

ERCE 2025

Comparative and Explanatory Regional Study

**For the Latin American and Caribbean region, it is essential to have an evaluation mid-decade, to mobilize action and educational transformation**

### What is the role of LLECE and why is it important for educational systems?

- The Latin American Laboratory for Evaluation of the Quality of Education (LLECE), coordinated by OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and founded in 1994, has developed and maintained contextualized and comprehensive measurements of the educational situation in the countries of the region.
- Its purpose is to contribute to the improvement of the learning of primary school students, by monitoring learning achievements and their progress with respect to international agendas, currently the 2030 Agenda.
- Since its inception, the Laboratory has assumed a relevant role in strengthening an evaluation culture in the region, working in coordination with the countries that are part of its studies.
- The LLECE comparative and explanatory regional studies are the large-scale evaluations that bring together the largest number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The purpose of the LLECE studies is to generate evidence and inputs to inform educational policy decision-making.
- The Laboratory maintains a close work agenda with the national teams to ensure the correct implementation of their studies, with the installation of technical capacities and the development of collaboration networks between the different countries as a working premise.
- The Laboratory's commitment to and with the countries is characterized by responding to the suggestions and needs of each context, complementing the national efforts of educational evaluation and supporting the actions of each country aimed at improving learning.
- Finally, the LLECE is a space for discussion and debate in which the countries are the protagonists of reflection, analysis and decision-making. This contributes to the generation of alliances and actions to improve learning opportunities that provide greater well-being to each student in the region.

# ERCE 2025

## Rationality and objectives

The Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study – **ERCE is the largest and most representative assessment of primary learning in the region.** Each new cycle of ERCE provides inputs of great relevance to educational systems and leads to analyzing their strengths and challenges.

OREALC / UNESCO Latin American Laboratory for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education (LLECE) generates valid and reliable information for the monitoring of the learning achievement of students in the region, under the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Its main initiative, the Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE), is administered periodically to third and sixth grade students and consists of a large-scale evaluation, designed and implemented with the active participation of the countries of the region that are part of the LLECE.

For more than 27 years, the Laboratory has collaborated with most Latin American countries and their national assessment units in order to measure learning achievements of elementary school students. During this period, four regional comparative and explanatory studies were carried out (PERCE 1997, SERCE 2006, TERCE 2013 and ERCE 2019), which were implemented under the direction of LLECE.

LLECE has contributed to the development of an evaluation culture in the region and has helped countries develop and refine their own evaluation systems. The ERCE 2019 covers more than 3,800 schools and more than 160,000 students, representing almost 20 million students in the third and sixth grades of primary school, where it also measures a set of socio-emotional skills for the first time. Through the implementation of the ERCE, the Laboratory has legitimized its action with countries and, at the same time, facilitated political dialogue with ministries of education. Through the Laboratory and its studies, it is possible to have information on the educational systems of Latin American countries within the framework of the E2030 Agenda.

## Links to the 2030 Agenda



LLECE's experience in the implementation of these studies has generated relevant information for the global education agenda and contributes to the achievement of SDG 4, "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Furthermore, it represents the monitoring mechanism that the region has for the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda, since it is the main evaluation tool of primary education in the region to contribute to early action for the well-being and learning of each child.

The ERCE 2025 will allow comparable information to be available after the passage of the pandemic, when countries are making efforts in the implementation of programs and public

policies that allow recovering the advanced path in educational matters, and that was deeply affected by this global crisis. Additionally, this measurement will be made 5 years before 2030, the date on which the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda will be reviewed. With this information, countries will have the opportunity to make new adjustments and prioritizations in their education policies, in the final stretch of the deadline agreed in the 2030 Agenda. As in the previous cycles of the study, the ERCE 2025 will have innovations in the area of educational measurement, because it has information in other domains of interest and expand the concept of educational quality and its monitoring.

Consequently, the ERCE 2025 will evaluate and compare the performance of students in the areas of mathematics and language at the third and sixth grade levels, and in natural sciences at the sixth-grade level. As in the previous four versions of this exercise, ERCE 2025 will provide solid empirical evidence for the formulation of educational policies, based on practices and processes that improve and strengthen the quality and equity of school education.

In response to these challenges, the proposed program focuses on producing results and databases needed for various reports and publications and disseminating the results of ERCE 2025, promoting their discussion among Member States, their different educational levels of the school system and other key stakeholders. In addition, it will strengthen technical capacities in national teams and develop national reports based on ERCE data. Working in collaboration with Member States' Ministries of Education and other key stakeholders, the programme will be a rich source of information for educational research and the formulation of policies and recommendations for regional commitments that address the challenges and gaps identified. The main results of the programme will be shared in a number of sub regional and regional policy dialogues, such as the bi-annual meetings of the Regional Steering Committee. All in all, OREALC/UNESCO Santiago has a long history of facilitating political dialogue among the countries of the region around educational priorities and approaches; The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is no different. Under this framework plus the support of the participants in the first Regional Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (January 2017), OREALC/UNESCO Santiago was mandated to lead the coordination, promoting the E2030 Agenda in the region.

### Summary of outcomes, outputs and activities

Outcome 1: The curricula of the countries participating in the ERCE 2025 are reviewed and analyzed
Output 1. Curricular analysis in 3rd and 6th grade in language, mathematics and science, in all countries participating in ERCE 2025
Activity 1: Development of a regional report on the ERCE 2020 Curricular Analysis.
Activity 2: Development of national reports with the ERCE 2025 results for each participating country.
Activity 3: Development of a webinar by country to promote the curricular discussion at the service of learning experiences.
Outcome 2: Regional capacities to produce and use learning outcome indicators are strengthened through the implementation of ERCE 2025
Output 1. ERCE 2025 targeted countries participate in the development of instruments, application and analysis of results.

Activity 1: Participation in the elaboration of questions and reagents for the tests of learning achievement and associated factors respectively
Activity 2: Data collection in the schools participating in the study
Activity 3: Production of results and databases necessary for the preparation of reports and publications
Activity 4: Conducting a cycle of workshops/webinars for the dissemination of ERCE 2025 results
Outcome 3: Countries have information on learning achievements and their associated factors
Output 2: Delivery of national and regional data for informed decision-making in school systems
Activity 1: Production of regional report of ERCE 2025 results.
Activity 2: production of national performance reports of participating countries.
Outcome 4: Study participating countries have new information on social-emotional skills
Output 3: implementation of a socio-emotional skills module complementary to ERCE 2019
Activity 1: Production of a regional report with the studies carried out.
Activity 2: production of national performance reports of participating countries.

## Implementation strategy

The programme will employ a number of strategies to ensure its results. Through regional and subregional meetings at ministerial and technical levels, virtual platforms, other consultation mechanisms and policy processes will ensure exchange and communication among multiple stakeholders.

The ERCE will begin its implementation phase with the signing of the 2022-2026 agreement between OREALC/UNESCO Santiago and the participating countries. From this milestone, the work will begin to be developed, which will culminate in 2026 with the publication of the results of the study.

The ERCE is an assessment of large-scale learning achievements. For its 2025 version, the study will maintain its main features of the latest applications continuing its focus on primary education. The participants will be children of third and sixth grade of the educational systems of the countries of the region, in the areas of mathematics, language and science, the latter only in sixth grade. Comparability is a constituent feature of the study, so it will be ensured in the following versions.

Since one of the purposes of the study is to explain learning achievement outcomes, context questionnaires will be applied to students of both grades, their families, teachers and principals of primary schools, along with a new version of the socio-emotional skills module already designed and implemented in the last study.

The implementation strategy is based on two key elements. On the one hand, one of the objectives of the LLECE is to install and enhance the technical capacities in the different educational systems of the region, so that the work will be maintained in close relationship with the technical teams, through a fluid dialogue between the coordination of the LLECE and the work teams of the ministries of education or evaluation agencies. On the other hand, it follows strong rigor and high technicality. Therefore, it counts with a High-Level Technical Council that

participates at all times in the study, in addition to the hiring of institutions in the region with the highest experience and technical quality for the development of the main products.

### Steps of the ERCE 2025

The complete cycle of the ERCE is structured under a line of concatenated activities, summarized in the development of the instruments, the testing and its application, analysis and results. One of the biggest challenges is to be able to complete all the activities in the scheduled time, complying with the technical requirements of the study, added to the participation of the countries themselves in the process and the programmatic agenda of the same. Another challenge is the convergence of implementation in considering the differences in the academic calendars of the countries. All the educational systems of the region respond to their own calendar according to their context, so the application window of the study is carefully assembled so that the test is administered during the last years of the academic calendar. In this way, all activities and processes, their times and other characteristics, are designed according to this convergence.

The study cycle aims to:

1. Ensure the collection of valid and reliable information on the achievement of learning and the factors associated with it, through a large-scale evaluation of the primary education systems of Latin America, complying with the required technical standards.
2. Promote instances for the installation of capacities in the development of large-scale evaluations in Latin America, through work with the teams of respective agencies and ministries of education.

The study cycle steps are described from the experience in TERCE and ERCE 2019. Considering the curricular basis of the study, all the steps described are necessary to meet the objective of the ERCE. Three fundamental actors are considered for the whole process. Firstly, the technical coordination of OREALC/ UNESCO is ultimately responsible for securing all stages of the process. It fulfills the role of main manager, coordination and technical counterpart. Secondly, countries through their national coordination and technical team in charge of implementing the study in their context. Finally, the implementing partners in charge of the activities or processes to be tendered during the study cycle. The total number of implementing partners will depend on the offer and the decision of the technical coordination of the laboratory to add processes or stages.

1. Curricular analysis (6 months). Curricular study of ERCE participating countries in third and sixth grades, areas language, mathematics and science. Approximate duration of 6 months from the signing of the contract. The duration could be extended if other objectives are incorporated.
2. Curricular analysis publication (6 months). Systematization of the principal regional and national findings of the curricular study.
3. Preparation of ERCE items (13 months). Process of construction of the items that will be piloted and, subsequently, will be used in the final application. The estimated time is 13 months, depending on the iteration process with the countries if it includes review of them, or only elaboration of items as a proposal. In these 13 months, the process of linguistic adaptation of the items by country is included.
4. Sampling pilot application (5 months).
5. Pilot application (13 months). This application consists of testing the instruments developed for the ERCE together with the operation in each of the countries. The deployment of field work is one of the key activities of this activity.
6. Analysis of pilot results (6 months). The implementing partner carries out the analysis plan prepared for this stage. For this version of the study, it has been decided to apply the pilot in the south -north calendar order and the final test in the north south- calendar order to have more time between applications for the analysis of the pilot results.

7. Sampling final application (3 months)
8. Final application (10 months). It implies the collection and capture of data from the study. In each country a similar process is carried out that includes the revision of the final instruments, printing, distribution, training for field work, application on the stipulated dates, data typing process. The duration of 10 months is considered from the delivery of instruments to the first country to the last to finish the process of data collection and capture. Monitoring of the technical coordination of the laboratory is necessary at all times. The final application will begin in the countries of the southern calendar, and then apply with the countries with the northern calendar (see Annexes: Gantt ERCE 2025 Charter).
9. Validation and delivery of databases to the Laboratory (10 months). Once the country has carried out the process of collecting and capturing data, it must deliver these databases to IIECE, which will have the objective of subjecting each one to a rigorous validation process prior to the analysis of the results. The iteration work with each country is expected to last approximately two months from when the information is finished. It is recommended that the country carry out this process once the data capture process of the study is finished.
10. Calculation of sample weights (4 months). Concluding with the review and validation of the bases delivered by the country, the sample weights will be calculated. You can start this work with the complete base of a country and successively add the bases as you have them.
11. Analysis of learning achievement results and associated factors. (7 months).
12. Dissemination of results. (2 months)

#### List of activities of the ERCE2025 implementation cycle

Activity	Time	Calendar
Curricular analysis	6 months	November 2022 – June 2023
Curricular analysis publication	6 months	March – August 2023
Process of elaboration of test items and reagents of questionnaires (revision tables specifications, elaboration of items, review of items proposed by countries, linguistic adaptation of the items, review countries, assembly, layout and sending to countries for pilot).	13 months	Dic 2022 – Dic 2023
Pilot application sampling	5 months	November 2022 - March 2023
ERCE pilot application (reception of diagrammed instruments, printing, data collection and capture, pilot	13 months	June 2023 –

database delivery).		June 2024
ERCE pilot result analysis – instrument diagramming	6 months	August 2024– January 2025
Final application sampling	3 months	October – December 2024
ERCE final application (reception of diagrammed instruments, printing, data collection and capture, pilot database delivery).	10 months	March – December 2025
Receipt and validation of databases	10 months	April 2025 – January 2026
Calculation of sample weights	4 months	January - April 2026
Analysis of learning achievement results and associated factors	7 months	April – October 2026
Delivery and dissemination of results	2 months	November – Dec 2026

Capacity building workshops will be held in different countries according to the previous schedule. The workshops will address the following topics:

1. Sampling Workshop: Sampling Techniques, Weighting and Estimation of Variance in Large-Scale Assessments
2. Item elaboration workshop: familiarization with specification tables, criteria for their construction, quality criteria for the elaboration of items, multiple choice reagents, open questions, rubrics, among others.
3. Workshop on surveying, data capture and correction of open questions: familiarization with the practical aspects of a large-scale evaluation. Training in data capture and verification procedures.
4. Data analysis workshop. Familiarization with the sample design and the design of an evaluation such as the ERCE, use of specialized software, descriptive analysis techniques, multilevel models, among others.
5. Workshop on the use and dissemination of results: Preparation of thematic reports, policy reports, blogs and infographics

## Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries are:

- The Ministries of Education of the countries of the LAC region participating in the development of the ERCE study, which will obtain guidelines to review, strengthen and/or advance in the design and implementation of policies and programs and other dimensions of target 4.1. in an articulated way.
- And technical specialists from the Member States of the LAC region who will participate in the capacity building workshops/webinars.

The key partners of the program are:

- OREALC/UNESCO Santiago

- The Ministries of Education of the countries of the LAC region participating in the development of the ERCE study

All proposed activities will be developed with a participatory approach, involving the direct beneficiaries in their design, implementation and evaluation. The dissemination of the results and products of the programme throughout the region will provide member countries with the opportunity to promote debate and formulate recommendations that support the country's efforts in monitoring and planning and developing public policies to advance the quality and equality agenda in accordance with UNESCO principles.

### Risk Analysis and Sustainability

Currently, the Laboratory requires the support and contributions of countries and donors to carry out the ERCE 2025 regional study, which is why it is important to continue to have the support of countries and the contribution of new strategic partners.

Another of the external risks also has to do with the current context of the pandemic, since it could affect fieldwork during the 2023-2024 pilot test and its application in 2025.

This project will seal the commitment of member countries with an agreement signed for 5 years (2022-2026), which will secure their annual contribution throughout the duration cycle of the ERCE 2025 Study.

### Budget

Seven dimensions encompass the budget for the implementation of ERCE 2025. That is to say: curricular analysis, preparation of the tests of learning achievements, elaboration of questionnaires of associated factors and innovation module, sampling, preparation of operations and application, dissemination of results and, finally, costs associated with the technical coordination of the study.

The study budget amounts to a total of \$5.135 MUSD, for the 5 years that the cycle lasts.

OREALC/UNESCO Santiago will contribute a value of \$560 MUSD, so the cost associated with the financing of the participating countries corresponds to \$4.575 MUSD.

Given the above, a total of 15 participating countries or states of countries have been considered for the definition of the annual contribution for the five years. Thus, in order to implement the next ERCE 2025, the participation of a minimum of 15 countries or states of countries with a quota of 61,000 MUSD per year for 5 years must be ensured.

NOTE: The commitment of the LLECE for the implementation of the study is based on the assumption that by the first quarter of the first year of the cycle (April 2022) the participants have formally declared their interests in being part of the ERCE 2025 by signing the letter of agreement and transfer of the first contribution corresponding to the year 2022.

In case of achieving the participation of more countries or states than those defined, the resources will be used for new developments and innovations to be carried out in the study according to the agenda planned with the countries.



<b>Localization:</b>	Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean
<b>Period:</b>	<b>ERCE 2025, cycle 2022-2026</b>
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<b>Preliminary budget:</b>	\$4.575 MUSD.

**Laboratorio** ■■■■■  
**Latinoamericano**  
**Evaluación** ■■■■■  
**Calidad** ■■■■■  
**Educación** ■■■■■