Defining the scope and the needs of the e-monitoring tool

Mapping of the available databases and e-tools

Recommendations on the structure of the monitoring and management mechanism for DI with associated data needs and indicators

Deliverables 12, 13 and 14 (as per the Workplan) under Component 2, Output 2.2 Activity 2.2.1 - Provide advice to the Greek government on how to monitor the DI process

EASPD
IMPROVING SERVICES
IMPROVING LIVES

European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities

Credits & Rights

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List of Abbreviations

DI: Deinstitutionalisation

EASPD: European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities

ECI: Early Childhood Intervention

MoLSA: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

MIA: Ministry of Interior Affairs

MoEd: Ministry of Education

MoH: Ministry of Health

MoJ: Ministry of Justice

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NCDP: National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities

IS: Information System

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

UGIS: Unified Geoinformation System

IDIKA: e-Government Centre for Social Security

OPEKA: Organisation for Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity

EKKA: National Centre for Social Solidarity

1. Introduction

This document is developed in the framework of "Technical support on the deinstitutionalisation (DI) process in Greece" project, giving assistance to the Greek government to strengthen its capacities in implementing the DI process. The project did not only aim at developing a policy framework through the Strategy, Action Plan and Roadmap, but also at supporting effective implementation and management of the DI process, of which monitoring is an important component.

This document is developed to provide the Greek authorities with recommendations on how to best manage and monitor the DI process with e-tools integrated in the existing Greek government e-platform(s) managed by the e-government agency HDIKA. It aims to clarify concepts and scope and provide guidance and tools for effective and efficient oversight, support, quality control and reporting systems and processes of the DI project. It is expected that this will help ensure that appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools are in place and are effectively used to measure progress.

In the first part of this document, we define the general scope and the need of an e-monitoring tool. It provides a stocktaking exercise of the existing information systems and databases. This is followed by analysis of the available data and functions as well as identification of gaps and dysfunctions (i.e., areas where there is a lack of availability of data).

Then specific recommendations are provided on the structure of an effective e-monitoring tool for DI with associated data needs and indicators concerning all main areas of the DI process namely, actions preventing institutionalisation, the gradual closure of institutional settings, the transition of persons with support needs to community and the development of new services and frameworks.

2. Defining the scope and the needs of the e-monitoring tool

2.1 Monitoring process

Monitoring is often believed to be the last element of the DI process. However, setting up monitoring tools at the end of the process is one of the common mistakes made when planning DI. We must build M&E into the entire process from the start and not when everything is already up and running. By doing so, we should:

- Ensure equal consideration for outcomes for service users and not only programme outputs, which often give little if any information on peoples' lived experience;
- Provide an 'early warning system'. Checking whether objectives are achieved and are being sustained allows for timely, periodic and appropriate interventions to ensure the project is 'adhering to the plan';

- Ensure high-quality planning before, during and after the transition of children and adults according to international minimum standards and best practices;
- Consolidate information collected from staff activity reports and project implementation;
- Enable professionals to perform case audits and service users' satisfaction surveys to measure the quality of the services offered;
- Support data analysis and information dissemination to the appropriate coordinating mechanisms, professionals and service users.

Monitoring is a continual function that keeps project managers and stakeholders informed about progress made towards achieving their goals and objectives. Data on specific, predetermined indicators is systematically collected and analysed to track actual project performance for the purpose of management and decision-making.

In the context of the project "Technical assistance to the Deinstitutionalisation process in Greece" we agreed to develop a detailed monitoring mechanism. More specifically, a monitoring and evaluation Committee is suggested to monitor all parts of the DI process according to a structured monitoring guide which is developed on the basis of actions and indicators described in the National DI Action Plan[1]. The members of the M&E Committee have been trained in using this monitoring guide.

2.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Committee for DI

The general structure of the social care system includes the involvement of the central government but also that of regional governments and municipalities. DI will follow this operational structure. A National M&E Committee for DI will, inter alia, coordinate all DI actions to ensure that DI policies designed at a national level will be further developed, specified and implemented at the regional and local level. The leading authority for developing and implementing DI policies and actions, described in the National DI Action Plan, is the MoLSA and Social Affairs portfolio. More specifically, the Directorates of the Secretary-General of Social Solidarity and Poverty Prevention are in charge of promoting, implementing and monitoring these policies. The thirteen Regional Governments and the twelve regional Social Welfare Centres of Greece will help plan and budget initiatives needed in their area as part of the National DI Strategy and Action Plan. At the local level, community-based social services are the primary contact point for citizens that draw on support. Social services have real-time access to all information, programmes implemented at a national, regional or local level, services and specialised settings available in the Municipality or Region. Therefore, community-based social services are the natural implementation bodies for gatekeeping mechanisms and DI policies that help children and vulnerable adults live a good life in the community.

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[1] For a detailed description of the guide see deliverable titled "DI Monitoring Framework" which has been developed in the context of the Activity 3.1.2 of the project "Training for stakeholders monitoring the DI process"

A National M&E Committee for DI oversees all these levels of implementation of the National DI Strategy and Action Plan. It is therefore suggested to include members from the MoLSA and all Ministries whose policies affect children, persons with disabilities and elderly persons (such as the MFin, MoH, MoEd, MoJ, MoIA). It is also suggested to include members from the local and regional governments, independent authorities (such as the Ombudsperson's Office), public and private service providers, and service users.

The National M&E Committee should regularly consult with entities that can offer technical support on best practices and methodological tools for implementing and monitoring national policies at the regional and local level. These entities can include delegations from countries that have made progress in DI, EU institutions, the National Confederation for Persons with Disabilities, the Church of Greece, NGOs, civil society, groups of service users etc.

The National M&E Committee should regularly (possibly every six months) develop reports on the progress of the financial and practical scope of the DI programme and submit them to the General Directorates of Welfare. Reports on the completion of the National DI Strategy and Action Plan, specific legislative changes, identification of resources, and agreed assessment processes with the implementing entities should be available to the Consulting Entities and published every six months. The National M&E Committee should also carry out regular or ad hoc audits in institutions and social care services that carry out DI programmes.

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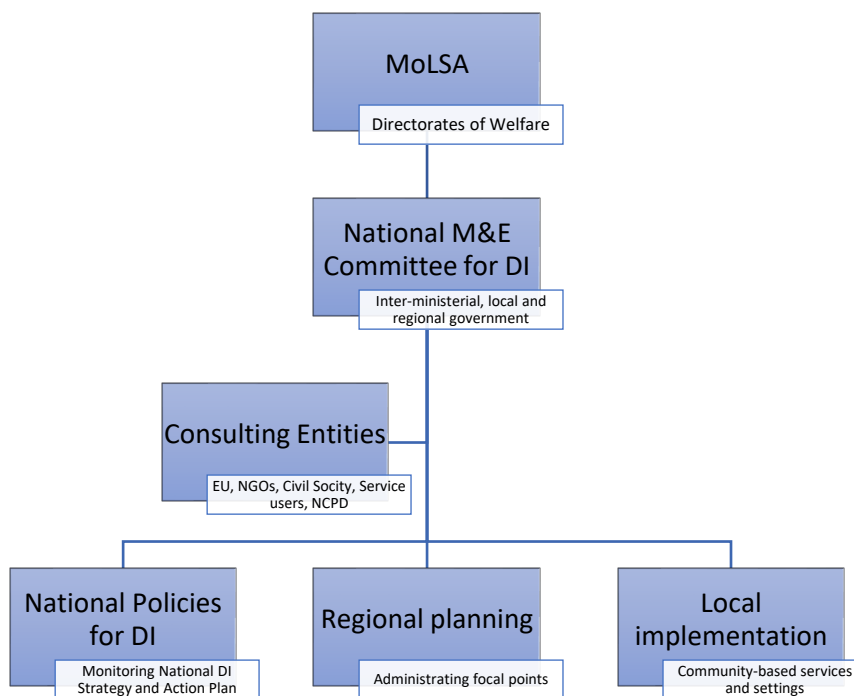
2.3 The role of an e-monitoring tool for DI

The National M&E Committee for DI will use all methodological and monitoring tools available to support their work. In addition to these tools, a specialised e-monitoring tool for DI should be developed to

monitor the progress of the transition from institutional to community-based care, following key quantitative data concerning children, persons with disabilities and elderly persons currently living in institutions, and the development of new community-based services.

The e-monitoring tool could be an excel based semi-annual tracking tool to be used by the monitoring committee members to audit the performance of the DI process as stipulated in the DI Strategy and Action Plan. Capturing comprehensive data on key program activities using a standardised tool helps build a robust data set for tracking progress and measuring performance. The concept of a single consolidated data set, monthly iterations and uniform reporting mechanism minimise discrepancies in data reported and used at various levels.

This e-monitoring tool should be designed to accompany existing monitoring tools and support the general mechanism for monitoring DI. It aims to be an easy-to-use instrument that will help collect baseline data to show the starting point and further support the National M&E Committee for DI in using milestones and indicators to measure progress.

An e-monitoring tool will operate properly only when we can extract information from existing digital systems and databases. In the next chapter, we take stock of the current status in that field, and we identify the interventions needed to support critical parameters of the DI process.

3. Mapping of the available databases and e-tools

The Greek legislation specifies various information systems and registers, related to the General Directorate of Social Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and public entities supervised by the MoLSA. Most important of all is the Unified Geoinformation System which is a provision in law 4445/2016 that introduces the National Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion Policies.

Other registers and information systems related to the DI process are the Information System and web portal e-pronoia, the "Foster Care and Adoption Information System" (anynet web portal[2]), which implements Law 4538/2018 for foster care and Adoption. In addition to anynet.gr all governmental departments, other agencies and public bodies regarding children and families have been merged into the website paidi.gov.gr. This website includes news and communications, statistics and consultations on childcare and parenting, including giving birth, fostering and adoption, childcare and schools.

Other relevant information systems and registers include the "National and Regional Register of Non-Profit Private Social Care Institutions" (Law 4455/2017), and the Information System of the Organisation for Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity (OPEKA). More specifically, Law 4520/2018 sets up OPEKA and includes provisions to address bureaucracy and enhance transparency. OPEKA and is the main policy lever for implementing the policies developed under the National System of Social Solidarity, whose main

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[2] https://www.anynet.gr/

objective is to support families and vulnerable sections of the population at the threshold of social exclusion, uninsured elderly persons, persons with disabilities and chronic conditions and people living in extreme poverty. OPEKA operates a consolidated register of beneficiaries to safeguard the public interest and ensure the transparency of administrative actions effective monitoring. It also enables recovery from claims against undue payments of benefits, timely payment of welfare benefits to every citizen's bank account, the electronic disability dossier and a digital application procedure for granting disability-related benefits.

Moreover, as per Law 4455/2017, e-Government Centre for Social Security (IDIKA) has set up and operates a digital registry of all non-profit legal entities governed by private law, such as charitable organisations, non-profit civil society organisations, NGOs, branches of international NGOs providing social care services in Greece. This tool allows the MoLSA to effectively monitor their activities and properly supervise them. It is a process that ensures public interest and at the same time improves the quality of social care services.

3.1. Unified Geoinformation System

Law 4445/2016 provides for, inter alia, the establishment of a "Single Geoinformation System" in the context of the operation of the "National Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion Policies". The National Mechanism operates at three levels: national, regional, and municipal. It aims to plan, inform, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate multi-sectoral policies of social inclusion and social cohesion. It acts coherently between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and other Ministries that pursue social policies.

The Unified Geoinformation System seeks to secure the digital pillar of the National Mechanism and consists of three structural parts or three subsystems.

The first subsystem is the database used by the Geoinformation system, where the needed data are systematically inserted and can be exported in an excel form. This database consists of 3 registers (beneficiaries, programs and providers). The law stipulates that the Unified Geoinformation system is not a platform for data entry and data collection from other existing information systems (for example, from e-pronoia, which we will see below).

The second subsystem concerns the statistical processing of the data of the first subsystem for the processing of procedures, reports and statistical data in order to monitor the social policies, the priorities of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and the evaluation of the relevant interventions. These reports should also have geographical criteria and combine the above data (beneficiaries, programs and providers). The third subsystem concerns data extraction (e.g. reports with tables, graphs, certificates and related information).

3.1.2 Observations and recommendations for the Unified Geoinformation System (UGIS)

The Unified Geoinformation System described in Law 4445/2016 has not been fully implemented and it is currently being upgraded. Planned configurations are in the right direction as the MoLSA has taken into account the following observations:

- each public or private provider of social care services enters data regarding its compliance, and less about the services it provides (number of beneficiaries it serves, capacity, staff-related data;
- in the register of beneficiaries there are no specialised data on service users that draw on support provided by the public and private providers in the system (individual identification data, social characteristics, etc.);
- there is no registry of the specific programs and services that beneficiaries use.

3.2 Foster Care and Adoption Information System - anynet.gr web portal

As per Ministerial Decree 13734/538/2019 the Information System (IS) for Foster Care and Adoption includes in its portal the following data, information and archives:

- the National and Special Records for Minors,

- the National and Special Records for Potential Foster Carers,

- the National and Special Records for Certified Foster Placements for Minors,

- the National and Special Records for Potential Adoptive Parents,

- the National Record for Adoptions,

- the National Record for Professional Foster Carers.

The IS for Foster Care and Adoption is one of the main DI tools. More specifically, the National and Special Records for Minors includes all minors that:

a) are placed in institutional settings or remain unaccompanied in public hospitals and maternity clinics or are referred to such settings upon Prosecutors' orders,

b) are about to be placed with a foster carer upon court decisions, prosecutors' orders or contract or upon the provisions of Law 4538/2018 Art. 18, or

c) are about to be adopted.

This IS aims to protect minors who live in institutions through individualised care and by enhancing and speeding up family rehabilitation programmes such as foster care and Adoption. Perspective foster carers and adoptive parents can submit and follow-up their applications digitally.

The central database for the IS for Foster Care and Adoption is held and supported by IDIKA and supervised by the Secretary-General of Welfare (MoLSA).

The IS for Foster Care, and Adoption is based on classified access. Different groups of users (general public, applicants, and certified professionals) have different access rights.

3.2.1 Observations and Recommendations for the IS for Foster Care and Adoption - anynet.gr

The IS for Foster Care and Adoption and anynet.gr web portal were essential for supporting data collection in child protection, sending a clear message to the public and private childcare providers and ensuring transparency in placing children in foster and adoptive families. Indicative of the overall lack of tools to monitor child protection in Greece is that until 2019, the Greek Authorities did not have official data -not even numerical data- of the children placed in the fragmented system of residential care. Due to anynet.gr and the systematic efforts of the MoLSA, the Greek Authorities now have official data and can follow up on the implementation of child individualised care plans.

The IS for Foster Care and Adoption can largely benefit from the following interventions:

- Allow for a digital entry of the individualised care plan for each child (ASOA) to replace uploading care plans in PDF form. This way care plans can be linked with other parts of the system and updated accordingly.

- Care plans should include information about the child's siblings in cases of sibling groups.

- Care plans should include information on the child's legal status (custody-related issues, pending court decisions, court orders for family visitations etc), insurance scheme, personal budget (i.e. disability-related benefits), whether the child has an assessment determining the degree of disability from Disability Assessment Centers (KEPA), therapeutic programmes that would benefit the child, special educational needs (if any).

- Care plans should be developed and implemented as essential case management tools. Therefore, they should state whether the child: (a) should be adopted, (b) placed in foster care, (c) reunited with his/her birth family, (d) should be placed in a family-like setting.

- The National Registry for certified foster carers should include information on the geographical distribution of foster carers and regional records of potential foster carers should be linked with the National Registry of potential foster carers. This way, community-based social services and Prosecutors will have the tool they need to place children directly to foster care -preferably in the region children already know, especially when they can have family visitations- instead of institutions.

- Anynet.gr and UGIS should be linked so that community-based social services can have access to information about childcare institutions (number of available places, staff-related information etc.).

3.3. Information System for Childcare and Parenting – paidi.gov.gr web portal

The website Paidi.gov.gr[3] is designed and constantly being developed as the best place to find government services and simple, clear and accurate information about childcare and parenting. It aims to include information for pregnancy and birth (working, time-off and financial support, registering births), fostering and adopting (process, benefits, FAQ), financial support for childcare (child benefits, tax credits etc.), early childhood education and care and schooling and legal issues in childcare (divorce and separation of parents, child maintenance and custody-related issues, juvenile law, probation work etc).

This web portal is only running for a few weeks, and it has not yet been fully developed. One of the first outputs was statistical information on the numerical data of children living in residential care. The more this IS is developed the more detailed numerical data should be (i.e. including ages of children, years of staying in care, geographical distribution etc.).

3.4 E-pronoia for the citizen

E-pronoia is an EU-funded project[4] developed in 2014-2015. The National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) is the implementing entity for e-pronoia. EKKA administrates the operation of e-pronoia, the support centre and the maintenance of databases. The project aimed to develop a modern digital system for the interconnection of social care services of our country and online real-time information on citizens' social needs and rights.

It mainly includes four applications:
- Digital Platform for Interconnection and Interactivity of Welfare Services,
- Welfare Portal to serve citizens directly: www.epronoia.gr,
- Digital Reporting, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation System for Social Care,
- Digital National Registries for beneficiaries emphasising child protection.

E-pronoia was designed to be interconnected with:

(a) public legal entities that provide social care and are supervised by the MoLSA,
(b) certified and non-certified providers of social care,
(c) community-based social services and community centre,s
(d) public legal entities that provide social care and are supervised by the MoH,
(e) juvenile protection associations, social welfare services, juvenile probation services.

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[3] https://paidi.gov.gr/
[4] Operational Program "Digital Convergence" - NSRF 2007-2013

3.4.1 Observations and recommendations for E-pronoia

E-pronoia was an ambitious plan that aimed to modernise the field of social welfare, streamline the delivery of social care services and create a digital interactive environment with citizens that draw on support.

More than six years after e-pronoia was launched, there are significant remaining issues in using this platform, rendering many of its parameters inactive. The development of other monitoring tools -such as the UGIS- overlap most of the e-pronoia functions. Further development of UGIS will be helpful.

3.4 General observations and recommendations regarding the existing information systems and registers

One of the main challenges in using IS is having collecting complete, reliable and updated data. In short, the lack of an effective mechanism for registration of service providers and the lack of obligatory minimum quality standards of care in these units results in weak monitoring and supervision of residential care facilities. It puts vulnerable children, persons with disabilities, elderly persons at even greater risk. To this day, residential facilities are not sanctioned if they refuse to share information or share false data on the children and people they serve. The belief that sharing data and applying quality standards is optional creates shortcomings that no information system can resolve.

One possible solution could be making accreditation and financing of service providers conditional to sharing accurate, reliable, updated information on their facility and the people they serve.

Other critical issues identified for the existing registers and information systems are:
  (a) They are often overlapping in content and function,
  (b) some of them are rarely used and content is not updated,
  (c) they suffer from constructional shortcomings,
  (d) they lack crucial interoperabilities, especially with each other,
  (e) they are not easy to use, mainly due to their fragmentation,
  (f) valuable information reports cannot be easily extracted.

For example, overlapping in content and function is evident in comparing UGIS and e-pronoia. It would be necessary to choose which one should be further developed to build around it a modern, digital environment for social services.

It is equally important that IS can operate as case management tools. To achieve this, we need to enrich the fields of information for each service user to monitor their progress better. This will be vital when using observation checklists to monitor the success of a placement. Otherwise, we risk ending up with numerical data of children and people that have transitioned to family and community-based care, and

numbers that can tell only a small part of the story and lived experience of those who have left residential care.

4. E-monitoring tool for DI with associated data needs and indicators

Any deinstitutionalisation Strategy/Action Plan to be assessed as successful, must fulfil specific outcomes and objectives that serve its overall goal. In the case of DI, it should substantially reduce institutional care for children, persons with disabilities and elderly persons and provide them with the tools and services they need to live a good life in the community. This must be documented in terms of specific outcomes and indicators that demonstrate a substantial change when comparing baseline data and progress in achieving milestones set at the DI Strategy and Action Plan.

Therefore, developing indicators that monitor success at different levels is a core step in building an e-monitoring matrix. Indicators provide evidence that results have been achieved or signal that progress is being made to achieve a result. Monitoring indicators requires data from the main areas of the DI process, as they are defined in the DI Action Plan. It is evident that now there are scattered data available in the various existing information systems and data bases but at the same time there are gaps in the required information. For this reason, the creation of a new information platform is not recommended, but an upgrade of the existing ones is required, which will allow us to supply the e- monitoring tool with the necessary data.

For the purposes of this e-monitoring tool we apply indicators that are quantative, i.e. have a numerical value (number, percentage or ratio), are simple i.e. they are straightforward and require only a single measurement and are directly related to the subject of interest.

A flexible e-monitoring tool is a valuable asset for the successful implementation of the overall monitoring and evaluation of the DI process. It works in complementarity with the detailed "DI Monitoring Framework" which has been developed in the context of the Activity 3.1.2 of the project "Training for stakeholders monitoring the DI process". The e-monotoring tool will audit some the key parametres of the DI process and should include the following indicators:

E-Monitoring performance indicators for the DI process to be monitored on a semi-annual basis

Performance indicator	Baseline Value	Month 6	M. 12	M. 18	M. 22	M. 28	M. 34	M. 40	M. 46	M. 52	M. 58
Number of certified ECI providers including numbers of staff with geographical distribution											
Number of children and families receiving ECI services with geographical distribution											
Number of children in foster care register, including numbers of unaccompanied minors											
Number of children in foster care, including numbers of unaccompanied minors											
Number of applications for foster care											
Numbers of candidate foster carers											
Number of active foster carers											
Amount spent for foster care allowances per month in total and per foster care category											

Performance indicator	Baseline Value	Month 6	M. 12	M. 18	M. 22	M. 28	M. 34	M. 40	M. 46	M. 52	M. 58
Training of staff:											
Number of staff working in residential institutions having received training in the DI process, including the number of days of training											
Number of staff previously working in institutional settings and now working in community-based services											
Transition from institutional to community based care:											
Numbers of existing institutional settings (with geographical distribution ?)											
Number of agencies providing institutional care											
Average size (in beds/seats) of residential care											
Numbers of adults living in institutional settings with geographical distribution with specific numbers for each institutional setting											

Performance indicator	Baseline Value	Month 6	M. 12	M. 18	M. 22	M. 28	M. 34	M. 40	M. 46	M. 52	M. 58
Number of children living in institutional care with specific reference to the number of children under 3/5 years old living in institutional care											
Average length of stay in institutional care											
Number of new admissions – placements in institutions per year											
Numbers of staff working in institutional settings with geographical distribution											
Numbers of children having transitioned from institutions to community based care (reunited with their families, foster cared, adopted, included in community based appartments for adolescents transitioning from institutions to community) with geographical distribution											

Performance indicator	Baseline Value	Month 6	M. 12	M. 18	M. 22	M. 28	M. 34	M. 40	M. 46	M. 52	M. 58
Numbers of newly established community-based family type, accommodation services for adolescents established, including numbers of adolescents service users and staff numbers with geographical distribution											
Number of adults having transitioned from institutions to the community (independent living, supported living accommodation etc.) with geographical distribution											

Conclusions

The monitoring and evaluation of the DI process is a multifaceted procedure requiring a set of tools and methodologies to be in place. The role of a monitoring committee specially appointed for this role with clearly defined responsibilities is of vital importance. Among the other monitoring and evaluation tools to which this Committee should have access is the e-monitoring tool developed and proposed in this document. This e-monitoring tool aspires to provide an easy-to-use matrix that will measure progress towards the key goals defined in the National DI Action Plan. However, the utilization of this e-monitoring tool is largely dependent on the extraction of reliable data from the various available information systems in the field of social welfare. For this purpose, the creation of a new information platform is not required, but an upgrade of the existing ones is recommended, which will allow us to supply the e-monitoring tool with all the necessary data. In this document a detailed analysis of the existing information systems is provided with specific recommendations for upgrading their operation.

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Foster care and Adoption Information System, www.anynet.gr

How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/how-to-guides/how-develop-monitoring-and-evaluation-plan

Information System for Childcare and Parenting –www.paidi.gov.gr

Monitoring and Evaluation, https://www.pcmi.co.uk/monitoringevaluation

Unified Geoinformation System, www.opengov.gr/minlab/?p=3469