



Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML)

Term of Reference for Target 4.1 Task Force

**Montreal, Canada
March 2017**

1 Task Force (TF) rationale

1.1 Overview of the proposal

UNESCO Institute for Statistics is responsible for defining and measuring globally-comparable indicators of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNESCO Institute for Statistics is launching the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning, to provide a platform for discussion among stakeholders, researchers, UN and NGO partners on how to fulfil UIS’s mandate for producing globally-comparable data on learning for each target within Goal 4. Three key issues require discussion: 1) the comparability of measurement across countries; 2) how best to define the proficiency level, or in the case of 4.1, defining “minimum proficiency level”; and 3) how frequently data should be collected to effectively track changes in outcomes due to interventions, and to guide policy. Options for measurement, including integration of existing data to address the need for universal learning indicators, will also be outlined by GAML.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics is convening task forces to address technical approaches to measurement of learning across Goal 4, as part of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML). Task forces will provide opportunities for input from a diverse range of stakeholders, with the overall purpose of identifying the innovations and methodological advances that could inform the design and implementation of universal learning indicators.

For Target 4.1, the global indicator focused on children and young people is “proportion achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics”. Several measures focusing on children and young people are available, but several technical issues remain. Notably, there is no comparability among existing national and cross-national assessments, no common definition of “minimum proficiency level” that applies to children and young people in all countries, creating a challenge for measurement. Moreover, with the technology advancement and methodology improvement in learning assessment, it is critical to focus attention on how the data are presented, received and used.

1.1.1 Purpose of the work

GAML presents an opportunity to further define measurement for the key outcome indicator for Target 4.1, by focusing on three key areas:

- 1) Global comparability: Defining technical standards for determining whether measures function similarly across contexts, and in addition, proposing technical alternatives for using existing national and regional data to generate global estimates.
- 2) Defining a minimum level: Defining options for measuring “minimum proficiency level,” through review of scientific literature, convening of experts, and identifying possible analytical strategies for generating the data required to define “minimum proficiency level.”
- 3) Periodicity: Examining the sensitivity of population-based measures to intervention effects, to estimate how frequently the data should be generated to track effects of policy implementation.

Specific options for discussion include identification of the pros/cons of each approach, within the larger context of an emphasis on globally-comparable data that can also inform national-level decision-making:

- Use existing tools, with the PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS as the main alternatives at present, and expand its instruments in content and skills coverage.
- Use a common set of items or identify a set of anchor items to integrate into national and regional assessments as a way to link the assessments onto a common scale;
- Create a new universal learning scale that will place all possible measures on a common scale, including examination of other analytical methods to generate standards for “minimum proficiency level” using existing data.

GAML may also provide a starting point for developing a multi-partner “measurement strategy” for target 4.1, including articulating links and sharing information on measurement of children and young people learning development. Several groups are interested in measurement, at both the global and national levels, including the OECD, the World Bank/UNICEF and regional groups in Latin America, Europe, and Africa.

These goals are expected to be achieved by working through the proposed UIS GAML Secretariat, and informed by convening stakeholders and experts to generate consensus.

Within the next year, the Task Force will work on the following areas:

- Provide feedback on measurement of Target 4.1, with emphasis on target 4.1 learning indicators, on the production of data quality framework, to help guide the development and implementation of robust and reliable assessments;
- Identify technical issues that are relevant to Target 4.1 learning indicators and define the scope for commission research studies to address key questions and issues that will help inform recommendations for learning indicators;
- Review commission research studies and synthesize input from task force members to make recommendations to GAML Secretariat and Chairs;
- Provide feedback on the development of implementation and capacity building plan to support countries in measuring indicators relevant to Target 4.1, especially for developing countries with diverse cultural settings.

1.1.2 Task Force Composition

The Task Force members will include six to twelve members, potentially in the following areas:

- Representatives from Citizen-Led Assessment
- Representative from Service Providers
- Representatives from International and Regional Assessment bodies (OECD, IEA, LLECE, PASEC, SACMEQ, SEAPLM, PILNA)
- Representatives from professional, academic, teacher associations
- Representatives from Member States

1.1.3 Relation with other activities in Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) and Technical Cooperation Group (TCG)

The Task Force will be engaged in the following ways:

- Review commission studies
- Present technically sound and pragmatic solutions to the GAML Secretariat and Chairs
- Provide supporting evidences or suggest alternatives on the methodological work developed to the GAML Secretariat and Chairs
- Liaison with the GAML Chairs for advice when there is disagreement on the technical solutions among members
- Review developed technical tasks
- Represent the GAML to present technical solutions to the TCG member states as requested by the GAML Secretariat and propose to the TCG the best technical solutions to produce the proposed indicators

The Task Force will work with GAML Chairs in term of technical development and propose best technical solutions, on the request of GAML Secretariat, to the TCG so final agreements can be reached within TCG for its implementation.

1.2 Organization of the work

Through the GAML Secretariat, UIS will take responsibility for summarizing the themes of the task forces and preparing summary documents to share with the GAML Chairs and TCG.

1.2.1 Outputs of the Task Force

The Task Force will review technical documents and processes, make recommendations to GAML Secretariat and Chairs, and endorse the following:

- Related tools, data platform, performance descriptors of the global reporting metric;
- Relevance empirical and theoretical research;
- Validity studies; and
- Planning tools and guidelines on the implementation and capacity building.

1.2.2 Deliverables

The Task Force, with the support of the GAML Secretariat, will produce a progress report and/or issue report to the GAML Chairs on a semi-annual basis.

2 Schedule

2.1 Target date for the start of work, duration and target date for the conclusion of the work

The Task Force will set-up in March 2017. The duration of the Task Force will be on need-basis, depending on the tasks and skills needed in the Task Force. The GAML Chairs will approve the formation and composition of the Task Force.

The Task Force will meet virtually base on the development progress of the studies, tools and products and once a year on an in-person meeting on the progress and update of work. The coordinator of the Task

Force may represent the Task Force to present progress and technical solutions at GAML meetings, and possibly TCG meeting, if deemed necessary.

The coordinator of the Task Force will liaison with the GAML Secretariat and Chairs when there is issues that cannot be resolved within the team.

	Activities and Timeline	Date
1	Identify technical issues that are relevant to target 4.1 and define the scope for commission research studies	March 2017
2	Outline desired research studies and prepare TORs	March 2017
3	Review research studies and make recommendation on methodology, tools and data platform for the global reporting metric	March 2017
4	Advise on the implementation and capacity building plan with regards to target 4.1 learning indicators	March-June 2017
5	Work with research institutes on specific methodological and policy research in the area of target 4.1 learning indicators	July 2017- March 2018