Implementing Education Policies

The new competence development model for schools in Norway: highlights of a suggested implementation strategy

Norway is deeply committed to education, as demonstrated by its high level of public expenditures and the dynamic policy activity targeting education quality in the country. This has been translated into noteworthy successes, such as PISA positive development in the average performance of Norwegian students, which is now above the OECD average in literacy, numeracy and science.

Norway is set on continuing this positive development, but recognises there still are challenges and great differences between schools in municipalities and between municipalities and regions. Professional development especially needs consideration, as existing strategies may be inadequate for local contexts, and may fail to engage teachers. This is why in 2017, in its White Paper n.21 "Desire to learn - early intervention and quality in schools", the Government of Norway presented its aims to provide municipalities and schools with greater freedom of action and empower them to carry out systematic school improvements at the local level. It introduced a new competence development model for schools to develop collaborative professionalism at every layer of the education system.

The new competence development model for schools requires a carefully thought out implementation strategy to ensure it results in effective changes in teaching practices in the classroom, and does not increase inequalities. Building on comparative research, on OECD and Norwegian data, on the input by Norwegian education stakeholders, and on the comparative experience of the OECD teams working on the project, the OECD has analysed the model to understand how it be most effectively implemented and has developed a set of suggestions, to be published in a report, as part of OECD's Implementing Education Policies project (forthcoming).

This document is designed for Norway's education stakeholders involved in the implementation of the new model. It summarises the findings and details concrete actions to consider for the implementation strategy to achieve its expected results of improving competence development at the local and school level. In particular, the document builds on Norway's commitment to seek consensus by engaging different stakeholders, and build ownership of the implementation of the model between different actors: the Directorate for Education and Training, county governors, universities, school owners, municipalities, school leaders, teachers, parents, and students.

This document is meant to guide the next actions to undertake for the new model to be effective, and to empower stakeholders so they can participate in the co-creation process of the implementation strategy. Following an introduction, it reviews the model, and the dimensions that need to be taken into consideration, including refining policy design, promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement, shaping a conducive context, and how to shape the implementation strategy for impact. It includes analysis and actions to consider. A final section on next steps presents a table for stakeholders to replicate and use in group discussions to refine the suggested actions to take to move forward with the implementation strategy, asking about indicators, what, how, who, when and with what resources.

Implementing education policy in Norway: introduction and methodology

Addressing the quality and equity of a country's education system can help shape its future. A thriving education system allows every student the opportunity to develop as an individual and strengthens a society's capacity for economic growth and well-being. Norway operates a comprehensive welfare system with high levels of public social expenditures. Education is considered as a priority, and Norway is one of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries investing the most in its education system, while emphasising equity and inclusion for all of its students. Overall, Norway is committed to an education system that promotes the development and learning of all its students.

With the White Paper n. 21 "Desire to learn - early intervention and quality in schools" (Government of Norway, 2017[1]), the Norwegian Government aims to provide municipalities and schools with greater freedom of action and empower them to carry out systematic school improvements at the local level. It promotes a new competence development model for schools in which national funding for sustainable capacity building and continuous professional development at all levels of the system is based on a local analysis and decision-making in networks of municipalities. This whole school approach calls for continuous professional development to be integrated into daily practice and municipalities taking responsibility for the development of their schools by engaging in networked collaborations. The partnership with universities and colleges is also essential for making this happen.

The ambitions set out in the White Paper n.21 are an attempt to "flip the governance" from government steering to greater leading from the local level, and aim to substantially change roles and introduce a whole new way of working for stakeholders. It calls for a carefully thought out implementation strategy to turn this policy into effective changes in the classroom. This includes the elements of effective governance as described in the OECD Governing Complex Educations Systems Project (Burns and Köster, 2016[2]; Burns, Köster and Fuster, 2016[3]): strategic thinking and shared vision building, careful monitoring and evaluation to make evidence-informed decision-making and the readiness to quickly adapt to changing contexts and new knowledge. But it also involves the need to design the policies smartly, to create a conducive context, to follow a coherent implementation strategy and to engage with stakeholders throughout the process. In complex education systems, "implementation" is not about executing the policy, but more about building and fine-tuning it collaboratively (Viennet and Pont, 2017[4]).

As part of its implementing education policies project (Box 1), the OECD has engaged with Norway to support the implementation of the new competence development model for schools, a process bringing together two OECD teams from the Implementing Education Policies and Strategic Education Governance projects. It follows a solid methodology to support implementation that combines research with field work and country stakeholder engagement to ensure validity and ownership. More importantly, the team has: extensively drawn on qualitative and quantitative comparative data from benchmarking education performers; done research and desk-based analysis of key aspects of education policy in Norway; undertaken an assessment visit to Norway (June 2018); held a stakeholder engagement seminar in Norway to discuss and obtain input on the preliminary findings (October 2018) and; had regular exchanges with the national coordinator and a reference group of key education stakeholders. The OECD team has also made extensive use of statistical information and policy documents from other institutions and from the Norwegian government. The analysis will result in a full OECD report (2019[5]).

The analysis builds on the framework developed by Viennet and Pont (2017[4]) to explore the different elements that can contribute towards the effective implementation of the new competence development model for schools. It aims to provide a rational lens to those involved in the policy to analyse, and consider measures to enhance the effectiveness of their specific education policy change processes. The framework suggests that to shape coherent implementation strategies – central to the success of implementation – policy makers need to engage with stakeholders early on in the process, and to take into account the policy design and its context. This document aims to contribute to Norway's implementation strategy by providing suggested actions to consider for Norwegian stakeholders to engage in the process of developing the new competence development model for schools.

Box 1. Implementing policies: supporting change in education

OECD's Implementing Education Policies Programme offers peer learning and ***tailored support for countries and jurisdictions*** to help them achieve success in the ***implementation of their education policies and reforms***. Tailored support is provided on topics the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills has comparative expertise in, including (but not limited to): ***introducing new curricula***, ***developing schools as learning organisations, teacher policy, evaluation, assessment and accountability arrangements/education monitoring systems*** and ***building educational leadership capacity***.

The tailored support consist of three complementary strands that aim to target countries' and jurisdictions' needs to introduce policy reforms and changes with impact:

- **Policy assessments** take stock of reforms policies and change strategies. The resulting report consists of an analysis of current strengths and challenges and provides concrete recommendations for enhancing and ensuring effective education implementation of the policy analysed. It follows a concrete methodology: a desk study of policy documents, a three to five day assessment visit, in which an OECD team of experts interviews a range of key stakeholders from various levels of the education system and additional exchanges with a project steering or reference group.

- **Strategic advice** is provided to education stakeholders and tailored to the needs of countries and jurisdictions. It can consist of reviewing policy documents (e.g. white papers or action plans), contributing the policy meetings, or facilitating the development of tools that support the implementation of specific policies.

- **Implementation seminars** can be organised to bring together education stakeholders involved in the reform or change process, for them to discuss, engage and shape the development of policies and implementation strategies.

In the case of Norway, a policy assessment visit was undertaken in May 2018, a stakeholder engagement seminar to discuss preliminary findings was held in October 2018, and three reference group meetings have been held in Norway in 2018-19.

Website: http://www.oecd.org/education/implementing-policies/

Brochure:http://www.oecd.org/education/implementing-education-policies-flyer.pdf

Why focus on local competence development in schools?

Norway places a high-value in education

Norway operates a comprehensive welfare system with high levels of public social expenditures. Education is considered as a priority, and Norway is one of the OECD countries investing the most in its education system, while emphasising equity and inclusion for all of its students. In 2015, Norway's cumulative expenditure per student on educational institutions between the age of 6 and 15 reached USD 135 000 on average, 50% more than the OECD average (OECD, 2018[6]).

In terms of education policy, the different political parties seek to maintain stability and avoid ideological shifts caused by political changes. Within the Parliament, where simple majorities are usually not achieved but multi-party agreements, educational reforms are considered as a priority and tend to have broad support. Often, when a government initiates a major reform, it is common for the next government to pursue it (Moller and Skedsmo, 2013[7]).

Norwegian schools are however in need of collaborative professionalism

The White Paper n. 21 (Government of Norway, 2017[1]) identifies several reasons for introducing a more decentralised competence development system. In particular, it reports that individual national competence development initiatives do not provide for enough local adaptation, and municipalities and county authorities have varying capacity and expertise to engage in quality development for schools. The new competence development model for schools aims to develop collaborative professionalism at every layer of the education system.

However, to improve quality in schools, particular attention needs to be paid to teachers. In 2013, Norwegian lower secondary teachers reported less participation in professional development than the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) average, both in terms of participation rate and number of training days (Figure 1), and higher than average unsatisfied demand for development. In addition, almost half of the students are in schools where the principal reported in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that teachers not meeting individual student's needs hinders learning (OECD, 2016[8]). Also to address these issues, the Norwegian has introduced a strategy for individual continuous professional development, the Competence for Quality programme.

Figure 1. Professional development recently undertaken by teachers in days, TALIS 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who report having participated in courses/workshops in the 12 months prior to the survey and the number of reported days they participated in courses/workshops over the same period:
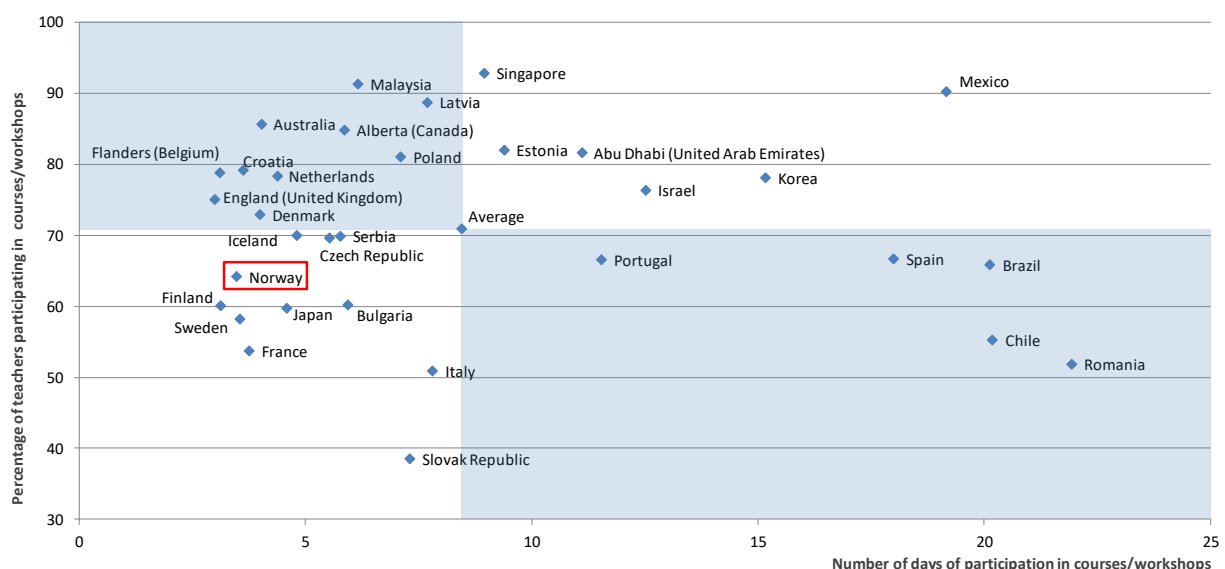
Source: OECD (2014[9]), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en.

StatLink 🖳 http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933041592

The new competence development model for schools

To improve school quality, the Norwegian government has introduced a new collective competence development model for schools in its White Paper n.21 (2017[1]). It complements individual professional development, and aims at establishing a sustainable approach for schools improvement that would respond to local context and the diversity of needs between Norwegian schools. The new model relies on three complementary pillars that cater to any school needs:

A decentralised scheme

• that will help to ensure that all municipalities (and eventually county authorities, as school owners) implement competence-raising measures, by channelling state funds to the municipalities. The municipalities themselves define and prioritise what they need, within the framework of national goals, in cooperation with universities and university colleges.

A follow-up scheme

• in which municipalities and county authorities that report weak results in key education and training areas over time, indicators yet to be developed, are offered state support and guidance.

An innovative scheme

• that is intended to result in more research-based knowledge about the school system. The State defines requirements for evaluation and quality, while the municipalities and research communities work together to develop the measures they wish to test.

The decentralised scheme is the main pillar, where the local analysis of needs (between teachers, school leaders, and school owners) drives the competence development. National funding is intertwined with local ownership to adapt to the large diversity of contexts in Norway. However, to benefit from national funding, school owners have to contribute 30% of the grant, to ensure that funds from national and municipal and county authorities contribute to the same end. The two other schemes are designed to ensure that the system is responsive to all schools, and caters to equity: municipalities lagging behind will be supported by the follow-up scheme, while cooperation with universities will promote innovation and emulation among all schools.

Unlike previous attempts at decentralisation that dispersed funds directly to individual municipalities, this policy adopts a new implementation approach: municipalities are encouraged to participate in collaboration forums and jointly agree on how the public funds will be used, and what measures will be prioritised. This implies:

• shifting the use of public funds away from national to local continuing education strategies, defined by network of municipalities and facilitated by the county governor;

• transferring the responsibility to the regional level of central government, i.e. the county governors, for administering the funds, driving the forums forward, and ensuring that the work results in activity in schools.

While designed from the centre, it ultimately aims to empower those at the school level to change their practices and deliver better education through training and collaborative work at the local level. This implies a structural shift of responsibilities from the Directorate for Education and Training at the national level to county governors and municipalities, and requires a careful process of ownership and allocation of responsibilities by different key players. However, the OECD team analysis and exchanges with education stakeholders in Norway suggests that if the policy is not realised in full, this will likely result in no change to the current situation at best, or an increase in inequalities at worst. This implies either a waste of public resources, or unintended consequences. If municipalities stop using the new model for instance, or use resources for different purposes than capacity building at the local level, this may not lead to school improvement.

# Dimensions that can contribute to the successful implementation of the model

The new competence development model for school in Norway was introduced in the White Paper n. 21 (2017[1]). The model aims to enhance collaboration in school competence development by providing extra funding as an incentive for a range of actors to engage in the process, and requires co-funding to ensure that funds from national and municipal and county authorities contribute to the same end. At the same time, to help those municipalities that may not be able to fully engage, it has a follow-up scheme to prevent inequalities to happen as a result of decentralisation.

Overall, the OECD team found that the different policy elements of the model have been designed in a coherent way, building on evidence and also taking into consideration and responding to the key role of municipalities in providing education in a decentralised context. However, the OECD team has also found a number of potential obstacles that could jeopardise the success of the new model. In particular, the following points need to be addressed:

- the policy needs a clear vision that brings together the different elements, including the follow-up scheme;

- the role of different stakeholders needs to be clear and meaningful;

- the model needs to be aligned to existing policies, such as the individual teacher competence development, the curriculum renewal and the national assessment strategy; and

- there is a need for a more concretely developed implementation strategy that bring together the actions, resources and timing, and communicates it clearly.

To address these issues, the OECD team, building on comparative evidence and exchanges with Norwegian stakeholders during the assessment, meetings with the reference group, and inputs from the OECD Norway stakeholder seminar, has developed a set of recommendations on the dimensions that need to be considered for the effective implementation of the model: smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and conducive context (Figure 2). These are reviewed below, followed by a section that brings them together to propose a clearer implementation strategy.

Figure 2. The OECD implementation framework
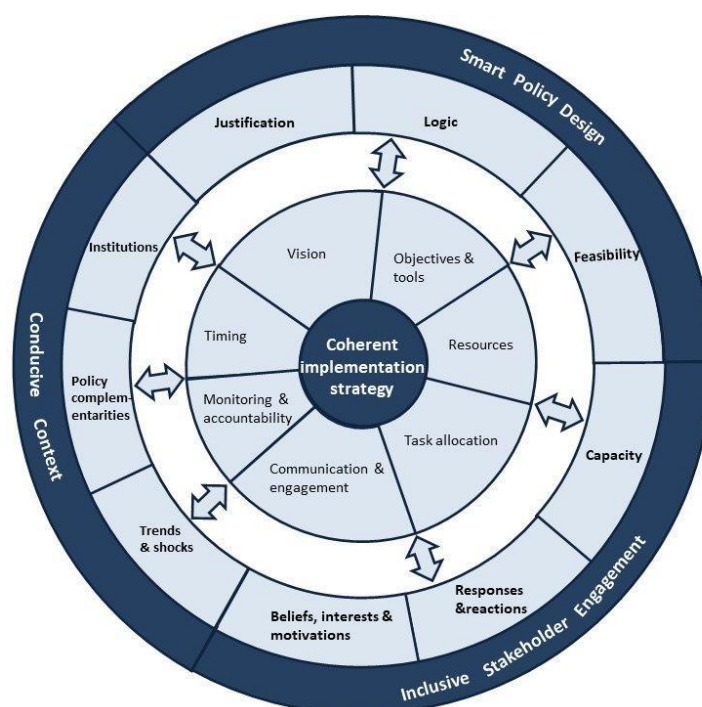
Source: Viennet and Pont (2017[4]), "Education policy implementation: a literature review and proposed framework", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 162, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/19939019.

Refining policy design

The new model is designed to develop collaborative professionalism between teachers, and better reflect local needs in terms of continuous professional development. Focus on collaborative learning has been a growing priority in Norway. While teachers in Norway reported higher than average levels of cooperation in schools, they participated less than average in collaborative professional learning in 2013 (Figure 3.). This gives the new competence development model room to improve the situation, under the condition that network collaboration and partnerships with the many different players effectively reflect teachers' need for competence development.

Figure 3. Teacher cooperation, TALIS 2013

Percentage of lower secondary education teachers who report never doing the following activities:
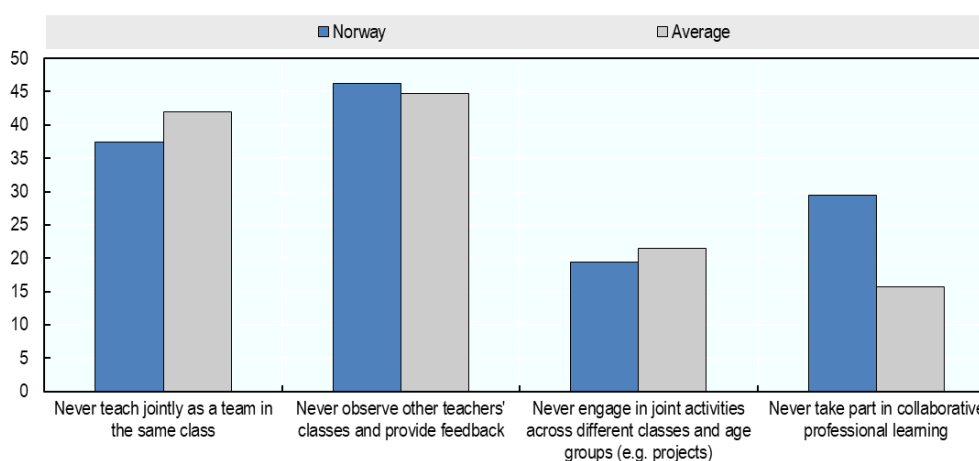
Source: OECD (2014[9]), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en

StatLink ⋙ http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933042086

Teachers in lower secondary education in Norway also reported higher than average unsatisfied demand for development, and less participation in professional development than the TALIS average (OECD, 2014[9]). The fact that the new competence development model is designed to be based on identified priorities at the school level is expected to increase the relevance of school-based continuous professional development. This underlines the importance of effective school evaluation and development processes, in terms of the need to address parts of the system where these are not well-established.

The new competence development model expects many education stakeholders to adopt new practices, including teachers and school leaders to recognise their capacity development needs, municipalities to take ownership of school improvement, networks to work together, universities to be more responsive to school training demands, governors' office to lead the process by acting as regional coordinators and distributing the funding. Ambitiously, this implies to improve at least professional development in schools, responsiveness of universities, and collaboration between municipalities. The success of the model relies *in fine* on all these layers updating their practices but also on ensuring that the stakeholders engage and shape the overall vision, play their agreed role, and collaborate according to the new scheme (Figure 4). If some of them do not take on their role, there are high risks that the model will not work or have the intended effect. Participants in the OECD Norway stakeholder seminar pointed to the complexity of the model, and highlighted the need for collaboration as the key for success. More particularly, some pointed to the fact that it was not clear how they could collaborate, and asked for examples of good practice, for shared information, and school-level priority-setting processes.

Figure 4. Stakeholders involved in the new competence development model in Norway
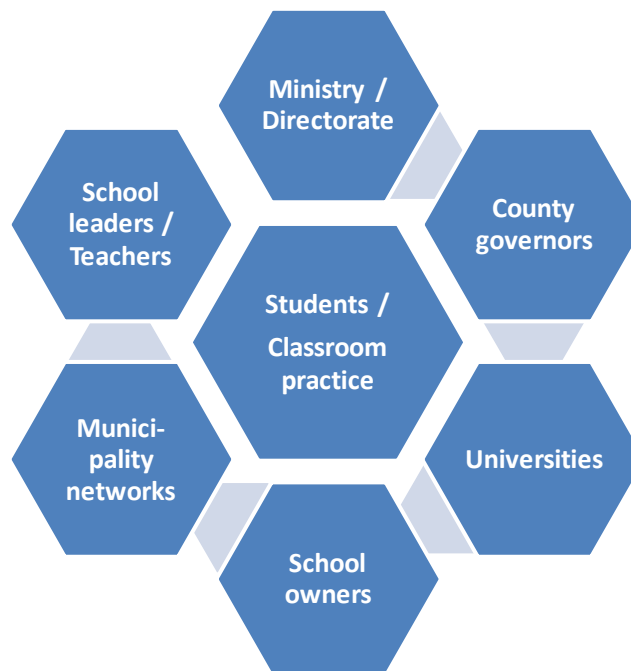
In this regard, following analysis and exchanges with education stakeholders in Norway, the OECD team considers that for the policy design to contribute to have impact, it will be important to consider:

Strategically prioritise the new model, clarify and communicate the vision to boost take-up:

• Hone the vision in operational terms, also with qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress, so that it can motivate and engage all different stakeholders.

Review the design of the model:

• In terms of the financial incentives to ensure they are clear enough for local anchoring, embed the model in the evaluation and assessment framework to foster teacher's ownership of the model, and clarify the position of the new model compared to existing school improvement strategies to create synergies.

Evaluate, assess, and monitor the realisation of the objectives of the new model:

• Any decentralisation process intrinsically bears a risk of increasing inequalities, as local governance units face different contexts, resources, and capacity. The follow-up scheme is still at a developing phase and need to be strengthened. New indicators allowing to monitor progress and quality must be developed at each level, for instance to assess the added-value of networks and the relevance of the professional development delivered by universities.

Promoting inclusive stakeholder engagement

The introduction and implementation of the new competence development model is deliberately designed as a long term process that aims to change decision-making on professional development sustainably. Norway in general has a "long tradition of seeking broad political consensus and finding predictable procedures to allow important political players a place at the table" (Directorate for Education and Training, 2015[10]). In line with this participative tradition in Norwegian policy making, the Ministry has consulted a broad array of stakeholders while preparing the policy.

In the first stage of the implementation, the OECD team has been informed that the Directorate has engaged key stakeholders, such as the county governors and the universities. At the same time the Directorate has left room for counties to organise regional networks according to regional contexts and needs. During the OECD Norway Seminar, participants discussed around the need to establish clarity on the roles of those engaged, and the need for students' and parents' views to be considered when the school define its priorities for competence development. They also highlighted the need to clarify the priority decision-making process for the content of the trainings to be delivered.

However, the OECD team noticed that stakeholder involvement at the national level has been narrowed down, as the model started to be implemented. It seems that the Directorate was concentrating its efforts on what were perceived to be the essential stakeholders in building up the collaborative forums, namely the counties and the universities, and the municipalities to a lesser degree. It appears as if the communication was more actively targeted at these stakeholders, whereas the communication to teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders was more passive. For example, information was provided on the website, but not actively and tailored or disseminated to various groups of stakeholders.

To strengthen the support and ownership of the stakeholders of the model, particularly teachers and school leaders, the following points merit consideration in the next stage. Given the shared responsibility for the decentralised model, it should be a collaborative effort of the government, counties, municipalities, and representative organisations to address the following issues.

Discuss, clarify and reach a common understanding of the expectations of roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders:

- Municipalities, county governors and the Directorate could develop a pro-active and targeted communication strategy to inform teachers (and other stakeholders) about the decentralised scheme.
- The Directorate could start talks with counties, municipalities, teachers and teacher representatives, and school leaders, on how to involve teachers in the various decision-making processes around the model.

Develop capacity at every level for participation and collaborative decision-making:

- At the school level: develop capacity to organise and participate in collaborative decision-making about professional development needs and opportunities.
- At the network level: develop facilitative capacity, namely the ability to design and facilitate open workshop discussions, to make networks and forums productive meeting places. This type of capacity could be developed for example through training or by assigning a specific network coordinator function.
- At the university level: recognise that the expertise to build bridges between municipalities and schools on the one hand and research and teacher training on the other hand, is a specific function. It will help to enlarge the responsiveness of universities to schools' needs and build real partnerships.

Enhance transparency about the available resources and their deployment:

- Municipalities and county governors could gather and publish data on the funding of the new competence development model at all levels of the system, as information about the available resources is a crucial condition for stakeholder involvement and improvement. The Directorate could collect and report data on the level of the system as a whole.
- For the forums and networks to succeed, it is crucial for the county governors and the Directorate to promote mutual learning, and monitor the functioning and outcomes of collaboration forums and regional networks.

Shaping a conducive context

An effective implementation process needs to be based on a continuous assessment of the evolving context in the school system. On many contextual aspects the competence development model for schools fits well as it: recognises the highly complex policy environment in Norwegian education and supports political legitimacy and democratic values with its aim to boost local development processes; builds on experience with municipal and school networks, but also recognises the reality that capacities vary among different municipalities and schools; and can be aligned with broader policies and strategies to develop the teaching profession and promote partnerships between schools and teacher education providers.

Table 1. Main barriers for the implementation of the new model

(Stakeholder seminar, Oslo, October 18th 2018)

Main barriers	Suggestions on how to address them
Competition between continuous professional development schemes, and lack of coherence.	Strategic dialogue including all levels to ensure policy coherence.
Lack of strategic planning capacity at municipal level.	Build strategic capacity at municipal level (at least): - Major action: county governors raising this as a priority during the next collaboration forum - Use current networks/capacity building platforms (e.g. KS' seminars).
Lack of feedback on money use and change in the classroom.	Integrate this to school and municipal quality development processes and establish new feedback mechanisms where necessary, e.g. classroom observations.
Lack of shared understanding (language) among actors (e.g. owners vs universities).	Develop a common language based on scientific terms to facilitate dialogue between school owners and universities.

The OECD team notes that the design for the new competence development model can support and further promote local development processes. However, while the model is designed based on knowledge of the current context, it will be necessary to continuously gather feedback on how well key aspects of the model work in the varying contexts among municipalities and counties. If not adequately addressed, contextual factors may provide barriers for the longer-term success of the model (Table 1.). In particular, the OECD team notes that for the decentralised scheme, it will be critical to evaluate the effectiveness of regional partnerships, planning of university provision within the collaboration forum, both locally and nationally; and for the follow-up scheme, to gauge how well this reaches the municipalities in greatest need and how well it is able to meet their local school development needs:

> **Foster conditions for long-term strategic planning of continuing professional development:**
>
> - Ministry: recognise the need to give assurances on budgetary allocations in the medium term.
> - Directorate: ensure effective coordination among universities in developing a strategy for provision nationally.
> - County governors: communicate the importance of effective municipal and school quality development processes and monitor progress on strategic planning in municipalities with identified capacity concerns.
> - At the university level: allocate existing resources to the most pressing demands, notably the upcoming curriculum revision; participate in the coordination network to develop a long-term view on how to build capacity and broaden the offer to meet local priorities; and provide feedback on collaboration forum.
> - At the municipality level: prioritise the effectiveness of school quality development processes, including school development plans; gather and provide feedback on the effectiveness of regional partnerships in prioritising school-based competency development needs.

> **Strengthen the whole-of-system approach in the implementation of the model:**
>
> - Directorate: facilitate coordination and feedback among county governors on how they promote a whole-of-system approach in the collaboration forum.
> - County governors: provide feedback on how well the collaboration forum is addressing varying municipal capacity within the county and providing conditions to build local university capacity.

> **Increase responsiveness to schools and municipalities with identified capacity needs:**
>
> - Directorate and county governors: gather, analyse and communicate feedback on how well the support offered by the advisory team meets the self-identified needs at the municipal and school levels; monitor and follow up on how the municipalities with identified quality concerns choosing not to accept the support of the advisory team address the identified concerns.
> - At the municipality level: provide feedback on how the 30% matching funding requirement relates to their participation in the decentralised scheme.

## How to turn a loose implementation strategy into a tight co-creation strategy?

An implementation strategy refers to the actions taken following a decision on the design of the policy for it to become a reality. The policy itself may be defined in a document that provides an overarching vision, as is the case of the competence development model in Norway, and this may be complemented with a separate strategy for it to be implemented (Ingram and Schneider, 1990[11]). The implementation strategy is action-oriented, and needs to be flexible enough to cope with unexpected issues (Fullan, 2015[12]). However, often, policy makers focus on the design of the policy, leaving the details of the implementation to public agencies, intermediate organisations, other governance levels and practitioners without clear guidance, which can result on the lack of impact of the policy.

As the new competence development model ambitiously aims to change the roles of many different actors, it requires a careful implementation strategy for all stakeholders to achieve the expected objectives. Some elements have been already disseminated in the White Paper (Government of Norway, 2017[1]), but overall, the implementation strategy is loosely developed with the engagement of stakeholders, who are expected to shape it along the way, and using the room for county and regional adaptation that is deliberately built in. The next section analyses and proposes some actions for consideration to support the implementation of the model at the present moment, building on the analysis undertaken of the dimensions that influence its effectiveness, including policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement and a conducive context. It applies the pillars underpinning a coherent implementation strategy (Viennet and Pont, 2017[4]) to the new competence development model to highlight where the co-creation could be strengthened and more coherently shaped.

Adapting the implementation strategy for impact

Analysing the implementation strategy and understanding how its components are developed and aligned coherently can help ensure that it can be effective over the long run. This can include a range of actions, such as defining actors' roles, calendars, allocation of tasks and others (Figure 5). This section analyses the implementation strategy through the lens of practical levers that can contribute to effective implementation: objectives, policy tools, task allocation and accountability, data and monitoring, communication and engagement, resources, and timing (Viennet and Pont, 2017[4]).

Figure 5. The different levers underpinning a coherent implementation strategy in Norway
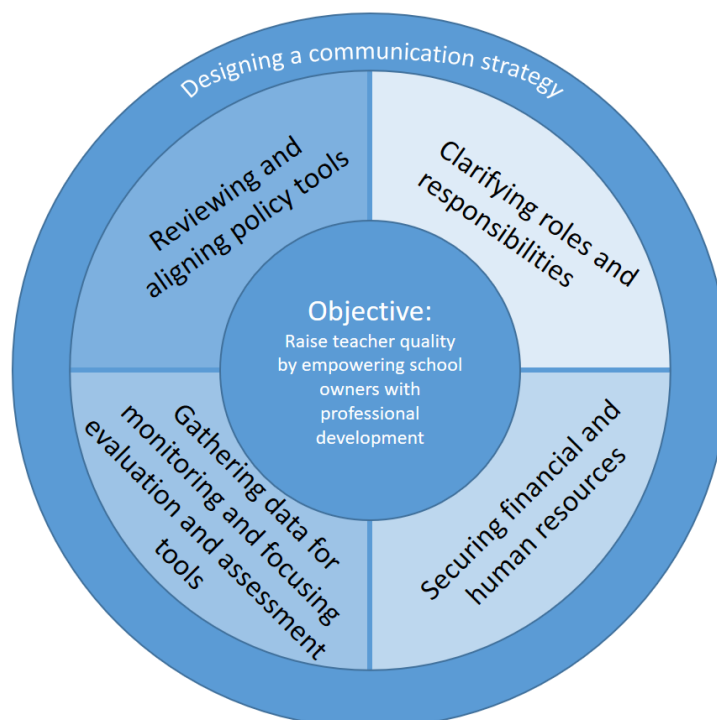
Refining the objectives

The overarching goals and logic (or vision) of a policy need to be refined in operational terms. Because a strategy usually involves several goals and initiatives to reach them, attention must be paid to its overall coherence and to its priorities. This implies that for the overall coherence, clear objectives can give direction and understanding for those involved.

In the White Paper, the objectives of the policy are to:

- give all municipalities wider powers and authority to strengthen the work on quality development through collaboration in networks,

- combine clear requirements and goals with local freedom of action, to enable the schools to work on the basis of local needs,

- help municipal and county authorities to develop the competence and capacity to attend to their responsibility for children and adolescents' education and training.

During the OECD visit and the OECD Norway stakeholder seminar, many expressed the view that these objectives are broad, and target many different actors at the same time and may not be specific enough to become operationalised in a concrete strategy. One of the main issues is to ensure that the vision is clear for different actors and stakeholder to have ownership and engage with the policy. How can this vision be sharpened for it to engage and motivate a wide range of education stakeholders? Linking the vision to student learning and to the future, which is the core purpose of education, would motivate various education actors to engage with learning at different levels.

Furthermore, how can the vision and its objectives be operationalised into specific targets? Are these clear for people to prioritise in their daily work? How can different actors at the different governance levels engage with these goals? For instance, what would be an objective for a municipality network: to organise a number of meetings a year, to spend a certain amount of time collaborating, to publish regular communication to inform other stakeholders, to secure funding from the decentralised scheme every year?

In addition, the objectives of the new model are closely tied to its position regarding other learning strategies. How is the new model supposed to contribute to the planned curriculum renewal in 2020? How does the new model strengthen the already existing national strategies of individual competence development?

Actions to consider:

Defining a clear vision collaboratively on a national level and developing associated operational objectives also at the county and municipal level.

• *Suggestion from the stakeholder seminar for a shared vision: To build a sustainable system of collaborative professional development based on local needs to enhance student learning using partnerships. (OECD Norway Seminar on Implementation).*

Clarifying the position of the new model compared to other professional development strategies and the new curriculum, by the Directorate, school owners, and teacher unions.

Reviewing policy tools and aligning with the broader policy context

In Norway, the main policy tool to drive the new model is the financial incentive for municipalities to take action, for universities and municipalities to forge partnerships, and to reach consensus among the different stakeholders. Financial incentives are indeed flexible enough to fit the decentralised context of Norway, since it gives the opportunity to municipalities to spend the funds according to their local needs. However, are these financial incentives enough to promote change and foster the take-up of the new competence development model? Are there incentives for teachers to improve their collective learning as there are for individual learning?

Moreover, former experiences in decentralisation of education projects in Norway and potential inefficient use of national funds at the local level question whether or not earmarked grants for professional development would be preferable. This issue was already raised by the Norwegian Government in the White Paper (2017[1]), and by some school leaders during the OECD Norway stakeholder seminar.

Embedding the new model in the assessment and evaluation framework would also strengthen teachers' incentives, and ensure teachers actively participate in the decision-making process. More precisely, research shows that professional development needs to go hand in hand with appraisal and feedback practices (OECD, 2013[13]). School self-evaluation could identify strengths and weaknesses to trigger off the follow-up or the innovative schemes. This would empower teachers and school leaders, and foster the ownership of the model. In other words, there is a room for better aligning the evaluation and assessment framework with the new competence development model.

Another policy tool of the new model consists in the follow-up scheme, where municipalities displaying weak results are offered support and guidance by the Directorate Advisory Team. Due to the tradition of trust in Norway, this program is not mandatory, and school owners can refuse this form of support. Moreover, support mainly consists in advice, without directly entering and observing what happens in the classroom. Therefore, how to increase responsiveness to schools with identified capacity needs? More broadly, how to ensure that stakeholders such as school owners, organisations and systems have the adequate resources and competencies to fulfil specific roles and tasks? And how to ensure that the support provided by the follow-up scheme is translated into improved teaching practices?

Actions to consider:

Reviewing incentives to maximise the take-up and impact of the new model, by school owners, county governors and the Directorate.

Communicate the expectation that the prioritatisation of school-based competence development flows naturally from regular school evaluation and planning processes:

- Reviewing teacher appraisal collaboratively by teacher unions, school owners and the Directorate, so that it informs the needs for professional development within the new model.
- School owners should link the decentralised scheme to their quality improvement framework as part of the school evaluation.

Consider making the follow-up scheme mandatory, and updating the practices of the Advisory Team towards actions taking place in the classroom.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities

The new model provides a direct description of the actors and the allocation of tasks, as the policy itself is about changing the roles of the actors to develop their capacity. The model has been clear in defining the role of governors, the role of municipalities and universities, and there is a certain level of clarity as to who is responsible for what. However, with the information available there is not much clarity regarding who is responsible if the implementation does not take place and of the quality of the processes and of the capacity development opportunities. Are the roles clearly defined with detail on who implements and who is responsible?

Despite thorough review of the data and interviews with key stakeholders, the OECD team still perceived some of the roles as unclear. During the stakeholder seminar, participants agreed on the definition of different roles (Table 2). However, the OECD team observed that while some governors were playing the intended role of mediators at some cooperation forums, others were directly deciding training priorities for the county. If in some counties this approach was selected in order to launch the new model, with the objective to set a dialogue process over time, it should be made clear that such a top down approach is opposite to the spirit of the new model. On the contrary, county governors, as important facilitators in the implementation of the new model, should favour a whole-of-system approach.

Table 2. Recognition of different roles and responsibilities

(Stakeholder seminar, Oslo, October 18th 2018)

Stakeholder	Expected role
Ministry / Directorate	Coordinate and clarify expectations and definition of roles with all stakeholders (but allow for flexibility at local levels).
County governors	Promote the model, supervise, control. Facilitate communication within local networks.
Universities	Be a partner in learning. Build competence and capacity in teacher education
School owners	Clarify roles at the local level. Engage and facilitate communication between levels. Coordinate and give directions based on national/local.
School leaders	Engage students, teachers & parents to define needs. Coordinate at the school level.
Teachers	Some participants think teachers should lead the model, while others opt for a more informing role. Express continuous professional development needs (individual, student, parent information).
Students	Inform decision-makers, school leaders and teachers of their needs. Be proactive in their learning (identify needs).
Parents	Inform school leaders and teachers. Participate in advisory committee.

Teachers and school leaders have to collaborate and to discuss in general to agree on their training needs so these can be prioritised in the model, but the mechanisms for this to happen appeared opaque to the OECD team. The White Paper (Government of Norway, 2017[1]) considers teachers involvement from a participatory view, where the ownership of teachers is crucial for the effective implementation of the scheme; while interviews with stakeholders revealed a potential service delivery view, where building a well-functioning mechanism that ensures universities meet the needs of teachers is more important than involving teachers in deliberations about their needs. Again, this underlines the crucial role of school leaders in engaging and promoting the new competence development model: the White Paper rests on the legal responsibility for school leaders and school owners to have school competence development plans.

If vocational education and training has now been included in the model, private schools are only marginally mentioned in the White Paper, while they represent an alternative to the public sector. It also appears that the voice of parents and students is not heard during the school development process. During the OECD Norway stakeholder seminar,

participants highlighted the importance of capturing parents and students views within this process. The OECD team reckons that it would contribute to develop a dialogue with schools and schools owners, which will in turn promote trust in school's work.

As coordinators, an important role for the county governor and the regional coordinators is respectively to create a level playing field in the collaboration forum and regional municipal networks. Specifically regarding municipalities with limited capacity, the county governors and network coordinators should safeguard their interests and engagement in the forums. For county governors, it could be an option to engage KS (the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities) representatives in the forum to stand for and support those municipalities. Together with stakeholders, the Directorate should verify that such a level playing field is being created in each collaboration forum.

So far, given the short amount of time since the beginning of the model in 2018, the outcomes of the networks have been rather intangible. From the OECD visit, the OECD team learned that many collaborations have actually used some of the funds to set up a network coordinator who can organise the events and follow-up. Some concerns arise however, as some well-funded teacher networks have failed to produce significant learning gains because they were shallow or unfocused on improving learner outcomes (Harris and Jones, 2010[14]). Is this role of network coordinator enough to incentivise teachers and school leaders to participate in the new model, and to focus on the real work of improving learning and teaching? The county governors could then seek to professionalise these networks, strengthen the position of the network coordinator, and ensure networks are indeed contributing to the success of the model.

In addition, accountability mechanisms are clarified in the White Paper in terms of the data defined for underperforming municipalities, who would receive support from the Directorate for Education from the advisory team. But it is not clear who would be responsible and accountable for a misuse of funding, if the coordination did not result in any change in schools and their learning, or for the lack of school involvement in the new competence development model. During the seminar, participants expressed the need for accountability, to make sure there were some kind of rules on how the funding could be allocated for example.

Actions to consider:

Regarding task allocation, discussions during the stakeholder seminar in Norway highlighted the need to:

- For the Directorate: to clarify its role in giving feedback and guidance in the co-creation process, including on the roles of governors and school leaders, the role of universities in their partnership with schools; and to review the position of private schools in the model,
- For school leaders and municipal and county authorities: to ensure teachers are part of decision-making processes, and that the views of parents and students are captured in the school development process,
- For municipalities: to consider establishing the position of a network coordinator to ensure fruitful network collaborations.

Focus in the county forum on how to safeguard the full participation of municipalities with limited capacity.

Enhance transparency:

- For school owners on what actions are taken to suport schools lagging behind,
- For school owners regarding the allocation and use of the funds acquired via the model, or consider earmarked grants as fund transfers to stakeholders,
- For networks in how effectively they are functioning,
- For county governors on how they steer the model and get feedback on the organisation and effectiveness of the county forum.

Gathering data for improvement

Knowledge constitutes a valuable implementation instrument that informs decision-making, improves the dialogue with actors and contributes to process transparency. Knowledge is also a source for actors to shape and revise their beliefs, which impacts their attitude in the implementation process. Understanding the mechanisms through which actors learn and process information is crucial to manage knowledge for effective implementation. In complex systems, the data collected through monitoring can also serve to hold stakeholders accountable throughout the system. Up-to-date data contributes to measuring progress of the implementation process, and is an integral part of a well-established quality assurance system.

In Norway, the education system is based on trust, and the introduction of a national quality assessment system occurred in 2004 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2018[15]). The Ministry of Education then developed a multi-faceted evaluation and assessment framework that provides monitoring information at different levels and aims to achieve both accountability and improvement purposes (Nusche et al., 2011[16]). Despite these efforts, Hatch (2013[17]) considered that Norway had only moved "half-way" towards accountability. This is also observable in the design of the new model, where the follow-up scheme is not mandatory: municipalities are offered the support of the Advisory Team Program, but have the choice to decline it.

There already exist tools to evaluate the quality of education, such as user surveys including mandatory pupil surveys in years 7, 10 and Vg1, voluntary parent and teacher surveys, point of view analysis tools, organisational analysis tools or others. For the competence development model, some user surveys have been conducted, but there does not appear to be a clear data framework to follow-up on progress in implementation and success. How could these tools be used to monitor the implementation of the new model? Moreover, should the Directorate for Education endorse a new leading role in exploiting the data to depict the nuanced landscape of education in Norway and help school owners? More precisely, for the Directorate to effectively participate in the co-creation process, how to ensure that the locally collected data are fed back centrally? Finally, how can the vision of the model be refined into existing, or to be defined, indicators? What kind of indicators would assess the added value of networks, the lower-bound quality limit for the follow-up scheme, and the effects of the decentralised and follow-up schemes on teaching practices?

As underlined in the previous section, transparency is also a powerful coordination mechanism as it opens up opportunities for information and feedback, particularly in highly complex policy arenas such as the Norwegian new competence development model, with its many actors and its room for county and local variation. Publicly available data contributes to the transparency of the model, and information about the available resources is a crucial condition for stakeholder involvement and improvement. Transparency starts with creating a solid information basis on the inputs, processes and outputs or outcomes of the initiative at all levels: municipality, county and state.

Actions to consider:

Translating objectives into indicators by school owners, country governors and the Directorate, either using existing databases or designing new systems gathering data, to monitor the implementation process and the new model.

Ensure local data are fed back to the Directorate so it can help county governors and school owners, and monitor the take-up of the model.

The "Participation Survey" yearly monitors teachers' satisfaction and perception of the training relevance. This should also apply to any training undertaken within the new model.

Foster transparency by publicly releasing information and data on inputs, processes (at this stage), and outcomes (later on) of the model at the municipal, county, and national level.

Designing a communication and engagement plan

The language of a policy may not necessarily be understood by the actors who are expected to implement it (Hill, 2006[18]). A policy must gather political support among actors and across implementation levels if it is to be implemented (Datnow, 2000[19]). With a large number of vocal stakeholders in the education sector, policy designers are encouraged to plan for engaging stakeholders as early as possible in the process of policy making (Haddad and Demsky, 1995[20]) and also to communicate clearly on the goals, objectives and processes required for the policy.

In the case of the new competence development model, this could be done by implementing a proactive and targeted communication strategy to inform teachers (and other stakeholders) about the decentralised scheme; and starting talks with counties, municipalities, teachers and teacher representatives, and school leaders, on how to involve teachers in the various decision-making processes around the new competence development model.

At the national level the most relevant stakeholders and representative organisations of stakeholders were involved by the Ministry in the preparation of the White Paper that introduces the new competence development model: students, parents, teachers, school leaders, school owners, universities and counties (Government of Norway, 2017[1]). In the implementation phase however, it seems that stakeholder involvement at the national level has been narrowed down, with a communication strategy more actively targeted at counties and universities, while teachers and school leaders were involved to a lesser extent.

From our conversations, it appeared that Norway gave the counties, universities and municipalities one year to start building the structure of the model and design what they thought would be more appropriate, so they would own it over the longer-term. Yet, this does not appear to be part of their systematic communication strategy, in terms of the development of the model. The lack of a clear communication strategy could, in the end, hinder the transparency of the model, its understanding by the different stakeholders, and the local level of anchoring.

Therefore, the following questions could help identify which points are key in developing a targeted communication plan. Have county governors received a clear mandate regarding their new roles? Does the Directorate have a varied set of targeted communication tools available, which clarify the underlying rationale, the aims, the instruments and procedures, and ways to participate and benefit from the new competence development model? Have they been used to inform different stakeholders? Have potential obstacles for practitioners been identified and solutions communicated to stakeholders?

Actions to consider:

> Design a targeted communication strategy to the different stakeholders that aligns to the agreed role expectations at the municipal, county, and national level. Organise feedback loops to foster ownership of the model among the different stakeholders.

> Include in the communication strategy information on accountability relationships, on data and indicators to measure progress and on the evaluation of the model.

Securing financial and human resources

The inputs necessary for education policy implementation consist mainly of the funding, technology and knowledge available to the actors, as well as their capacity to use them. The amount, quality and distribution of these resources allocated to implementation determine to a great extent whether and how a policy is implemented (Wurzburg, 2010[21]; OECD, 2010[22]). A recurring issue with resources is not only about whether they are available for implementation, or in sufficient quantities, but how they are used, and what for, i.e. what the resource strategy is (OECD, 2015[23]).

Funding issues relevant to education policy implementation include whether there is enough funding, where it comes from, whether it is earmarked and who decides how to allocate it. The OECD team has been informed that the model has been allocated 100 NOK for the first year with expectations to be progressively increased by NOK 300-400 million by 2020. But these are not yet firm commitments, and could be changed with political cycles. Some stakeholders consider the funding of the model to be modest, unclear, and short-termed, which could jeopardise the model as there is a threshold level of funding below which implementation does not take place (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980[24]). In light of past experiences, would earmarked grants be preferable for stakeholders? And should a mechanism lifting the 30% co-funding requirement for the more disadvantaged municipalities be considered?

Moreover, different types of capacity are needed to make participation and collaboration in decision-making effective. First at school level, the capacity and will is needed, to organise and participate in collaborative decision-making about professional development needs and opportunities. For instance, are teachers and/or school leaders able to use data to analyse weak teaching and learning and design an appropriate training strategy? Second, leadership capacity is needed to make networks and forums productive meeting places. This point is partly addressed with the creation of the network coordinator role, but some training might be required for the coordinators to facilitate meetings efficiently. Third, are school owners in capacity to develop strategic planning and manage funds for teacher training? Pertaining to the capacity of municipal staff, it seems to be questionable if horizontal capacity building through networks will be sufficient for all municipalities to meet the responsibilities and expectations arising from educational policies in general. After agreement with county governors, KS seminars, an existing platform, could be an interesting support structure to municipalities struggling with the new model. Fourth, particularly at universities, the expertise to build bridges between municipalities and schools on the one hand and research and teacher training on the other hand, needs to be recognised as a specific function. It will help to enlarge the responsiveness of universities to schools' needs. Fifth, are school owners allocating time in schools schedules to engage in collaboration, and compensating the cost of participation in network collaboration or training?

Actions to consider:

Ensure long term stability of funding for the model, and communicate it to stakeholders.

Consider linking the level of required co-funding requirement to the municipality level of deprivation.

Foster capacity development at every level by allocating sufficient time and funding resources for:

- Teachers to reflect on their professional needs,
- School leaders to exert leadership and steer collaboration between teachers,
- School owners to lead meaningful school evaluation,
- Network coordinators and county staff to effectively exercise facilitative leadership for enhancing collaboration,
- University researchers to bridge the gap with schools.

Clarifying expectations on timing and pace

The timing and pace set for implementation determine to a large extent how the process unfolds. An implementation strategy defines a timeline common to the main stakeholders, to guide over time the actions to undertake.

The agenda of the new model is not clear in the duration at present, and the OECD team was informed that stakeholders were given one year to start building the structure necessary for the new model, that the decentralised scheme will include upper secondary schools in 2019, and that the design of the follow-up scheme needs to be finalised. This lack of visibility is not problematic per se, as long as a high level of political assurance strengthens the long term nature of the model. The focus should lie on allowing time to invest in building up the necessary structures and processes for the new competence development model to bear fruit.

The steady increase over the years of the budget for the decentralised scheme should be matched with growing objectives in terms of teacher training participation. Due to contextual factors, including existing structures such as networks of municipalities, the roll out of the model will follow a different pace across territories. As a result, municipal and county authorities should benefit from some flexibility to organise a suitable timeline, based on the assessment of existing capacities.

Actions to consider:

> Within a central framework allowing county variation, each county governor needs to work with stakeholders to set objectives linked to the phasing in of the new model and offer a clear timeline to stakeholders.

Next steps

It will be important for the Directorate, together with key stakeholders, to reflect on the aforementioned actions, on how to accomplish them, on who would be responsible for each one, and on how this could be monitored. In Table 3, each line represents a lever for accomplishing a coherent implementation strategy, associated with the several previously detailed actions. This table is included to use collaboratively to guide how to move forward with these actions and ensure the model is implemented effectively.

Table 3. Implementing the new model: planning the next steps

Implementation levers	Concrete actions to consider	Indicators to review progress in action	Who is in charge?	Resources	When?
Refining the objectives					
Reviewing policy tools and aligning with the broader policy context					
Clarifying roles and responsibilities					
Gathering data for improvement					
Designing a communication and engagement plan					
Securing financial and human resources					
Clarifying expectations on timing and pace					

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