

## Regional Technical Consultation Meeting on Regional Benchmarks in Southeast Asia

### Concept Note

Wednesday, 24 March 2021 (Virtually)

#### I. Background

The extraordinary session Global Education Meeting in October 2020 reminded countries of this commitment *to accelerate the progress and propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring* (§10). 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 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”* (§28), 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 proposed benchmark indicators are well aligned with both SEAMEO and ASEAN's priorities and strategies and could help it to effectively monitor the progress in the region. 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 (sub) regional benchmarks will be very relevant to South East Asia and can 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 2023
- set indicator reporting standards and processes

SEAMEO has prepared its Strategic Plan 2021-2030. This decade roadmap supports the achievement of SDG indicators and has been providing a strong leadership in the promotion and development of education, science and culture in the region through advocacy, promoting partnership, knowledge generation and sharing, capacity development to realize inclusive and quality education in all its 11 Southeast Asian member countries.

In order to monitor the progress in the region, SEAMEO also developed a monitoring indicators framework aligning with SDG4 global and thematic indicators. Similarly, the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) which serves the same countries in the region has been developing its education workplan (2021-2025) aligning it with SDG4.

This shows great political commitments in the region. However, there is a big monitoring challenge as there are data gaps in many of the proposed indicators.

## **II. Establishing SDG benchmarks for the region**

**As a technical lead in the monitoring of SDG4, the UIS is proposing interim benchmarks to help support regions including the SEAMEO and ASEAN 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 with regional agencies, partners, stakeholders and member states is suggested to agree on the processes and approaches of benchmarks and agree on the benchmark indicators and their levels.

## **III. 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 discuss to expand the scope of the benchmark indicators and will discuss additional indicators that could be interest of region.

#### **IV. Expected outcomes of the consultation:**

- 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.
- Develop a follow up plan for the national consultations

#### **V. Participants:**

High Officials from the Ministries 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.

#### **VI. Date and Venue:**

The Southeast Asia Regional Benchmarking Technical Consultation meeting on SDG 4 will be held virtually on Wednesday, 24 March 2021.

#### **VII. Co-Organizers:**

The Asia Pacific Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030 and SEAMEO Secretariate and ASEAN with the support of UIS.

#### **VIII. Contact Persons**

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## IX. Tentative Agenda

Wednesday, 24 March 2021, from 0900 to 1130 hrs (BKK Time / GMT+7)

Activities (What)	Time	Speakers
Welcome and introduction to the meeting.	0900-0920	Mr Shigeru Aoyagi Director, UNESCO Bangkok  Dr Ethel Agnes P Valenzuela Director, SEAMEO Secretariat
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>	0920-0945	Mr Roshan Bajracharya UNESCO, UIS
Discussion and agreement on the proposed indicators with Identification of additional indicators for benchmarking	0945-1030	Mr Nyi Nyi, Thaung UNESCO Bangkok  Mr Francisco Benavides UNICEF EAPRO
Methodological discussion and Simulations of the benchmarks for the selected indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ SEA/ASEAN benchmarks</li><li>▪ National level benchmarks</li></ul>	1030-1100	Mr Roshan Bajracharya UNESCO, UIS
Feedback and discussion	1100-1120	Dr Ethel Agnes P Valenzuela Director, SEAMEO Secretariat
Plan for national consultations	1120-1130	TWG-SDG2030
Closing Remarks	1130-1135	Mr Shigeru Aoyagi Director, UNESCO Bangkok  Ms Rodora Barbaran Director, Human Development Directorate, ASCC Dept, ASEAN Secretariat
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