

Terms of Reference

Asia-Pacific Regional Network of SDG4-Education 2030 National Coordinators

*Endorsed at the
First meeting of the Regional Network of National Coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030*

Background & Context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 attach critical importance to enhancing cooperation and coordination among all countries at all levels in the education sector and across other sectors¹. The enabling role of education in achieving the other SDGs and the contribution of other SDGs towards education have also been underscored.

In response, under the aegis of the United Nations regional SDG coordination mechanism, at the Asia-Pacific level, the Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) on Education 2030+ was formed in March 2016. The RTWG-Education 2030+ builds on the work of the TWG on Education for All (EFA), which operated as a key TWG within the framework of the Asia-Pacific regional coordination mechanism under the MDG framework.

To complement the TWG-EFA, a regional platform for EFA National Coordinators was established in 2002. Its main purpose was to coordinate and synergize national and regional efforts to promote collaboration and networking among the 46 Member States to plan, implement, monitor, assess and report on the status of national EFA plans.

The EFA National Coordinators gathered annually and played a pivotal role in facilitating Member States to participate in the regional level monitoring of EFA. This resulted in three major regional monitoring exercises: the Mid-decade assessment (2008), the End-of-decade review (2010), and the EFA country review (2015). The EFA National Coordinators regional platform helped sustain momentum on EFA over 15 years.

At the first Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of Education 2030 (APMED 2030) in 25-27 November 2015, the participating Member States agreed to “(e)stablish or strengthen a national coordination mechanism for SDG 4... and identify an appropriate SDG 4 coordination focal point” (APMED 2030 Outcome document, “Next Steps: Actions for 2016”). Since then, over 25 countries in the region have nominated a national coordinator/focal point for SDG4, under whose leadership, national coordination mechanisms are being established in their respective countries. It is expected that these National Coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030 will serve as the first point of contact for the regional TWG and its partners in coordinating and supporting technical support, as well as evidence based policy advocacy for the effective implementation and monitoring of progress on SDG4.

The second APMED2030 unanimously agreed to renew the National Coordinators regional platform of Member States and endorsed the terms of the regional network proposed in this document herein.

¹ SDG 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Objective

To serve as a regional platform for SDG4 National Coordinators for sharing of knowledge, good practices and experience, as well as for promoting south-south-north cooperation, for the effective implementation and progress monitoring of SDG4-Education 2030.

Members

- National Coordinators of SDG4-Education 2030 or their representatives/alternates (Member States)
- RTWG Education 2030+ (mainly represented by the Co-chairs UNESCO and UNICEF)
- Asia-Pacific regional representatives of the SDG4-Education 2030 Global Steering Committee
- SDG4 focal points of the sub-regional organizations [Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- Secretariat: UNESCO Bangkok

Proposed profile of National Coordinators

- Senior level official (preferably Director-General level or above) from the ministry of education responsible for the overall national education sector policy and plans:
 - o *If the national coordinator will to be at the minister or vice-minister level, a “focal point” at a Director-General/Deputy Director-General/Director level or technical officer level, should be appointed, who will be given with the responsibility for daily coordination and contact with UNESCO Bangkok (Secretariat).*
 - o *Where there is more than one responsible ministry for the education sector (e.g. basic and higher education; general education and TVET, etc.) there should be a focal point in each of the ministry concerned, and one overall coordinator.*
 - o *In case there is no suitable position in the MoE (or relevant ministry for SDG4), the National Coordinator could be the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO.*
- Have a convening role for broader partnerships around SDG4-Education 2030;
- Have excellent communication skills;
- Be available to represent its ministry in key regional meetings on Education 2030;
- Be given time and other logistical support to carry out their functions effectively by their host ministries; and
- Have alternates who can represent him/her when required.

Main functions of the regional network

The regional network of SDG4 National Coordinators will serve as a regional platform for national coordinators to share knowledge and experiences on implementing and monitoring SDG4-Education 2030 through:

- Building partnerships and networks around SDG4-Education 2030 to stimulating and guiding a holistic vision of education as per SDG4, including response to emerging challenges;
- Providing synergy between education and other sectors in support of the broader SDG framework;

- Facilitating mutual learning among the Member States to effectively implement the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda at national and sub-national levels;
- Fostering south-south-north cooperation across the various thematic areas of SDG4;
- Facilitating country level participation in regional and sub-regional level monitoring exercises on SDG4-Education 2030;
- Organizing high level joint advocacy and awareness raising
- Ensuring regular communications between regional and global level coordination (through the Global SC representatives); and
- Exploring opportunities to generate and mobilize resources for effective implementation of SDG4 within the country.

Main activities (foreseen/proposed)

- Organization of regional SDG4-Education 2030 meetings, including APMED.
- Organization of periodic regional monitoring exercises.
- Development of joint communique and/or advocacy messaging, communication materials.
- In partnership with the RTWG, conducting cross-national studies on the key common issues in implementing the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda.

Timeframe

The regional network will be initiated at the second Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (18 November 2016). It should remain in place until 2030. An evaluation of its effectiveness should be undertaken by the end of 2020 and thereafter at regular intervals to ensure that the mechanism remains relevant to emerging needs.

Main actions for 2017

	Actions	Time frame
1	Finalize the ToR for the regional network	by February 2017
2	Update the status of SDG4 national coordinators nomination and national coordination mechanism for SDG4-Education 2030	Ongoing
3	Launch an online portal for the SDG4 national coordinators regional network	by May 2017
4	Organization of the 1 st meeting of the regional network of National Coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030	4 July 2017
5	Regional progress report on SDG4-Education 2030	December 2017
6	Issuance of 1 st regional network newsletter (TBD)	TBD