human Rights, which refers to civil and political rights. The Charter guarantees a broad range of everyday human rights related to employment, housing, health, education, social protection and welfare, and lays specific emphasis on the protection of vulnerable persons such as elderly people, children, people with disabilities and migrants. It requires that enjoyment of the above-mentioned rights be guaranteed without discrimination.

## 2.3 Efficiency

### Efficiency and management

The project was originally supposed to run for 36 months, but received a four-month no-cost extension. The structure of the UNECE project team had not changed since the project began in May 2016, although there had been changes of staff in the EC DG EMPL. EC DG EMPL and UNECE jointly managed the AAI project with almost daily contact between the two. UNECE primarily provided staff for the project management and coordination as well as an intergovernmental platform for policymakers' involvement (Working Group on Ageing). The UNECE Population Unit provided coordination and organised the implementation of project activities.<sup>32</sup> Basically there was one senior staff member (UN level P5) and a project assistant (funded from the project budget) with some support from a P2 staff member and a programme assistant (UN level G6). Evidently the Population Unit carries out other duties apart from coordinating the AAI project. However, the following table contains time allocation estimations for the 40 months of the project.

**Table 8: Estimations of UNECE staff time allocated to AAI project**

UNECE Staff member	Allocation of time over 40 months
P5 Officer	8.2 months
P2 Officer	4 months
G6 staff member	4.2 months
Project Assistant	Full time for 39 out of 40 months, with a one-month break due to the United Nations' rules for temporary contracts

In 2016–2017, UNECE worked with the University of Southampton – UK as the key institutional contractor for implementation of a number of research tasks foreseen under the project. However, an unexpected interruption of the contract with this institutional contractor, resulted in the University of the Basque Country (selected through the “call for quotations”) taking on the rest of the research tasks. The University of Southampton ceased work in April 2018, and the new contract with the University of the Basque Country did not commence until the end of the year, resulting in a delay in institutional support.

There were four institutional consultants engaging throughout the period 2016–2018: The Technical University of Dortmund, Warsaw School of Economics, Italian National Institute of Health and Science on Ageing, and University of the Basque Country for the implementation of country-specific studies (first three institutes) and more general scope of research tasks (the fourth institute). Institutional contracts were awarded using a competitive tender approach.

Apart from institutional consultants, individual consultants were hired to: draft guidelines on calculation of AAI for non-EU countries and at subnational level; draft an analytical report analysing AAI trends over the period 2008–2016; collect data and draft a report on AAI at subnational (NUTS 2) level in Romania (pilot study); collect data and draft a report on AAI at subnational (NUTS 2) level in Spain (pilot study); and carry out this independent evaluation.

<sup>32</sup> The UNECE Population Unit work to promote policy dialogue on various facets of demographic change across the UNECE region, with a particular focus on ageing.

**Table 9: Budget versus preliminary data on actual expenditure**

USD	Budget		Actual Expenses (Preliminary)	
	Total	of which: Contribution from EC	Total	of which: Contribution from EC
Cost items				
UNECE own contribution — staff resources	238,092		250,866	
UNECE staff travel	50,435	50,435	22,061	22,061
Travel of experts	74,826	74,826	57,015	57,015
Travel of meeting participants	88,587	88,587	76,648	76,648
Meeting organisation: <i>Facilities and interpretation</i>	-	-	24,242	24,242
<i>Hospitality</i>	46,470	46,470	6,540	6,540
Individual consultants	9,239	9,239	20,200	20,200
Individual contractor — IT expert	28,467	28,467	-	-
Sub-contracting consultants: <i>Research consultants</i>	-	-	231,869	231,869
General temporary assistant (GTA)	286,620	286,620	311,082	311,082
Sub-total	299,143	299,143	1,000,523	749,657
Project support cost: 7 %		61,865		52,476
Project total costs	1,121,879	883,787	1,052,999	802,133

The project team size was set in the Agreement with the donor, but consultants were hired by UNECE to work on specific aspects of the project. Although the evaluation of Phase II recommended that the project to intensify resource mobilization efforts to enable the expansion of the work on the AAI in the UNECE region, there were no fund-raising activities foreseen by the Agreement with the donor. The project budget was set by the Agreement with the donor (European Commission) and was sufficient for the activities foreseen without additional fund-raising.

The overall project budget was \$1,183,746 of which 11% (or \$ 138,381) was unspent (based on preliminary figures). Thus, expenditures were at 85% of the budget actually spent (thus not including the visualization tool). Based UNECE contribution to the project is estimated to be \$238,094. This is how the UNECE contribution was costed in the agreement with the donors. Final figures will be available at the end of the year.

The largest unspent item was research consultants for the calculation of the AAI, and analysis of results and methodology (\$28,692.44). Savings for research consultants was because of competitive calls, which nearly all ended up lower cost than UNECE estimated. Travel expenses were lower than expected because the UNECE reported they held more expert meetings back-to-back with other events. In addition, travel expenses tended to be lower than United Nations budget planning requests.

According to the UNECE unspent amounts of EC contribution mainly comes from funds foreseen for the visualization tool development (budgeted at \$81,522), which was not originally expected to be undertaken by the EU itself, and termination of institutional consultancy contract with Southampton. UNECE reported some savings under other items. Approximately \$24,000 was also unspent for research consultants to disseminate the AAI, which includes the task of disseminating the visualization tool. This evidently could not be done, as the visualization tool was not ready during the project period. Much of the other categories of unspent funds related to travel (either of UNECE staff or experts to meetings).

UNECE stated the unspent funds were due to lower than foreseen travel expenditure. This may indicate that not all invitees were interested or able to attend the various events/meetings set up under the project.

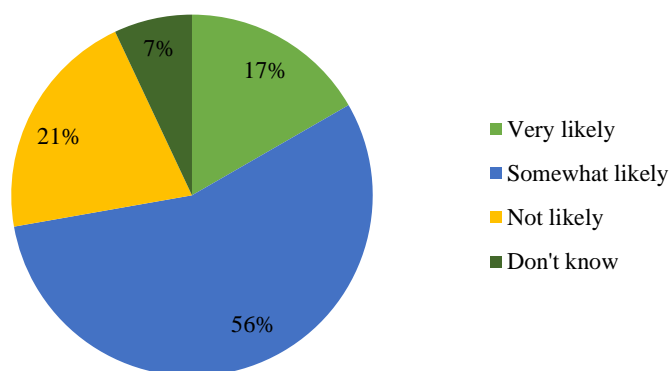
**Conclusion: Resources and costs**

The project achieved its objectives within the anticipated budget and resources allocated. Costs appeared to be justified. The evaluation concludes that more resources could have been spent on promoting and advocacy of the AAI. However, the relationship between cost and the tasks planned seems reasonable. All results were achieved on time, except the visualization tool.

## 2.4 Sustainability

### Likelihood of continued usage of AAI related to ageing policies

A major question for any project, is the likelihood that project beneficiaries continue with initiatives after project funding ceases. Interviewees were asked whether they will continue to use the AAI in their work related to ageing policies and their views are summarized in this section. Survey respondents were asked to assess how likely is it that the AAI will continue to be used without the support of UNECE or the EU. Over half of survey respondents (40 out 72) felt that it is somewhat likely that the AAI will to continue to be used. Twelve (17%) thought it very likely and fifteen (21%) respondents indicated that the AAI is not likely to continue to be used without the support of UNECE or the EU. A UNECE official cautioned that if the AAI does not continue to be collated and updated, it would not be sustained as a tool. Sixty-two respondents gave further comments with regard to factors that influence the continued usage of the AAI, and what institutional involvement would make the AAI more sustainable in the AAI usage, which is outlined in this section, along with interview results.



**Figure 8: Likelihood that AAI will continue to be used**

**How likely is it that the AAI will continue to be used in countries without the support of UNECE or the EU?**

Reasons for the likelihood of continued usage of the AAI relate to conceptual and methodological clearance of the index by important international institutions; the fact that there is international comparability on ageing; and the multidimensional nature of the Index. Having an interest in measuring active ageing depends on the country’s demographics (high percentage of ageing populations) and someone (a ‘champion’) who pushes for the AAI as a measurement tool in national or subnational government. Evidently most survey respondents are not definite (56% somewhat likely and 21% think it is not likely that it will continue. Many survey respondents did not think national governments would

cooperate to create/maintain AAI results without EU/UNECE support or coordination. As indicated by one survey respondent:

*“In some countries the AAI would continue without the EU or UNECE support, but in the majority of them the AAI would be stopped, and the comparability of the index will disappear.”*

Another survey respondent felt: *“unsure that a country will calculate the AAI without any central initiative”*

During the project period, the AAI has been taken up by countries and at the sub-national level, but not necessarily in consultation with the AAI project team, which means that in some contexts it is likely to continue to be used without the knowledge of UNECE or the EC. Some examples given where project beneficiaries are likely to continue using the AAI are presented below:

- **Spain:** because some regions have included the calculation of the AAI as an indicator to monitor their planning and strategies related to older people, they are likely to continue using this tool in the coming years, particularly where the usefulness of the Index has been demonstrated. A lead Researcher stated that if the subnational level wishes to use the tool, they would commission it. In the Spanish case, the Biscay Government initiated the AAI at subnational level, and commissioned it. Competition between regions was also a reason in Spain for provincial policy level interest.
- **Republic of Moldova:** will continue to calculate the AAI according to their work plan and an agreement with Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection. The AAI is considered a useful tool to help in the monetization of social policies. Researchers at the National Institute for Economic Research in the Republic of Moldova are planning to calculate the AAI in 2020 or 2021. Currently the Generations and Gender Programme (already run in other UNECE countries such as Belarus, Kazakhstan) is being implemented, funded via UNFPA country office and the same Ministry with the National Bureau of Statistics. UNECE are participating with this project.<sup>33</sup> The national research institution has included some questions from the AAI and extended them into the *Generations and Gender Programme* operations.
- **Romania:** decision makers in the Minister of Labour and Social Justice perceive the index as a very useful tool. It is highly likely that the AAI would be calculated periodically at regional level and used as a tool for evidence-based decision making for active ageing and elderly protection.
- **Others:** The AAI is likely to be used in some countries as a normative model (e.g. Russian Federation) if the country lacks an alternative tool. In **Belarus** work is underway to introduce the AAI methodology; in **Turkey**, the AAI may continue to be used, but the support of both statistical institutions and policymakers is still necessary /important.

### **Factors that influenced sustainability**

National governments come and go in some countries, so a mandate from the EU was suggested by quite a few as an important factor for sustaining use of the index. If the AAI is not part of official EC documents, it may fade away. Many felt that the influence of the EU was important to promote the AAI, at least in member states. Multilateral organisations are important with regard to mandates that promote a tool and whether it is mainstreamed as a monitoring instrument. For example, when the MIPAA/RIS was monitored through the lens of the AAI index, interviewees who knew about this indicated it as very

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<sup>33</sup> Their survey expects to develop data-driven and rights-based policy scenarios on addressing demographic changes in the Republic of Moldova.

positive. A government official in Belgium felt that the EU should produce a statistical directive that requires all member states to send data required for the AAI calculations. As one survey respondent stated:

*“Many policymakers need guidance in how to best promote active ageing, and without an informed, scientifically grounded leadership from the EU and the UNECE they run the risk to perform poorly in this field.”*

A Researcher from Germany highlighted that the AAI never became integrated into official European statistics or EuroStat (or German national statistical office). A quick search of the EuroStat website during the evaluation did not reveal any reports on the AAI.<sup>34</sup> An Italian Researcher thought that EuroStat could take the lead on collating data for the AAI. It was also mentioned by a few interviewees that stronger links could be made to the European Pillar on Social Rights.

The DG EMPL Social Protection Committee failed to adopt the AAI as a monitoring tool (according to the AAI project counterpart in the EU). The AAI was presented to the Social Protection Committee of DG EMPL, who was not open to having it used as an official monitoring tool. The Committee were not concerned with issues related to the quality of the AAI, rather some members explicitly did not wish to have a synthetic measure (combining other metrics). Some Member State representatives are more sceptical than others about using composite indices. This was in contrast to many being strongly interested in using the Index. It could be concluded that the EU wished to avoid comparing states, through use of tools such as the AAI or the OECD *Better Life Index*. Some interviewees felt that the EU could still ensure the AAI made it into EU policy recommendations.

The AAI Expert Group (EG) played an important role in sustaining interest in the project throughout the implementation period. Academics and specialist gerontology institutions as members of the EG, provided their intellectual views and inputs (including on the interpretation of national or subnational results). For example, discussions took place based on cultural differences and whether it is always the case that the higher the score, the better for society. An UNECE official stated that a number of members of the AAI EG are willing to keep contributing to the project and are willing to continue communicating on the AAI even without the UNECE / EC support.

With regards to sustaining the interest of researchers and academics, it is important to note that academics are mainly measured by their publication outputs, hence acknowledging due credit in United Nations or EC reports and documents is more important for them, if academics are to get institutionally support to participate in projects like the AAI project.

In summary:

- The Index required many more champions, better ownership and promotion, including more political support, and support from organisations representing the elderly.
- More discussions on cultural differences were required to ensure full agreement on standards for subnational calculations. The Guidelines for subnational level require wider dissemination.
- Supporting the application of the AAI at local or subnational level affected the sustainability of initiatives.
- Further institutionalization of the AAI use in the EU, the UNECE and in official documents which was required by international organisations is still required. For example, it would be helpful if the AAI is taken up or endorsed by the EU Social Protection Committee.
- There is a need to involve national statistical offices or the likes of EuroStat.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/home?>

Table 11 in Annex 12 outlines the basis of an action plan for follow up to the AAI project.

The AAI project counterpart in the EU reported that although the EU is revisiting who can fund or resource the AAI, there does not seem to be funding available at present to continue. On the other hand, because the AAI is based on data already produced, marginal costs are not high to calculate the index. The AAI project counterpart in the EU may approach the EC Social Protection Committee again, as there is a resurgence of interest in ageing and active ageing. However, funding and interest may depend on the new Commission's Directorate-General of DG EMPL and his/her prioritization of demographic changes within the EU. The UNECE is prepared to reach out to the new Commissioner when appointed. It would be important that those promoting the AAI reach out to European Parliamentarians interested in the topic of ageing and attend or highlight events for their MEPs.<sup>35</sup> Some of the outcomes from the push towards ageing-awareness around 2012 are only now becoming apparent. With the WHO decade of healthy ageing from 2020-2030 soon approaching - the AAI could be a very worthwhile policy/practice evaluation tool and mechanism to provide a balanced perspective on older persons' changing experiences of ageing over the next period. This will only happen if the AAI is supported by the EC/UNECE over the next ten years.

### **Conclusion: Continued usage of the AAI and sustainability**

The majority of the 72 workshop respondents said that it is somewhat likely that the AAI will continue to be used without the support of the EU or the UNECE. Without UNECE support and EU endorsement whether the index will continue to be widely calculated is a major question. Usage and ownership by countries themselves was what sustained the AAI in certain countries. In reality, it is up to each country to ensure the calculation of the AAI is sustained. National Statistical Offices providing data or using the AAI is a prerequisite for sustainability and would guarantee that their databases keep/collect information required for calculating the AAI. However, parliamentarians must first know about the Index, if they are to include it in monitoring ageing in their country. Having an active promoter of the AAI in each country was important. In other words, each country requires an 'AAI champion'.

Country level ownership for the researchers involved is another important aspect. More academics and gerontology researchers must use the index and endorse it. The AAI requires periodical methodological and conceptual evolution and requires indicator updating (following discussed and consensus) for refinement. During the project period this occurred through the Expert Group, who helped to ensure that the index moved beyond being a tool to only measure "*the untapped potential*" of older persons, but to also look at inequalities based on location, education and sex.

A centralized coordinating or processing unit for country AAI data is required, ideally in the UNECE, to compile AAI updates. A reason for a country /region to keep using the AAI is because of the added value of comparisons/benchmarking. However, this is only possible if results from other places are available and updated. If data are too old, policymakers will not be interested. Some believe there is a need for one standard set of weights, and use of one specific statistical software; whereas others think it can be modified at the subnational level, provided it is not called the 'official AAI' per se.

<sup>35</sup> For example in February 2017, Mental Health Europe and a Member of the European Parliament Deirdre Clune (Ireland, EPP) held an event in the European Parliament on mental health and active ageing. Discussions focused on the lifespan approach to mental health and the importance of active ageing to ensure positive mental health at all ages.



## **Project contributions to implementation of MIPAA/RIS**

Every five years, countries of the UNECE region undertake an analysis of the current state of implementation of MIPAA/RIS and outline actions required to make further progress. The UNECE Working Group on Ageing facilitates this process by preparing guidelines for reporting. In 2015, this Working Group recommended that countries in the region use the AAI indicators for the monitoring of the implementation of the third cycle of the MIPAA/RIS and evaluate their progress in active ageing policies. The results were included in a statistical annex in the synthesis report on the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS. The UNECE Secretariat compiles and synthesizes all country reports. Country reports indicated that countries in the ECE have been undertaking steps to transform the main pillars of social protection for older age – pensions, health services and long-term care – to respond to growing demand. Some reforms are said to have been designed to implement the concept of active ageing.

The AAI analytical report (2019) provides a comparison of the challenges highlighted by the AAI, the 2018 ES-CSR and the 2017 MIPAA/RIS national reports, by cluster, country and AAI domain.<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the AAI results are used to highlight which dimensions should be addressed in the next monitoring round of either the ES-CSR or MIPAA/RIS national reports. A Researcher from Austria felt that the UNECE did a good job in implementing the five-year monitoring of the MIPAA and promoting the AAI to be used in these national reviews. The fact that the UNECE was behind the index was considered really helpful. According to an interviewee representing civil society, having a push from the UNECE is important in terms of the MIPAA review in the region.

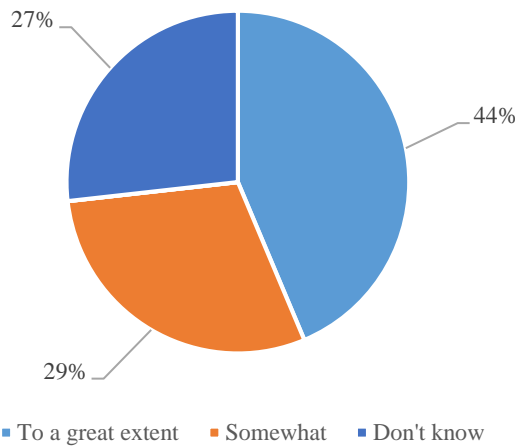
Just over two fifths of survey respondents reported that the AAI project contributed to the implementation of the MIPAA/ RIS ‘to a great extent’. Slightly less than third of respondents, thought the AAI project contributed somewhat to the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS. Roughly a quarter of respondents said they did not know. A few respondents to the questionnaire felt the AAI project contributed to the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS by keeping active ageing on the political agenda.

Some respondents explained further why they thought the project contributed or did not contribute to the MIPAA/RIS. Broadly, several survey respondents outlined that the AAI areas were defined in alignment with MIPAA/RIS and more specifically aligned with the UNECE Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2012) goals. The AAI highlights areas where more of the potential of older persons can be harnessed. It also highlights where there are gaps in the enabling environment for active ageing. By providing such evidence, the AAI gives policymakers an indication in which areas measures need to be taken to advance the implementation of MIPAA/RIS. Thus, the AAI project contributed by aligning directly with the priorities of the MIPAA/RIS cycle and helped consolidate data for monitoring.

As previously mentioned, the AAI was required as a statistical annex to the latest UNECE cycle of evaluation, which helped countries to revise the available statistical sources and measure the active ageing potential of the older in a more precise manner. In Italy for example a national project employs the AAI to set targets for the MIPAA and the SDGs. The 2018 Analytical Report linked the AAI-domains with the MIPAA/RIS areas of commitment in a direct way. Three respondents felt that the AAI data was and is still planned to be used for monitoring the implementation of MIPAA by a variety of countries, providing a valuable tool for a global scorecard for its implementation; and comparing the country results in terms of MIPAA goals.

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<sup>36</sup> The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) are important for the 56 countries of the region covered by the UNECE. The European Semester (ES) provides a framework for monitoring economic policies annually across the EU (28 countries). Following an assessment of EU national governments’ plans, a set of country specific recommendations (ES-CSRs) are made. On the other hand, the MIPAA/RIS has five-year cycles of review and appraisal of progress made (the last being 2012-2017).



**Figure 9: The AAI and the MIPAA/RIS**

**How did the AAI contribute to the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS. N= 72 respondents**

On the other hand, some respondents (1) stated that the AAI is not fully aligned with the MIPAA/RIS, but contributes or helps to monitor some aspects. For example, the AAI does not cover the aspect of social assistance. The role of families and informal social systems are important for the MIPAA/RIS, but are sometimes a bit ambiguous within the AAI (e.g. whether volunteering is by choice or by need; intergenerational caring). For MIPAA/RIS implementation more local engagement is required. Special strategic plans, at global or country level must specify AAI for monitoring policies. The project could have focused more on this aspect.

**Conclusion: Contribution to MIPAA/RIS implementation**

As it is clear from the "2018 Active Ageing Index Analytical Report", the AAI is also aligned towards at the MIPAA commitments. The project made strong efforts to ensure that it contributed to monitoring MIPAA/RIS implementation.

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## 3. Conclusions and recommendations

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### 3.1 Conclusions

Economic indicators are always important drivers for policymakers. Sentiment and other broader indicators are gaining in popularity (e.g. the Happiness Index). All measurements that aim to have policy influence, must relate to systems of national accounts. For example, costs for the health system, costs for pensions. Active ageing, if used as a concept, requires measurement to understand how it can be better supported. The AAI promoted and supported during this project, provided a reasonable way to compile individual indicators into a single index, on the basis of a multidimensional active ageing concept that requires measurement.

The AAI is a tool that measures the potential of contribution. It does not measure quality of life, well-being nor does it involve participatory methods of research. Thus, it does not consider the aspirations of individual elderly people. The Index use is to monitor ageing policy rather than human rights. However, activists can use the results of the calculations to advocate for their rights. Rodriguez-Rodriguez et al. (2017) found that in the Spanish context, training for an active ageing is considered a good way of empowering the older population for their future linked to rights.

The AAI is therefore a starting point for measuring older people's contributions, and the methodology has now started to consider economic and social inequality. Although it disaggregates into male/female, it does not examine gender inequalities in depth, but it highlights where more in-depth analysis may be necessary. Under this project, studies on inequalities in the three countries (Germany, Italy, Poland) attempted to do this. Indeed, active ageing policies can result in some groups of older persons such as frail and oldest people being excluded. Policy stakeholders can sometimes over-emphasize physical activity over mental incapacity. Discussions under this project, particularly in the Expert Group focused on how to interpret the data generated through AAI calculations.

The AAI has been a very important contribution for many working on ageing. It is useful for evaluation and planning. Even with the project being wound down, it is important that the AAI continues to be promoted, as it is a useful tool and can offer good insight when it comes to policy considerations. A range of recommendations are outlined to ensure the continuation of AAI calculations. Annex 12 outlines the basis of an Action Plan for AAI project follow up, with a table that outlines specific elements of support that would be helpful.

### 3.2 Recommendations

The following table outlines four recommendations that arise regarding the AAI project evaluation. These recommendations centre on i) linkages with the SDGs; ii) continuing to support the centralized calculations of the AAI; iii) promoting the AAI; and iv) developing more studies to complement AAI calculations. Table 10 should be read with Table 11 in Annex 12, which contains elements/ rationale for a multilateral organisation to support the AAI, and specific elements of support that may still be required amongst members of multilateral organisations.

**Table 10: Recommendations**

	Findings from evaluation	Recommendations arising from evaluation findings	Further details	Responsibility and timeframe
1.	SDGs are probably the most important overarching framework leading up to 2030. All UNECE member States have adopted the 2030 Agenda incorporating the SDGs in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.	<b>1.1 Improve alignment with SDGs and the <i>Leave no one behind</i> agenda.</b>	If planning to promote the AAI in the future, link it to specific SDGs, building on work already completed. For example, consider aspects of active ageing and climate change. Consider how the AAI results can link to other initiatives that aim to reduce pressures on the environment; address green-house gas emissions and tackle pollution; or minimize waste and improving efficiency in the use of natural resources Link to sustainable finance area – and consider how pension funds and/or older people can be encouraged to invest taking into account environmental, social and governance considerations.	Start immediately linking with on-going work in the UNECE <i>Sustainable Development and Gender Unit</i> .  The SDGs require the partnership of governments, private sector, civil society and citizens alike, thus all are responsible, and the linkages to ageing should continue within the appropriate multilateral institutions.

	Findings from evaluation	Recommendations arising from evaluation findings	Further details	Responsibility and timeframe
2.	Active and health ageing concepts are still used, even though there can be insufficient understanding of them. There is a strong interest in continuing to modify, calculate and develop the AAI amongst many project stakeholders.	<p><b>2.1. Review Table 11 that contains elements of an Action Plan for follow up by UNECE.</b></p> <p><b>2.2. Continue to make the AAI more topical by more explicitly aligning it to current/ upcoming goals/ priorities/ topics (e.g. Europe 2020 - a Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; WHO decade of healthy ageing from 2020-2030, rights of older people etc.).</b></p> <p><b>2.3. More academic focus should also be encouraged, via competitive funding for academic research using the AAI as a tool.</b></p>	<p>Link to other EC initiatives on ageing such as from Science Advice for Policy by European Academies (SAPEA), who is providing science advice to the EC on the <b>future of ageing</b>.<sup>37</sup></p> <p>Investigate the use of the AAI in calls for Horizon 2020, which may ensure attention from academics.</p>	<p>EU/UNECE are both responsible.</p> <p>The EU can provide details on research opportunities.</p> <p>Continue immediately with updating the web and include calls for research funding on the wiki.</p>
3.	The AAI is not known widely enough, the project could have worked on promoting the AAI more widely.	<p><b>3.1 Document more examples of the application of the index in a way that is relevant for policymakers. Ensure the AAI is linked and used in any policy briefs produced by UNECE.</b></p> <p><b>3.2. The EC (and UNECE) should use the visualization tool when completed to conduct publicity (within DG EMPL) on the AAI.</b></p> <p><b>3.3 Keep an official centralized recalculation every two years.</b></p>	<p>Linking with ageing focal points, (with funding available or new funds) continue to organise national country events so the AAI becomes better known as having a reputable evidence base and tool to support active ageing. Build a stronger relation to national researchers and advocates/NGOs to make the AAI matter more. Ensure more publicity around any presentations of reports/results. Hold a 'launch' for the AAI Visualization Tool. Share more information on the measures taken by countries after they used the AAI. A newsletter about the updates of the AAI or events for those who attended any of the events related to AAI can be sent to ageing focal points. Hold seminars with users and interested parties, to collect remarks and suggestions to develop an AAI 2.0.</p>	<p>Immediately. UNECE should keep the wiki and web tool updated. Should no further funds emerge, UNECE should allocate a percentage of staff time (15-25%) to keep a helpdesk, for support and answering questions on methodology.</p>

<sup>37</sup> [www.sapea.info/topics/ageing](http://www.sapea.info/topics/ageing) This will take account of the current international and European policy context and the available scientific evidence, to address the question of what policies at the EU level could support the Member States in achieving inclusive, fair and sustainable systems of health and social care and promote the taking up of innovation for ageing societies. SAPEA has set up a Working Group with experts from across Europe, and will produce an **Evidence Review Report** with policy options.

	<b>Findings from evaluation</b>	<b>Recommendations arising from evaluation findings</b>	<b>Further details</b>	<b>Responsibility and timeframe</b>
4.	<p>Infrastructure and inequalities within a country affect the implementation of ageing policies.</p>	<p><b>4.1 Develop a concept note to obtain funding for subnational calculations, which also includes indicative budget lines to be filled by national experts.</b>  <b>4.2 Qualitative studies that complement the index could be encouraged and commissioned if funding is available or commissioned in partnership with other projects (e.g. the Generations and Gender Programme).</b></p>	<p>The AAI could link with GIS technologies and become more interactive aligning ‘poor’ areas with AAI scores.</p> <p>More focus at disaggregate level (i.e. inequalities beyond gender, such as education, income) that helps to identify specific groups of older population that policies would need to address/monitor more.</p> <p>A policy brief on Women and Age for the Beijing Platform for Action 25-year review could be prepared outlining inequalities in ageing for men/women in selected countries.</p>	<p>Immediately, UNECE and EU.</p>

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## 4. Annexes

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### Annex 1: Evaluation terms of reference

#### Extending policy relevance of the Active Ageing Index: Cooperation with UNECE

##### I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objectives of the project “Extending the relevance of the Active Ageing Index (AAI): Cooperation with UNECE” (hereinafter “Project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in enhancing national policy formulation on population ageing and intergenerational and gender relations.

The results of the evaluation will support improvement of the services provided as well as future projects and activities implemented by the UNECE Population Unit.

##### II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the logical framework of the project documents. The evaluation will cover the organisational contribution of the UNECE Population Unit during the period of project implementation from 1 May 2016 to 31 August 2019. The project is intended for the benefit of all the UNECE countries, however, the evaluation will cover the countries / regions where AAI has been applied or for which it has been calculated and analysed, including the 28 EU countries, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Switzerland.

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of the evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation will assess how gender considerations were included in the process and it would make recommendations on how gender can be better included in the process.

##### III. Background

The current project builds on two previous phases of cooperation on the AAI between the UNECE Population Unit and the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The first two phases were separate projects with the European Commission as the donor. They took place from 3 January 2012 to 4 February 2013 and 1 August 2013 to 30 April 2016, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

The AAI — a composite measure of the untapped potential of older people to contribute to economy and society through employment, social participation, and living independently — was originally developed in 2012 (under the first phase, see above).

The main project objectives are defined as follows: a) further work to develop the AAI methodology, in particular to enhance its flexibility and enable wider implementation; b) further promotion of use of AAI as flexible tool providing evidence base for policymaking, analytical work and advocacy; c) support to countries in their attempt to apply AAI for their needs at both national and subnational levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Final reports to the donor (European Commission), respectively  
<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/Finances/E147/E147-ReportFinal2011-2013.pdf> and  
<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/ActiveAgeingIndex/FinalreportAAI2013-2016.pdf>

#### **IV. Issues**

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

##### **RELEVANCE**

1. How relevant was the project to the target groups' needs and priorities? How relevant was the project for the UNECE region needs and priorities?
2. To what extent was the project related to the UNECE programme of work?
3. How relevant are the activities with regards to gender equality and empowerment of women?
4. To what extent was the project design and development intervention relevant for meeting the project objectives?
5. How relevant were the partnerships with other entities?

##### **EFFECTIVENESS**

6. To what extent were the objectives of the project achieved? In particular:
  - a) How did the project contribute to the increased use of AAI for ageing policy monitoring?
  - b) How did the project contribute to a wider recognition of AAI as a useful flexible tool for analytical work, policy monitoring and advocacy in ageing-related areas?
7. To what extent and for what purposes is AAI used by the various stakeholders?
8. To what extent did the planned activities contribute to achieving the objectives and the expected accomplishments? In particular:
  - a) To what extent did the project activities, including studies on inequalities in three countries (Germany, Italy, Poland) and the development of Guidelines for calculating AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level, contribute to building the evidence base on ageing?
  - b) How did the work of the Expert group help to promote the use of AAI among relevant stakeholders?
  - c) How did the Second international seminar on AAI contribute to the promotion of AAI use at different levels and in a large variety of countries?
  - d) To what extent were the national seminars in Italy, Poland, and Romania helpful to the local stakeholders in offering an insight into the active ageing situation in the country from the AAI perspective?
  - e) 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?
9. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the expected results?
10. To which extent a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy were incorporated in the design and implementation of the project?

##### **EFFICIENCY**

11. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources? If there were differences between planned and actual expenditures, were they justified?
12. Was the relationship between cost and results reasonable? How could the use of resources be improved?
13. Were the results achieved on time?
14. Where there any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones?



15. How do the costs and use of resources compare with similar projects (within UNECE or by other United Nations agencies)?

#### SUSTAINABILITY

16. What is the likelihood that the beneficiaries of the project will continue using AAI in their work related to ageing policies?
17. What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
18. To which extent the projects have contributed to establish accountability and oversight systems between right holders and duty-bearers?
19. How did the project enhance national policy formulation on population ageing in selected UNECE countries?
20. How did the project contribute to adjustment of country policies or adoption of new measures for implementation of MIPAA/RIS?

#### **V. Methodology**

The evaluation will be conducted on the basis of:

The *desk review* will be based on project reports and material available including: the agreement with the donor, interim and draft final (provided it is ready by the time of evaluation) reports on project implementation to the donor, project wiki-space; reports from the meetings of the Expert group on AAI; other documents 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 developed by evaluator in consultation with UNECE and sent to stakeholders working on/with AAI. The UNECE project manager will provide the list with contact details of the relevant stakeholders. Results of the survey will be disaggregated by gender.

The questionnaire will be followed by *interviews* of selected stakeholders (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with UNECE). These will be carried out via phone or other electronic means of communication.

UNECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data techniques are selected. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

#### **VI. Evaluation schedule**

- Desk review of documents provided by UNECE to the evaluator (by 22 July 2019)
- Delivery of inception report including design of survey (by 22 July 2019)
- Feedback on inception report by the project manager (by 26 July 2019)
- Launching the survey (31 July 2019)
- Conducting interviews (by 23 August 2019)
- Analysis of collected information (by 6 September 2019)
- Draft report (6 September 2019)
- Comments back to the evaluator after review by the project manager and the PMU (16 September 2019)
- Final report (24 September 2019).

## **VII. Resources**

The requirement for an external evaluation is specified in the agreement with the donor. An evaluation consultant identified through the UNECE Evaluation Consultants' Roster will be hired and managed by the project manager (Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich).

## **VIII. Intended use / Next steps**

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The results will be used in the planning and implementation of future similar projects in the region and possibly beyond. The findings of the evaluation will inform follow up actions and guide initiatives already started and required to disseminate the knowledge created and enhance its use. The outcomes of the evaluation will also contribute to the broader lessons learned, by being made available on the project website (UNECE sub-page).

## **IX. Criteria for evaluation**

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.
- Fluency in written and spoken English. Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to UNECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.

## Annex 2: List of documents reviewed

- UN (2017) New York [A/71/6/Rev.1](#) Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019
- UN (2015) New York [A/69/6/Rev.1](#) Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2016-2017
- Kabeer, N. (2001) Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women’s Empowerment, in B. Sevefjord, et al. *Discussing Women’s Empowerment – Theory and Practice*, SIDA Study No.3, 2001. UNECE Executive Committee 104th meeting Geneva, 11 March 2019 Item 4 Informal Document No. 2019/9/Rev.1 Annual report on evaluation 2018
- UNECE Evaluation Policy October 2014 and Supporting Guide for Conduction Evaluation.
- UNECE Annual Report 2018
- United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*.
- New York: UNEG.Statistical Division Population Unit [Active Ageing Index project](#) Final report European Union Contribution Agreement with International Organisation No. VS/2011/0473 (SI2.612652) Amendment No. 1 (VS/2011/0512) Geneva 2013
- Statistical Division Population Unit *Active Ageing Index II — Further Development and Dissemination*. 30 June 2016
- Stakeholders Meeting on the Active Ageing Index 17 June 2019 Room Elisabeth, Hotel Leopold, Rue du Luxembourg 35, Brussels
- Presentation on AAI and Linkages with SDGs Policy seminar: Ageing and the SDG 21 Nov, 2018, Geneva.
- Policy seminar: Ageing and the Sustainable Development Goals. 21 November 2018, Geneva. Olga Kharitonova, UNECE
- UNECE / European Commission (2019) “2018 Active Ageing Index: Analytical Report”, Report prepared by Giovanni Lamura and Andrea Principi under contract with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), co-funded by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Brussels).
- Evaluation report Phase II (March 2017).
- UNDP, HelpAge International AARP Real Possibilities. *Ageing, Older Persons and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
- Document related to previous phases, including the evaluation report of Phase II. <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/vitalija/FMfcgxwChmLnfDZDFtjsSbhbMLpcJdfn>
- Connecting MIPAA/RIS and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Areas for policy integration. Policy seminar: Ageing and the SDG 21 Nov, 2018, Geneva
- Second Seminar on the AAI Brief Overview.
- EC (2016) *Active Ageing Index at the local level Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion Germany*, 14-15 April 2016
- Rodriguez-Rodriguez, V., Rojo-Perez, F., Fernandez-Mayoralas, G., Morillo-Tomas, R., Forjaz, J., & Prieto-Flores, M. E. (2017). Active ageing index: application to Spanish regions. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 10(1), 25-40.

- UNECE / European Commission (2015). Active Ageing Index 2014: Analytical Report. Economic Commission for Europe. 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) Geneva, p. 50.
- Formosa, M., 2017. Responding to the Active Ageing Index: Innovations in active ageing policies in Malta. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 10(1), pp.87-99.
- Varlamova, M., Ermolina, A. and Sinyavskaya, O., 2017. Active ageing index as an evidence base for developing a comprehensive active ageing policy in Russia. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 10(1), pp.41-71.
- de São José, J.M., Timonen, V., Amado, C.A.F. and Santos, S.P., 2017. A critique of the Active Ageing Index. *Journal of aging studies*, 40, pp.49-56.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) Active ageing: a policy framework, Geneva, WHO.
- UNECE (2019) 2018 Active Ageing Index. Analytical Report, June 2019. UNECE and co-funded by the European Commission
- WHO (2018) Ageing and Health 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>
- UNECE (2016) Recommendations on Ageing-related Statistics Prepared by the Task Force on Ageing-related Statistics United Nations New York
- UNECE (2018) Guidelines on producing leading, composite and sentiment indicators - draft Prepared by the Task Force on leading, composite and sentiment indicators.
- UNECE (2017) Synthesis Report on the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in the ECE region between 2012 and 2017. Economic Commission for Europe Working Group on Ageing
- Ministerial Conference on Ageing Lisbon, 21 and 22 September 2017
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- Walsh, K., Scharf, T. and Keating, N., (2017). Social exclusion of older persons: a scoping review and conceptual framework. *European Journal of Ageing*, 14(1), pp.81-98.
- Active Ageing Index at the local level Synthesis Report Jolanta Perek-Białas, Warsaw School of Economics and Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Manuscript completed in July 2016

## Annex 3: On-line evaluation surveys

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**Please complete and return before August 26 2019**

### AAI Project Evaluation Survey

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#### **Hello and welcome to this survey!**

As you already know, the Active Ageing Index (AAI) is a composite measure of the untapped potential of older people to contribute to the economy and society through employment, social participation, and living independently. See [leaflet](#) on the AAI.

*The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)* in cooperation with the European Commission (EC) coordinated the implementation of an AAI project, which is just concluding. This survey is for the purpose of evaluating the achievements of this latest AAI project (which ran from May 2016 to August 2019, the 3<sup>rd</sup> such project). An independent evaluator Dr. Una Murray is evaluating the AAI project.

As you were engaged in some way with the AAI project, you are kindly requested to complete the survey [[link to survey](#)] by August 30<sup>th</sup>

There are 21 questions, many are multiple choice, with options to write more detail if you wish. It should not take longer than 15 - 30 minutes to complete the survey.

Your responses are extremely important and will help us realistically evaluate the AAI project, make recommendations to support improvement of services provided, as well as inform future projects by the UNECE. Any critiques of the AAI project will not be attributed to an individual survey respondent, but rather form part of the overall answers to evaluation questions. If you have any other questions or comments, please feel free to contact Una directly at: [unamurray@gmail.com](mailto:unamurray@gmail.com)

1. Your name:
2. Institution:
3. Country of location:
4. Please outline your link to the AAI project:
5. Male  Female  Other

To recap, the objectives of the AAI project under evaluation were to:

- (i) further work to develop the AAI methodology, enhance its flexibility and enable wider implementation of the AAI
- (ii) further promote the use of AAI as a flexible tool providing an evidence base for policymaking, analytical work and advocacy
- (iii) provide support (via UNECE) to countries in their attempt to apply AAI for their needs at both national and subnational levels

#### **Overall AAI achievements**

6. In your view, what are the three most important achievements of the AAI, particularly in the past 2-3 years.

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)

### Concrete examples of AAI contributions to policy

7. Please outline any concrete examples of how the Active Ageing Index contributed to a country's policies on ageing? (*Q21 in ToRs*)

### Sustainability of Active Ageing Index

8. As the AAI project is now drawing to a close, in your view, how likely is it that the Active Ageing Index will continue to be used (e.g. as a methodology, or to inform policy) in countries without the support of the EU or the UNECE? (*Q18 in ToR*)

- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Very likely     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat likely | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not likely      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 8b. Please explain your answer further, e.g. what factors influence the continued usage of the AAI, which countries you are referring to, what institutional involvement would make it more sustainable...

### Relevance of the AAI project to UNECE Region

9. Do you agree or disagree that this AAI project, which aimed to extend the policy relevance of the AAI was relevant to the UNECE Region's needs and priorities? (*Q1 in ToR*)

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly Agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Undecided         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Relevance of the AAI project to EU Region

10. Do you agree or disagree that this AAI project was relevant to the EU Region's needs and priorities? (*Q1 in ToR*)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10b. Please indicate why you feel the AAI project was particularly relevant to a country, the EU or the UNECE regions needs and priorities and state why

### Gender equality focus and the AAI project

11. The AAI project had a focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women. How do you rate the alignment of the AAI project's activities towards gender equality? (*Q3 in ToR*)

- High Alignment
- Moderate Alignment
- Low Alignment
- No Alignment
- Don't know

11.b Please explain further, you can refer to a specific country, if you wish.

### AAI and links to the SDGs

12. How do you rate the alignment of the AAI project towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- High alignment
- Moderate alignment
- Low alignment
- No Alignment
- Don't know

12.b Please explain further and perhaps include reference to a specific SDG.

### Contributions to the MIPAA/RIS

13. How well do you think the AAI project contributed to the implementation of the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS)*? (Q21 in ToR)

The AAI project contributed to the implementation of the MIPAA/RIS:

- To a great extent
- Somewhat
- Very little
- Not at all
- Don't know

13.b Please explain further.

### Uses of the AAI by different stakeholder groups

14. We would like to ask you to assess (by multiple choice) the extent to which you consider the AAI is being used by different groups and for different purposes. Please indicate *to what extent* and for *what purposes* the AAI is being used by various stakeholder groups? (Q7 in ToR)

Stakeholder Group	The AAI index is being used for <b>ageing policy monitoring</b>	The AAI index is being used for <b>analytical work &amp; producing evidence</b>	The AAI index is being used for <b>advocacy work on ageing</b>	The AAI index is being used in <b>methodological discussions on ageing</b>
Policymakers at national level  <i>Please indicate which country.....</i>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
Policymakers at sub-national level  <i>Please indicate which country.....</i> .....	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
Those engaged in advocacy on ageing	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
Those engaged in research on ageing	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
European Commission Staff	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>



Stakeholder Group	The AAI index is being used for <b>ageing policy monitoring</b>	The AAI index is being used for <b>analytical work &amp; producing evidence</b>	The AAI index is being used for <b>advocacy work on ageing</b>	The AAI index is being used in <b>methodological discussions on ageing</b>
Other group <i>Please specify</i> ..... .....	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>

14.b Any further comments on uses of the AAI.

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### Building an evidence base

15. Please rate the following accomplishments of AAI project activities that relate to building an evidence base.

The Expert Group helped to promote the use of AAI among relevant stakeholders <i>(Q8b in ToR)</i>	The 2018 AAI Analytical report contributed to building the evidence base	The evidence base on inequalities in ageing was built in Germany? <i>(Q8a in ToR)</i>	The evidence base on inequalities in ageing was built in Italy? <i>(Q8a in ToR)</i>	The evidence base on inequalities in ageing was built in Poland? <i>(Q8a in ToR)</i>	The guidelines for calculating AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level
To a great extent					
Somewhat					
Very little					
Not at all					
Don't know					

### Events offering insight into the AAI situation and promoting the use of the AAI

16. If you were involved in any of the events below, please answer these questions (Q8d in ToR)

	Offered insight into the AAI situation	Helped to promote the use of the AAI	Any further comments on these events
<b>The June 2019 Stakeholder Meeting on the AAI, Brussels (17 June 2019)</b> <i>Q8c in ToR</i>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The Side Event at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2017 in Lisbon.</b>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The Second International Seminar on AAI in Bilbao, Spain 27-28 September</b>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	

2018 <a href="#">[see link]</a>	Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The National Seminar in <u>Italy</u> on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2017</b>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The National Seminar in <u>Poland</u> on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2018</b>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The National Seminar in <u>Romania</u> on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2019</b>	Contributed a great deal to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat contributed to offering insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Very little insight into the active ageing situation <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	To a great extent <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Very little <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	

### Project activities to disseminate information on the AAI

17. Please rate AAI project activities towards dissemination of information to better inform on the AAI, and for wider recognition of AAI (*Q8e ToR*)

<p><b>If you have seen UNECE <u>presentations</u> on the AAI, how would you rate them in terms of better informing on the AAI?</b></p> <p>Very important in informing stakeholders &amp; providing recognition of AAI <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Important <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Other comments on AAI presentations
<p><b>A <u>wiki-space</u> is devoted to the index <a href="#">[wiki-space link]</a>. If you have used this space, how do you rate the wiki-space?</b></p> <p>Very important in informing stakeholders &amp; providing recognition of AAI <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Important <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Other comments on AAI the wiki-space
<p><b>A range of briefs and reports on the AAI were developed <a href="#">[available here]</a>. How do you rate these?</b></p> <p>Very important in informing stakeholders &amp; providing recognition of AAI <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately Important <input type="checkbox"/> Not Important <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Other comments on AAI briefs and reports

### **Challenges with the AAI**

18. Can you outline any **challenges /obstacles** with regard to the increased use of the Active Ageing Index for ageing policy (*Q9 in ToR*)

19. Can you outline any **challenges /obstacles** with regard to the wider recognition of the Active Ageing Index? (*Q9 in ToR*)

### **Finally, let us know your recommendations**

20. Do you have any suggestions or alternative ways for further work on the Active Ageing Index (Q14 in ToR)

## **Annex 4: List of interviewees for evaluation**

1. Ms. Olga Kharitonova,  
AAI Team Assistant Population Unit  
UNECE
2. Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich  
Chief, Population Unit,  
Statistical Division UNECE, Geneva, Switzerland
3. Ms. Lisa Warth  
UNECE Population Unit
4. Ms. Lidia Bratanova  
Director Statistical Division UNECE
5. Mr. Carsten Boldsen  
Chief, Economic Statistics Unit, Statistical Division, UNECE
6. Mr. Andres Vikat  
Chief of the Social and Demographic Statistics Section. UNECE Statistical Division Geneva,  
Switzerland. Also on Expert Group on AAI

### **Civil Society**

7. Ms. Heidrun Mollenkopf  
German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO)
8. Ms. Anne-Sophie Parent  
AGE Platform Europe (also in EG) Secretary General AGE Platform Europe Brussels,  
Belgium. Also on Expert Group on Ageing

### **European Commission or EU linked**

9. Mr. Ettore Marchetti  
Policy officer Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion European  
Commission Brussels, Belgium. Also on Expert Group on Ageing

### **Expert Group on Ageing, under Phase III of AAI project**

10. Mr. Robert Anderson  
Head of Unit Living Conditions and Quality of Life (LCQL) Eurofound Dublin, Ireland.
11. Mr. Jürgen Bauknecht  
Appointed professor for social policy and economic framework conditions University of  
Applied Sciences Düsseldorf, Germany
12. Mr. Heribert Engstler  
Head of Research Data Centre German Centre of Gerontology, Berlin, Germany

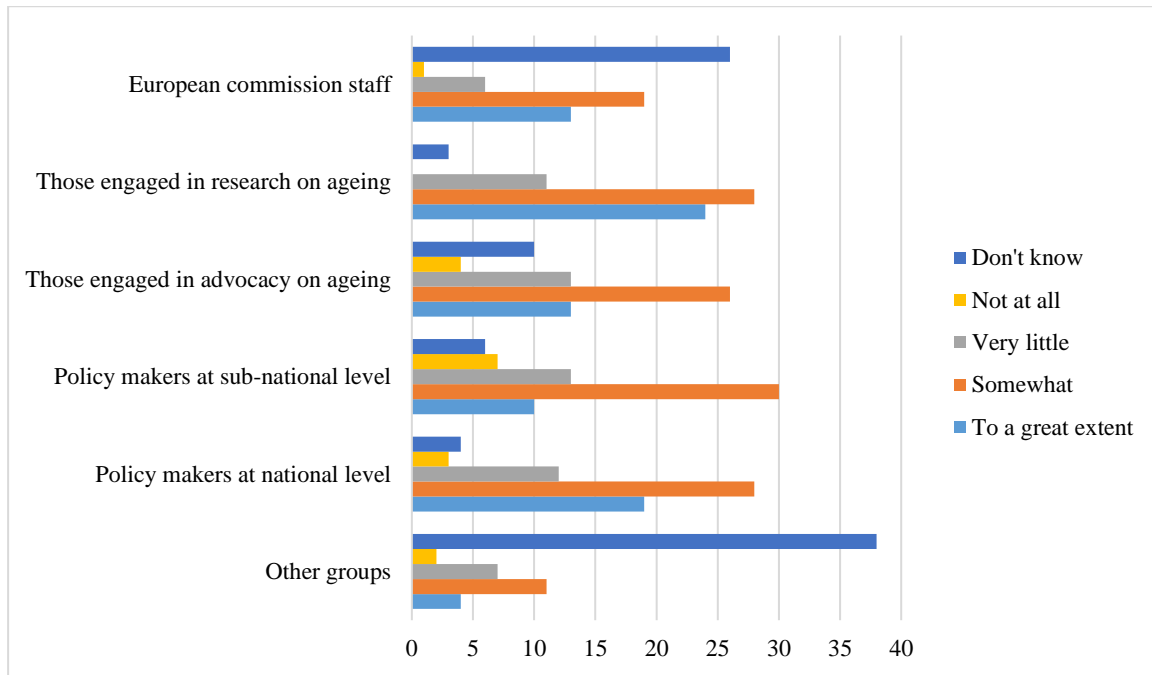
13. Mr. Kenneth Howse  
Senior Research Fellow Oxford Institute of Population Ageing University of Oxford United Kingdom
14. Mr. Giovanni Lamura  
Senior Gerontologist National Institute of Health & Science on Ageing (INRCA/IRCCS)  
Centre for Socio-Economic Research on Ageing Ancona, Italy. Also Consultant for AAI project
15. Mr. Bernd Marin  
Researcher European Bureau for Policy Consulting and Social Research, Vienna, Austria Also on Expert Group on Ageing
16. Mr. Sergio Murillo Corzo  
Director-General for Autonomy Promotion Department of Social Development Biscay Provincial Government. Bilbao, Spain
17. Ms. Jolanta Perek-Bialas  
Adjunct, PhD, Academic Lecturer, Researcher Institute of Statistics and Demography Warsaw. School of Economics and Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University Kraków, Poland
18. Mr. Karel Van Den Bosch  
Expert Federal Planning Office Brussels
19. Ms. Maria Varlamova  
Russian calculations. Jagiellonian University, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions ITN EuroAgeism Kraków, Poland
20. Mr. Koen Vleminckx  
Director of Research & Publications DG Strategy Research and International Relations FPS Social Security Brussels, Belgium
21. Mr. Asghar Zaidi  
Seoul National University and London School of Economics and Political Science Republic of Korea and London, United Kingdom
22. Ms. Eszter Zolyomi  
Researcher and Project Coordinator of MAIMI European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. Vienna

#### **Others**

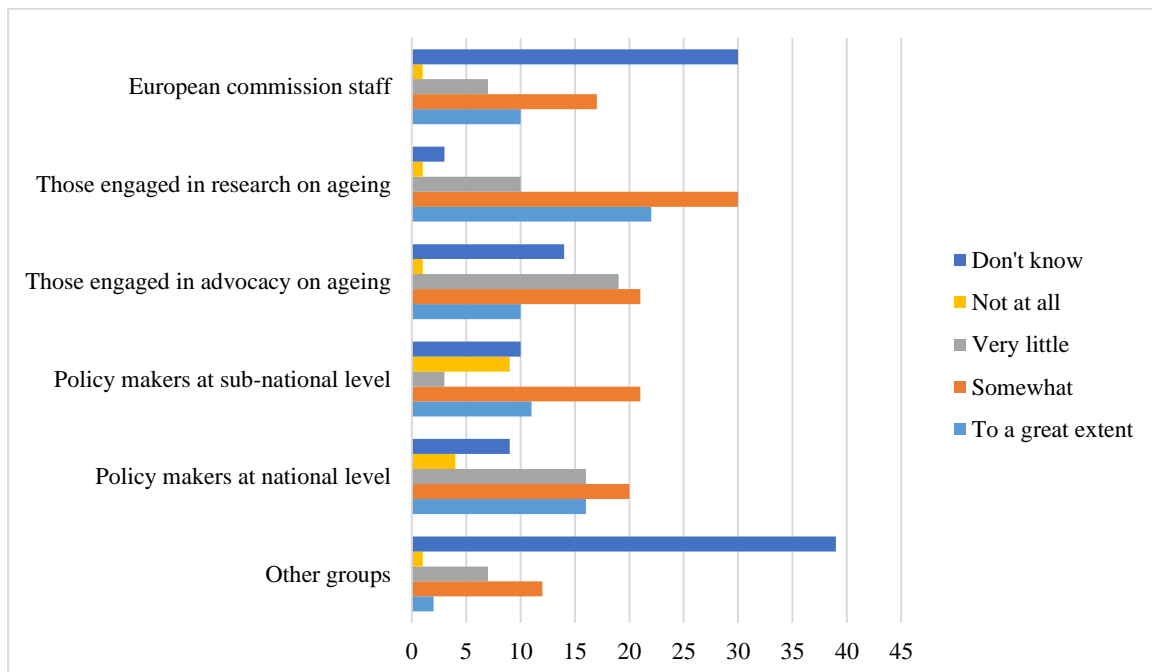
23. Ms. Yolanda Gonzalez Rabago  
Lecturer University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) also Consultant Bilbao, Spain
24. Ms. Aina Strand  
Department of Public Health. National focal point on ageing. Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services
25. Mr. Manuel Montero Rey  
Head of International Relations Unit. IMSERSO National focal point on ageing. Ministry of Health, Consumers and Social Welfare. Madrid

26. Ms. Aliona Cretu  
National focal point on ageing, Republic of Moldova. Head of the Demographic Policies Unit  
Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection
27. Ms. Olga Gagauz  
Vice director National Institute for Economic Research. Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
28. Ms. Mariana Buciuceanu-Vrabie  
National Institute for Economic Research, Republic of Moldova
29. Mr. Andrea Principi  
Researcher at National Institute of Health & Science on Ageing (INRCA). Also Consultant  
Ancona, Italy
30. Ms. Sara Marsillas Rascado  
Researcher also Consultant. Fundation Matia Gerontological Institute (NGO) Madrid, Spain
31. Ms. Malina Voicu  
Senior researcher also consultant Research Institute for Quality of Life Bucharest, Romania
32. Mr. Kieran Walsh  
Professor of Ageing and Public Policy and Director of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology  
at NUI Galway. Ireland

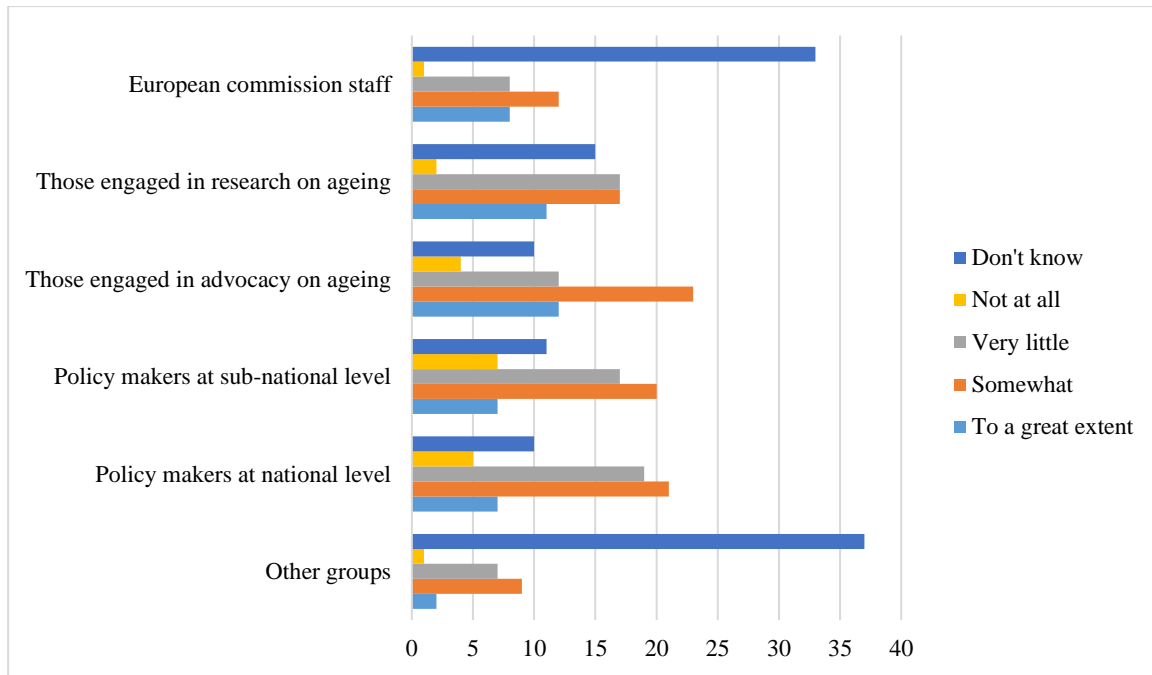
### Annex 5: Evaluation survey respondents' views on use of AAI



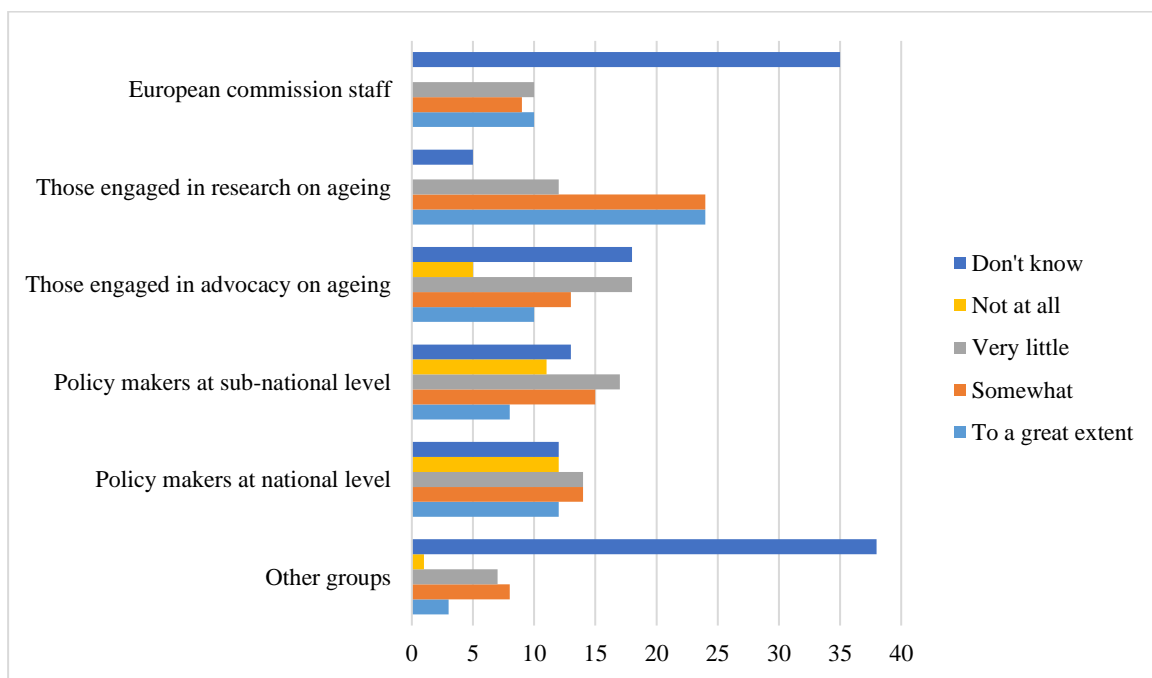
**Figure 10: Survey respondents' views on stakeholders who use the AAI for ageing policy monitoring**



**Figure 11: Survey respondents' views on stakeholders who use the AAI for analytical work and obtaining evidence on ageing**



**Figure 12: Survey respondents' views on stakeholders who use the AAI for advocacy work**

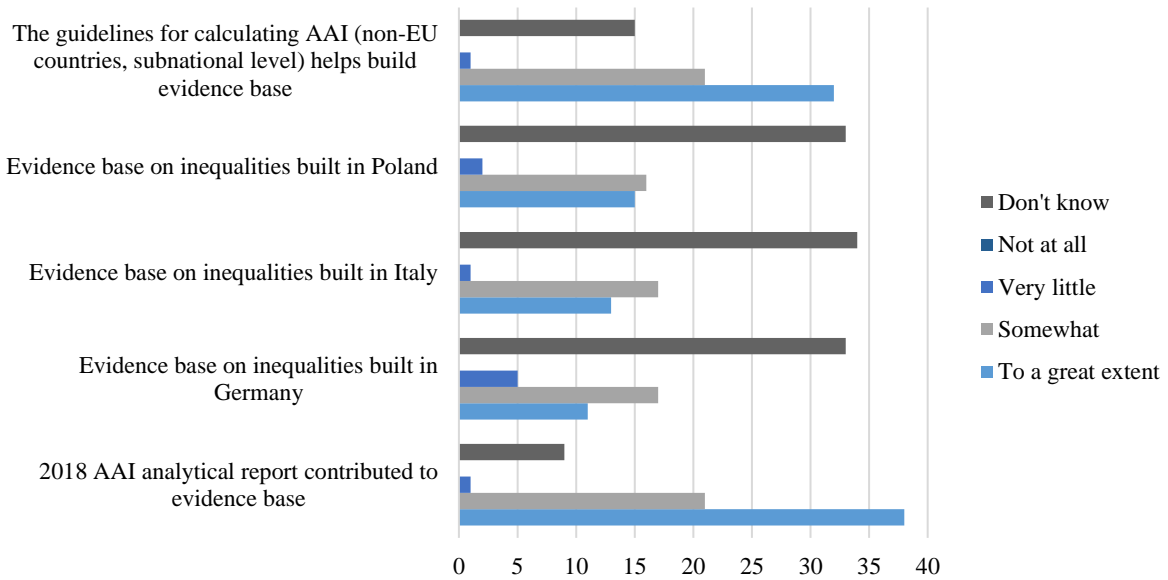


**Figure 13: Survey respondents' views on stakeholders who use the AAI in methodological discussions on ageing**



## Annex 6: Views on the extent planned activities contributed to building evidence

Survey respondents were asked to rate the AAI project activities as they related to building an evidence base. Results are outlined in Figure 14. Evidently the 2018 Analytical report and the Guidelines for calculating the AAI contributed the greatest extent to building an evidence base.



**Figure 14: Survey respondents' rating of project activities as they relate to building an evidence base**

## **Annex 7: Studies on inequalities in Germany, Italy and Poland**

Ageing and demographic change represents a major challenge for people, politics, administration and business in Germany. The Federal Government takes this challenge into account within the scope of its demographic strategy. According to an interviewee who led two studies for Germany,<sup>38</sup> adapting the AAI methodology was not easy to do. There were a lot of data gaps and a need to substitute indicators. This interviewee felt that The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) contributed to building the evidence and demonstrated their interest by providing further funding to calculate the AAI at the subnational level. The results in Germany were used as a starting point to get discussions going at the local policy level. However, the interviewee from University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf cautioned that some indicators with low results cannot be enacted upon at the local policy level, so there is a reluctance to focus on issues outside the local policy scope area. This is because the local level may not be able to act on the results. A researcher from Germany felt that the work to adapt the AAI to the local level was not worth the efforts. An individual representing civil society felt that the AAI was quite useful at the Kreis level in Germany, but to use it at this level requires considerable work. Experts must understand how the indicators work. This interviewee felt that the weighting system should be more transparent

In Italy, according to a Researcher from Ancona, they had to adopt 5 or 6 indicators, but were 85% able to use the AAI at the subnational level. The AAI Guidelines were not available at the time the report was produced, however the work at the subnational level in Italy contributed to the Guidelines. This researcher, who had calculated the AAI at the subnational level, felt that there is substantive information in the Guidelines. He felt it is best to try to adapt the index when reviewing the methodology to cover missing indicators, but explain carefully the consequences of such adaptation. Working with the National Institute of Statistics, Italy reported good quality data. During the project, the research institute was unable to cross-tabulate data by sex, educational level, living place) because of a lack of access to the National Institute of Statistics data. If the National Institute of Statistics had more funds, more sophisticated analysis could have been undertaken.

An interview with the researcher who lead the calculation of the AAI at the subnational level in Poland reiterated that the AAI is best used to look internally at ageing policy implementation within a country, rather than comparison with other countries. In Poland staff at the relevant ministry felt that the index was important and that it can demonstrate whether inequalities are increasing or decreasing, and for which groups.

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<sup>38</sup> (i) Analysis of AAI results for different population groups in Germany, 2017: [Report](#) and under a previous phase, (ii) pilot study at local level in Germany, 2016: [Report](#)

## **Annex 8: Presentations, seminars, high level events (Objective 2)**

A side event “*Active Ageing Index: ways to realise the potential of living longer*” took place in Lisbon, Portugal, on 21 September 2017 during the fourth UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing. The AAI was presented at this side event, which aimed to provide a dedicated space for in-depth discussion, experience exchange and peer learning in ageing policy, which is of interest to the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration. One National Focal Point on Ageing felt there was a missed opportunity to promote the AAI more in Lisbon, as the presentation should have been discussed at a higher level, (rather than a side event).

Intergovernmental bodies were important for disseminating information on the AAI. The Working Group on Ageing was one such body. UNECE regularly presented the developments under the project to the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and its Bureau (twice a year). The Chief of the Social and Demographic Statistics Section stated that bringing AAI attention to a regular standing working group, where representatives from all UNECE countries came together and discuss their actions was important. The Statistical division works with Central Statistical Offices (or CSOs) in countries, who have an influence in promoting certain methodologies that have international comparability. Testimonials from others working at the policy level are important to disseminating the AAI results. Mid-level officials talk to each other at international conferences and sometimes share information, particularly those who share the same language.

National seminars were organized every year during the project:

- A seminar on policy implication of AAI in Ancona, Italy, on 11 May 2017;
- A National Seminar on AAI in Warsaw, Poland, on 18 June 2018;
- Two other national seminars in Romania and Spain on 30 May and 26 August 2019 respectively.
- As mentioned in Box 1 UNECE organized a Seminar (November 2018) in Geneva, which included a focus on linkages between the AAI and the SDGs.

One interviewee stated how sometimes at these seminars, participants from the national offices of statistics met researchers from their country for the first time. Interviewees from research found the different events and seminars interesting in terms of methodological steps.

A Researcher from Poland outlined how through the UNECE, they invited regional presidents (16 regions) to hear about the AAI results at subnational level. In Poland, being linked to the UNECE is highly prestigious, and this was evident by the priority placed by the Government on the AAI. This researcher noted the importance of researchers working closely with their respective government ministry, providing policy advice. Evidently this is possible in some countries more than others.

According to a researcher who attended the Romanian seminar, discussions were very constructive, with representatives from NGOs on ageing present also. In essence, the results provided a focal point for civil society and the ministry with responsibility for policy on ageing to come together and discuss ageing issues. However, the interviewee was unable to report any positive changes in Romania as the Seminar only took place in May 2019.

According to a Researcher from Italy, the AAI is very useful for policymaking, but not in terms of aiming to get a higher AAI score itself, rather for setting targets and monitoring ageing. This researcher concurred with the Romanian researcher with regards to involving organisations that represent ‘seniors’ as changes should be planned with their involvement. In Italy, many are striving to create such a policy space in regions, comprising regional department managers and senior representatives. According to this respondent, Italy now has 10 or 11 regional laws on active ageing (out of 20 regions). One region mentions the AAI in the law.

## Box 2: Second international seminar on AAI

### Second International Seminar, Bilbao

The goal of the second seminar was to provide a multidisciplinary forum for those interested in the use of AAI to enhance the knowledge about ageing and older people and lead to the development of better policies. Over 60 abstracts were submitted after a call for papers, indicating the interest in ageing and the index specifically. Some papers were more applied, and others strongly academic. Thirty-seven papers were selected to be presented at either a plenary session or poster session. Approximately 144 participants from 37 countries attended, including researchers, policymakers, and representatives of international and regional organisations, national statistical offices, and civil society. The World Bank and WHO gave keynote opening speeches. The Seminar examined the ways the AAI has been used or might be used. The AAI results from EU national level were presented as well as the subnational level in Poland and Italy. The OECD presented the *Better-life index* as an interesting way to measure well-being.<sup>39</sup> This index allows for a comparison of well-being across countries, based on 11 topics the OECD has identified as essential, in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life.

## Box 3: AAI Analytical Report

### The 2018 AAI Analytical Report

The June 2019 Analytical Report made considerable efforts to ensure the AAI is seen as a flexible tool. Similarities and differences across countries can be highlighted. Apart from county-specific policies, Part 3 of the June 2019 Analytical Report on the AAI provides interesting results with regard to linking AAI results with existing policy frameworks.

In the 2018 AAI Analytical Report, the authors used a cluster approach, beyond the national level results (in essence, playing down the importance of national rank compared to earlier reports). Countries were grouped into clusters based on the proximity of their result overall and by domain. One of the authors of the Analytical Report outlined how they tried to make the findings readable for a wider audience, providing useful insights. The aim is that the policy insights could be useful for the European Semester, or feed into monitoring MIPAA.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/111111111111>

## Annex 9: Use of the AAI by various stakeholders

### Interview comments on the use of the AAI

A UNECE staff member felt that the AAI has been very useful as a monitoring tool for countries. The Europe region seems to be the only region that measures quantitatively aspects of ageing, although the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) are now considering developing an Index.

The AAI results are used widely to demonstrate the relative score of a country. For example, the National Focal Point on Ageing in **Norway** stated that they use the AAI to demonstrate their relative score. Currently, Norway is lacking a good national tool for monitoring their ageing policies.

A researcher from **Belgium** found that the index is a good way to synthesize information and present it. They intend to present it at a Conference in December this year, as they think it would be useful for Belgium. However, one survey respondent from the Belgian Federal Planning Bureau Belgium stated that the AAI was not considered in policymaking.

Countries tended to be more interested in the results of the tool when they came close to the bottom in ranking. For example, Poland wished to investigate why they were ranked so low. In the Russian Federation, both the AAI and the Age Watch Index<sup>40</sup> were calculated. The discrepancies between both results spurred interest amongst Russian officials. The gaps between men and women were wide in the Russian Federation, and policymakers were really interested as to why there is an eleven-year discrepancy in the life expectancy between women and men. Other countries such as the **United Kingdom**, were less interested as they were ranked towards the top. However, a researcher from the United Kingdom reiterated that it is useful to have some type of measurement for cross-country comparison.

Since being implemented by the Biscay Provincial Government in 2013, measurement of ageing using the AAI has expanded in other regions of **Spain**. Policymaking based on evidence and data is important for monitoring policy according to the Biscay Provincial Government. The point was made that some policies are made at the regional level, whereas others are at the national level.

A senior researcher from **Romania** felt that similar to the Human Development Index, the AAI is a useful tool for the academic community and for policymakers as it allows us to see changes over time. She recommended not adjusting the index, so such changes in ageing can be monitored.

An EG member representing AgePlatform (civil society), stated that they find the indicator results very useful. For example, they are currently using the AAI in a smaller project called *Age Barometer*. *Age Barometer* annually publishes an assessment of the socio-economic situation of older people across the EU and how this situation underpins the respect of their human rights. Annual assessments are linked to the monitoring of policy processes at EU and national levels in regard to ageing under the European Semester.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The AgeWatch Index is HelpAge International's product, which ranks countries by how well their ageing populations are faring. The index is based on four domains that are key enablers of older people's well-being: income, health, capabilities, and enabling environments. AgeWatch aims at measuring well-being, while the AAI focuses more on older persons' potential and contributions.

<sup>41</sup> Important policy processes for AgePlatform include for example the EU Pillar of Social Rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Linking the AAI project to these was considered very helpful.

#### **Box 4: AAI case example, the Republic of Moldova**

##### **The AAI in the Republic of Moldova**

In the Republic of Moldova, every opportunity was used to present the AAI results to local public authorities (in meetings with Parliament commissions, the conference in April 2016). The survey results and the individual indicator results helped introduce the concept of Active Ageing into a roadmap of policy action. The indicators provided data, which allowed the government to think of new measures. The AAI indicators helped the Government devise new measures for older men and women.

Researchers interviewed did not know the objectives of the roadmap, but did reiterate that their ministry for Health and Social Protection is paying attention to the AAI as a tool to quantify social policies. A quote from the Secretary General at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection reveals the importance of evidence for policy in demographic related areas: "*Evidence-based data is the basis for effective policymaking. The demographic situation in our country requires immediate action*" Boris Gilca, Secretary General, Ministry of Health, Republic of Moldova in January 2019.

In the Republic of Moldova, researchers plan to introduce some questions in a forthcoming Generations and Gender survey (sample size 10,000) that will be realised in 2019/20. The Generations and Gender Survey will highlight the demographic trends and challenges in order to develop evidence-based policies.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The Generations and Gender Survey began in the Republic of Moldova in January 2019. So far, the survey has been undertaken in 22 countries and represents a global tool for monitoring demographic change and responding to ageing processes, low fertility rates, changes in family structures, intergenerational relationships, and others.

## Annex 10: Conceptual criticisms of the AAI

### Box 5: Criticisms of the AAI methodology

#### Conceptual criticism of the Active Ageing Index itself

The criticisms of the AAI itself are in some ways beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, it can be argued that these criticisms relate to Objective 1, further developing the AAI methodology to enhance its flexibility. In any case, conceptual criticisms noted in documents, interview and surveys are summarised below. Please note that these are subjective criticisms and some criticisms may not be based on full information with regard to the AAI.

- The AAI is encompassing too many aspects of ageing making it normatively ambiguous, and technically too complex. Whether or not older people engage in Information Technology (IT) and sports is normative and judgmental. For example, older people can be ranked and perceived differently if they read a newspaper on the Internet or read a paper copy.
- According to many interviewed, the ranking of AAI indicators is a problem that could never be resolved. Being more active is not always better. The normative aspect indicates the higher the scores the better. The AAI may not be fully accepted amongst all researchers and statistic offices unless the composition of the index is explained clearly (what it is and what it is not).
- One survey respondent stated that once you understand how weights are calculated and applied, and furthermore what studies they are based on, it becomes harder to comprehend how the index is being calculated, and subsequently draw any insights on active ageing. This is because different databases have their own methodological issues and implications, but they are combined in the AAI.
- Weights are higher for the formal labour market and other productive activities. There are criticisms of this and the economic implications behind the indicators (i.e. employment).
- Where pensions are not good or available, older people stay in work as long as they can (Romania). In Italy, it was noted that there is only one word that covers retirement and being a pensioner – “Pensionato” or “Pensionata”. Thus, measuring the employment rate of very old people does not make sense, as you seldom find someone working once retired.
- Only one of the index items can be linked to people who need care. High levels of care provided by family members are characteristic of societies with a lack of public care services. Caring for grand children can be as a result of inadequate or expensive childcare facilities (crèches, or kindergartens), rather than choosing to do so.
- Another indicator that demonstrates cultural differences, is the indicator that positively considers living alone or living as a couple. This is likely to imply a Northern European family model rather than a Southern European model. Retirement homes in some countries are substandard, and no older person wishes to live there, so they live independently.
- A significant critique relates to the theory of model ageing, which argues against concepts such as ‘active ageing’ because they can exacerbate inequalities in older populations. A framework for old-age exclusion which depicts interconnected domains is outlined by Walsh et. al (2017).

## **Annex 11: Guidelines produced during the project period**

The idea to develop subnational guidelines came from efforts to calculate the index at the subnational level. A consultant, who had worked on the AAI calculations for the Russian Federation<sup>43</sup> led in the development of these Guidelines, which were completed in February 2019. Members of the Expert group were able to provide comments and advice to the author of the draft guidelines (from September 2018). The Expert group was very helpful in reviewing and providing feedback on the draft Guidelines. For the moment, the Guidelines lack a table of contents.

### **Box 6: Guidelines for calculating the AAI**

#### **Guidelines for calculating AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level**

The Guidelines for calculating AAI in non-EU countries and at subnational level were carefully written and the language simplified to make it readable and useful to policymakers. Summaries are provided via graphs.

Ten steps for calculating the AAI in various contexts are outlined. The Guidelines detail how to deal with weights; how to locate data sources; and outline in detail the AAI domains and indicators. For each domain, possible alternative variables are provided, with types of survey questions that could be used, based on what other countries used (for example, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, the Russian Federation). The Guidelines also contain a detailed section on methodological adjustments, and interpretation of the results.

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<sup>43</sup> The Team came from the High School of Economics, Moscow.



## Annex 12: Basis of an Action Plan for AAI project follow-up

Table 11 below summarizes different views on multilateral institutional support that is considered important for the continuation of the AAI, and specific elements of support that would be helpful. These views, along with results from the document review undertaken for the evaluation are presented to form the basis of a follow-up Action Plan.

**Table 11: Action Plan for AAI follow-up**

Rational for political support from EU/UNECE for continuation of the AAI	Specific elements of support that could be planned (national level or/and more broadly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support from EU and UNECE strengthens the AAI<sup>44</sup> framework and stresses the importance of implementing it in policies of each country. The combined action of the UNECE and EU (Eurostat and the European Commission) can encourage national legislators and the national statistical institutes to officially adopt the AAI to monitor progress in active ageing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of data for AAI indicators for the next appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation in 2020-2021</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An international institution facilitates a common <b>approach</b> for the calculation and interpretation of EU national results.</li> <li>• A coordination role is required for the future to preserve the construction and stability of the index.</li> <li>• International support for the use of AAI (a framework) that demand calculation for annual/quarterly reports is very valuable for getting things done. Without this the AAI will easily discontinue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion required on how the methodology can get tweaked over time without losing the benefit of comparability.</li> <li>• Some ‘body’ is required to discuss cultural issues and ageing, because targets in terms of active ageing/AAI should be set taking in consideration the culture of a given place, the aspirations and motivations of the older population in that place.<sup>45</sup></li> <li>• Organising another international seminar (in 2-3 years time) would be beneficial.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU/UNECE offer <b>reliability and prestige</b> to the AAI project.</li> <li>• Governments will be more willing to use the AAI insights if multilateral institutions back it up.</li> <li>• The absence of ‘official centralized’ recalculation can undermine the trust of politicians in the AAI tool, particularly if they think that there may be some data manipulation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to organised presentations at side events, such as the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing keeps the AAI on the radar. Enable relevant ministers understand the importance of the AAI.</li> <li>• It would be helpful to have the experts funded from time to time to present AAI at relevant events.</li> <li>• Support required to organise national seminars.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sharing information and results between countries</b> can hardly be done without multilateral support.</li> <li>• Only with a wide use of the index (and indicators) via a mandate (EU or UNECE) <b>can possible comparisons</b> be made.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More examples of good practice in use of the index are an important factor which will affect future use.</li> <li>• Analysis is needed of the positive and negative impacts of policies on ageing in a country sharing examples of what can be done on specific ageing issues.</li> <li>• Support of subnational analysis of AAI results. More support is required on the application of the AAI at the local or regional level, where there is a demand.</li> <li>• Funding availability in non-EU countries, including national funding, and the ability of adaptation of the index for sub-national use. If the costs of conducting subnational surveys are too high, the survey is not going to continue to be used.</li> <li>• How to compare across different dimensions (gender).</li> <li>• Another analytical paper should be issued in 2022.</li> </ul>

<sup>44</sup> Eighteen survey respondents mentioned the need for EU/UNECE support.

<sup>45</sup> This could also mean that in a given place, for a given indicator, the target score could be low rather than high. Target scores could be different in different places.

Rational for political support from EU/UNECE for continuation of the AAI	Specific elements of support that could be planned (national level or/and more broadly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having access to open data and a flexible methodology via an international institution is beneficial for policymakers to monitor the annual results and progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodological support is required in some countries<sup>46</sup>.</li> <li>• A ‘helpline’ or ‘help-desk’ (by e-mail) is required in the coming years to ensure that people who have doubts on how to best use the AAI, can be supported.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic seminars and commissioning new reports and materials from multilateral organisations will keep the AAI alive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to give clear explanations of the AAI results, outlining what they mean, and any cultural or other nuances associated with the indicators.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central guidelines, and the forthcoming visualisation tool are all helpful tools for AAI calculations and analysis of national results, but require an important body to publicise them.</li> <li>• Funding helps advocacy and awareness raising considerably.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme website requires maintenance, gatekeepers.</li> <li>• Maintaining the Wiki and visualization tool to allow for AAI visibility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint ownership between the EU and UNECE is a good collaborative option to ‘house’ the AAI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding to set up structures for ‘housing’ and analysing results.</li> <li>• Follow other UNECE models for housing data, such as the long-term data management programme, <i>Generations and Gender</i>.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Nations is the custodian for the SDS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More guidelines on linking the AAI with the SDGs would be helpful to influence the continued usage of the AAI.</li> </ul>

<sup>46</sup> E.g. non-EU countries such as Kazakhstan