Orientation Meeting on Establishing National Benchmark Values for the SDG 4 Indicators
Purpose of the meeting

❖ Update Member States on the progress of the global and regional processes in establishing the regional and national benchmarks for the seven SDG 4 indicators.

❖ to orientate Member States on the process of establishing national benchmark values.

The specific objectives of the meeting are:

- To familiarize participants with the benchmark indicators and their methodologies and data sources;

- To present and discuss the process of establishing national benchmark values for SDG 4 indicators; and

- To draw an action plan to support countries in establishing their national benchmark values.
Benchmarks are a neglected Education 2030 Framework for Action commitment

UN Secretary General Synthesis Report, 2014
Called on countries to “embrace a culture of shared responsibility, one based on ... benchmarking for progress” (§146)

Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2015
Called on countries to establish “appropriate intermediate benchmarks (e.g., for 2020 and 2025)” for the SDG indicators, seeing them as “indispensable for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets” (§28)

Global Education Meeting, 2020
“We request UNESCO and its partners, together with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, to ... accelerate the progress and propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG indicators for subsequent monitoring” (§10)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority policy areas</th>
<th>GLOBAL SDG 4 benchmark indicators</th>
<th>REGIONAL SDG 4 benchmark indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Basic education      | 4.1.1 Minimum proficiency in reading/maths  
  4.1.2 Completion rate  
  4.1.4 Out-of-school rate | Africa: +2 (NEET; STEM)  
  Asia/Pacific: +3 (adult education; tertiary GER; STEM)  
  Europe: +2 (adult education; tertiary GER) |
| Pre-primary          | 4.2.2 Participation in organized learning a year before primary education entry | Africa: +1 (Participation TVET grads in LF)  
  Asia/Pacific: +1 (youth/adult TVET participation)  
  Europe: +2 (VET graduates work-based learning; digital skills) |
| Teachers             | 4.c.1 Qualified teachers            | |
| Expenditure          | 1.a.2/FFA Education as % GDP / % budget | |
| Equity               | 4.5.1 [To be defined]               | |
| TVET / Higher education |                                  | Africa: +2 (schools with electricity/Internet/computers; WASH) |
| Skills for work      |                                    | |
| Learning environment |                                    | |
Process towards benchmarks in 2021

Agreement on seven indicators TCG6

Adoption of technical process TCG7

Regional/sub regional Consultations

Global Education Meeting

UNESCO General Conference

GOAL
Regional benchmarks endorsed as first step to national benchmarks

KEY ACTIONS
Regional organizations propose minimum regional benchmarks

Outputs
- Regional minimum benchmark values
- Additional regional benchmark indicators

National benchmarks endorsed

Member States propose national benchmarks
Regional Process of benchmarks in Asia and Pacific

November 2020
Technical Team

March and April 2021
Five sub regional technical consultations

June 2021
Online country consultation

Discussed in various sub regional high-level meetings such as ASEAN SOMED meeting, SEAMEO Education Congress and Forum of Education Ministers’ Meeting (FEdMM).
• Member States agreed with all the proposed indicators for regional benchmarks.

• Agreed on Regional Minimum Benchmarks values for each of the sub regions

• The Member States confirmed that there is a need of national consultation meetings and agreed to finalize the national benchmarks in the next stage.
Establishing National Benchmarks

**Invitation**
Letter from UNESCO Assistance Director General for Education has been sent to all the Ministers inviting member states to establish and provide inputs to UNESCO on **4th of August**

**When?**
- Countries are requested to submit their national benchmarks for selected indicators by **1 October 2021**
- Compile and finalize the national benchmarks values by **15 October 2021**

**How?**
- Use national targets in strategies and plans
- Consult UIS dashboard on benchmarks in making decision, in case the lack of such national targets
- Together with regional organizations and partners, sub regional/national consultation meetings will be organized to support countries to establish national benchmarks
USE of Regional and National benchmarks

- Progress achieved
  - Lessons to learn
- Lack of progress
  - To act upon
- Data gaps
  - To fill the gaps
- Support strategies for the countries farthest most from the Regional minimum benchmarks
National Benchmark Indicators for SDG 4

Definitions and Methodologies
**Definition**
Percentage of children and young people in Grade 2 or 3 of primary education, at the end of primary education and the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a **minimum proficiency level** in (a) reading and (b) mathematics.

**Formula:**

\[
\text{Percentage of children at Grade 2/3 achieving or exceeding minimum proficiency level in the given subject} = \frac{\text{Number of children at Grade 2/3 achieving or exceeding minimum proficiency level in the given subject}}{\text{No of children grade 2/3 achieving any proficiency level in the subject}} \times 100
\]

**Data Source**
Large Scale Learning Assessments:
- International
- Regional
- National (establishing alignment is needed)

**Type of Data**
Numbers of students who have achieved different levels of proficiencies in different subjects. The minimum proficiency level must be defined.

**Minimum proficiency level:** the benchmark of basic knowledge in a domain (mathematics, reading, etc.) measured through learning assessments.

Definition of minimum level data published by UIS from 2019: According to alignment as adopted by GAML and TCG.
**Definition**
The percentage of a cohort of children or young people aged 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade of each level of education who have completed that grade.

**Data Source**
Census or Household surveys

**Data Type**
- Education completion data by single age;
- Population data by single age

**Formula:**
\[
\text{Primary completion rate} = \frac{14-16 \text{ years age children who have completed Primary}}{14-16 \text{ years age population}} \times 100
\]

If the Primary level age group is 6-11 years old, the official entry age to last grade of Primary is 11. Therefore, 3-5 years above the official age of entry to the last grade of primary is 11+3 to 11+5.
Indicator 4.1.4

Out-of-school rate

**Definition**
Children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education who are **not enrolled in Pre-primary, primary, secondary or higher levels of education**. Children and young people who are enrolled in pre-primary education are **not** considered to be out-of-school.

**Data Source**
Administrative data/EMIS; Household Survey data

**Data Type**
- School enrollment/attendance data by single age or official education level age groups;
- Population by single age or official education level age groups

**Formula: OOSR for Primary Education**

\[
\frac{\text{Total population of the official age group for primary education}}{\text{Total population enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education of the same age group}} - \text{Total population of the official age group for the same education level}
\]

Pre-primary refers to ISCED 0
Primary refers to ISCED 1
Secondary refers to ISCED 2 and 3
Indicator 4.2.2
- Participation rate in organized learning

**Definition**
The number of children aged one year before the official entrance age to primary education who participate in an organized learning programme, including programmes which offer a combination of education and care, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population of that age.

The age range will vary by country depending on the official age for entry to primary education.

**Data Source**
Administrative Data/EMIS; Household Survey

**Data Type**
- School enrollment/attendance by single age;
- Population by single age

**Formula:**

\[
\text{Number of children aged one year below the official primary entrance age who participate in organized learning} \times 100 \\
\text{Total number of children of the official age one year before for pre–primary education}
\]
Indicator 4.c.1

- Minimum Qualified Teachers

**Definition**
Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary education; (b) primary education; (c) lower secondary education; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in each country, by sex

**Formula:**

\[
\text{Proportion} = \frac{\text{Total number of teachers in a level of education with at least the minimum training}}{\text{Total number of teachers at that level}} \times 100
\]

**Data Source**
Administrative Data/EMIS

**Data Type**
- Number of teachers by who have received minimum organized training (pre-service or in-service) by levels
- Total numbers of teachers by levels of education
Target 1.a-related

Expenditure vs. GDP / Total Public Expenditure

**Definition**

**Vs. GDP:** Total public expenditure on education (current and capital) expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in a given financial year.

**Vs. Total Public Expenditure:** Total public expenditure on education (current and capital) expressed as a percentage of total government expenditure in a given financial year.

**Expenditure on education as % of total public expenditure**

\[
\text{Expenditure on education as % of total public expenditure} = \frac{\text{Total expenditure on education from the government}}{\text{Total government expenditure from all public sectors}}
\]

- Total government expenditure from IMF data

**Government expenditure on education as % of GDP**

\[
\text{Government expenditure on education as % of GDP} = \frac{\text{Total expenditure on education from the government}}{\text{GDP}}
\]

- GDP data from the World Bank

**Data Source**

Ministry of Finance/Planning/NSO

**Data type**

- Public expenditure by current and capital
- Total Government expenditure
- Gross domestic products (GDP)
National Benchmark Indicators for SDG 4

UIS Template to support establishing national benchmarks
In the Education 2030 Framework for Action all countries committed in 2015 to establish ‘appropriate intermediate benchmarks ... to serve as quantitative goalposts for the review of the global progress vis-à-vis the longer-term goals’ (§28).

- Benchmarks are objectives to be achieved by 2025 and 2030 for selected SDG 4 indicators.
- Benchmarks define the contribution the country is making to the achievement of SDG 4.
- Countries will set their benchmarks based on the targets in their national plans.
- If countries do not have objectives, they can set benchmarks with the help of supporting resources, which calculate indicative benchmarks based on their starting point and past growth rates.

Purpose of Establishing Benchmarks
To facilitate national consultation/discussion on establishing benchmark values for different indicators based on national policies and priorities...

To provide plausible values based on different scenario to take decision on the most reliable and realistic benchmarks values for different indicators...

To help countries compile inputs from different sub sectors in an efficient manners...

Providing you with a template...

The Template is composed of 3 worksheets

1. **Instructions** – background information; explanations on the composition of the matrix; and steps on how to set national benchmark values

2. **Benchmarks Setting** – this is the template to enter your benchmark values

3. **FAQ** – a section to answer some of your questions

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2025 national minimum benchmark</th>
<th>2025 national feasible benchmark</th>
<th>2020 national minimum benchmark</th>
<th>2030 national feasible benchmark</th>
<th>2025 minimum regional benchmark</th>
<th>2030 minimum regional benchmark</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 Proportion of students at the end of lower secondary</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 Proportion of students at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4 Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.5 Proportion of students achieving completion rate primary</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.6 Proportion of students achieving completion rate lower secondary</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Countries are expected to set benchmarks for seven indicators for 2025 and 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1:</td>
<td>Proportion of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level at three (3) levels of education a) Grade 2 or 3, b) end of primary and c) end of lower secondary, in two (2) subjects: (i) reading and (ii) mathematics [6 benchmark values]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2:</td>
<td>Completion rate at three (3) levels of education a) primary, b) lower secondary and c) upper secondary [3 benchmark values]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.4:</td>
<td>Out-of-school rate at three (3) levels of education a) primary, b) lower secondary and c) upper secondary [3 benchmark values]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2:</td>
<td>Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) [1 benchmark value]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.c.1:</td>
<td>Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications at four (4) levels of education a) pre-primary, b) primary c) lower secondary and d) upper secondary [4 benchmark values]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Target 1.a)</td>
<td>Total government spending on education as percentage of (a) GDP (b) total government spending [2 benchmark values]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This makes it a total of 38 values:

19 benchmark values for 2 points in time (2025 and 2030).

The definition of the seventh benchmark indicator, a measure of the gender gap in upper secondary completion that will capture equity in education, is currently being decided by the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 indicators. National benchmark values for this indicator will be set in 2022.
# How to read the template

**Columns 1 and 2** – Latest year and latest value

**Column 3** – Regional average at baseline: Average of regional values at 2015 (+2/-2); for expenditure median regional value.

**Columns 4 and 7** – National minimum benchmark: Value achieved based on the median growth rate historically observed conditional on the initial level (except for the expenditure indicators, for which the minimum regional benchmarks are 4% of GDP and 15% of public expenditure [1], when the country has not reached any of those values yet).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Latest year</th>
<th>Latest value</th>
<th>Regional average at baseline</th>
<th>2025 national minimum benchmark</th>
<th>2025 national feasible benchmark</th>
<th>2025 national benchmark (to be set)</th>
<th>2030 national minimum benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.a.GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to read the template

Columns 5 and 8 – National feasible benchmark: Value achieved based on the conditional 75th percentile rather than the conditional median growth rate. If the country has been growing faster than the 75th percentile, then the country’s projection is used as the feasible benchmark.

Columns 6 and 9 – National benchmark (to be set)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2025 national feasible benchmark</th>
<th>2025 national benchmark (to be set)</th>
<th>2030 national minimum benchmark</th>
<th>2030 national feasible benchmark</th>
<th>2030 national benchmark (to be set)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.a GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to read the template

Columns 10 and 11 – Regional minimum benchmarks: Average of country feasible benchmarks for the bottom third of countries in the region, weighted by the school-age population (except for the expenditure indicators, for which the minimum regional benchmarks are 4% of GDP and 15% of public expenditure).

Columns 12 and 13 – Space for your annotations and references as required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2025 minimum regional benchmark</th>
<th>2030 minimum regional benchmark</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>If benchmark values are from national plans, strategies, or policies, please mention the documents’ name and link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.a. GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to provide your inputs on national benchmarks values in column 6 and 9 of the template

By consulting your national education sector strategy, plan or policy, for each indicator and education level (and/or subject), take the following steps:

- If your strategy, plan or policy contains a target for years 2025 and 2030, fill in the value of the target in columns 6 and 9; and record the source of the information in Column 13.

- If they contain a target for years other than 2025 and 2030, also fill in the value of the target in columns 6 and 9, add a comment in Column 12 on the year to which this benchmark is referring and record the source of the information in Column 13.
What if...

A. your national education sector strategy, plan or policy does not have a target for the benchmark indicator
B. there is no up-to-date national education sector strategy, plan or policy

➢ You can use the resources made available in the template, which indicate a possible benchmark value (national feasible benchmark) that the country may consider.

A. your national education sector strategy, plan or policy does not have a target for the benchmark indicator
B. there is no up-to-date national education sector strategy, plan or policy
C. no indicative ‘national feasible benchmark’ is proposed

➢ Select the benchmark value to the best of your knowledge. Provide any information to explain the decision with a comment in Column 12. Also indicate whether your country is unable to set a benchmark for a particular indicator and, if so, which steps you propose for setting your benchmark value for that indicator.
Frequently asked questions

- Are benchmarks fair? Are countries far from and close to the goal treated the same way?
- COVID-19 is expected to negatively affect education indicators. What happens in that case?
- Reported latest data seem inconsistent and benchmark values are questionable. What happens in that case?
- My country has no data. What happens in that case?
- How have these seven indicators been selected?
- How will the equity benchmark be decided?
- The benchmarks suggest that the world will not meet SDG 4 target levels. Are benchmarks lowering the level of ambition?
- What do regional benchmarks mean and why do we need them in addition to national benchmarks?
- The regional benchmark in our region is set at a very low level. Why is that?
Thank you

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