



OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (School Resources Review)

**Guidelines for Country Background
Reports**

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GUIDELINES FOR COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORTS

Introduction

1. The OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools (also to be referred to as the *School Resources Review*)¹ will provide analysis and policy advice on how to distribute, utilise and manage resources so that they contribute to achieving countries' educational objectives to the fullest. An important part of the Review consists of collecting information on country approaches to improve the effectiveness of resource use in schools, the challenges of implementation and the evidence of their impact. There are important differences between countries with respect to the distribution, utilisation and management of school resources. The Review intends to provide a stock-take of current policies and practices in countries, identify innovative and successful initiatives, and analyse the effectiveness of policies.

2. With these objectives in mind, the Secretariat will collect information on country approaches to distributing, utilising and managing school resources through the preparation of Country Background Reports (CBRs), to enable countries to set their approaches in proper context. These will be prepared following the guidelines provided in this document.² These guidelines incorporate feedback on an earlier version of this document [[EDU/EDPC\(2013\)11](#)], which was discussed at the meeting to launch the OECD Review, held on 27-28 March 2013 at the OECD Headquarters in Paris [[EDU/EDPC/M\(2013\)1](#)]. The CBRs respond to a common set of issues and questions, and use a common framework to facilitate comparative analysis and maximise the opportunities for countries to learn from each other.

3. This is part of the effort to collect information from as many countries as possible, in ways that minimise the burden on countries and make it easy to share and add to the public knowledge base.

Purposes of the Country Background Report

4. The Review is using a comparative framework to help countries assess: (i) how to effectively govern resources within the school system; (ii) how to effectively distribute resources across the school system; (iii) how to effectively utilise resources once they have been allocated to different priorities and programmes; and (iv) how to effectively manage resources at different levels of the system. The CBRs will provide in-depth analysis of context, key factors and policy responses in individual countries. They provide an invaluable source of information on policies to improve the effectiveness of resource use in schools and greatly facilitate the analysis to be developed within the Review.

¹ The project plan for the Review is outlined in the document "Design and Implementation Plan for the Review" [[EDU/EDPC\(2013\)4/REV1](#)].

² The guidelines provided in this document were prepared in line with the analytical framework and the key issues and questions for analysis proposed in the "Design and Implementation Plan for the Review" [[EDU/EDPC\(2013\)4/REV1](#)].

5. The CBR is intended for four main audiences:

- The Secretariat and participating countries as an aid to sharing experiences, and identifying common problems and policy options. It will also provide important background material for the final synthesis report;
- The team of external reviewers who will visit the country concerned (for those countries opting for a Country Review) – the CBR will assist to identify issues that should be explored, the policies that should be examined, and the consultations that should be held;
- Those interested in the effectiveness of resource use in schools within the country concerned – the CBR can be an important means of focusing national attention on key issues that need to be addressed, and drawing attention to policy initiatives; and
- Those interested in the effectiveness of resource use in schools at international level and in other countries – all CBRs will be placed on the OECD website and their availability widely disseminated.

6. To serve these purposes and to reach these audiences each CBR will need to be a coherent, self-contained document and not just a series of responses to questions. To maximise the opportunities for countries to learn from each other the CBRs will need to be prepared according to a common framework and structure and written in an accessible style.

7. Nevertheless, the richness and value of these CBRs comes from a problem-oriented and dynamic view of issues related to resource use in schools. The questions posed in these guidelines are intended to draw out coherent analyses and discussions on the key policy issues. Responses to questions may be combined, rephrased or expanded in the light of national circumstances. The key requirement is that the issues underlying the questions are addressed in the CBR. In addition, if something that is important regarding the effectiveness of resource use in schools in the concerned country is not mentioned in these guidelines it should nevertheless be addressed in the CBR.

Structure of the Country Background Report

8. The proposed structure for the report is an executive summary followed by six chapters (see Annex 1 for technical information). Each chapter should summarise any available evidence on the main causal factors in the area concerned, and the impact of any policy initiatives. Several questions in each chapter seek opinions or judgements about matters on which there is not likely to be clear evidence or where views may differ among key stakeholders. In these cases it is important that the report indicates the range of views or opinions held by stakeholders and the main issues which are contested. The information to be provided concerns pre-primary, primary and secondary education.³

9. Throughout the report, the objective is to summarise and synthesise the available material on resource use in schools and to minimise the burden on countries where material is already available elsewhere. For this reason, hyperlinks to other documents, reports and statistics already available on the internet are encouraged. The report itself should be a maximum of 100 pages, although countries may wish to provide additional information in annexes.

10. Wherever possible, the CBR should refer to the source(s) of any data – legislation, formal agreements, research articles, literature reviews, surveys, evaluations, publications, administrative data and

³ The scope of the Review does not include tertiary education and adult education.

so on. Statistical and other data should be provided to support and illustrate the points made in the report. Where data are provided they should be accompanied by brief notes to clarify the concepts and terms that are used, and the methodology used to collect the data. Where evidence is missing on particular points this should be indicated. The OECD Secretariat will also draw on the relevant data published in *Education at a Glance*.

11. The Secretariat is happy to provide comments to countries on their draft CBR or clarify any substance or technical points at any moment.

Chapter 1: The national context

12. The purpose of this chapter is to briefly outline the broad economic, social, demographic, political, and cultural developments that shape the challenges facing the school system. It is intended to provide the context for the more detailed discussion in later chapters.

1.1 The economic and social context

- Present the economic and social background of your country, with a special emphasis on the main economic and labour market trends that have implications for school policies.

1.2 Demographic developments

- Summarise the main population trends in terms of numbers, age structure and cultural diversity that have implications for school policies.

1.3 Political context

- Present the political context of your country, with special emphasis on aspects that have implications for school policies (e.g. political cycle, political jurisdictions).

1.4 Public sector management

- Outline the main principles, practices, aims and objectives prevailing in the organisation and management of the public sector. What recent reforms have been implemented?

Chapter 2: The school system

13. The purpose of this chapter is to describe some of the main features of the school system in terms of organisation, governance as well as performance. This chapter will provide much of the detail that is needed to understand the process of decision-making, and the allocation and use of resources in the school system. The issues covered in this chapter will be referred to in subsequent sections of this report.

2.1 Organisation of the school system

- Outline the main structural features of the school system – levels of education, types and numbers of schools; the different possible school tracks; the distribution of student numbers across different levels of education (pre-primary, primary, secondary), types of programme (e.g. general and vocational education) and sectors (public and private); and the regulatory and legislative framework governing the school system. What is the starting school age and what is the duration of compulsory education?

- Describe any major changes in the structure of the school system taking place in the recent past. Are any reforms being currently considered?

2.2 Education environment

- What is the importance of education in society? Do parents invest considerably in the education of their children? What is the prevalence of private tutoring in the school system?
- What are the key traditions, cultures and values in the education system? This could cover aspects such as the culture of evaluation and accountability within the school system; the tradition of quality-focussed policies in the education sector and the public sector; the extent to which teachers are trusted as professionals; the extent of the regulatory and standard-setting role of national education authorities; or whether education staff are part of the civil service.
- Does the media play a key role in defining general perceptions of schooling?

2.3 Objectives of the education system and student learning objectives

- What are the goals and purposes of the education system? What are, specifically, the more immediate policy priorities and education targets? How are student learning objectives articulated (e.g. national curriculum, educational standards, learning progressions)?

2.4 Distribution of responsibilities within the school system

- What are the different levels of education administration and what types of articulation exist between them? What agencies play a role in the governance of schooling (e.g. inspectorates, agencies for curriculum development and assessment)?
- How are decision-making responsibilities distributed between the different levels of the administration (central, state/regional, local, and school level) for each of the different education levels (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary) in matters such as: curriculum development and assessment; opening or closing schools; setting the school calendar and instruction time; deciding on class size, grouping of students, and strategies to support students with learning difficulties; organising school leadership; and allocating and managing financial resources (e.g. deciding on budget allocation within schools), human resources (e.g. teacher selection, evaluation and dismissal) and physical resources (e.g. use of school facilities)? If publicly-funded privately-managed schools are present in the school system, comment on the differences in autonomy between these schools and public schools.
- Has the distribution of responsibilities within the school system recently changed? How? Which were the goals guiding these changes? Are any new changes or initiatives foreseen?

2.5 Market mechanisms in the school system

- To what extent have market mechanisms been introduced in the provision of educational services (e.g. degree of school choice by parents, public funding of privately-managed schools)? To what extent are parents able to choose the school their children attend? Which criteria are used to select students into schools for which demand exceeds supply?
- What policies have been implemented to encourage competition between schools? What type of information about the quality and performance of schools is made public (e.g. results of student

standardised tests)? What other measures have been implemented to enhance accountability in the school system?

2.6 Performance of the school system

- Summarise information on access, participation and completion rates at different levels of the school system such as: entrance rates, student enrolment, transition rates, completion rates, average study duration, incidence of year repetition and early school drop-out. Outline recent trends in these indicators.
- Provide information on measures of student performance: qualifications attained, results achieved in standardised assessments, levels of education reached by the population.
- Provide information about differences in performance across student groups (e.g. students in remote areas, students in disadvantaged areas, cultural minorities, students with special needs) and school types (e.g. public vs. private, urban vs. rural area, by school size).

2.7 Policy approaches to equity in education

- What central policies or programmes exist to encourage the school system to advance equity goals? Describe any policies, targets or goals that apply to specific groups such as those from low income families, disadvantaged areas, cultural minorities or students with special needs.

2.8 Main challenges

- Discuss the main challenges currently facing the school system in the country. Are there any pressures for further decentralisation, or on the contrary, recentralisation of decision-making in school policy? Is the school system facing any issues of coordination among the different decision-making levels?
- What are the main areas of disagreement between education stakeholders about current school policy? Elaborate on the main reasons for disagreement.

Chapter 3: Governance of resource use in schools

14. This chapter is concerned with how resources are governed within the school system. It addresses the level of resources for education, sources of revenue for education, the planning of resource use and the implementation of policies to improve effectiveness of resource use.

3.1 Level of resources and policy concerns

- What is the total budget allocated to education (including tertiary and adult education)? What is the total budget allocated to schooling (i.e. pre-tertiary education)? Outline the trends in the schooling and education budgets in recent years.
- What proportion of the education budget in pre-tertiary education goes to privately-managed schools?
- Comment and present data on unit costs of spending per student across the different education levels, school types and school sectors. Which trends has spending per student followed in the

recent past? Where available outline differences in spending per student across different regions or different contexts (e.g. larger, smaller, urban, rural schools).

- Discuss any challenges currently facing the level of financial and other resources in the school system. To what extent do these challenges differ across the different levels of the school system?
- Focusing on the recent impact of the financial crisis and associated processes of fiscal consolidation which may have occurred: Are there any specific programmes or items in the education (and school) budget that are under greater pressure of being reduced? In case the education (or school) budget was reduced recently, what strategies were followed to achieve the reduction? In more general terms, is there a concern about improving the efficiency with which school resources are used? If yes, what strategies are followed to improve the effectiveness of resource use in schools?

3.2 Sources of revenue

- Describe the sources of funding for the school system. What is the relative relevance of centrally, regionally and locally levied resources for financing the school system? How have these evolved in recent years? To what extent are regional and local governments allowed to complement any central transfers with their own resources? Has this led to significant differences in levels of spending between regions and localities?
- What is the extent of parental contributions to the funding of the school system? Are there any fees charged in public schools? What is the extent of contributions from private entities other than households (e.g. philanthropy, business sector contributions) in the school system budget?

3.3 Planning of resource use

- Describe the recent trends in the demand for different services within the education system. Which levels of the education system are facing increasing demand from the public? Which policies have been undertaken, or are planned, to face this increasing demand? How has this affected the resources available for the school system?
- Outline the general trends in the schooled population. Is the school system facing increasing or declining school enrolments? Does this vary across levels of the school system and regions?
- How are responsibilities for resource use shared? More specifically, which groups or units have the responsibility for the following tasks: channelling resources to policy priorities; distributing resources across the different levels of education administration; monitoring resource use across the system; managing the teaching workforce; organising school leadership; maintaining the school system infrastructure; communicating with the relevant stakeholders about resource use; setting up budgeting and accounting systems; and setting up relationships with contractors and vendors.
- Are there any methods and instruments specifically designed to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use? How are “effectiveness” and “efficiency” conceptualised? Have measures of efficiency been developed at system, sub-system and school levels?
- What type of evidence is used for the planning of resource use? Do results of research about the effects of resource use inform such planning?

- Are there any mechanisms that allow schools to share information and their experiences in how to effectively manage their resources, for instance, sharing results about the implementation of innovative forms of organisation? Which methods are available for benchmarking and for the adoption of best practices in resource use between different schools?

3.4 Implementation of policies to improve the effectiveness of resource use

- Describe how national school policies are developed. Which actors are typically involved in setting school policy? Are there any tensions between these actors about the relative priority that should be given to different objectives?
- How are formal stakeholder consultation procedures organised in the school system? What typical strategies are followed to build consensus about priorities for school system spending?
- Are pilots and policy experimentation common before implementation of school policy? How are the results of the monitoring of resource use shared with stakeholders?

3.5 Main challenges

- Are there any aspects in the governance of resource use that are being currently challenged or subject to re-examination? What are these aspects and which alternative policy options are currently being considered?
- What are the main areas of disagreement between education stakeholders about the governance of resources in the school system? Elaborate on the main reasons for disagreement.

Chapter 4: Resource distribution

15. This chapter is concerned with how resources are distributed within the school system. It deals not only with resources levied at the central level but also with those levied at the more local level (e.g. regions, municipalities). It addresses the distribution of resources between the different levels of the administration (e.g. central, state, regional and local), across resource types (e.g. human resources, physical resources, targeted programmes), between levels of the school system (e.g. pre-primary, primary, secondary), between different sectors (e.g. general programmes, vocational programmes) and between individual schools. In addition, it concerns the distribution of school facilities (e.g. organisation of the school network), the organisation of teacher resources (e.g. number of teachers; teacher preparation), the organisation of school leadership resources (e.g. number and profile of school leaders) and resources targeted at specific student groups (e.g. special needs; compensatory programmes for disadvantaged students).

4.1 Distribution of resources between levels of the education administration

- What proportion of the educational budget is decentralised and managed at the different levels of the education administration? Are there any differences between the different levels of the school system in this respect, i.e. is funding more decentralised for some levels of education than others?
- On which basis are financial resources allocated to the different levels of the education administration? Which specific criteria are used to estimate the financial resources needed for each administrative unit? How do these criteria account for the particular characteristics of the student population in each administrative unit?

- Regarding the monetary transfers from the central government to decentralised entities, what part of these transfers is ear-marked (i.e. the money needs to be spent on specific items)?
- Is there any funding outside the main mechanism of distribution that specifically attempts to target resources to regions or localities with specific (or greater) needs? What are the criteria for assigning extra-funding in case such programmes exist?

4.2 Distribution of financial resources across resource types

- For each of the different levels of the administration and educational levels, outline how financial resources are spent on different budget items (e.g. capital and current spending) and resource types (human resources – teachers, school leaders, non-teaching staff ; physical resources – buildings, equipment, school materials; other resources). How has the allocation of funding to different budget items and resource types changed in the past years?

4.3 Distribution of resources between levels and sectors of the school system

- Describe how financial resources are distributed across the different levels of the education system (exceptionally, for this item, please include tertiary and adult education). What is the relative financial weight of each of the education levels? How have these evolved in the recent past?
- Describe how financial resources are distributed across the different sectors of the school system (e.g. general programmes, vocational and pre-vocational programmes) for the educational levels at which different sectors exist. What is the relative financial weight of each of the education sectors? How have these evolved in the recent past?

4.4. Distribution of resources across individual schools

- What are the main principles and mechanisms for funding public (and publicly-subsidised) schools (e.g. funding formulae, historical funding, administrative discretion)? Which specific criteria are used to estimate the financial resources needed for each school? How do these criteria account for aspects such as the socio-economic background of students, or schools' and students' special needs? Please refer to resources levied at the central level but also to those levied at the more local level.
- In countries where resources are distributed to schools according to funding formulae: What variables are included in the formula to allocate funds? Are there any adjustments in the formula to specifically account for students' special socio-economic backgrounds? Is the funding formula applied nationwide or is it defined at the level of local administration?
- Is there any funding outside the main mechanism of distribution that specifically attempts to target resources to schools with specific (or greater) needs? What are the criteria for assigning extra-funding in case such targeted programmes exist? What are the policy objectives of targeted programmes which provide schools with extra resources (e.g. improve school management)?
- In the specific case of publicly-subsidised privately-managed schools: What requirements do these schools have to meet to receive public funds? How do funding mechanisms differ from those for public schools? Is public funding for this type of schools mostly targeted for specific resources (e.g. teachers' salaries) or is it open to a more discretionary use?

4.5 Distribution of school facilities and materials

The school network

- How is the school network organised? Are there established principles or regulations for the organisation of the school network (e.g. size of schools; geographical distribution of schools) at the central or local administration levels?
- Typically, how big are schools at the different levels of the school system? What is the average number of students per school, and what have been the recent trends in this indicator. Are there any significant differences in the average size of schools across different regions and localities?
- Are small community schools a pressing issue in national or regional education policies? Which policy alternatives have been discussed to face this challenge?
- In case of the rationalisation of the school network (e.g. closure of some schools): How are the freed resources from a school which shuts down reallocated? In case of school shut down, which were the costs of redirecting students to other schools? Is there any evidence available on the impact of the policies implemented?
- Have there been any experiences with innovative uses of ICT with the purpose of extending the benefits of large schools to small community schools?

School facilities and materials

- Have there been recent investments in school infrastructure? What policy initiatives ensure the quality and adequacy of school facilities for teaching and learning purposes? Are there any programmes targeted at meeting the infrastructure needs of individual schools?
- What policies have been followed to introduce ICT in schools? Is there any evidence available on the impact of these policies?
- What policies are followed regarding textbooks? Are these provided for free to students?

4.6 Distribution of teacher resources

Description of the teaching body

- Describe the size and composition of the teaching body, as well as recent trends in these aspects.

Teacher education and recruitment

- What are the main pathways by which people can become teachers (include details on initial teacher education)? What are the prerequisites to enter the teaching profession? Are there any programmes targeted at attracting high quality secondary school graduates into initial teacher education?
- How are teachers recruited and assigned to schools? Have any policies or incentive schemes been implemented to attract qualified teachers to disadvantaged or remote schools? If so, how is this carried out in practice?

4.7 Distribution of school leadership resources

Description of school leadership and school leaders

- Describe the size and the composition of the personnel in charge of school leadership. Characterise the individuals occupying school leadership positions in terms of age, gender, profession.

Preparation of school leaders and selection

- Which are the prerequisites for school leadership positions? Are there any programmes to specifically prepare school leaders for their functions? How are school leaders recruited? In case school leadership responsibilities are distributed among a group of people, how are these individuals selected?
- Have any policies or incentive schemes been implemented to attract qualified school leaders to disadvantaged schools? How is this carried out in practice?

4.8 Distribution across specific student groups

- What school resources are distributed directly to students (or their families) instead of being channelled through schools (e.g. vouchers, financial aid, extra out-of-school support)? What criteria are used to distribute these resources directly to students (or their families)?
- Describe programmes targeted at providing specific student groups with extra resources (e.g. financial aid for disadvantaged students; meals at school; extra support to assist students from a cultural minority or a migrant background).
- Describe how students with special needs are integrated in the school system. What type of special provisions and resources exist for students with special needs? Describe any special or additional funding outside the regular funding for schools that is aimed at groups of students with special needs. Is this funding channelled through specific targeted programmes?

4.9 Main challenges

- Are there any aspects in the distribution of resources that are being currently challenged or subject to re-examination? What are these aspects and which alternative policy options are currently being considered?
- What are the main areas of disagreement between education stakeholders about the distribution of resources in the school system? Elaborate on the main reasons for disagreement.

Chapter 5: Resource utilisation

16. This chapter is concerned with how resources are utilised through specific policies and practices, to different priorities and programmes once they have reached different levels of the school system. It addresses the matching of resources to individual student learning needs, the organisation of student learning time, the allocation of teacher resources to students, the organisation of school leadership, the teaching and learning environment within school, the use of school facilities and materials and the organisation of education governance.

5.1 Matching resources to individual student learning needs

- How are students organised into learning groups within schools? Are they grouped according to criteria other than age (e.g. based on needs, abilities or preferences)? Is there any evidence on the impact of such practices?
- What strategies are typically used to address learning difficulties of individual students? Are additional resources targeted to students with learning difficulties? Is year repetition a common practice? What actions are implemented at the school level to prevent early school drop-out? If available, please provide evidence of the impact of such practices.
- How diverse is the offer of educational programmes at lower and upper secondary levels (e.g. existence of vocational tracks)? At what stages of the school system are students selected into different tracks? What criteria are used to select students into the different tracks?

5.2 Organisation of student learning time

- Describe the organisation of the school calendar (e.g. number of instruction days in the year, duration of school holidays) for the different levels of the school system. What is the average number of hours of instruction per week and year?
- How is the school week organised? What is the duration of a regular school day, and how is it organised? How are learning activities distributed among regular instruction, extracurricular activities and homework?
- Have there been any changes proposed to the organisation and management of time in schools (e.g. reducing the duration of the school day, or the number of school days per week)?

5.3 Allocation of teacher resources to students

Class size and teacher-student ratios

- For the different levels of the school system, what is the average class size in schools? What is the teacher-student ratio? Are there differences in terms of class size or number of teachers available for students with greater needs? Outline recent trends in these indicators.

Organisation of teachers' work

- How many hours do teachers spend teaching (teaching hours per week and year)? What proportion of working hours does teaching time represent? Besides teaching, what other activities typically take place during teachers' working hours (e.g. planning, professional development)? What proportion of time is dedicated to each of them?
- Are there requirements for professional development? How is professional development encouraged and supported?

Career structure and compensation

- How is the career structure of teachers organised? Does it have multiple stages associated with differentiated responsibilities? What roles and responsibilities can teachers have in schools in

addition to their teaching duties (e.g. head of department, mentor of beginning teachers, curriculum development work, co-ordination of professional development)?

- How are teachers' salaries determined? Which incentive structures are used to reward teacher performance and experience? How do teachers' salaries compare to salaries of other occupations requiring broadly similar qualification levels?
- Have there been any recent changes to teachers' career structure or working conditions? Which ones? What were the reasons for these changes?

Support staff in schools

- How extended is the use of support staff to support teachers in their duties inside and outside the classroom? What kinds of support staff are commonly used in schools? What tasks are typically performed by the support staff? Are there any mechanisms in place to target support staff to specific groups of students with greater learning difficulties?

5.4 Organisation of school leadership

School leadership arrangements

- How is school leadership typically organised? Are the tasks of school leadership concentrated on a single individual or are they divided among a group of people in a team?

Organisation of school leaders' work

- What are the main tasks carried out by school leaders (e.g. administration, pedagogical leadership)? What proportion of time is dedicated to each of these activities? Are there any external support systems in place to assist school leaders in their tasks?
- What initiatives have been undertaken to develop leadership and management capacities of school leaders? What relevance is attributed to the professional development of school leaders?

Career structure and compensation

- How are school leaders' salaries determined? Are there any mechanisms that reward performance? Which reward systems or incentive structures attempt to reward participation in school leadership activities for other personnel? How do school leaders' salaries compare to occupations requiring similar qualifications?
- How is the career structure of school leaders organised? Does it have multiple stages associated with differentiated responsibilities?
- Have there been any recent changes to school leaders' career structure or working conditions? Which ones? What were the reasons for these changes?

5.5 Teaching and learning environment within school

Organisation of learning

- What role do individual schools typically have in curriculum development and student assessment criteria?

Evaluation and school development

- Are school self-evaluation practices well established? Is it typical for schools to have internal teacher evaluation systems?
- Is it common practice for schools to prepare and publish a school development plan? Are these informed by internal evaluation procedures?

Well-being and outreach to the school community

- What policies exist to create adequate learning environments also beyond the classroom? How developed are safety and well-being policies in schools?
- What policies seek to strengthen the links between individual schools and their communities?

Teacher collaboration and professional learning

- Which policy instruments or incentive schemes attempt to encourage cooperation among teachers and facilitate the development of professional learning communities in schools?

5.6 Use of school facilities and materials

- Describe the typical use of school facilities and buildings. Are school buildings and facilities used beyond regular school time? Are they used for activities such as remedial courses, tutoring, summer and evening schools?
- Have school facilities been made available for broader educational or non-educational purposes, for instance providing diverse community activities or services, such as adult learning classes or after-school and holiday clubs for children? Refer to any uses that may be considered out of regular school activities.
- What is the extent of use of ICT in schools? What improvements did ICT bring to the daily teaching and learning activities?

5.7 Organisation of education governance

Education administration arrangements

- What units are typically part of the education administration at the different levels (e.g. curriculum development and assessment, inspection services, statistics and analysis)? What is the typical size of the education administration at the different levels (i.e. central, regional, local) and how is staff typically distributed across the different areas of responsibility (e.g. curriculum development and assessment, inspection services, statistics and analysis)?

- What is the typical background of staff in the education administration? What is their employment status? What initiatives have been undertaken to develop capacities of education administrators?

Evaluation and assessment procedures

- Are schools, school leaders and teachers evaluated in the context of a national or a sub-national framework? Are the results of the evaluations used to reward or sanction them? Is there evidence on the impact of such approaches?
- What typical approaches are followed to monitor the national and sub-national school systems? What instruments are typically used to assess whether student learning objectives are being met at the national and sub-national levels?

School support structures

- What structures exist to support the work of schools (e.g. advisory services, inspection services, agencies to improve quality in education, institutes to provide professional development to education practitioners, provision of information)?
- Is capacity building and technical leadership an important function of the education administration (e.g. through the provision of national frameworks, guidance materials, tools for the use of school agents)?

5.8 Main challenges

- Are there any aspects in the utilisation of resources that are being currently challenged or subject to re-examination? What are these aspects and which alternative policy options are currently being considered?
- What are the main areas of disagreement between education stakeholders about the utilisation of resources in the school system? Elaborate on the main reasons for disagreement.

Chapter 6: Resource management

17. This chapter is concerned with how resources are managed at all levels of the school system. It addresses capacity building for resource management; the monitoring of resource use; transparency and reporting; and incentives for the effective use of resources.

6.1 Capacity building for resource management

- What programmes and processes guarantee expertise in the management of resources throughout the school system? Which policies attempt to ensure capacity to effectively manage resources, especially at the local and school levels?
- Are there any competency frameworks for the selection of school leadership, or professional development programmes that support the resource management capacities of schools? What types of competencies are developed for different actors in the school system to ensure an effective management of resources?

- What support is given to schools and their leadership in the task of managing resources (e.g. in the form of regional agencies providing advice, sharing of resources and expertise within school networks)?
- What initiatives at the system and sub-system levels are taken to build up a knowledge base, tools and guidelines to assist resource management procedures (e.g. tools for planning resource use, systems of budgeting and accounting, guidelines for school leaders and education administrators to report on resource use, instructions to purchase education materials and establish contracts, and information about choices of education materials)?

6.2 Monitoring of resource use

- What approaches exist to monitor the use of resources at the different levels of the school system? Which actors or agencies are involved in the process of monitoring and supervising how resources are used in the school system? What is the importance of monitoring the equity of resource use across student groups and regions of the country?
- Are financial audits of individual schools and local education authorities organised and, if so, by which entities? Is there a tradition of education performance audits by the national audit system? Are evaluations of individual resource managers conducted? Or, else, is financial/resource management an area assessed in the performance evaluation of individuals who perform duties as resource managers (e.g. school leaders, local education administrators)?
- Is there a tradition of policy and programme evaluation? How is the effectiveness of different school policies or targeted programmes assessed? Which entities take responsibility for policy and programme evaluation?

6.3 Transparency and reporting

- What requirements exist for schools and the education administration to publicly communicate information about how resources are used and to provide evidence of their impact on learning (e.g. student achievement results)? What type of information is publicly provided?
- What requirements exist for schools to communicate information about resource use to the education administration? What type of information needs to be provided to the education administration?

6.4 Incentives for the effective use of resources

- Are there any mechanisms in place that link future resources of individual schools or local education authorities to past educational performance? How are such mechanisms implemented? Is there any evidence on their effects on the use of resources at the school level?
- Are individual local education authorities, schools or school agents (e.g. school leader, education administrator) rewarded for gained efficiencies? For instance, can schools, at least in part, retain the benefits of their improved efficiency? Conversely, are individual local education authorities, schools or school agents sanctioned for decreased efficiencies? If available, please provide evidence of the impact of these approaches.

6.5 Main challenges

- Are there any aspects in the management of resources that are being currently challenged or subject to re-examination? What are these aspects and which alternative policy options are currently being considered?
- What are the main areas of disagreement between education stakeholders about the management of resources in the school system? Elaborate on the main reasons for disagreement.

ANNEX 1

18. This annex provides some technical details to assist countries in preparing their Country Background Report (CBR). The CBR should be provided in electronic format, preferably as a Word document, suitable for placement on the OECD website.

Structure of the report

- Table of contents
- List of acronyms and glossary of terms
- Executive summary
- Chapter 1. The national context
- Chapter 2. The school system
- Chapter 3. Governance of resource use in schools
- Chapter 4. Resource distribution
- Chapter 5. Resource utilisation
- Chapter 6. Resource management
- References
- Annexes (if any)

Format

19. To ensure that CBRs have a consistent appearance and are easy to use we would appreciate it if you could follow these format guidelines:

- Font Times 11
- Single spacing
- Page size A4
- Pages numbered
- Normal text, single spacing within paragraphs, with a space between paragraphs
- Paragraphs should be numbered sequentially throughout the document (1, 2, 3, etc.).
- Lists should be indented; points in a list should be indicated with bullets or numbers.
- Tables and figures should be prepared in Excel or Word, if possible. Each table and figure should have a title and a source, as well as notes as appropriate. Please insert the tables and figures as “pictures” in the document, not floating over the text.
- References should appear as needed throughout the text in round brackets, specifying the author and the date, like (Smith, 2004); Full references should be given in the reference list.