This paper provides more specific information on the international costs for cities and countries wishing to participate in the Study on Social and Emotional Skills than provided at the meeting in December 2016. The paper summarises the information on international costs provided to city and country representatives in December 2016, decisions taken on the shape of the Study that impact on overall costs, the basis for calculating per city/country contributions to cover the international costs and international costs per city/country.

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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.
OECD STUDY ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS: INTERNATIONAL COSTS

1. There are two types of costs involved in international studies such as the OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills: international costs and local costs. International costs include the costs of the international contractor appointed to design, develop and implement the Study, other experts needed for specific parts of the Study, the cost of the OECD Secretariat working on the Study, and the costs of publishing the final and other reports. Local costs cover all costs in administering the Study in each city and country, such as the cost of the Study Project Manager and other local staff and the cost of translations. Each city and country is responsible for meeting all local costs of the Study and for meeting a portion of the international costs.

2. This paper provides more specific information on the international costs for cities and countries wishing to participate in the Study than provided at the meeting in December 2016. The paper summarises:

   • The information on international costs provided to city and country representatives in December 2016
   • Decisions taken on the shape of the Study that impact on overall costs
   • The basis for calculating per city/country contributions to cover the international costs
   • International costs per city/country.

Information on the international costs of the Study provided at the December 2016 meeting

3. At the meeting of city and country representatives on this Study in December 2016, the Secretariat provided a paper on the likely costs of the proposed new Study on Social and Emotional Skills. The paper estimated that the international costs for each participating city and country would be between EUR 300,000 and EUR 400,000. This estimate was based on a number of assumptions, including:

   • the shape of the Study, ie the calculation was made assuming older rather than younger children would be covered by the Study and that no more than two age groups would be included
   • that at least 10 cities and countries would participate in the Study
   • a highly competitive rate could be negotiated with an appropriately skilled international contractor.
4. The December 2016 paper also noted that, as with any new study, the number of cities and countries that are willing to fund the Study from the outset is smaller than the number who are interested in the work and who may choose to participate in later stages. In addition, high quality international studies of this nature are inevitably costly. For these reasons, the Study needs to be shaped to be affordable for as many cities and countries who wish to participate as possible, as well as still producing robust and reliable information. Ensuring the Study is as affordable as possible will encourage diversity of participation and limit the extent to which cost is a barrier for those who would otherwise participate.

Decisions taken on the shape of the Study that impact on overall costs

5. At the meeting in December 2016, city and country representatives expressed two key preferences on the shape of the Study that impact on overall costs. The first of these is the number of grade or age levels to be included in the Study. City and country representatives noted at the December meeting that assessing only one grade level is a lower cost option than assessing two or three grades. However, including an additional grade or age would provide much value-add to the Study in enabling cities and countries to better understand the likely development of social and emotional skills between two points in students’ schooling.

6. The second design feature that significantly affects cost is the age of the students to be assessed. Assessing the skills of older students is less costly than doing so for younger children. This is due to the time and resources involved administering the Study to younger students. While teacher and parent reports on young children’s skills are not more costly than for older children, such reports pose challenges in comparability across cultures. Thus, some element of direct assessment is required to achieve comparability. The Secretariat advised that students can generally engage directly in exercises individually and in group settings from approximately age 10 onwards. In addition, assessments can be administered online with this age group, with little need for assistance.

7. At the December meeting, city and country representatives proposed two age groups to be included in the Study: age 10 and age 15 years. This information was relayed to the short-listed bidders in the procurement process the Secretariat was undertaking to identify a suitable international contractor to design and implement the Study. The responses from these bidders on incorporating countries’ preferred age points helped the Secretariat to better understand the implications of this choice, including the impacts on overall costs.

The basis for calculating per city/country contributions

8. There are three factors that determine per city/country contributions. These are the:

- overall cost of the Study, as noted in paragraph one
- number of participants in the Study
- basis for distributing the international costs across participating cities and countries.

9. A number of OECD studies, such as PISA and TALIS, apportion costs across countries on a formula that incorporates countries’ population size and relative GDP. This is an established basis for apportioning costs across OECD countries and is generally perceived as fair. However, this approach does not necessarily result in a fair distribution across cities, as the size and income of a country is not always a good measure of an individual city’s ability-to-pay. For example, cities of identical sizes and resources may be located in countries with significantly different population sizes and GDPs. Furthermore, some cities are being supported financially, and through other means, by their national administrations and
others are not. Thus, basing cities’ contributions on their countries’ size and income may result in an unfair distribution of costs across cities.

10. An alternative is to develop a formula for each individual city based on its size and ability-to-pay. This would, however, be complex, potentially difficult to calculate and complex to understand. The Secretariat does not believe that the benefits of such an approach outweigh the disadvantages. Consequently, this option is not being pursued further.

11. Thus, the Secretariat proposes to distribute the international costs on an even basis across cities and countries. Thus, the total international costs of the Study will be divided by the number of cities and countries that participate. This is simple to understand and to calculate. It also means the only uncertain variable for countries is the final number of cities and countries that participate in the Study.

12. Funding allocated by the CERI Governing Board and voluntary contributions that have been made by a selection of cities and countries have covered the costs of the OECD Secretariat staff working on this project to-date. Unless cities and countries required their voluntary contributions to be spent before 2017, these funds are still available to resource the Study. In 2016, the CERI Governing Board agreed to provide further funding for the Education for Social Progress (ESP) project in the Programme of Work and Budget for 2017-2018, which includes the Study on Social and Emotional Skills. The combination of these two sources of funding has enabled the Secretariat to enter a contract with the preferred International Contractor.

**International costs per city/country**

13. Assuming 10 cities/countries participate in the Study, the total international cost for each city/country to participate in the Study will be EUR 293,000. This is a little lower that the estimated range indicated to cities and countries in December 2016, as the cost for some components of the Study are lower than the Secretariat had anticipated.

14. The Secretariat proposes that the international costs of the Study are split into two instalments for participating cities and countries. The first payment will provide cities and countries with a guaranteed place in the Study. To date, seven cities have made financial contributions assuring them a place in the Study.

15. The Secretariat encourages cities and countries interested in participating in the Study to make the first instalment as soon as possible to ensure they have a place in the Study. The Study has been designed for a maximum of 12 cities and countries, so no further cities or countries will be accepted once this maximum has been reached. If the maximum number of countries is not reached, cities and countries are required to provide the first instalment by 30 April 2018, the cut-off point for joining the Study.

16. The cost per city/country greatly depends on the number of cities or countries participating in the Study. The Secretariat estimates that participation by 10 to 12 cities or countries is ideal in terms of the likely value and usefulness of the findings, the affordability and the manageability of the project. As noted above, there are seven cities and countries that have thus far contributed financially to the project and a further four have shown considerable interest. In this latter group, some have indicated they will not be able to formalise their participation until more definite information is available on the scope and cost of the Study.

17. The second instalment will be calculated once the final number of participating cities and countries is confirmed. If there are more than 10 cities/countries, the per city/country contribution will be reduced. Similarly, if there are fewer than 10 participants, the per city/country contribution will increase. For cities or countries that have already made a payment, the second payment will be adjusted in the light
of this first payment so that all cities and countries pay the same amount in total. Thus, if the first payment was higher than required, the second payment will be adjusted downwards and vice versa. The second and final instalment will be required by 30 September 2018.

18. The following table sets out these per city/country contributions and the required timing for these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMING FOR PAYMENT</th>
<th>TOTAL COST PER CITY/COUNTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First instalment</td>
<td>30 April 2018 (or until 12 cities/countries have joined the Study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second instalment (if 10 cities/countries participate)</td>
<td>30 September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (if 10 cities/countries participate)</td>
<td>30 September 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next steps

19. We encourage cities and countries to discuss their interest in the Study with the Secretariat as soon as possible, and to advise on any information or timing issues that may be relevant in relation to their decision to join the Study. The Secretariat may, for example, be able to provide more tailored information for individual cities and countries to support their decision-making processes or to provide any other assistance that may be useful.

Discussion

- Is there further clarification that cities or countries would find helpful on how the international costs will be apportioned?
- Are there other factors cities and countries believe should be considered in relation to how costs are apportioned?
- Are there any potential difficulties relating to the timeframes indicated above for the two instalments?
- What other information would be helpful for countries on the international costs?