Benchmarks for SDG 4 indicators

Fulfilling a neglected commitment, proposing a basis for discussion

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Commitment

Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2015

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).

Global Education Meeting, 2020

"We request 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" (§10).

Objectives and principles of benchmarks

Three **objectives**:

▶ **Availability:** identify data gaps

▶ **Accountability:** assess progress

▶ **Actionability:** lead to responses

Five **principles**:

▶ **Fair:** consider initial conditions, feasible progress, aspirations

▶ **Efficient:** timely and regular data are for most countries

▶ **Relevant:** indicators linked to national and regional agendas

▶ **Simple:** benchmarks understood by all

▶ **Transparent:** process is verifiable and communicated clearly

Proposed benchmark indicators

7 indicators to benchmark were adopted by the TCG in 2019, which satisfy the principles of efficiency and relevance

▶ 4.1.1 **Minimum learning proficiency in reading and maths**

▶ 4.1.2 **Completion rate**

▶ 4.1.5 **Out-of-school rate**

▶ 4.2.2 **Participation rate one year before primary**

▶ 4.c.1 **Trained teachers**

▶ **Education expenditure as share of GDP/total expenditure**

▶ **Equity indicator** (to be defined)

Political process: why the regions?

For benchmarks to be sustainable, countries must own them. At regional level countries have more dialogue opportunities.

(Sub-)regional organizations can align global and regional education agendas to avoid duplication. They need to:

▶ **confirm** willingness to support benchmarking process
▶ **coordinate** with organizations where memberships overlap
▶ **identify** steps leading to approval of benchmarks
▶ **communicate** steps to TCG to develop a global roadmap
▶ **identify and define** technical support where necessary

Two aspects of **flexibility** in the process:
▶ **any** willing regional organization can lead the process
▶ regional organizations may set **additional** benchmarks

Technical process: two perspectives

Approach 1

Common benchmark for all countries in a region

= equal to the feasible progress a country can make

(e.g. country furthest behind, in bottom 25% etc.)

▶ more meaningful in homogeneous (sub-)regions

Approach 2

Different benchmark for each country

= based on its initial condition and a measure of feasible progress based on past observations

(e.g. progress of average country, of fastest 25% etc.)

Technical process: two perspectives

▶ A region can set a **common** regional benchmark
OR
▶ A country-specific benchmark may be proposed

...but countries may also set their own higher benchmark

Country	Region (SDG or other)	Baseline	Approach 1 Minimum regional benchmark	Approach 2 2025 Proposed national benchmark	Approach 2 2025 **Nationally set benchmark**	Approach 2 2030 Proposed national benchmark	Approach 2 2030 **Nationally set benchmark**
Afghanistan	…		…	…	…		…
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Zimbabwe	…		…	…	…	…	…
				Regional averages emerging from national benchmarks			
Africa	…		…	…	…	…	…
…				…	…	…	…
Europe	…		…	…	…	…	…
World	…		…	…	…	…	…

Technical process: two perspectives

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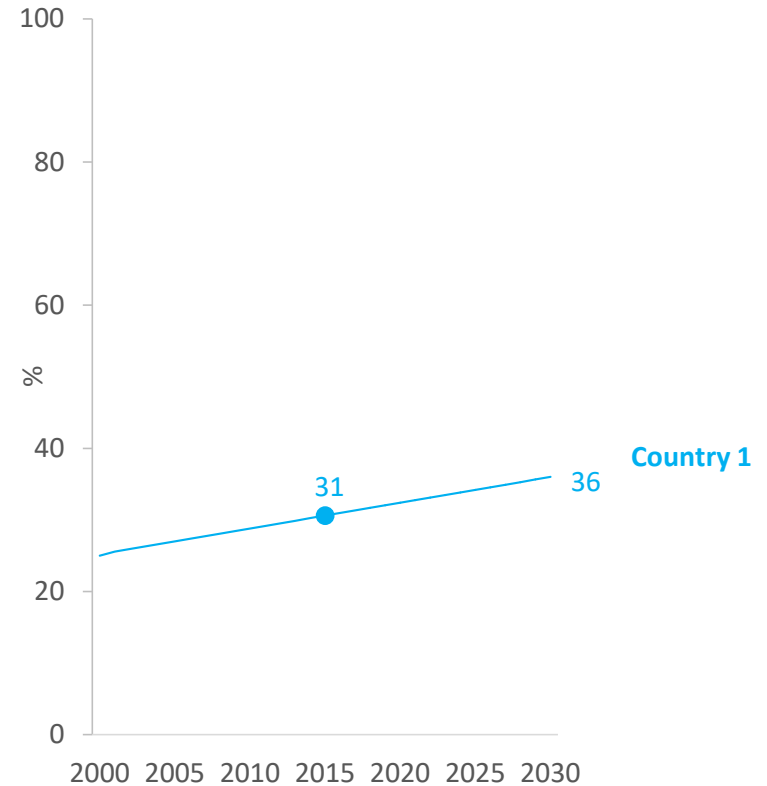|			Approach 1	Approach 2			
				2025		2030	
Country	Region (SDG or other)	Baseline	Minimum regional benchmark	Proposed national benchmark	Nationally set benchmark	Proposed national benchmark	Nationally set benchmark
Afghanistan	…		…	…	…	…	…
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Zimbabwe	…		…	…	…	…	…
			Regional averages emerging from national benchmarks				
Africa	…		…	…	…	…	…
…				…	…	…	…
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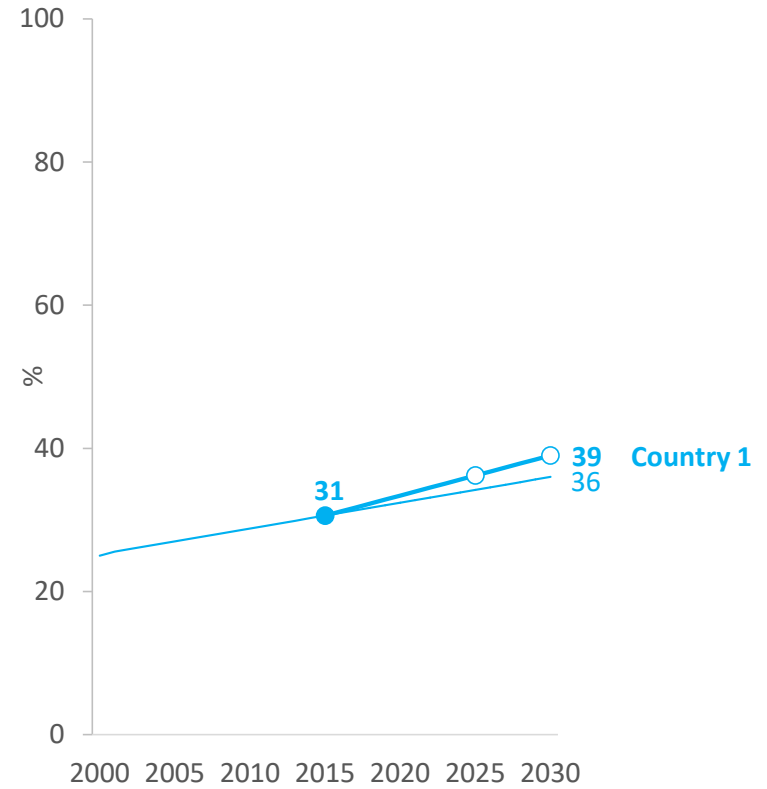| Country	Region (SDG or other)	Baseline	Minimum regional benchmark	Approach 1 Proposed national benchmark	Approach 2 2025 Nationally set benchmark	Approach 2 2030 Proposed national benchmark	Approach 2 2030 Nationally set benchmark
Afghanistan	…		…	…	…	…	…
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…
Zimbabwe	…		…		…	…	…
	Regional averages emerging from national benchmarks						
Africa	…		…	…	…	…	…
…				…	…	…	…
Europe	…		…	…	…	…	…
World	…		…	…	…	…	…

Example

▶ Country 1 has one of the lowest baseline values, **31%**

▶ Projected to reach **36%** by 2030

	Baseline	**Approach 1** 2030 Minimum regional benchmark	**Approach 2** 2025 Projected national benchmark	2025 National commitment	2030 Projected national benchmark	2030 National commitment
Country 1	31					

Example

▶ Country 1 has one of the lowest baseline values, **31%**

▶ Projected to reach **36%** by 2030

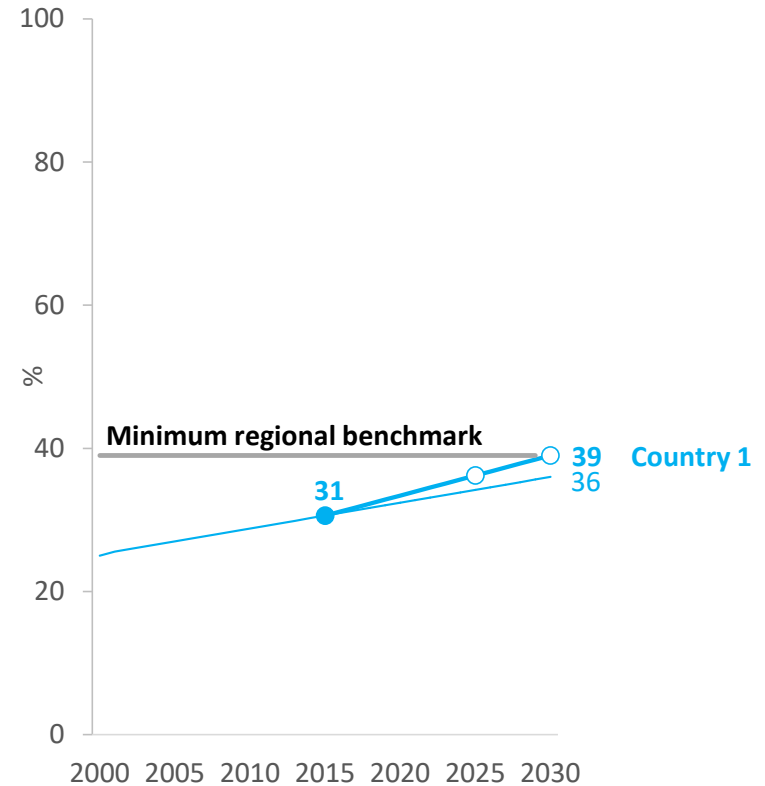▶ It can reach **39%** if it grows as fast as better performing countries

		Approach 1	Approach 2			
		2030	2025	2025	2030	2030
	Baseline	Minimum regional benchmark	Projected national benchmark	National commitment	Projected national benchmark	National commitment
Country 1	31		36		39	

Example

▶ Country 1 has one of the lowest baseline values, **31%**

▶ Projected to reach **36%** by 2030

▶ It can reach **39%** if it grows as fast as better performing countries = **minimum regional benchmark**

Note: For country 1, which lags behind, approaches 1 and 2 have the same result

	Baseline	**Approach 1** 2030 Minimum regional benchmark	**Approach 2** 2025 Projected national benchmark	2025 National commitment	2030 Projected national benchmark	2030 National commitment
Country 1	31	**39**	36		39	

Example

▶ Country 1 has one of the lowest baseline values, **31%**

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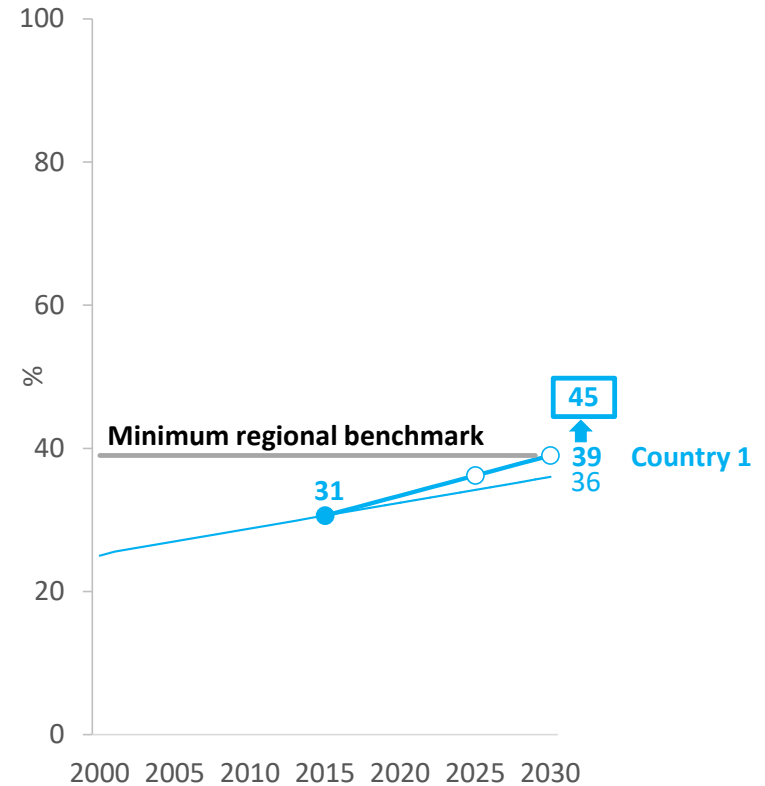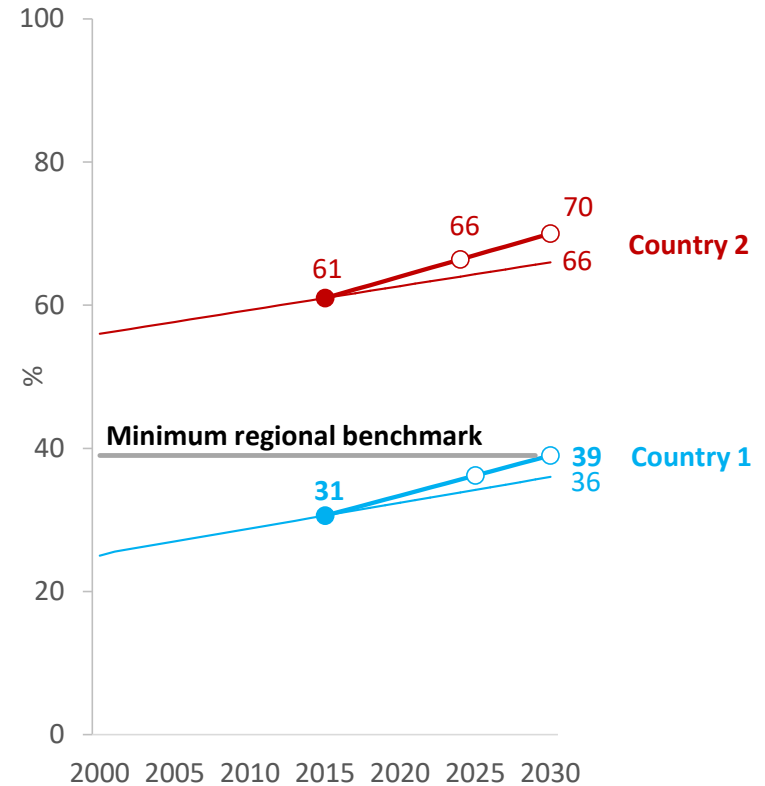▶ Country can choose to set a higher benchmark, e.g. **45%**

	Baseline	Approach 1 2030 Minimum regional benchmark	Approach 2 2025 Projected national benchmark	2025 National commitment	2030 Projected national benchmark	2030 National commitment
Country 1	31	**39**	36	40	39	**45**

Example

▶ Country 2's baseline above min regional benchmark, **61%**

▶ Projected to reach **69%** by 2030

▶ It can reach **70%** if it grows as fast as better performing countries

	Baseline	Approach 1 2030 Minimum regional benchmark	Approach 2 2025 Projected national benchmark	2025 National commitment	2030 Projected national benchmark	2030 National commitment
Country 1	31	**39**	36	40	39	**45**
Country 2	61	**39**	66		70	

Example
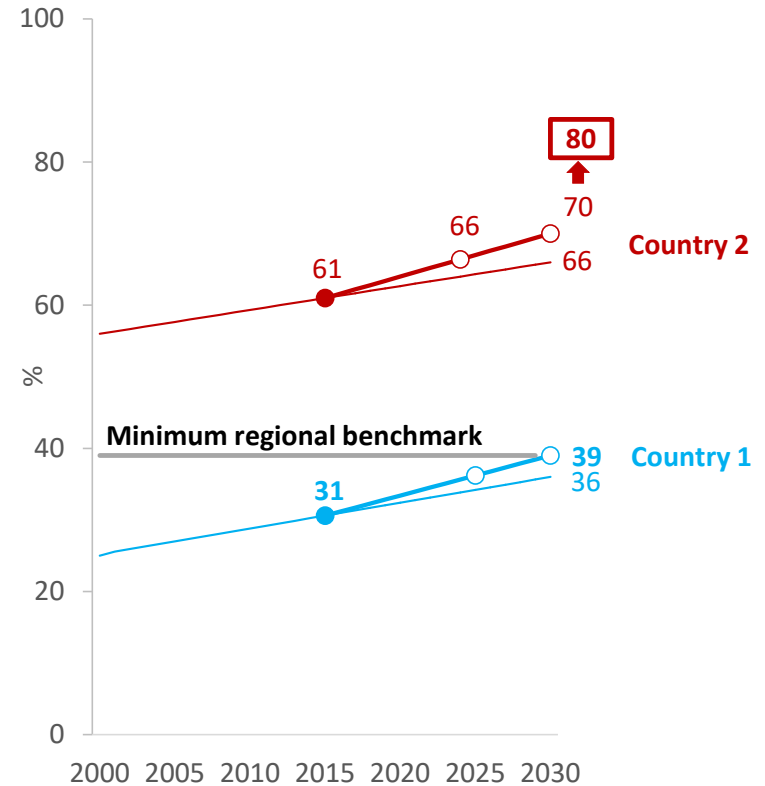
▶ Country 2's baseline above min regional benchmark, **61%**

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▶ It can reach **70%** if it grows as fast as better performing countries

▶ Country can choose to set a higher benchmark, e.g. **80%**

	Baseline	**Approach 1** 2030 Minimum regional benchmark	**Approach 2** 2025 Projected national benchmark	2025 National commitment	2030 Projected national benchmark	2030 National commitment
Country 1	31	**39**	36	40	39	**45**
Country 2	61	**39**	66	73	70	**80**

Communicating progress

While benchmark is defined as level, rate of progress is also monitored for information; a **dashboard** distinguishes:
▶ if benchmark is reached or not (lack of data is marked by grey)
▶ if value of indicator is increasing ↑ (**fast ⬆**) or decreasing ↓ (**fast ⬇**)

Legend

	No data
	No data for trend
	Exceeds benchmark by much
	Exceeds benchmark by a little
	Misses benchmark by a little
	Misses benchmark by much
↑	increases slowly
⇔	no change
↓	decreases slowly
⬇	decreases quickly
⬆	increases quickly

Next steps

Following presentations show progress made
in discussions at regional level