

Amsterdam, 11 October 2022

## **Formal Invitation to participate in the IEA PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) 2026**

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to extend a formal invitation to participate in PIRLS 2026; the sixth cycle of the international reading literacy assessment and one of the flagship studies of IEA. Administered every five years since 2001, PIRLS provides internationally comparative data on how well children read by assessing fourth grade students' reading achievement and offers policy relevant information for improving teaching and learning. As a worldwide standard for monitoring reading comprehension achievement, PIRLS is used by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics to measure Sustainable Development Goal 4.1 (SDG 4.1).

This cycle of PIRLS brings with it several advances in the measurement of learning progress. PIRLS 2026 will complete the study's transition to a fully digital assessment. PIRLS 2026 will present texts and items as an engaging and visually attractive experience that motivates students, will include the ePIRLS assessment (a simulated internet environment for assessing online reading), and increase operational efficiency. The rationale behind transitioning to a fully computer-based assessment is to keep pace with an increasing worldwide reliance on digital communication and assessment.

Further, PIRLS 2026 will offer a special opportunity of a PIRLS longitudinal option. The objective is to provide highly valuable information by following a longitudinal design to disentangle cohort and grade effects and to investigate learning gains over one year. For countries that choose to participate in this option, the PIRLS longitudinal study will be administered one year after the PIRLS 2026 administration and to the same students to measure learning progress and advancing educational effectiveness research.

Describing the learning gains and how they relate to contextual variables provides deeper insights into education systems by enriching what is possible to learn from cross-sectional studies. As a result, research can draw more robust inferences about successful practices observed in education systems. More detailed information about this option will follow in due course.

The first PIRLS 2026 National Research Coordinators meeting will take place in the Netherlands in February 2023 and will be hosted by IEA in close collaboration with the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College. It is strongly encouraged for all interested countries to send a representative to this meeting, even if participation in PIRLS 2026 is not yet fully confirmed. More detailed information about the meeting will be provided in December 2022.

For additional information, please find attached to this letter the PIRLS 2026 information package containing the study brochure, an overview of estimated national costs, information sheets outlining National Study Center tasks and job descriptions, as well as a provisional timeline for PIRLS 2026. The costs of participating in PIRLS 2026 are 430,000 ICU (IEA's International Currency Unit) and an explanation of the participation fees is also contained in the information package. More information can also be found on our website: [iea.nl/studies/iea/pirls/2026](https://iea.nl/studies/iea/pirls/2026).

If you have any questions about participating in PIRLS 2026 or if you would like to receive the draft participation agreement, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Andrea Netten, Director of IEA Amsterdam ([a.netten@iea.nl](mailto:a.netten@iea.nl)).

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Dirk Hastedt  
IEA Executive Director