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Using the results of external evaluation – international experiences

Serban Iosifescu, EQAVET expert
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The two competing purposes of external evaluation:

Accountability purpose “School effectiveness”	Development purpose “School improvement”
Focus on schools	Focus on teachers
Focus on school organisation	Focus on school processes
Data-driven, with the emphasis on outcomes	Empirical evaluation of effects of changes
Quantitative in orientation	Qualitative in orientation
Lack of knowledge about how to implement change strategies	Exclusively concerned with change in schools
More concerned with change in student outcomes	More concerned with journey of school improvement than its destination
More concerned with schools at one point in time	More concerned with schools as changing
Based on research knowledge	Focused on practitioner knowledge
Concerned with schools that are effective	Concerned with how schools become effective
Static orientation (school as it is)	Dynamic orientation (school as it has been, or might be)

Source: Reynolds et al. (1996) and Chapman (2005) in Yeung (2011).



The two competing purposes of external evaluation:

Table 6.12 Use of the results of external school evaluation for accountability (2009)

Total number of systems by level of influence:	The degree of influence the results of external school evaluation may have over:							
	Evaluation of school performance	Evaluation of school administration	Evaluation of individual teachers	Support to improve teaching skills	The likelihood of a school closure	Another financial reward or sanction	The size of the school budget	Teacher pay and bonuses
High	11	8	6	5	7	2	0	0
Moderate	5	7	8	9	2	2	2	3
Low	3	3	3	5	1	4	7	0
None	1	2	2	1	8	9	10	12
UK (England)	High	High	High	High	High	Low	Low	Moderate
Ireland	High	High	High	High	Moderate	None	None	None
Belgium (Fr.)	High	High	High	High	Low	None	None	None
Turkey	High	High	High	Moderate	High	Low	Low	None
Iceland	High	High	Low	Low	a	None	None	a
UK (Scotland)	High	High	a	High	High	a	a	a
Poland	High	Moderate	High	High	None	m	None	m
Slovak Republic	High	Moderate	High	Low	High	Moderate	Low	None
Netherlands	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	None	None	None
Belgium (Fl.)	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Low	a
Portugal	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate	None	None	None	None
Austria	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Germany	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	None	None	None
France	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	Low	Low	None
Israel	Moderate	None	Low	Moderate	None	None	Low	None
Czech Republic	Moderate	High	Moderate	Low	High	High	Moderate	Moderate
Korea	Low	High	None	Moderate	None	Low	None	None
Spain	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	None	None	None	None
Luxembourg	Low	Low	Moderate	Low	a	a	Low	a
Estonia	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Note: The symbol "a" denotes that this is not applicable and the symbol "m" denotes that information is missing.

Source: OECD (2011).

Synergies for Better Learning. An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment (2013). Paris: OECD -

http://www.oecd.org/education/school/Evaluation_and_Assessment_Synthesis_Report.pdf

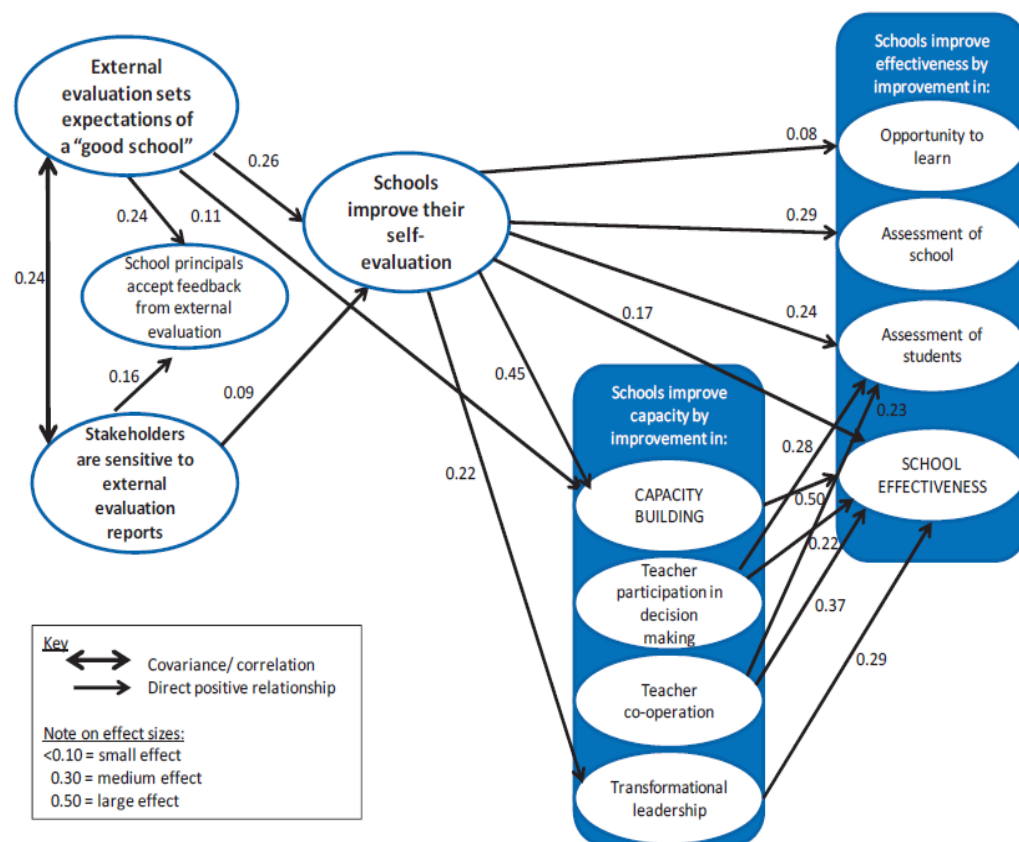
The intended impact of external evaluation:

Three common levers for school improvement:

- External evaluation sets expectations on quality (i.e. with evaluation criteria and standards indicating a “good school”).
- The results of external evaluation are shared with stakeholders (boards / management, parents and students etc.), stakeholders are sensitive to the results and this leads to pressure for improvement.
- External evaluation promotes and stimulates improvement of self-evaluation processes.

Figure 6.2 Evidence on reported improvement actions in schools following external school evaluation

Path analysis of school principal reports on external school evaluation in Styria in Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and England in the United Kingdom



Source: Ehren et al. (2013).



The unintended impact of external evaluation:

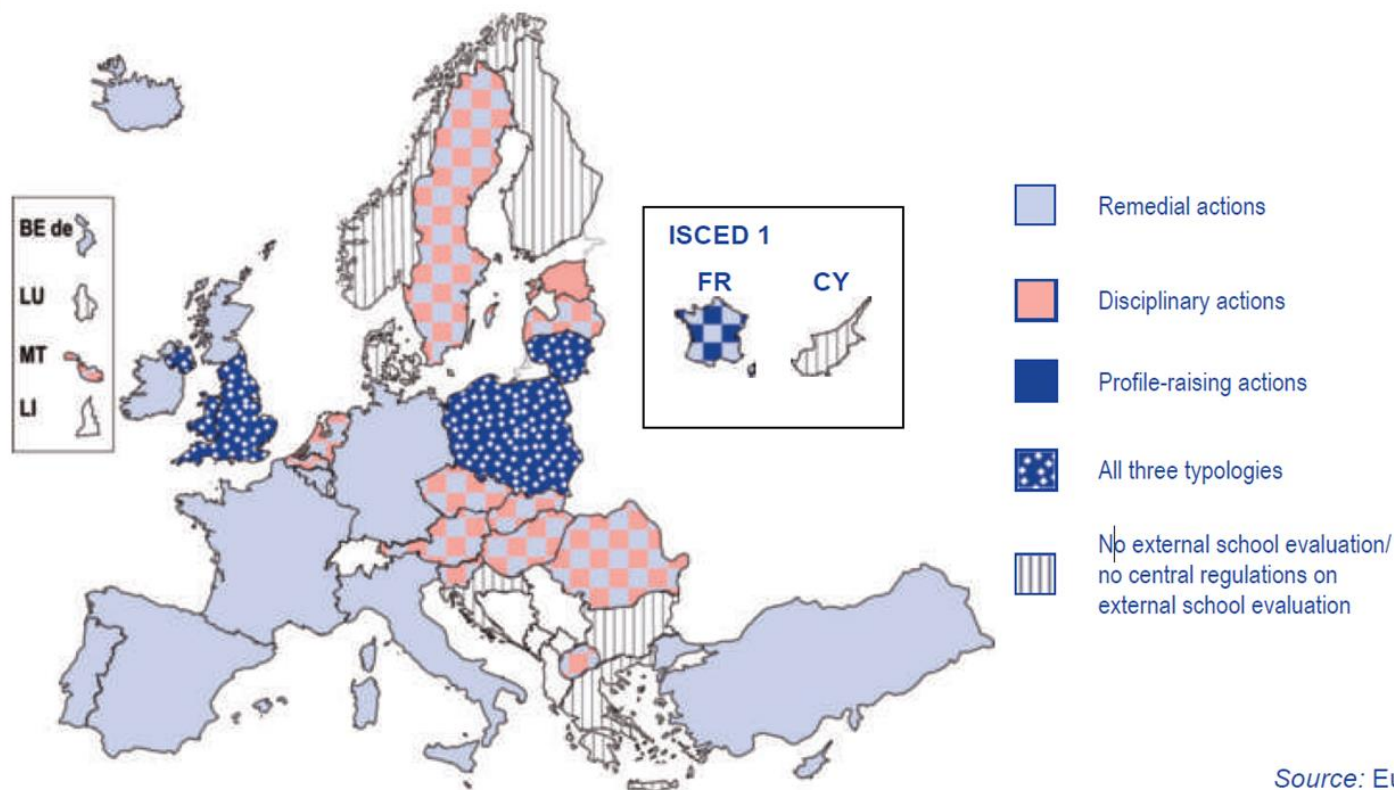
Unintended impact can include, for example:

- Extensive preparation for external evaluation and paying less attention to the teaching and learning process during that period.
- Undue stress for staff in anticipation of an external evaluation and staff complaining of preparations for external evaluation being stressful and time consuming.
- The external evaluation body determines the expectations of good education / training; thus, new teaching approaches and curriculum experimentation may be hindered by the concerns that these could distract staff from concentrating on meeting the expected external evaluation standards.
- Too much focus on accountability purpose may determine that compliancy dominate evaluation.



The follow up of external evaluation:

Figure 1.7: Typology of outcomes following the external school evaluation report, full-time compulsory general education, 2013/14

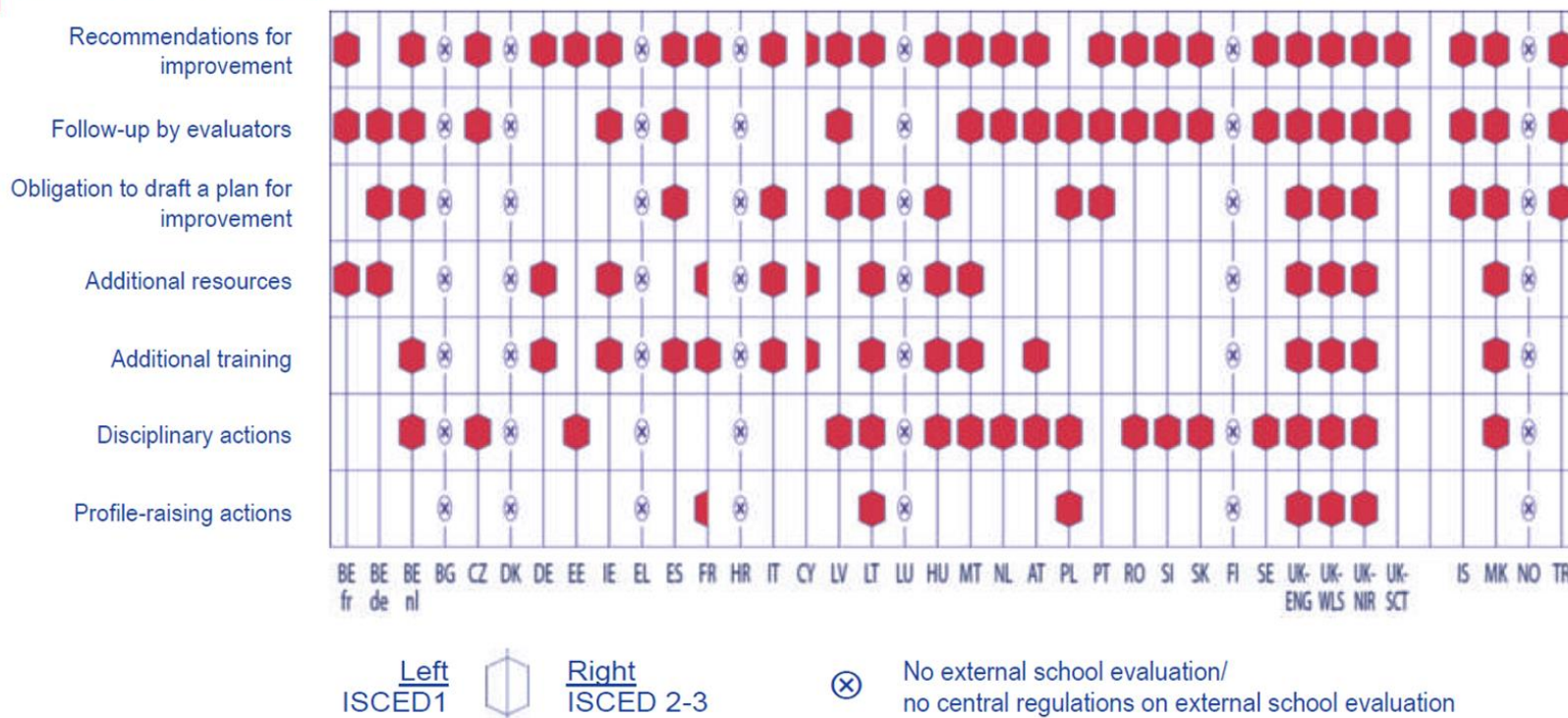


Source: Eurydice.



The follow up of external evaluation:

Figure 1.8: Typology of outcomes of the external evaluation of schools, full-time compulsory general education, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Assuring Quality in Education: Policies and Approaches to School Evaluation in Europe. Eurydice Report (2015). European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union -

<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4a2443a7-7bac-11e5-9fae-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



The follow up of external evaluation:

Aggregated reporting on evaluation findings:

- Evaluation findings are also distributed to central/top level authorities in most countries.
- Often, evaluation bodies compile annual or biennial reports that provide a general overview.
- The nature of such reporting can however serve different purposes:
 - In Spain, Slovenia, and Romania for example, it focuses on the activities of the evaluation body.
 - In Belgium (French Community), Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, it provides a general overview of findings and recommendations.
 - In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it covers both topics.
 - In Romania, again, a report on the general quality of the education system is prepared every four years.
 - In some countries, such as the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland), in addition to annual reports on the evaluation activity and/or findings, specific thematic reports are compiled.
 - In Austria, the aggregated school inspection data at provincial level is the basis for regional development plans by school type, and the regional aggregated findings inform the national development plan.
- In most cases, thematic, annual, or biennial reports are made public through the evaluation body website or the central/top level authority distribution channels.



Policy recommendations:

- Optimise the feedback of nationally collected data to schools / providers for self-evaluation and development planning.
- Promote the wider use of the results of external evaluation: the reports should not be too technical (should be readable for a wider audience).
- Systematic follow-up by the external evaluators and/or appropriate authorities or support agencies; such follow-up should include both a monitoring and support function.
- Taking into account a broad set of performance indicators together with adequate contextual information.



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Thank you for your attention!