SPREADING AND SUSTAINING INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Guidelines for Completing the ILE 'Monitoring Notes'

The 'Monitoring Notes' cover the design, implementation, and maintenance of strategies and initiatives aimed at spreading innovative learning environments. These 'Notes' allow those systems wanting to follow their strategy or initiative over a period of time (one-year) to report to the international project following an agreed format. The information gathered on this basis will provide core material for Strand 3 of the Innovative Learning Environments (ILE) project focused on 'Implementation and Change'. Whereas our second (Innovative Cases) strand looked at particular examples of innovative learning environments, we are now broadening the horizon towards change strategies that *necessarily involve several and possibly many different sites*.

The 'Monitoring Notes' follow and build on the 'System Notes' that have allowed the initial identification of promising initiatives for spreading and sustaining innovative learning environments in the different participating systems. Whereas the 'System Note' provided a snapshot of the featured strategy or initiative, the aims of the current exercise are to *follow change* over time and to deepen the *richness of description and analysis*.

Relevant Strategies and Initiatives

For this strand of the project, we are interested in change initiatives designed to spread and sustain innovative learning environments. They may cover a variety of different approaches, often in combination: direct promotion, provision of incentives, network creation, knowledge management, leadership strategies and other professional development capacity building, creating new forms of expertise and change management, and more general drives to create climates favourable to innovative learning. They target change in one or more of the different components of learning environments: particular learner groups; the learning professionals; content; materials, facilities, and technologies; and the different ways in which these are organised and assessed.

The initiatives of interest to us may be directed and funded through the public authorities in full or in part; they may be (co-)organised and (co-)funded by other partners, such as foundations, community bodies, teacher or leadership organisations, businesses or higher education institutions. They may also

come from 'bottom-up' endeavours within education. They are all relevant to this strand of the ILE project.

The initiative may be an established one or instead it may be just beginning; in either case, it needs to be already operational rather than still at the planning stage. It will normally already have been included in the initial 'System Note'.

We are not looking for general reforms of the curriculum, institutional structures, and the management or governance of schooling that do not have the intention first and foremost to innovate learning environments.

Completing the Monitoring Notes

This document provides the reporting framework for those systems moving beyond the 'System Note' to monitor their chosen strategy or initiative over a one-year period. These systems will report on *one* initiative and prepare two reports:

1) 'Monitoring Note 1' at the start of the one-year period (normally May 2013); and
2) 'Monitoring Note 2' a year later.

There is no specific methodology suggested as the initiatives will be of very different kinds though clearly the 'Monitoring Notes' call for monitoring, analysis, and reflection. The system may decide to contract in additional research capacity but we leave it to each one to decide on that and on who will prepare the reports. It is essential, however, that the ILE Coordinator oversees the development of the reports and communication on this with the ILE project.

We envisage that the completed 'Monitoring Note 1' might be around 10 pages in length, and that the 'Monitoring Note 2' a year later around 20 pages in length, but these are purely indicative guidelines.

The completed 'Monitoring Notes' will be disseminated through various channels: they will be published on the ILE website; distributed through project conferences and workshops; and provide the core material for the analytical outputs of Strand 3 of the ILE project on "Implementation and Change".

The questions structuring your submissions

'Monitoring Note 1' will normally be submitted by end-May 2013. It builds and elaborates on the initial 'System Note' by:

- Focusing on *one* initiative only (some of the submitted 'System Notes' cover several). If a choice needs to be made, please select that initiative/strategy that holds greatest promise of extending innovative learning environments and doing this at scale.

- Providing more contextual information about the aims, rationales, the target populations, institutions involved, and accountability, governance, and broader policies that contextualise or impact on the featured initiative. Why does the initiative/strategy look like it does?

- Elaborating on the theory of change underpinning the strategy and the mechanisms in place to realise such a "theory": why it is expected that significant change will take place in the nature of learning at the ground level and at the same time that this will occur at the hoped-for scale and be sustained?

'Monitoring Note 2' will be submitted end-May 2014 and it is expected that each participating system at this level will put mechanisms in place to be able to monitor progress. Basic questions here include:

- How far have the original intentions and mechanisms been maintained and, if they have changed, why?
- Elaborate on the role of policy and policy-makers, at various levels of the education system, in realising the innovative change.
- Have new stakeholders come into the frame? Has the policy context changed? Have new challenges, opportunities or resources emerged?
- How responsive has the initiative been to altered circumstances?
- Explain what mechanisms have been put in place for making progress sustainable?

A strategy or initiative that aims to change learning environments should be evaluated in these terms as well: how far has the reorganisation of learning and behaviours been reached in the way intended?

- *Change of learning environments*: How have arrangements and behaviours been altered – inspired or driven by the initiative? How far-reaching is that change?
- *Reach*: How many learning environments (schools etc.) have shown evidence of change and has such reach met the ambitions of the initiative?
- *Change in learning outcomes:* What are the learning criteria by which effectiveness or success of this strategy/initiative can be judged? What does existing evidence show about positive change in learning outcomes?
- *Change theories and mechanisms*: How robust have the underpinning change strategies proved to be and what might be strengthened to assure wider success?

We would like this report to contain reflections on the evaluations that have been done and that ideally would have been conducted to do justice to the initiative/strategy, including why these may have proved difficult to put in place. Such reflections will provide invaluable additional insight on appropriate evaluation methodologies for innovation in learning in the future.

These points are summarised in Table 1.

Less successful initiatives/strategies

We are also interested in learning from initiatives/strategies that were ***less successful***. In the original System Note we indicated our interest but, for perhaps understandable reasons, this has not been widely taken up. If you have such an example to offer we would be interested in knowing what it was as an annex to 'Monitoring Note 2': who was involved, design and ambition, and why in your view it did not work. These initiative/strategies may already have been completed and need not be identified by name.

The same general framework may be used but focusing especially on Q.9 – tensions and impediments – and making it very clear that it is being put forward as an example that did not work well and with particular focus on those factors that explain its difficulties of implementation and lack of success.

Submission of Notes

The 'Monitoring Note 1' should be submitted by the end of May 2013; the 'Monitoring Note 2' should be submitted a year later at the end of May 2014. They should be submitted by the ILE Coordinator to Mariana Martinez Salgado at mariana.martinezsalgado@oecd.org.

Further information

If you have any questions concerning the above or would like more information on the Innovative Learning Environments project you can contact Mariana by email or telephone at +33 145 24 79 94.

In summary

Table 1 below provides an outline of the questions to be taken into account in the monitoring and reporting. It shows how 'Monitoring Note 1' builds on the initial 'System Note' by asking for additional information, and more in-depth analysis and reflection. 'Monitoring Note 2' in turn builds on 'Monitoring Note 1', and includes evaluation of the strategy or initiative.

Table 1: Contents and questions structuring 'Monitoring Notes 1 and 2', extending the 'System Note' framework

System Note (5 pages) (submitted 2012 or early 2013)	*Monitoring Note 1 (10 pages)* (normally submitted Spring 2013)	*Monitoring Note 2 (20 pages)* (normally submitted Spring 2014)
Q.1. Aims: What is the learning to be changed? Who are the learners targeted? What are the environments and sites to be brought in? Is there a particular source of inspiration behind the initiative? *Q.2. Leadership and partners*: What is its main leadership? Who are the main partners involved (e.g. education authorities, networks of practitioners, foundations, community bodies, teacher or leadership organisations, business organisations, higher education institutions)? *Q.3. Strategies and activities*: What are the specific design, features, and activities of the strategy? What is the main rationale? How is communication and feedback assured? *Q.4. Context:* What are the particular contextual, local or political factors that have been influential in explaining why this initiative has emerged and/or has been sustained? *Q.5. Resources:* What levels of financial resourcing are involved and where do these come from? What supplementary resources, if any, are involved: e.g. facilities & buildings, technological resources, additional or specialist staffing?	The information on Q.1- Q.5 may well be the same as the System Note, in which case please reproduce it. If it has changed since then please revise as appropriate. Please note that this Note is requesting the focus to be on *one* particular strategy or initiative (for those who included two or more in the original 'System Note'). In addition to Q.3 as stated please also address the question: *what monitoring and evaluation is in place to gauge take-up, success, and effectiveness?* More than this, we are looking for: • *A substantial amount of additional contextual information* about aims, rationales, the target populations, institutions involved, and accountability, governance, and broader policies that contextualise or impact on the featured initiative. Why does the initiative/strategy look like it does? What is the role of policy and why? • Elaborate on the *theory of change* underpinning the strategy, and the mechanisms in place to realise such a "theory". Why is it expected that significant change will take place in the nature of learning at the ground level and at the same time that this will occur at the hoped-for scale and be sustained?	Where significant change occurred in the basic features covered by 1-5 this should be reported. This refers more to the descriptive features (aims, partners, organisation, context, and resources) than the evaluative analysis discussed below. Hence, such factors as responsiveness to contextual change and the arrival of new stakeholders should be included. Any significant change in the two key factors from 'Monitoring Note 1' – context and theory of change – should also be discussed here.

System Note (5 pages) (submitted 2012 or early 2013)	Monitoring Note 1 (10 pages) (normally submitted Spring 2013)	Monitoring Note 2 (20 pages) (normally submitted Spring 2014)
Q.6. Developments over time: How long has this initiative been going and how long did it take to get it started? Has it changed significantly since it began and how much has it grown or spread since then?	Developments since the initial System Note was written are included in Q.1- Q.5 above, so Q.6 is now redundant in the 'Monitoring Note'.	All the above Q.1 - Q.5 concern developments over time, so Q.6 *per se* is now redundant in the 'Monitoring Note'.
Q.7. Evidence of effectiveness and efficiency: Is there evidence relating to success in terms of the aims referred in Question 1 - a) the learning to be changed; b) the learners targeted; c) the environments and sites to be brought in? Is there evidence relating to the more efficient use of educational resources? **8. Success factors**: What factors have, in your view, been most influential in the success of this strategy/initiative? How successfully have risks been managed? **9. Tensions and impediments**: What, if any, are the factors that have impeded the success and spread of the initiative? How open are they to being overcome?	As the evaluations involved in monitoring the initiative are the subject of 'Monitoring Note 2', Q.7-Q.9 do not have to be reproduced in this 'Monitoring Note 1'.	The 'System Note' Q.7 – Q.9 remain the basis for preparing and reporting in 'Monitoring Note 2' i.e. effectiveness & efficiency, success factors, and impediments. As part of this, be sure to give as much attention as the evidence permits on: - *Change of learning environments*: How have arrangements and behaviours been altered – inspired or driven by the initiative? How far-reaching is that change? - *Reach*: How many learning environments (schools etc.) have shown evidence of change and has such reach met the ambitions of the initiative? - *Change in learning outcomes:* What are the learning criteria by which effectiveness or success of this strategy/initiative can be judged? What does existing evidence show about positive change in learning outcomes? *Change theories and mechanisms*: how robust have proved to be the underpinning strategies and what might be strengthened to assure wider success?
10. Source information: References to documents, websites, etc.	Only include a new document if a significant publication has appeared since the 'System Note' was completed.	References to documents, websites, etc. and to research activities and methodologies used in the monitoring and reporting.