National Benchmark Indicators for SDG 4

UIS Template to support establishing national benchmarks

Providing you with a template…

…To facilitate national consultation/discussion on establishing benchmark values for different indicators based on national policies and priorities

…To provide plausible values based on different scenarios to decide on the most reliable and realistic benchmark values for different indicators

…To help countries compile inputs from different sub-sectors in an efficient manner

The Template is composed of 3 worksheets

1. **Instructions** – background information; explanations on the composition of the matrix; and steps on how to set national benchmark values
2. **Benchmarks Setting** – this is the template to enter your benchmark values
3. **FAQ** – a section to answer some of your questions

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Indicator	2025 national minimum benchmark	2025 national feasible benchmark	2025 national benchmark (to be set)	2030 national minimum benchmark	2030 national feasible benchmark	2030 national benchmark (to be set)	2025 minimum regional benchmark	2030 minimum regional benchmark	Comments	If benchmark values are from national plans, strategies, or policies, please mention the documents' name and link
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics	72	78		84	94		45	57		
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	66	76		74	86		59	69		
4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics	54	57		61	66		28	35		
4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	52	63		56	73		41	45		
4.1.1.c Proportion of students at the end of lower seconda	46	47		49	52		28	32		
4.1.1.c Proportion of students at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	45	51		49	57		33	38		
4.1.2.i Completion rate primary	97	97		98	100		83	87		
4.1.2.ii Completion rate lower secondary	90	91		92	93		68	74		

Countries are expected to set benchmarks for seven indicators for 2025 and 2030

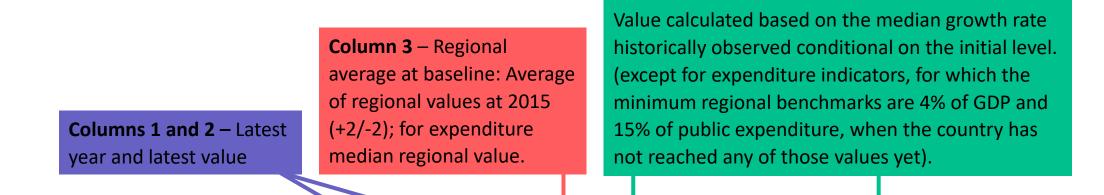| Indicator	Description
4.1.1:	Proportion of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level at three (3) levels of education a) Grade 2 or 3, b) end of primary and c) end of lower secondary, in two (2) subjects: (i) reading and (ii) mathematics [6 benchmark values]
4.1.2:	Completion rate at three (3) levels of education a) primary, b) lower secondary and c) upper secondary [3 benchmark values]
4.1.4:	Out-of-school rate at three (3) levels of education a) primary, b) lower secondary and c) upper secondary [3 benchmark values]
4.2.2:	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) [1 benchmark value]
4.c.1:	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications at four (4) levels of education a) pre-primary, b) primary c) lower secondary and d) upper secondary [4 benchmark values]
(Target 1.a)	Total government spending on education as percentage of (a) GDP (b) total government spending on essential services [2 benchmark values]

This makes it a total of 38 values:

19 benchmark values for 2 points in time (2025 and 2030).

The definition of the seventh benchmark indicator, a measure of the gender gap in upper secondary completion that will capture equity in education, is currently being decided by the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 indicators. National benchmark values for this indicator will be set in 2022.

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How to read the template

Columns 1 and 2 – Latest year and latest value

Column 3 – Regional average at baseline: Average of regional values at 2015 (+2/-2); for expenditure median regional value.

Columns 4 and 7 – National minimum benchmark: Value calculated based on the median growth rate historically observed conditional on the initial level. (except for expenditure indicators, for which the minimum regional benchmarks are 4% of GDP and 15% of public expenditure, when the country has not reached any of those values yet).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Indicator	Latest year	Latest value	Regional average at baseline	2025 national minimum benchmark	2025 national feasible benchmark	2025 national benchmark (to be set)	2030 national minimum benchmark b
1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)	2018	11.2	16.5	15.0			15.0
1.a.GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	2018	2.4	3.8	4.0			4.0
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics	2018	3.7	22.9	20.5	26.0		32.6
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	2018	5.2	21.2	35.6	53.6		51.1

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How to read the template

Columns 5 and 8 – National feasible benchmark: Value achieved based on the conditional 75th percentile rather than the conditional median growth rate. If the country has been growing faster than the 75th percentile, then the country's projection is used as the feasible benchmark.

Columns 6 and 9 – National benchmark (to be set)

Indicator	4 2025 national minimum benchmark	5 2025 national feasible benchmark	6 2025 national benchmark (to be set)	7 2030 national minimum benchmark	8 2030 national feasible benchmark	9 2030 national benchmark (to be set)
4.1.2.i Completion rate primary	80.2	82.6		84.6	88.2	
4.1.2.ii Completion rate lower secondary	67.2	69.1		72.8	76.2	
4.1.2.iii Completion rate upper secondary	37.4	39.8		42.3	47.4	
4.1.4.i Out-of-school rate, primary	13.6	11.3		10.7	7.4	
4.1.4.ii Out-of-school rate, lower secondary	20.5	17.8		17.0	13.1	
4.1.4.iii Out-of-school rate, upper secondary	35.9	32.5		31.9	26.5	

How to read the template

Columns 10 and 11 – Regional minimum benchmarks: Average of country feasible benchmarks for the lowest third of countries in the region, weighted by the school-age population (except for the expenditure indicators, for which the minimum regional benchmarks are 4% of GDP and 15% of public expenditure)

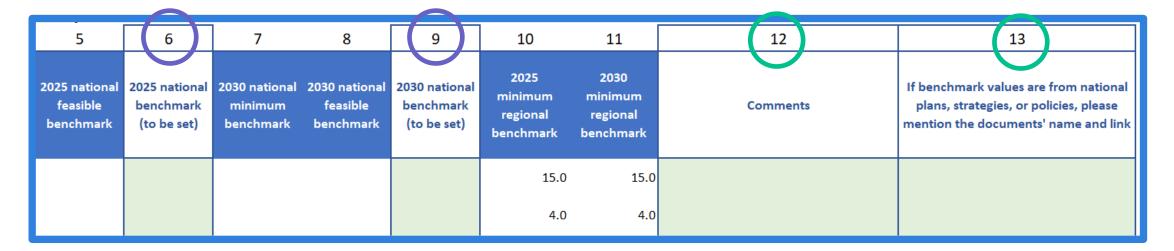Columns 12 and 13 – Space for your annotations and references as required

Indicator	10 2025 minimum regional benchmark	11 2030 minimum regional benchmark	12 Comments	13 If benchmark values are from national plans, strategies, or policies, please mention the documents' name and link
1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)	15.0	15.0		
1.a.GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	4.0	4.0		
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics	49.3	61.3		
4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading	51.6	63.2		

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How to provide your inputs on national benchmarks values in columns 6 and 9 of the template

By consulting your national education sector strategy, plan or policy, for each indicator and education level (and/or subject), take the following steps:

- If your strategy, plan or policy contains a target for years **2025 and 2030**, fill in the value of the target in **columns 6 and 9**; and record the source of the information in **Column 13**.

- If they contain a target for years *other than* 2025 and 2030, also fill in the value of the target in **columns 6 and 9**, add a comment in **Column 12** on the year to which this benchmark is referring and record the source of the information in **Column 13**.

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					15.0	15.0		
					4.0	4.0		

What if...

A. your national education sector strategy, plan or policy does not have a target for the benchmark indicator

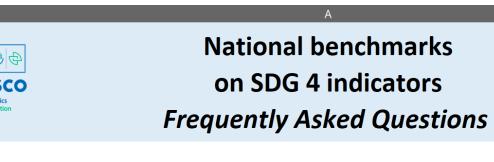B. there is no up-to-date national education sector strategy, plan or policy

A. your national education sector strategy, plan or policy does not have a target for the benchmark indicator

B. there is no up-to-date national education sector strategy, plan or policy

C. no indicative 'national feasible benchmark' is proposed

➤ You can use the resources made available in the template, which indicate a possible benchmark value (**national feasible benchmark**) that the country may consider.

➤ Select the benchmark value **to the best of your knowledge**. Provide any information to explain the decision with a comment in Column 12. Also indicate **whether your country is unable to set a benchmark for a particular indicator** and, if so, which steps you propose for setting your benchmark value for that indicator.

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Frequently asked questions

❖ Are benchmarks **fair**? Are countries far from and close to the goal treated the same way?

❖ **COVID-19** is expected to negatively affect education indicators. What happens in that case?

❖ Reported **latest data** seem inconsistent and benchmark values are questionable. What happens in that case?

❖ My country has **no data**. What happens in that case?

❖ How have these seven indicators been **selected**?

❖ How will the **equity benchmark** be decided?

❖ The benchmarks suggest that the world will not **meet SDG 4** target levels. Are benchmarks lowering the level of ambition?

❖ What do **regional benchmarks** mean and why do we need them in addition to national benchmarks?

❖ The **regional** benchmark in our region is set at a very **low level**. Why is that?

➢ Consult the FAQ

National benchmarks on SDG 4 indicators
Frequently Asked Questions

Are benchmarks fair? Are countries far from and close to the goal treated the same way?
1. The benchmarks are set by countries therefore it is up to countries to set a level that represents a fair contributio[n]
2. When countries have not set benchmarks, the indicative benchmarks proposed for countries' consideration are '[...]' starting points of each country into account, but they assume that countries will improve faster than before, given [...]

COVID-19 is expected to negatively affect education indicators. What happens in that case?
For many countries, COVID-19 is expected to slow down or even reverse their educational progress. This factor can [...] benchmarks proposed. But the benchmark values are being set for 2025 and 2030, in other words they are mediu[m...] countries should have recovered from the consequences of the pandemic and gone back to their original trajectory[...] more severe, benchmarks may be adjusted in 2022.

Reported latest data seem inconsistent and benchmark values are questionable. What happens in that case?

Instructions | Benchmarks_Settin[g] | **FAQ**

Thank you

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