



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
INSTITUTE  
FOR  
STATISTICS



TECHNICAL  
COOPERATION  
GROUP



# Technical Cooperation Group on the SDG 4 – Education 2030 indicators (TCG)

## Revised Terms of Reference

January 2020

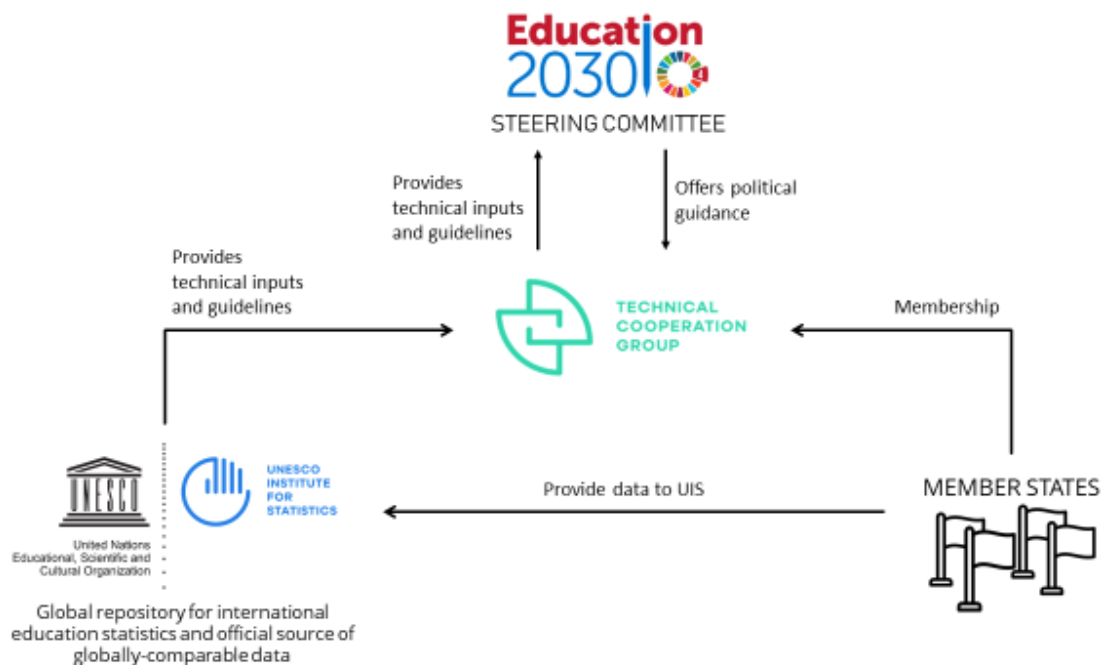


## 1. Background

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN General Assembly in September 2015 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) at the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015, attention has turned to the development of processes and plans for monitoring progress towards the targets associated with SDG 4 on education. At the level of global monitoring, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) developed a global indicator framework which was agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016. A slightly refined version was agreed in March 2017 and formally adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017. At the level of sectoral thematic monitoring, the Technical Advisory Group on post-2015 education indicators (TAG), established by UNESCO in 2014, set out a proposal for 43 thematic indicators that was included in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

In this context and to lead the development and implementation of the thematic indicators for education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the UNESCO Education Sector's Division of Education 2030 Support and Coordination (UNESCO ED/ESC) convened the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4-Education 2030 Indicators (TCG) in May 2016. The TCG provides a platform to discuss and develop the indicators used for monitoring the Education 2030 targets in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, involving the main stakeholders.

Figure 1. Overview of UIS partnerships to implement the SDG 4-Education 2030 indicator framework



The TCG makes recommendations on the necessary actions to improve data quality and availability, as well as the design and development of methodologies for the production of thematic monitoring indicators. As shown in Figure 1, the TCG plays a critical role of advancing the implementation of the thematic indicator framework on education. This document specifies the TCG's objectives,



membership, governance and working groups. It also explains the TCG's partnership with the UIS-led expert groups to implement the SDG 4 indicator framework.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the TCG include the following:

- a. Establish common data standards and methodologies of universal validity that maximize the use of different sources of information for the global and thematic indicator framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and the Education 2030 Agenda. More concretely:
  - **recommend and decide on priorities** on improvements in efficiency and alignment of education data collection systems;
  - **propose, develop and endorse methodological norms and standards** for specific indicators;
  - **propose, develop and endorse tools and guidelines** for specific indicators;
  - **identify needs** and propose ways **to build capacity** for countries to utilise these tools and guidelines;
  - **coordinate global efforts** to improve data availability and quality based on norms, standards and procedures; and
  - **collaborate with agencies and countries in the implementation of the working groups strands** by sharing the chairing of the working groups with the support from the UIS as Secretariat.
- b. Define and approve methods pertaining to other pressing policies and management challenges identified by Member States and which are not included in the SDG global and thematic framework but for which globally comparable data and a global data collection might be justifiable for setting priorities for development and reporting. These data may also be cross cutting and relevant to more than one SDG (such as data for displaced populations).
- c. Work with the UIS Secretariat to assure the quality and timeliness of the data produced, ensuring the compliance in the implementation of the decisions taken by the TCG.
- d. Support the work of the IAEG-SDGs, relevant regional bodies and countries related to the implementation of the global and thematic monitoring framework and coordinate the harmonization of regional monitoring frameworks, assuring the coherence of these processes.
- e. Operate as the Member States advisory group to the [Global Coalition for Education Data](#).
- f. Inform the SDG 4 - Education 2030 Steering Committee on the implementation of the thematic indicator framework.



### 3. Membership

The TCG is composed of a maximum of 38 members based on the following (see Annex I and Annex II for the current composition):

1. Representatives that have experience in the field of education statistics in charge of units either in countries or international agencies. All members are *ex-officio*.
2. UNESCO (4 members, of which 3 are voting): the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) as the statistical agency of UNESCO serving as Secretariat with no vote, the UNESCO Education Sector's Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (ED/ESC) who coordinates the vote for UNESCO, the Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, and the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR).
3. UNESCO Member States (a maximum of 28 voting members): initially all countries who were members of the IAEG-SDGs were invited to join the TCG. Upon renewal of membership, they were selected based on the UNESCO regional grouping (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean). Given that, regional representation is determined in each of the regions and member states are elected to take part in the discussions to define the global monitoring indicators. This balanced regional representation contributes to the coordination of the work of the TCG at the global level.
4. Multilateral SDG 4 Monitoring Partner Agencies (3 members): UNICEF, OECD and the World Bank Group (WBG) will be permanent members given their key roles as data reporting agencies for the global and thematic monitoring frameworks.
5. Civil Society Organizations (2 members): Education International and a second member nominated by the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 coordination group.
6. The Co-Chair of the SDG 4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) representing Member States.<sup>1</sup>

The TCG will also include, as observers, representatives of regional commissions (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)), regional agencies, non-government organizations and other organizations able to provide expert technical advice and support throughout the framework implementation process. Annex I presents the current composition of TCG participants.

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<sup>1</sup> The Education 2030 SC ToR reads, "*The SDG-Education 2030 SC is co-chaired by a Member State representative and UNESCO ADG/ED. Moreover, there will be three Vice Chairs, two from Member States from different regional groups and one from the civil society/teacher organizations constituency.*"



All TCG participants are designated by their respective constituencies, represent them and are accountable to them. Member States participate on behalf of their region. It is therefore the responsibility of participating Member States to ensure appropriate designation and sufficient communication within their region. By the same token, it is the responsibility of the representatives of the other constituencies to communicate and consult with their peers when appropriate.

#### 4. Roles and Responsibilities of TCG participants

The roles and the responsibilities of the TCG participants are:

- a) Commit to the tasks and outcomes of the TCG's work plan and additional tasks decided by the TCG;
- b) Commit time and effort to complete tasks on time and to a level of excellence;
- c) Participate in physical meetings and virtual communications;
- d) Review key deliverables/products from the TCG or the [Global Alliance to Monitor Learning \(GAML\)](#) (e.g. the Secretariat, TCG Working Groups, GAML Task Forces);
- e) Identify issues that the TCG should address;
- f) Identify potential risks and suggest possible solutions;
- g) Participate in at least one TCG Working Group or designate an alternate from the same organization;
- h) Contribute towards successful communication and positive motivation among TCG participants;
- i) Build good working relationships and serve as a sounding board for new ideas and opportunities for growth.

#### 5. Governance

As the UN office for the production of internationally-comparable statistics on education and in line with the mandate given in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is the Secretariat of the TCG and its Director chairs the TCG jointly with the Director of the UNESCO Education Sector's Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (ED/ESC). The Chairs of the TCG inform the SDG 4 – Education 2030 Steering Committee on the activities of the TCG twice a year on the occasion of each of the SDG 4 – Education 2030 SC meetings.

The implementation of the work plan is supported by Working Groups established within the TCG and through other inter-agency mechanisms, and, where relevant, bring together additional specialised agencies and expert advisers in the various fields covered by the targets of SDG 4.



To ensure the coherence and efficiency of the Working Groups, they are co-led by one agency and one country both members of the TCG and with significant expertise in the topics to be addressed by each group.

### ***Responsibilities of the co-Chairs***

The responsibilities of the TCG co-Chairs are:

- a) Chair meetings and ensure meetings are strategic, participatory, concise, and in line with the purpose of the group;
- b) Coordinate the work of the Working Groups and ensure the delivery of their outputs;
- c) Inform and update the SDG-Education 2030 SC co-Chairs on the TCG's activities and outputs;
- d) Promote the work of the TCG;
- e) Liaise with partners and promote their participation, if relevant to the objectives of TCG.

### ***Role of the Secretariat***

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the TCG Secretariat, in its role as UNESCO's statistical agency will:

- a) Organize the meetings and select the meetings' venues;
- b) Prepare and facilitate meeting agendas;
- c) Draft the minutes of the meetings in a timely manner;
- d) Maintain accurate and complete information and key documents related to the work of the group on a joint platform;
- e) Submit all relevant documents and meeting minutes to co-Chairs for their approval;
- f) Draft and present TCG reports to the Education 2030 SC;
- g) Coordinate with TCG Working Groups and ensure delivery.

### ***TCG Operations***

The TCG conducts its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, and may invite experts, as appropriate, from civil societies, academia and the private sector to contribute with their expertise and experience on indicators and innovative data compilation methods. Papers will be commissioned as needed as part of the inputs.

At the sixth TCG meeting in Yerevan (August 2019), the TCG Secretariat, the UIS, presented a proposal to divide the indicator development group into working groups focused on data sources with the objective of focusing on data availability and quality, including time dimensions. The following six working groups were settled:

- administrative data / Education Management Information System (EMIS);
- household surveys;



- learning assessments;
- personnel data on teachers;
- education expenditure; and
- additional groups on specific issues (e.g. refugees, conflict-affected countries).

The UIS will operate as the Secretariat for the working groups. The working groups will have different chairs from institutions willing to delegate their time for this task. Consultants could be appointed to support the working groups, but ideally they will not act as chairs.

The new working groups will work, when necessary and appropriate:

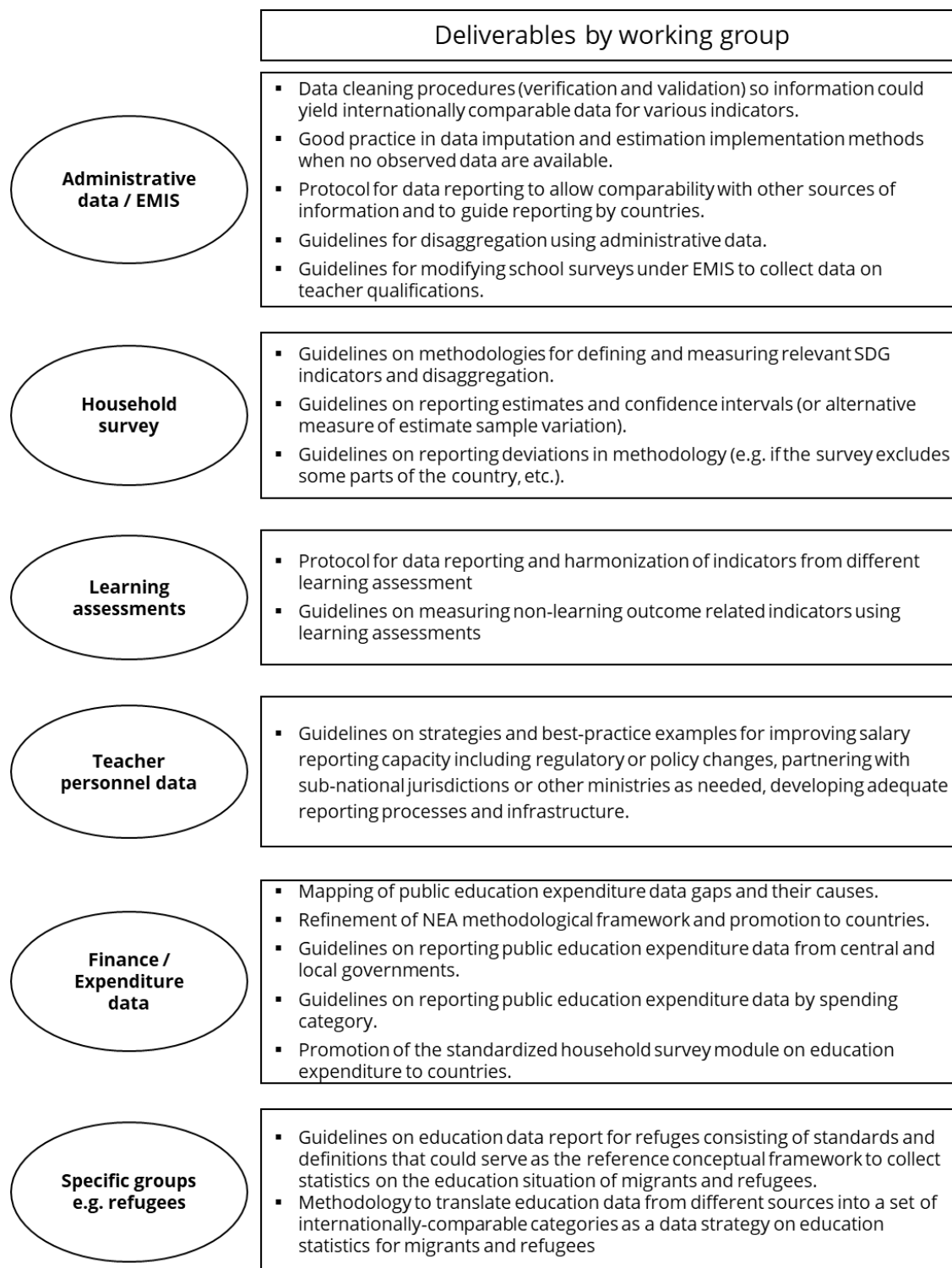
- with existing coordinating platforms, such as inter-agency working groups;
- with specific sectors and communities of practice interest; and
- others, as may be suggested by the UIS.

The working groups will operate under the following guidelines:

- Working groups are set up with the agreement of the TCG to address specific technical topics that are discussed as priority in the TCG and the Education 2030 SC. In the future, other working groups could be set up with the agreement of the TCG.
- Each working group, facilitated by the working group co-leads, will develop the proposed objectives, issues, indicator priorities and deliverables in an annual work plan.
- Working groups will meet at least twice a year and will report on progress to the TCG and to the indicators working groups.
- The Secretariat will facilitate working group meetings and provide other administrative support.
- Coordination between the working groups will be actively pursued with support from the Secretariat.

Each of the working groups and the nature of their work is presented in more detail in Figure 2 below, establishing a first draft of the [Terms of Reference](#) for each strand of work.

Figure 2. Summary of TCG working groups and illustrative deliverables







## 6. The TCG in the Global Data Coalition and the Global Architecture

The [SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee](#) (SC) is the global multi-stakeholder mechanism for education in the 2030 Agenda. One of its primary objectives is to “*encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities*” to achieve SDG 4 and the other education-related targets in the SDGs. It coordinates with regional SDG 4 Steering Committees or related mechanisms in five regions: sub-Saharan Africa; Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Europe and North America.

The technical branch of the SC is the [Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 – Education 2030](#) (TCG). Established in 2016, the TCG serves as a platform to discuss and develop indicators used for monitoring the Education 2030 targets in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. The [SDG 4 - Education 2030 Framework for Action](#) ratified that the UIS remains “*the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education*” while it is also clearly recognised that “*in addition to collecting data, the UIS will work with partners to develop new indicators, statistical approaches and monitoring tools... working in coordination with the Education 2030 Steering Committee.*” Under its proposed re-organization, the TCG will have six working groups, each committed to work on a different source of data (as presented in Figure 2). One of roles of the working groups will be to develop technical standards and tools that will guide countries and donors (refer to the previous section for a more detailed presentation of the working groups).

The Multilateral Education Platform (MEP) is a forum for strategic dialogue among 13 key multilateral partners that aims to reduce fragmentation and agree on priorities. Established at UNESCO in July 2019, the MEP is comprised of principals of UN agencies and other multilateral partners involved in education. The [Paris Outcome Document](#) agreed to jointly accelerate progress toward SDG 4 based on seven broad priorities. During the UN General Assembly in September 2019, the MEP agreed to move ahead on one – namely the need for more coordinated technical and financing support for increasing availability and quality of education data, under the proposed [Global Coalition for Education Data](#), and is led by UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics.

Most of these UN agencies and multilateral partners, often jointly with other partners, are already collaborating in a range of inter-agency and other groups to plan, develop, and implement coordinated activities in response to their partner country needs for education data (see Annex III). However, these are yet not sufficiently aligned to take advantage of potential synergies, nor are they sufficiently well-funded (both in terms of amount and efficiency). One of the purposes of the Coalition will be to strategically align all these groups to the common goal of supporting SDG 4 monitoring. These inter-agency and other groups will essentially become the technical arm of the MEP.



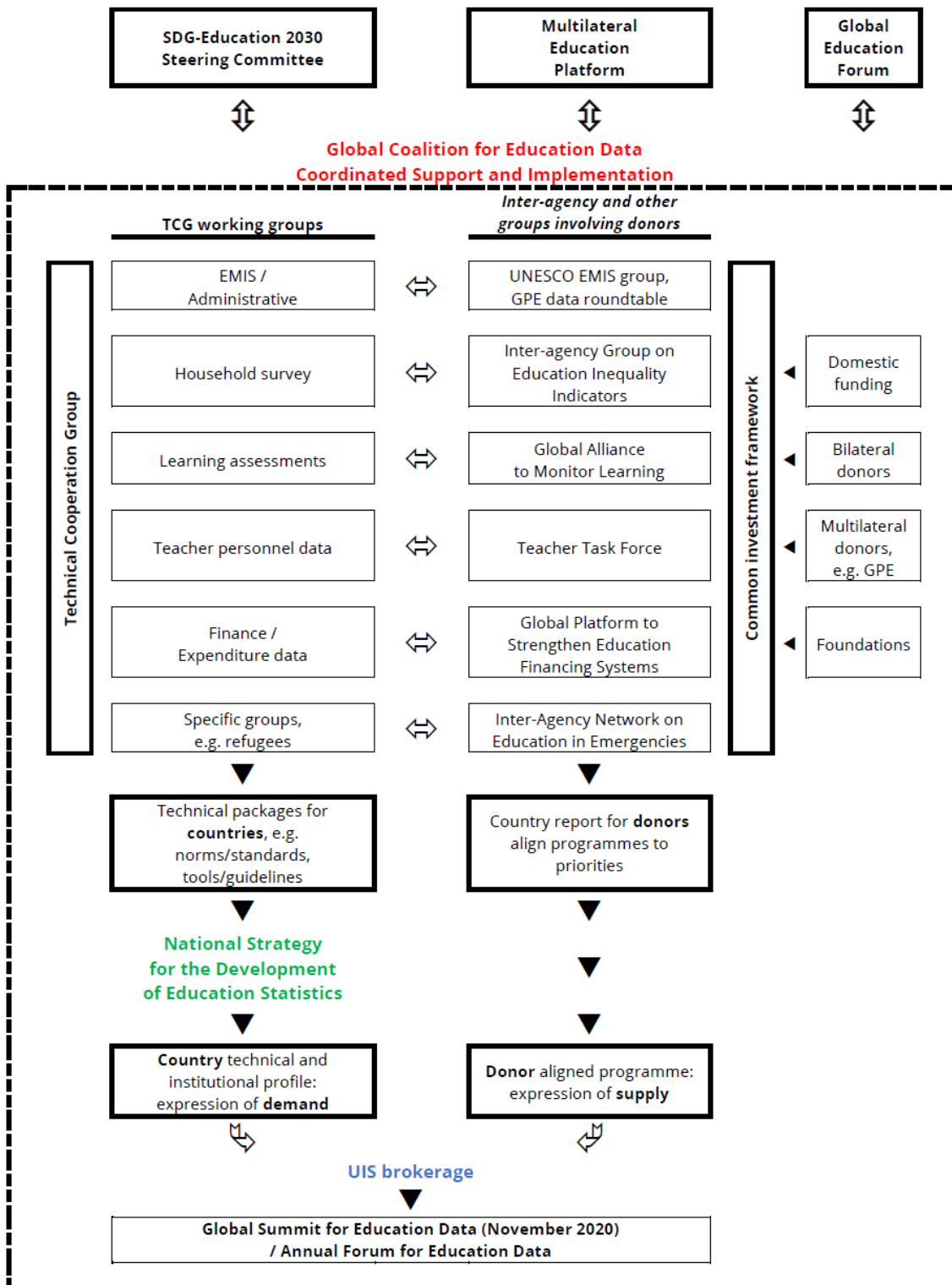
Finally, the initiative of the Special Envoy Mr. Gordon Brown, the Global Education Forum (GEF), which is co-chaired by UNESCO and two senior personalities, serves as a complement in the system in terms of advocacy and mobilization of financial resources.

In education statistics, there are already a number of mostly *ad hoc* initiatives to raise funds for education data that try to bring together countries and donors but, as with some of the technical collaboration mechanisms, they are not yet sufficiently aligned to the goal of supporting SDG 4 monitoring. Through the Coalition work, the dialogue between countries and donors will become more systematic – and will essentially become the data-specific arm of the GEF.

In short, the Global Coalition for Education Data offers an opportunity to align multiple and often uncoordinated donor initiatives, both at the technical and the financial level. It will set the stepping stones for working with existing platforms and inter-agency working groups as appropriate within a clear framework to support the monitoring of SDG 4; addressing specific technical issues and topics; harmonizing tools where necessary; and ensuring broad buy-in for future dissemination and use. It will build on existing roles and mandates.

Figure 3 describes how the proposed initiative fits in the global education architecture.

Figure 3. The Global Coalition for Education Data and Roadmap to Delivery





## Annex I

### Composition of the TCG, 2019-2020

Secretariat	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Co-Chairs	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) UNESCO Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (UNESCO ED/ESC)
UNESCO Members (3)	UNESCO Education Sector's Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (UNESCO ED/ESC) UNESCO Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (UNESCO ED/IPS/ESG) UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR)
UNESCO Member States (currently 22, a maximum of 28)	<b>Western Europe and North America:</b> Canada, France, Germany, Sweden <b>Eastern Europe:</b> Armenia, Estonia, Russian Federation <b>Latin America and the Caribbean:</b> Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico <b>Asia and the Pacific:</b> Bangladesh, Indonesia, P.R. China, Pakistan <b>Sub-Saharan Africa:</b> Gambia, Zambia, Angola <b>Arab States:</b> Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia
Multilateral SDG 4 Partner Agencies (3)	UNICEF, OECD, World Bank Group
Civil Society Organizations (2)	Education International Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 coordination group
SDG-4 - Education 2030 Steering Committee	Co-Chair representing Member State
Observer countries (18)	<b>Western Europe and North America:</b> Belgium, Norway <b>Eastern Europe:</b> Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Turkey <b>Latin America and the Caribbean:</b> Argentina, Peru, Venezuela <b>Asia and the Pacific:</b> Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines <b>Sub-Saharan Africa:</b> Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa <b>Arab States:</b> Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) <b>E9 countries:</b> Bangladesh
Observer agency (10)	Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), African Union, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Pacific Community (SPC), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Department for International Development (DfiD)
Observer regional commissions	European Commission, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)



## Annex II

### Composition of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG), 2019

Secretariat	United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA
Co-Chairs	Ms. Viveka Palm, Sweden Ms. Albina Chuwa, United Republic of Tanzania
Chair of UN Statistical Commission	Kenya
Member States	<p><b>Eastern Africa:</b> Ethiopia</p> <p><b>Middle and Southern Africa:</b> Cameroon, Malawi</p> <p><b>Western Africa:</b> Ghana, Niger</p> <p><b>Northern Africa:</b> Egypt, Libya</p> <p><b>Western Asia:</b> Oman</p> <p><b>Central, Eastern, Southern, and South-Eastern Asia:</b> Afghanistan, Japan**, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia</p> <p><b>Oceania:</b> Fiji, Samoa</p> <p><b>The Caribbean:</b> Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p><b>Central and South America:</b> Brazil, Columbia, Dominican Republic</p> <p><b>Eastern Europe:</b> Belarus, Russian Federation</p> <p><b>North America and Northern, Southern and Western Europe:</b> Canada, France, Germany, Ireland</p>

Note: \*The Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission is a member of the IAEG-SDGs ex-officio.

\*\* Japan and the Republic of Korea are sharing membership for this period, with Japan serving as member from June 2019 – May 2020 and the Republic of Korea from June 2020 – May 2021.

Source: UNSD, July 2019.



## Annex III

### Existing platforms and initiatives in data, measurement and accountability

Technical	Existing platforms and initiatives	Global investors
1) Country action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country compacts, multi-partner coordination groups at country level, civil society</li> <li>Improving national statistical capacities</li> </ul>	UNESCO, GPE EC, World Bank, USAID, bilaterals, regional development banks, PARIS 21
2) EMIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNESCO</li> <li>UNICEF</li> <li>World Bank</li> <li>FHI 360</li> </ul>	Bilaterals, GPE, World Bank, European Commission, UNICEF, Aga Khan and other philanthropies, UNESCO, UIS
3) Population surveys, census & population estimates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International household survey network</li> <li>DHS – MICS collaboration</li> <li>LSMS working group</li> <li>World Population and Housing Census programme</li> <li>Inter-secretarial Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS)</li> <li>UNFPA</li> </ul>	USAID, UNICEF, World Bank, UNSD, OECD, UN Population Division, GEMR, regional commissions
4) Learning Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GAML</li> <li>TALENT</li> <li>NEQMAP</li> <li>UNESCO IIEP</li> </ul>	UNESCO, WBG, OECD, IEA, PASEC, SACMEQ, SIMEAO
5) Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OECD NESLI</li> <li>ILO</li> <li>IMF</li> <li>UNESCO/UIS</li> <li>OECD/TALIS</li> </ul>	ILO, UNESCO, Education International, OECD UNICEF, NORAD, GPE
6) Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WBG</li> <li>IIEP/UIS</li> <li>OECD</li> <li>GEMR</li> <li>GPE</li> <li>IMF</li> </ul>	World Bank, GPE, OECD, IMF, EC, UNESCO, GEMR
7) Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OECD</li> <li>UNHCR</li> </ul>	Education Cannot wait (ECW), GPE

*Note: Analytics, data use & open access, and Scorecards & profiles to evaluate if working groups are needed*