International Benchmarking for School Improvement

Project Outline

September 2023

BACKGROUND

The PISA-based Test for Schools (PBTS) is built on the global PISA assessment but designed to be used by individual schools and districts.

Teachers, school leaders and local educators are just as interested in international benchmarking as national policymakers. They know how important it is for their students to be prepared to enter a global economy where the benchmark for educational success is no longer the national standards alone, but the best performing education systems internationally. Moreover, they find real value when that information comes with tangible insights on how to leverage improvement in their own school.

Teachers are also actively seeking to connect with their peers around the world to share their professional insights by collaborating and learning from one another. This is not about copying prefabricated solutions from other places; it is about looking at good practices in our own environment and elsewhere to become more knowledgeable about what works and in which contexts. Supporting school leaders, teachers and educators in achieving their aspirations is what PISA for Schools is all about.

OBJECTIVES

The **PISA for Schools** project contributes to improving student learning and well-being by empowering teachers and school leaders through global connections and international benchmarking based on PISA. The PISA for Schools project three objectives:

1. **Measure** students' learning outcomes in mathematics, science and reading, as well as their social and emotional skills and well-being. In particular, how well they can extrapolate that knowledge and skills and apply them in novel contexts.

2. **Explore**: Empower school leaders and teachers by providing them with data about their students' performance, learning environment, socioeconomic background and motivation for learning.

3. **Act**: Provide global peer-learning opportunities among teachers and school leaders as they apply their insights from targeted data in their efforts to improve student learning and well-being in their school.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY

Target population

Like PISA, the PISA-based Test for Schools (PBTS) is designed for students who are between 15 years and 3 completed months to 16 years and 2 completed months at the time of assessment. By following the same methodology used in the main PISA Study, school PBTS results will be directly comparable to the main PISA results both at the national and international level.

Eligible schools

All schools that fall within the target population are eligible to participate in PBTS if they meet the minimum requirements. Each school must have 42 or more eligible students. In addition, 80% or more of the sampled students must take part in the assessment to be able to produce a school report. To ensure that the minimum number of 42 students per school is reached, schools are encouraged to test at least 55 students.

Field Trial

The validation study (field trial) is a mandatory element of the assessment process. It ensures the psychometric properties of the instruments in the context of the country of administration. The schools selected for participating in the field trial should be as diverse as possible in terms of level of achievement, school size, intake and type. The schools that participate in the field trial will receive a school report if they meet the eligibility requirements described above.

Testing period

The Service Provider can choose the testing period when they wish to administer the PBTS. Testing must be avoided during the assessment period of other OECD tests such as PISA and TALIS. The testing period should be held within a period of 6-8 weeks. Scoring and coding activities can be launched during the testing period and can be completed after the testing period concludes.

Administration mode

To ensure alignment with PISA, the PBTS is available only in digital format in the country's language of instruction, with multilingual options available for countries that have multiple languages of instruction. The provision of the PBTS can take place both online and offline. This flexibility provides valuable support for schools that have poor internet connections, allowing them to take the test offline and to copy the student responses to the PBTS platform after students have completed the test.

OUTCOMES

School reports

Each participating school will receive a comprehensive report aimed at school improvement efforts and international benchmarking. Each report will be unique to the individual school and will be delivered in a digital and PDF format.

School group report

School networks or groups of schools can also request (at an additional cost) a comprehensive Group Report geared toward improvement efforts at the network level.

Data

Together with the abovementioned reports, Service Providers will also receive the complete datasets generated by the administration of the PBTS in their territory. Thus, they will be able to autonomously carry out any desired additional analysis on the data.

Capacity building

Building capacity for educational improvement is one of the main aims of the PISA for Schools project. Capacity building activities can be broadly addressed either to participants (e.g. school staff) or to other stakeholders (e.g. Service Provider staff, analysts from educational authorities and other interested parties). For both groups, the OECD will provide international networking opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

For instance, every school participating in PISA for Schools has access to the project's Global Community. Online and in-person events are organised regularly to offer a space for school leaders, teachers and educators to share and solve problems, learn from other contexts and experiences, and support others to understand the results from their School Report and implement change in their classrooms.

At the same time, Service Provider's staff will acquire hands-on experience in competence-based educational assessment, from implementation to post-assessment activities. Staff will apply the principles of survey management, digital test administration, validation studies, data analysis and processing, and item analysis and development, drawing from the expertise and experience of the OECD and other partners of the PISA for Schools project.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service Provider (SP)

The PBTS is co-ordinated in each territory by a SP, which is responsible for implementing the project and is accredited by the OECD.

External Contractor(s)

If the SP does not have all the capacities required for carrying out the project, it can outsource some of the responsibilities to one or several other External Contractors accredited by the OECD.

International Platform Provider (IPP)

The PBTS is administrated using a digital platform developed by the OECD's partner Janison Pty Ltd, who acts as the IPP and is responsible for providing digital authoring, delivery and reporting tools to schools.

OECD

The OECD is responsible for certifying the SP and for informing the PISA Governing Board representative about the progress of the project in that country.

The OECD also provides technical advisory services, support and oversight the development of the PISA for Schools project. The OECD's tasks include: providing test material, leading the translation and adaptation of the test, verification of translations and adaptations, developing reporting templates, etc.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Timeline

The initial implementation of the PBTS takes approximately ten months and includes translation and adaptation of the assessment and a field trial (Year 1, first testing cycle).

After the first testing cycle, the assessment can be provided 'on demand' to any school in the country (second testing cycle onwards).

Budget

The cost of implementing the PBTS consists of three distinct components:

1. **OECD**

a. **A voluntary contribution to be paid to the OECD** for the **Year 1,** which includes the validation study (field trial) and the country's language adaptation verification, for a fixed amount of **EUR 90 000.**

The voluntary contribution to the OECD from **Year 2** onwards, using the same instruments and in the same conditions, is **EUR 40 000 plus a variable unit rate per participating school**. The variable amount is calculated using a tiered pricing model as follows:

Number of schools (per year)	Cost per school within each tier (per year)
1-99	€350.00
100-299	€300.00
300-499	€250.00
500-999	€200.00
≥1000	To be discussed

The voluntary contributions for each year include one testing cycle. An extra amount of EUR 15 000 will be charged for each additional testing cycle per year.

Additionally, the OECD will conduct a needs assessment to ascertain whether the SP requires **additional support activities** to successfully implement the project. These activities may be provided by the PISA for Schools team and associated experts.

Examples of additional support activities are outlined in the table below (For more detail please see Annex 2):

Additional support activities	Year 1	Year 2
Initial workshop (approx. 2 days on site)	€10 000	€10 000
Data coding training, quality check and double marking	€20 000	€20 000
Sampling framework design for representative sampling	€20 000	€20 000
Tailored data analysis and report	tbd	tbd
Group report	€35 000	€35 000
Dedicated capacity building activities	To be discussed	To be discussed
OECD mission	Depending on location	Depending on location
Country customisation of PISA for Schools Online Community	€10 000	Not applicable
Post-assessment workshop	€10 000	€10 000

2.   International Platform Provider

The IPP will charge a fixed annual fee of **EUR 75 000** in Year 1 which will include network specification, validation, customisation of the international digital platform to one national language, hosting on the PBTS platform and a **base provision for 200 schools** for a single test cycle.

The PBTS platform is currently configured to deliver the assessment in English, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Portuguese. If the national language(s) is not already supported by the platform, an additional EUR 15 000 will be charged for each language requiring development.

If the SP chooses to undertake **additional support activities**, the following IPP charges will apply: EUR 5 000 for the initial onsite workshop and EUR 10 000 for the Group Report.

In **Year 2**, a fixed annual fee of **EUR 60 000** will include maintenance, hosting on the PBTS platform and a base provision of 200 schools.

In all years of implementation, for each additional school beyond the base provision a unit rate of EUR 150 will be charged.

Additional testing cycles within a given year will be charged at EUR 15 000.

3.   Service Provider

The costs incurred by the **Service Provider** when delivering the PBTS, including technical support and logistics of the test administration and any additional support from external experts, if required.

STEPS FOR JOINING THE PISA FOR SCHOOLS PROJECT

1. Expression of interest

Schools, school networks or public authorities send an
expression of interest to the OECD Secretariat.

2. Approval by national education authorities

The OECD Secretariat will then obtain approval in principle to offer the
PISA-based Test for Schools from the relevant PISA Governing Board Representative.

3. Identification and accreditation of a Service Provider

The OECD accredits a Service Provider (SP) on the basis of its capacity to meet the
standards required by the OECD, as defined by the Technical Report and Guidelines. The
SP signs an agreement with the OECD and also signs a contract
with the International Platform Provider.

4. Preparations for assessment delivery

The PISA-based Test for Schools assessment is translated into the official language(s) and
validated by the OECD. After which a validation study (field trial) is conducted in the
country or school network to ensure the reliability and validity of the assessment.

5. On-demand testing

Once the validation study (field trial) is complete, the test can be
delivered on demand to any eligible school which meets the criteria
set out in the Technical Report and Guidelines within the agreed testing period.

CONTACTS

For further information on the PISA for Schools project please see our website:
https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-schools/

For more information, contact Joanne Caddy (Team Leader) at joanne.caddy@oecd.org

ANNEX 1: RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below provides a description of the tasks involved in the project, and the team that is responsible for each task.

PGB Member= PISA Governing Board Member
SP = Service Provider
IPP = International Platform Provider
Territory= it can be a local, regional or national entity.

1. Expression of Interest	Responsibility
Receive an expression of interest from country/school network	OECD
Seek approval by PGB Member (for new countries)	OECD/PGB Member
Identify a SP for Territory	OECD, Territory
Prepare OECD/SP/Territory Agreement	OECD
Prepare IPP/SP Contract	IPP
2. Adaptation	**Responsibility**
Set up country authoring environment in international platform	IPP
Establish procedures for the security, protection, and confidentiality of all materials	IPP, SP, Territory
Provide manuals for SP operations	IPP
Provide localisation support documentation	IPP
Provide PBTS test materials to the SP	OECD
Lead adaptation workshop for test materials with SP	OECD, SP
Translation and adaption of PBTS test materials	SP
Verify adapted versions of PBTS test materials	OECD, contractor
Author PBTS test materials in platform (including localisation)	IPP
Adaptation and translation of school level reporting templates	OECD, SP
3. School Recruitment	**Responsibility**
Agree on testing window	IPP, SP, Territory OECD
Compile a database of schools to be tested	Territory, SP
Identify school coordinators	Territory, SP
4. Test Cycle Planning	**Responsibility**
Sampling - Create school lists and select participating schools/students	SP
Manage communication for participating schools.	SP
Design and develop testing window and all checks for delivery capability	IPP
Booking of testing slots	SP
Create and perform user acceptance plan	IPP
5. Preparation & Readiness Check	**Responsibility**
Publish practice tests	IPP
Recruit and train Coders for open-ended questions (in local languages)	SP
Provide training workshops for SPs	IPP
Create spreadsheets for IPP for sampled students	SP
Train School coordinators and Test administrators	SP, IPP
Generate School PINs	IPP
Perform checks of school equipment in Territory	SP, IPP

6. Delivery & Coding	Responsibility
Provide support to SPs for test delivery	IPP
Deliver the test	SP, IPP
Report on administration process by IPP	IPP
Report on administration process by SP (template provided by OECD)	SP
Enable data extraction for open-ended questions by SPs	IPP
Coding of open-ended responses	SP
7. Validation & Data Analysis	**Responsibility**
Data checks and data validation for open-ended questions	SP, contractor
Data checks and data validation for close-ended questions	SP, IPP, OECD
Provide validation study template	OECD
Provide raw data in final database containing student scores	IPP
Perform validation study (only in Year 1)	SP
Validate validation study (only in Year 1)	OECD
Validate final results provided by the IPP	OECD
8. Reporting	**Responsibility**
Generate reports and data on digital dashboard for validation by OECD	IPP
Validate school report	OECD
Deliver digital school reports to participating schools	SP
9. Post Test Activities	**Responsibility**
Send information about PISA for Schools Online Community	SP
Organise post-launch activities (e.g. webinars, launch events in schools)	Territory, SP, OECD
Administer survey for school satisfaction	IPP, OECD, SP

ANNEX 2: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

This section provides a brief explanation of the additional support activities that the PISA for Schools team can provide to the SP:

Initial workshop

The most common activities of the initial onsite workshop for training and support to SP are aimed at capacity building within the SP team, and include:

- What are the OECD, PISA and PISA for Schools;

- The cognitive test and the student questionnaire: their structure, goals and what is measured;

- SP activities and responsibilities: handling and translation of test materials, school recruitment and student data collection, response coding and grading;

- International Platform features and initial training on its use when preparing testing cycles, conducting coding and generating reports.

  In addition to the initial workshop a public launch event could be conducted to raise awareness among schools and key stakeholders about the PISA for Schools project in the country.

Data coding training, quality check and double marking

Each SP will need to allocate a certain number of Coders in order to mark open-ended items in the cognitive test and open-ended questions in the student questionnaire. The OECD will provide training either directly to the coders or to some trainers (who will later train the coders), depending on the SP's needs assessment.

Sampling framework design for representative sampling

Although mainly focused at School-level improvement, the PISA for Schools instruments can be used to draw conclusions at more systemic levels, on a given network of schools, a given subgroup of the student population or the entire Territory, provided that a statistically representative sample of schools and students has been drawn according to PISA technical standards.

This item will cover costs incurred by the OECD and External Contractors in designing a sampling framework and other procedures required to obtain a sample that allows for statistically valid conclusions regarding the group of interest.

Tailored data analysis and reporting

The content of the data analysis and reporting will be defined together with the SP. It is possible to include analyses that will look at specific groups of students and schools (e.g. resilient schools, low/high performing schools or rural/urban schools) and into details about their development of Social and Emotional skills.

The OECD and the SP will determine if (and which) additional questions could be added to student questionnaire in order to provide additional analysis according to specific local or context needs.

Group report

In addition to the School Report, the OECD can analyse the final results at a regional, municipal, or school network level and provide a group report.

The OECD and the SP will determine if (and which) additional questions could be added to student questionnaire in order to provide even more meaningful analysis in the national context.

Dedicated capacity building activities

Depending on their needs, Service Providers can request dedicated capacity building activities which will go beyond the inherent capacity building that naturally takes place through SP participation in the PISA for Schools project.

A non-exhaustive list of possible topics for these dedicated capacity building activities include survey management, test design, item analysis and development (i.e. psychometrics), validation studies and secondary analysis with PBTS data.

OECD mission

This will cover the costs related to one mission of OECD staff to the country where the project is being or will be implemented. The OECD recommends that this takes place in order to deliver the "Initial workshop, training and support to SP" in person. If needed, other missions can be requested later by the SP.

Post-assessment workshop

The most common activities of the post-assessment workshop are aimed at capacity building, and include: interventions to increase data literacy of school principals and teachers, creating opportunities to promote peer-learning or presenting compendia of OECD findings on particularly relevant topics. The final content and topics will be agreed upon with the SP.