This document describes the Strategic Governance Learning Seminars, a series of peer learning meetings of countries. The series is part of the Strategic Education Governance (SEG) project. The document provides background to the presentation on SEG in the oral statement of the Head of IMEP.

Rien Rouw, Analyst, EDU/IMEP, marinus.rouw@oecd.org
Claire Shewbridge, Project leader, EDU/IMEP, claire.shewbridge@oecd.org

Complete document available on OLIS in its original format

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.
STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE LEARNING SEMINARS

Part of the CERI Strategic Education Governance (SEG) project

Introduction

1. The Strategic Education Governance project aims at delivering concrete support to decision-makers as well as the exploration of cutting-edge themes. The work is divided in two streams, an indicator development stream and an exploration stream. As indicated in the CERI-PWB one of the main deliverables of the project will be workshops and conferences for peer learning. The Strategic Governance Learning Seminars is one of the ways peer learning takes shape. The seminars are meant to explore mainly implementation and realisation issues, one of the most salient and challenging points both in policy-making and policy research nowadays. In addition the results of the seminars could also feed into the indicator development.

2. Regarding the substance of the seminars we do not have to start from zero, but we will build on the work already done in the Governing Complex Education Systems (GCES) project. GCES identified five elements of effective governance: it focusses on processes, is flexible and adaptive, works by building capacity, stakeholder involvement and open dialogue, requires a whole-system approach, and finally harnesses evidence and research to inform policy and reform. While these elements provide a framework for governing complex education systems, translating them into national, regional and local contexts and for particular policies is not always obvious, it calls for differentiation and contextualisation. To facilitate this, we propose a learning seminar series to support countries to learn from each other on how to realise those elements in the everyday governance of specific policies, such as reducing drop out or improving the achievement of disadvantaged children. These seminars will create a space where country representatives can learn from real life cases.

Aims

3. The aim of the Strategic Governance Learning Seminars is to make the GCES-insights actionable and to inspire countries to draw lessons for governance practice by contrasting and comparing their governance approaches and the challenges they face in governing their systems. This will provide critical feedback on their own systems and strengthen their self-reflection on the role of government in complex systems as well as expand their repertoire to act effectively in various forms of governance. The seminars will produce ‘new’ knowledge about implementation and realisation issues for both participating countries as well as countries in general. They will aim to make tacit knowledge explicit, by deepening our insight in the design and implications of implementation strategies. In particular, the seminars aim to:

- gain a deeper understanding of the issues at stake and the range of governance options available across countries
- learn about effective and/or innovative governance policy practice in other countries and context-specific obstacles and enablers, and develop consequently ‘decisional capital’ of participants
• identify governance options and possible trajectories (next practice) for future action
• generate knowledge of the actual ‘how to’ of implementation and realisation of policies.

Design

4. For the purpose of creating an engaging learning environment, a methodology will be used focused on enactment and translation, i.e. the reconstruction of real life policy experiences with the help of stakeholders involved in the policy process, followed by an explicit phase of reflection and translation to different contexts. The cases are meant to illustrate and apply governance concepts. The approach is deliberately interactive, participants actively engaging in discussion and explicit reflection. As it is an instrument for countries, themes for the seminars will be discussed and decided upon by participating countries. Seminars will be tailor-made loosely within the framework of a live case methodology. This methodology entails collaborative learning from real life cases presented by participants.¹ A learning seminar generally will take 1.5 – 2 days.

Participants

5. Ideally two to four countries will participate in a particular seminar. Each country can delegate two or three participants. Participants may come from different layers of the education system. It is up to the country to decide upon the delegation. One of the participating countries will host the seminar. The host country will not only provide facilities but also the main case to be discussed. Initially comparable countries will be invited, for example highly decentralised countries, but there will be room to invite an ‘outlier’ to insert radically different perspectives, thus sharpening the discussion. The main case will be presented by the most involved policy makers and external stakeholders from the host country. One or two experts will strengthen reflection and translation. The SEG-team will provide both theoretical and empirical insights from the GCES-project and ongoing work on strategic governance. The seminar will be guided by an experienced facilitator.

Preparation

6. Seminars will be designed in close cooperation with the host country, taking into account the voices of the participating countries. For each seminar both a governance topic will be selected (for example participatory governance or accountability) as well as a particular policy initiative (for example introducing a new curriculum or attracting and retaining high quality teachers) as illustration of the governance issue. Cases might either be retrospective or prospective.

7. For each seminar a preparatory document will be drafted jointly by the SEG-team and the host country. Part of the preparatory document will be a short country questionnaire to collect the learning needs of the participants.

Execution

8. As a rule, seminars will take 1.5 – 2 days. The seminar starts with an introduction of the governance topic at hand. The next step is the reconstruction (retrospectively) or elaboration (prospectively) of the main policy case by the host country policymakers and possibly stakeholders or experts involved to get a broad and whole-system perspective on the case and to learn about the interests of

¹The design of the learning seminars is inspired by the case teaching program and Live-Case Study methodology of ANZSOG School of Government (https://www.anzsog.edu.au/resource-library/case-library/teaching-with-cases).
various stakeholders. Preferably the case presentation includes the results of evaluation research or exploratory research, or draws from research on governance in general. A site visit could also be part of the reconstruction or elaboration phase. This phase is followed by discussion and formulating lessons for the host country. The last step entails reflection and translation to other countries and contexts. Throughout the seminar participants are encouraged to draw on their own experiences and share their reflections with the group. Another possibility would be to explicitly create a slot for the presentation of the participating country experiences.

**Follow up**

9. The discussions and outcomes of the seminar will be included in a policy brief (5-10 pages) prepared by the SEG-team and the host country. Final publication will be decided in consultation with the participating countries.

10. At the end of the biennium the lessons of all seminars will be drafted in a summary report that will be publicly available.

**Costs**

11. To be discussed with countries.