

SPRING

SPRING Sustainable Practices of Integration

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
AB	Advisory Board
EU	European Union
SG	Steering Group
TBC	To be confirmed
WP	Work Package
T	Task
D	Deliverable
Nuts	Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques

1 INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the approach taken to establish a systematic classification system for the SPRING project and presents the first consolidated version of this classification system¹. The document uses the term “SPRING taxonomy” interchangeably with “systematic classification system for the SPRING project”.

The taxonomy supports the achievement of the project’s objectives. The overall objective is to gather, summarise and share the best available research and evidence on the effectiveness, innovation, transferability, sustainability and evaluation methods for integration policies and practices. Summarising the evidence, SPRING will collect, create and disseminate the most usable and practical materials and make this evidence more accessible by curating the content and form to match the specific profile and needs communities of practice. To reach these goals, SPRING maps communities of practice and engages with communities of practices using participatory approaches (WP1); it collects and systematises evidence (WP2), maps and identifies successful and sustainable practices (WP3) using a set of specific criteria, and develops tools and knowledge to promote an evidence-based culture in integration policy (WP4). Finally, SPRING will create an online portal to make these results widely available and accessible in a sustainable way (WP5).²

The taxonomy has been elaborated in the framework of WP2, but will serve the entire project. This report describes the context and purpose of the taxonomy, its development and outlines questions that need addressed in the implementation and further development of the taxonomy in individual work packages and in particular in the context of the definition of the functionality of the SPRING portal. The report proceeds as follows: the next section, section 2, outlines the overall scope and activities of WP2, its interlinkages with other WPs and the main steps for establishing the present deliverable. Section 3 specifies the main objectives and requirements of the taxonomy, the conceptual and methodological approach and documents the applied co-design approach. Section 4 presents the first version of the systematic classification system. Finally, section 5 summarises the main features of the taxonomy and outlines next steps and potential challenges for the subsequent implementation and refinement of the taxonomy during the project.

¹ This deliverable has been prepared by Albert Kraler, Lydia Rössl and Isabella Skrivaneck (DUK). Additional inputs on the SPRING systematic classification system ("taxonomy") were received from Peter Scholten and Asya Pisarevskaya (EUR).

² For further information on the project and consortium: <https://integrationpractices.eu/>

2 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE DELIVERABLE

The main objective of WP2 is to take stock of research evidence on *integration policy practices* (on the term see box 1, below). To do so, it establishes a systematic classification system for the collection, mapping and synthesis of evidence on integration policy practices. Subsequently, it systematically maps studies on integration policy practices and conducts a qualitative review of evidence along four dimensions of integration (housing and settlement, employment, education and training, access to services) and four analytical dimensions of integration policy practices (policy frames, instruments and tools, outcomes, community relations). Finally, it synthesises the main evidence on policy practices in an accessible format (handbook) tailored to the needs of communities of practice. Throughout the described WP2 activities, the initial version of the SPRING taxonomy will be reviewed, adjusted and refined if necessary, accounting for interrelationships with and needs of other WPs.

Box 1: The term integration policy practices

The term “Integration policy practices” has been introduced in the SPRING project proposal to describe the scope of the mapping and synthesis of academic evidence on the integration of new migrants in Europe. Thus, the term emphasizes the focus of SPRING on policies and practices rather than broader processes of in- and exclusion, integration and incorporation. While these are clearly relevant, they are considered by SPRING only insofar they are shaped by, or should inform deliberate policy or practice interventions.

While not defined in the project proposal, the term *integration policy practices* alludes to several features of integration as field of policy and practice and how the project understands this field. Thus, the term reflects an understanding of integration policy as inherently diverse and constituted by a plurality of different *practices*. By referring to practices in the plural the term also refers to the multitude and diversity of actors, and indeed different “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998) involved in integration policy making and implementation. In a similar vein, the reference to *integration policy practices* also speaks to the trend of the mainstreaming of integration policy (Scholten et al., 2017) and the fact that it is mainstream welfare institutions, NGOs, and others that engage in *integration policy practices*, rather than only specialised institutions or organisations dealing with migrant integration. Finally, the term also refers to two basic dimensions of interventions: policy (and politics), i.e. the negotiation and definition of policy objectives and the choice of instruments on the one hand, and their implementation through concrete practices on the other.

While WP2 focuses on research evidence, it has important interlinkages with WP1 and WP3 at the conceptual, procedural and content level. WP1 engages with communities of integration policy practice, including a stakeholder mapping and identifying key policy implications based on

stakeholders' needs and experience. WP3 focuses on the identification of practices, including criteria to identify and classify successful and sustainable practices, and to develop a better understanding of the transferability of existing practices. WP2 relies on a co-design approach thus involves close collaboration with WP1 (*Communities of practice*). The results of co-design process inform the design of the SPRING portal (WP5).

D2.1 is the first deliverable of WP 2. It describes the approach and documents the process for establishing a systematic classification system, which is the basis to collect, map and synthesise evidence on integration policy practices in the subsequent tasks of the WP2.

A key requirement of the development of the SPRING taxonomy has been to establish a systematic and logical framework allowing to classify and accumulate research evidence. The taxonomy elaborated by a preceding H2020 project CrossMigration (2018-2020) and accessible at the Migration Research Hub³ was taken as the starting point for the development of the SPRING taxonomy. To this end, WP2 partners assessed how the existing taxonomy matched with the purpose and requirements of the SPRING taxonomy. The projects' overall focus on four domains of integration and the work package's focus on four analytical dimensions of integration policy practices both specified in the proposal guided these efforts. In terms of domains of integration, SPRING focuses on housing and settlement, employment, education and training, and access to other key services, such as health, legal counselling and welfare. The four analytical dimensions distinguished for the collection and synthesis of evidence are policy frames, instruments and tools, outcomes, and community relations, respectively.

In view of the role of the SPRING taxonomy for the whole project, but in particular for WP1 (Engaging communities of practice on integration with a participative approach) coordination meetings with WP1 and WP3 were organised. In addition, the lead partner in WP1 was also invited to a WP2 workshop focused on the taxonomy. To validate the approach and the systematic classification the WP2 team also consulted the Advisory Board.

In addition, stakeholders will be consulted in the framework of the technical workshop organised by WP1 in conjunction with the launch conference in June 2021. While the taxonomy itself will not be discussed, a number of related questions will be discussed with stakeholders that in turn will help to inform the further development of the taxonomy and the definition of the functionality of the SPRING portal⁴. A further joint workshop of WP1 and WP2 in project month @M13 (March 2022) to validate the co-design trajectories developed in WP1 and the evidence

³ See www.migrationresearch.com/taxonomies.

⁴ The technical workshop is scheduled for the 9th of June, 2021, the launch conference organised as a 2 hour webinar is scheduled for June 8.

collected under WP2 will provide another opportunity to consult stakeholders before the launch of the spring portal in month @M18 (August 2022).

3 APPROACH AND PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE SPRING TAXONOMY

3.1 OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE TAXONOMY

The main objective of the SPRING taxonomy is to provide a systematic classification system of integration policy practices for the collection, mapping and synthesis of evidence from research in subsequent tasks of WP2. This involves a logical and comprehensible structure of the taxonomy, which (1) enables a comprehensive accumulation of evidence in the further tasks of WP2 and (2) provides interlinkages with and support for the tasks of other work packages:

For WP2, the key requirement for the taxonomy is its capability to support the systematic mapping of evidence on integration policy practices undertaken under T2.2. In this context, aligning the SPRING taxonomy with the Migration Research Hub taxonomy was crucial for using the Migration Research Hub as one of the research tools for the mapping of evidence. Secondly, the taxonomy should also reflect the four dimensions of integration SPRING is focusing on (housing and settlement, employment, education and training, and access to other key services). Third, the taxonomy should also reflect the organisation of the analysis into four analytical dimensions distinguished in view of the review of evidence undertaken under T2.3 (namely policy frames and objectives, instruments and tools, outcomes and community relations). Finally, the taxonomy should be capable of distinguishing specific target groups of integration policy practices.

In relation to the project as a whole, the key requirement of the taxonomy was that it should support the efforts of other WPs, but in particular the data collection on communities of practices undertaken by WP1 and the collection of information on and validation of successful integration practices undertaken by WP3. In relation to both WPs, this was achieved by including central dimensions of these work packages in the taxonomy.

3.2 THE MIGRATION RESEARCH HUB AS THE FIRST REFERENCE POINT

The migration research hub⁵ was developed as part of the H2020 project “Current European and Cross-National Comparative Research and Research Actions on Migration (CrossMigration, 2018-2020), which aimed to take stock of research in migration studies. Its classification system combined a theoretical, deductive approach with an inductive process of topic modelling, and more precisely, “a computer-based strategy for identifying topics or topic clusters that figure centrally in a specific textual landscape” (Pisarevskaya et al., 2020: 459). The development was a

⁵ www.migrationresearch.com

collaborative effort and iterative process, involving machine learning and many experts verifying topics concerning logic and relevance for science. Search strings to identify relevant literature were de- and refined on an ongoing basis throughout the project.

WP2 lead partners identified the following features of the migration research taxonomy as important to consider for building the SPRING taxonomy:

The CrossMigration project aimed at stock taking of migration research, mainly focusing on migration processes. Although integration dimensions are included, it does not focus on integration and “*integration policy practices*”. Reflecting this focus, a migration process-oriented perspective informs the interface of the migration research hub.

For the purpose of the SPRING taxonomy, “topics” are the most important branch. Within topics the cluster of topics under “migration consequences”, which is further divided into social-cultural, socio-economic, legal-political and transversal consequences as well as the topic cluster “migration governance” covering different policies (immigrant policies and law) and actors involved in the integration process are the most relevant for the purpose of SPRING. This said, several topics included under other branches of the CrossMigration taxonomy have also been considered for the SPRING taxonomy.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE TAXONOMY AS A TRANSDISCIPLINARY CO-DESIGN PROCESS

The SPRING project characterises a high degree of transdisciplinarity in regard to project partners, a methodological co-design approach that includes the participation of central actors external to the project, and iterative feedback and learning orientated loops. Based on a broad understanding, transdisciplinary research is pursued here with the aim of addressing a socially relevant problem, facilitating mutual learning processes between academics within and across disciplines as well as with actors outside research and academia (e.g. integration practitioners), and generating solution-oriented knowledge that is relevant in academia, society and practice (Lang, 2012). Lang (2012) defines transdisciplinarity as *[...] a reflexive, integrative, method-driven scientific principle aiming at the solution or transition of societal problems and concurrently of related scientific problems by differentiating and integrating knowledge from various scientific and societal bodies of knowledge.* (26f.)

The chosen reflexive approach to learning and knowledge transfer responds to two basic needs of the SPRING project: (a) improve the availability, accessibility and searchability of information. The SPRING Portal that will be established in the framework of WP5 provides access to the different databases and supports dissemination among the target groups; and (b) the capability and capacity of stakeholders in the field of migrant integration to formulate and reflect on knowledge needs, to reflectively use different types of knowledge (scientific evidence, practical knowledge....), and to generate relevant knowledge themselves. The engagement and exchange

with the Communities of Practice in WP1 assures their involvement in all other steps of the project.

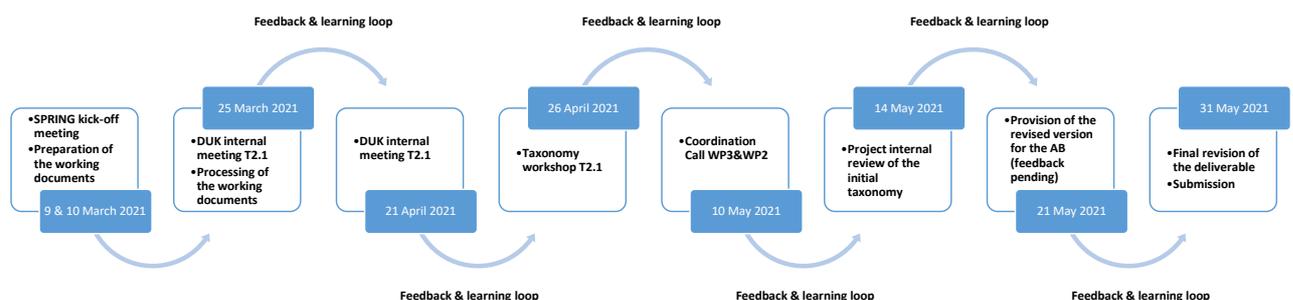
It is aimed to design the SPRING taxonomy logically and in accordance with the objective of providing different communities with a toolbox that enables the identification of and access to information on sustainable integration practices, involving not only project-internal but also project-external target groups. Therefore, a co-design approach was chosen that follows the double-diamond structure, which, initiated and gradually implemented in WP1, also includes WP2-WP4 and whose results influence the design of the SPRING portal. This approach, like many co-design concepts, has its origins in the design industry (Design Council, 2007), but this and similar approaches (transdisciplinary, community-based, interactive, or participatory research approaches) are proven and anchored instruments of transdisciplinary research.

The 'double-diamond' structure distinguishes two separate processes: a problem definition process and a solution finding process. Both processes have a diverging phase (exploring and gathering insights) and a converging phase (deciding and defining). Based on the processes of the double-diamond model, WP1-3 follow a circular rather than a linear process. Centered on feedback, learning and reflection processes, it helps to shape communication and cooperation within the project and with external actors (practitioners, policy makers, stakeholders, experts from science and practice, etc.). Furthermore, it allows integrating different contributions and make it comprehensible to the other groups participating the process. Researchers have repeatedly used the double-diamond model, in particular in service design, and adapted it accordingly (e.g. Wolstenholme et al., 2017/ Bell & Nusir, 2017/ Clune & Lockrey, 2014). For SPRING, WP1 lead partners will design, implement and report about the concrete implementation of this approach, which will feed into the process-oriented design of the SPRING taxonomy for the collection, mapping, and synthesis of evidence on integration policy practice.

3.4 THE CO-DESIGN APPROACH IN PRACTICE

The following visualisation illustrates the process from the SPRING kick-off meeting to the submission of the deliverable.

Figure 1: Taxonomy development process up to the submission of the deliverable



The SPRING kick-off meetings reflected in many respects the different approaches of the WP leaders and project partners regarding the connections with and added value of the taxonomy for further WPs, which has implications for the further definition of objectives. Based on the SPRING kick-off meetings (consortium, WPs), WP2 specified key questions for an initial reflection process, and set up the first working documents for the taxonomy. This regards the basic design and structure of the SPRING taxonomy. On the one hand, the taxonomy has to meet the requirements to implement the subsequent WP2 tasks (mapping, review and synthesis of research evidence on integration policy practices). On the other hand, it has to take into account the goals of the SPRING portal, which will make available evidence on (sustainable) integration practices from science and research according to the needs of practitioners.

After the kick-off event and the initial meeting on T2.1 between members of the task leader DUK, the work on the taxonomy basically started as a stocktaking exercise and a critical reflection what the existing migration research taxonomy (developed in the H2020 CrossMigration project) already provides the taxonomy with. It was agreed to critically reflect the classification system (topics, themes, topic names and search strings) of the Migration Research Hub and the possible benefit for a logical structure and purposes of the SPRING taxonomy. Therefore, DUK established a colour coding system:

- Red: the item can be removed, not needed for SPRING
- Orange: the item can be used, search strings have to be changed
- Green: the item can be left as is

In assigning these colour codes, DUK actually did a provisional check of the results that each taxonomy item gives in the Migration Research Hub (<https://migrationresearch.com/taxonomies>). Results demonstrate that not so much needs to be removed - and even if the overarching topic label often does not fit with the integration focus, the results of searches often still do.

In parallel to the described review and assessment of the existing migration research taxonomy, DUK set up a second document that contains suggestions for changes of and additions to the taxonomy. Here, dimensions of WP1 and the analytical framework of WP2 have been added.

Especially in the document with proposed changes and additions to the taxonomy, the integration of cross-connections to the other WPs becomes visible. As examples, the differentiation of actors into supranational, multi-country, national and local policy actors, non-governmental organisations, business, and grassroots initiatives, implemented by WP1, can be mentioned, and the changes and additions of geographical dimensions (Nuts, rural/urban). In relation to WP3 - Identification of practices, particular emphasis is placed on the analytical

framework of WP2 (policy objectives and frames (policy input), instruments and tools, integration outcomes (related to integration policy target groups) and community relations), which supports the identification and traceability of the success and sustainability of integration practices. The focus on the four already mentioned key domains of integration (housing and settlement, employment, education, and training, access to services) is repeatedly addressed in the WPs, those domains were supplemented and anchored in the SPRING taxonomy.

Following this initial assessment and synthesis of potential additions and changes, WP2 lead partners (EUR, DUK) held a “Taxonomy workshop” and were joined by WP1 partners (ICMPD) and WP2 implementing partners (ICMPD). Thereby the preceding work and reflections on the documents served as the basis for the workshop on WP2 and guiding questions. These comprised

- the purpose of the taxonomy, either to refine the existing migration research taxonomy or adding a new portal that draws on the hub;
- how the taxonomy can reflect scientific and practical evidence accordingly;
- what general function the taxonomy has for WP2 and for other WPs; and
- feedback to the working documents (reviewed migration research taxonomy, suggestions for changes/adaptations).

The Workshop gave room for disentangling different options, pros and cons, and determining further clarification needs and next steps. The main results/decisions were:

- The existing taxonomy would be used to the maximum extent possible, add topics and adjust search strings.
- WP2 organised a coordination meeting with WP3 to clarify reciprocal requirements regarding the taxonomy and type of inputs that WP2 and WP3 would focus on (WP2 focus on meta-level, studies of individual practices, comparative studies, WP3 information on individual integration policy practices).
- WP2 partners followed a co-design process for the development of the taxonomy
- The chosen approach (working documents) would be pursued, and EUR (WP2) and ICMPD (WP1) provided additional written feedback.

Workshop participants reviewed both working documents with regard to:

- links to the tasks of further work packages and integration domains and analytical dimensions contained therein that are relevant for further classification
- the use and objectives of the taxonomy in the further course of the project
- the definition of the target groups using the taxonomy

The results of the workshop were used for the initial draft and the work on the deliverable. Based on the coordination meeting between WP2 and WP3 (10th of May), a first draft of the taxonomy was prepared and put up for discussion within WP2. The drafted deliverable and resulting version of the taxonomy (see Chapter 4) was sent to the Advisory Board with a request for comments

and additions. The guiding questions sent to the AB addressed the taxonomy in the context of the overall project and objectives:

- Should the Spring Portal provide a singly entry point for users searching for evidence/stakeholders/information on projects or do we have different sections for different types of searches?
- Do we target the SPRING Portal towards practitioners and policy makers (i.e. the communities of practice)?
 - Is a broad database what is needed?
 - How are/ can existing resources be exploited?

At the time of submitting the deliverable, feedback and answers to the questions were still pending. They will be included in the further development process of the taxonomy.

In the context of the previously illustrated process for T2.1, central further questions, which are closely related to WP2 as well as to other work packages, support the decision to set up a co-design process for the further development and possibly needed adjustments of the taxonomy in line with the objectives and key target groups of WP1-3.

Central milestones of the further co-designs approach are (for the development of the SPRING taxonomy and in addition to the already described process and results of the tasks in WP2) the SPRING launch conference (8th of June) and a technical workshop (9th of June) that aims to bring together practitioners and researchers to identify main priorities and needs, as well as difficulties and good practices. The results of the launch conference and the technical workshop serve as additional contributions for the advancement of the classification structure, which will be validated, adapted and refined in a process-oriented manner in the further course of WP2, as well as in particular of the tasks of WP1 and WP3. Other key influencing factors of WP1 will be:

- the stakeholders needs assessment (@M8 & @M17),
- the outcomes of a Validation Workshop (@M13) bringing together again practitioners and researchers that presents the results of the pilot co-design trajectories to receive feedback on how these results can be applied to other contexts as well as feedback on the results of the systematic knowledge accumulation undertaken in WP2.
- Furthermore, content and outcomes of four Webinars (@M15 & @M20) to share information on the four selected spheres of integration and of the problem definition process (T1.2) are considered for the design of the taxonomy (especially with regard to the benefits for the SPRING portal).

In relation to WP3, the findings of the following tasks will be included in a validation and revision process of the taxonomy:

- the developed set of criteria for the identification of successful and sustainable practices (T3.2: M2-7);
- content and conclusions (confirmation of the named set of criteria) of the Expert Reflection Group (T3.3: M2-23);
- outcomes of the application of the defined set of criteria for the identification of successful and sustainable practices (T3.4: M8-23);
- the classification and mapping of identified practices (T3.5: M8-18).

4 THE SPRING TAXONOMY

Following the coordination meetings of the team members of work packages 1, 2 and 3, DUK prepared an initial draft of the taxonomy that could be a workable taxonomy for the entire project and the purposes of WP1-3 and ultimately, the search functions of the SPRING portal.

This first draft compiled those dimensions of the Migration Research Hub taxonomy that WP2 partners had identified as relevant and useful for the SPRING classification system (topics, themes, topic names), and accounted for the dimensions from the mapping template of WP1 (T1.1). In addition, some elements specific for WP2 were added.

In this way a simplified form of taxonomy has been created with a very limited number of overarching categories (7) and altogether 61 topics. Governance level/geographical target area; governance actors; areas of integration; analytical dimensions of integration policy practices; target groups in terms of legal status and admission channels; target groups in terms of social characteristics; and a residual category “other” research characteristics which includes, for example, methodology. Apart from the topic level the latter will be further distinguished into detailed subcategories.

While more than the four areas of integration outlined in the proposal were included, many elements from the fine-grained CrossMigration taxonomy were left out. This initial draft was further discussed in depth within WP2, and according to the comments and with regard to the need for timely deployment and use of the taxonomy as a tool for T2.2 (systematic mapping of studies in integration policy practices).

The draft SPRING taxonomy is presented overleaf.

Table 2: SPRING Taxonomy

Dimension	Governance level/ Geographical target area)	Governance actors	Areas of integration	Analytical dimensions of integration policy practices	Target groups (legal status/ admission channel)	Target group (social characteristics)	Research characteristics (Taken from Migration Research Hub)
Subdimensions	Supranational (EU)	Public bodies (public authorities, agencies, representative bodies such as parliaments or councils, ombudsmen or other executive or legislative bodies)	Housing and settlement	Policy objectives and frames ("policy input")	Asylum seekers	General population/ non-migrants	Disciplines (Subtopics taken from Migration Research Hub)
	Multi-country	Trade Unions	Employment and related training (skills assessment, re- and upskilling)	Instruments and tools ("policy output")	Refugees	Men	Area of Study (Subtopics taken from Migration Research Hub)
	National (Nuts 0)	Employer Associations	Education and training	Integration outcomes (related to integration policy target groups)	Resettled refugees	Women	Methods (Subtopics taken from Migration Research Hub)
	Regional (province, subnational region) [Nuts 1-2]	Professional Associations	Health	Community relations (wider societal outcomes)	Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection	Sexual minorities	
	Urban – Small/ Medium (OECD Definition) [Nuts 3]	Private companies and businesses	Welfare and social work (social benefits, social insurance, other material support)		other protection status, including toleration (suspension of removal)	children	
	Urban – Larger Cities (OECD definition L-XXL). [Nuts 3]	Grassroots (volunteer based) organisations (mainstream population/ mixed)	Rights, legal status and non-discrimination		Irregular migrants	youth	
	Rural and Smaller Municipalities [Nuts 3]	Migrant/diaspora organisations	Civic participation		Family migrants	elderly	
	Other	NGOs/ non-profit organisations	sports/leisure/arts		(Permanent) Labour migrants	faith groups	
		Knowledge producers (universities, think tanks, consultancies)	attitudes (both mainstream/minority)		(Temporary) Labour migrants	Specific ethnicity/languages	

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Dimension	Governance level/ Geographical target area)	Governance actors	Areas of integration	Analytical dimensions of integration policy practices	Target groups (legal status/ admission channel)	Target group (social characteristics)	Research characteristics (Taken from Migration Research Hub)
		Media	Intergroup relations and contact, including racism and xenophobia		Students	Racialised minorities/ BPoC	
		EU institutions and agencies	Family relations, marriage and children		unaccompanied minors	Other	
		International Organisations	crime (perpetration & victimization)		other		
		Courts	identity and belonging		EU-citizens		
		Political Parties / politicians	gender and gender relations				

5 CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

The present taxonomy is a work in process, which on the one hand must correspond to functions within the project and specific tasks, but whose development process in its entirety has to meet the overall project goals and thus also the needs of the SPRING target groups. The presented initial draft of the taxonomy serves primarily internal purposes, further developments with the involvement of the target groups, especially in the context of WP1 and WP3, will form the database that will ultimately be available on the SPRING portal to the target groups and a broad public and must serve their requirements.

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