

## South Asia Regional Technical Consultation Meeting on Regional Benchmarks

### Concept Note (DRAFT)

Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (Virtually)

11:00 AM (New Delhi time)

#### 1. Rationale of establishing Regional benchmarks for SDG4

The Education 2030 Framework for Action 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” (P28), a request that remains unrealized. In 2019, the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) for SDG 4 Indicators, whose purpose is to develop the SDG 4 monitoring framework, agreed at its 6th meeting on a set of seven indicators to be benchmarked of data and policy relevance (see Table 1).

Table 1: Proposed benchmark indicators

No.	Benchmark Indicators	Level
1	<b>indicator 4.1.1</b> Minimum learning proficiency in reading and mathematics	Global
2	<b>indicator 4.1.2</b> Completion rate	Global
3	<b>indicator 4.1.4</b> Out-of-school rate	Thematic
4	<b>indicator 4.2.2</b> Participation rate one year before primary	Global
5	<b>indicator 4.c.1</b> Percentage of trained teachers	Global
6	<b>Indicator:</b> Education expenditure as share of budget and GDP	Education 2030 benchmarks
7	<b>indicator 4.5.1</b> [Equity indicator]	Global

The extraordinary session Global Education Meeting in October 2020 reminded countries of this commitment. Its Declaration called on “*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 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring*” (p10). Fulfilling this neglected commitment to set benchmarks would help renew emphasis on achieving SDG 4. However, to set a regional benchmark which reflect the region’s reality, there is need of transparent technical process supported by strong regional political process.

The Regional Roadmap for the SDG4- Education 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific (2015-2030) has specific focus on strengthening monitoring capacities of the countries and also monitor the progress of the goal at monitoring at regional level.

At the sub-regional level, The SAARC<sup>1</sup> Framework for Action has been approved by Education Ministers meeting in October, 2019. The SAARC regional monitoring mechanism has included all the global indicators and some additional indicators to contextual regional challenges.

The Draft SAARC regional monitoring mechanism developed by SAARC secretariat with the technical support from UNESCO and UNICEF has been presented in a regional workshop in Kathmandu in 2019. Next step to be formally presented for discussion at a Senior Officials meeting in order to be recommended to a Ministerial level meeting.

The proposed benchmark indicators are very much relevant for the roadmap and could help the region to effectively monitor the progress of SDG4. Furthermore, due to the lack of agreed benchmarks for key SDG4 monitoring indicators, it is also difficult to measure the progress of the country in the region. The establishing of regional benchmarks could help to:

- Harmonize (sub) regional and global monitoring framework;
- Develop data collection strategies;
- Monitor (sub) regional SDG 4 progress especially for the Mid-Term Review exercise on 2030;
- Set indicator reporting standards and processes

## **2. Establishing benchmarks for the region**

**As custodian agency of SDG4 monitoring, the UIS is proposing interim benchmarks to help support regions to develop regional and national benchmarks** following various approaches. The regional partners and member States need to look carefully into these benchmark indicators and their values and their relevancy for regional and national level. In this regard, a technical consultation have been planned to discuss with member states of South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) on the processes and approaches of benchmarks and agree on the benchmark indicators.

## **3. Objective and expected outcomes:**

The overall objective of the Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 is to review the proposed benchmark indicators and approaches used to set the levels of benchmarks and collect inputs and comments for finalization. The consultation will also update the progress of alleging SDG4 indicators in national education monitoring framework and discuss to expand the scope of the benchmark indicators and will discuss additional indicators that could be interest of the sub region.

## **4. Expected outcomes of the consultation are:**

- Update on the status of SDG4 indicators alignment at country level;

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<sup>1</sup> South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

- Agree on the benchmark indicators for the region with additional indicators relevant for the region;
- Seek expert advises and inputs to finalize the levels of regional and national benchmark for 2025 and 2030;
- Feedback on draft SAARC regional monitoring mechanism;
- Develop a follow up plan for the national consultations.

#### **5. Participants:**

The officials from Ministry of Education and National statistical offices who are responsible for education data and monitoring, regional experts on education indicators and monitoring, regional partners and stakeholders will be invited to the regional technical consultation meeting.

#### **6. Date and Venue:**

The South Asia Regional Benchmarking Technical Consultation meeting on SDG 4 will be held virtually on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

#### **7. Time:**

- 11:00 AM New Delhi time.

#### **8. Organizers:**

UNESCO New Delhi/Bangkok with the technical support from UIS.

## Tentative Agenda

What	How	How long	Who
Welcome and introduction to the meeting.	Remarks	10 minutes	UNESCO Bangkok
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on the status of SDG4 indicators alignment at country level</li> <li>Draft SAARC regional monitoring mechanism/ indicators</li> </ul>	Presentations	40 minutes	Member States  SAARC Secretariate
Introduction to benchmarking and the regional process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why benchmarking?</li> <li>Indicators for benchmarking</li> <li>Regional process</li> </ul>	Presentation	30 minutes	UIS
Discussion and agreement on the proposed indicators with Identification of additional indicators for benchmarking	Guided Discussion	30 minutes	UNESCO New Delhi
Methodological discussion and Interim benchmarks for the selected indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sub regional benchmarks</li> <li>National level benchmarks</li> </ul>	Presentation/ demonstration	30 minutes	UIS
Feedback and discussion	Discussion	30 minutes	ROSA
Plan for national consultations	Discussion	10 minutes	UNESCO Bangkok
Closing	Remarks	5 minutes	UNESCO New Delhi