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TCG4: Working Group 3: Measuring SDG 4 – Terminology

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Introduction

In order to ensure the transparency of the processes through which data are reported from national organizations to regional and international organizations, validated and finally published as indicators, it is necessary to have a common understanding of the terms related to the reporting of these indicators. The intention of this document is to clarify terms that are commonly used in discussing the indicators used to measure progress for SDG4 - Education. It can be used in conjunction with the metadata document found [here](#) and the [SDG4 data digest found here](#). It also follows the conventions and definitions provided in [this document](#) from the UNESCO Institute of statistics (UIS).

Note on the term 'data reporting'

Note that the term data reporting can be used in several senses: it is sometimes understood as the publishing of SDG indicator data for a given country and sometimes understood as the collection of the data for the purposes of publishing SDG indicator data.

As a note of caution, a reader should be aware that data reporting could be used in the following senses:

Data provision: when data is provided by a national statistical office or regional organization (e.g. Eurostat) to UIS in order to supply the data for calculating an SDG4 indicator. Note that data could be regionally provided but still globally comparable.

Data reporting: the publication by UIS of SDG indicator data for a given country.

Monitoring: This is what the final user of the indicator does with the published indicator: uses it to track progress for a particular indicator. There may be multiple users of the indicators, in multiple types of organizations.

Note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive, and these are not official definitions. This is just to alert the reader that the term data reporting can be used to refer to different activities.

Types of indicators

Progress towards each of the goals and targets are monitored regularly and at several different levels. In December 2014, the UN Secretary-General recommended four levels of monitoring with each one serving a different purpose, a different audience and comprising different *types of indicators*:

1. **Global indicators:** A set of eleven indicators which were developed and agreed upon by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). These indicators are meant to be comparable between all countries (globally comparable) and aim to be succinct measures for their counterpart sustainable development goal.

2. **Thematic indicators:** These indicators are designed to track the education targets more comprehensively and are meant to include the global indicators as a sub-set. The thematic indicators serve as a framework to track progress on an internationally comparable basis with a wider view of a range of sectoral priorities than the global framework which captures a more limited perspective through a small set of leading indicators. Countries may choose to report these indicators or not, depending on whether each specific target and the associated indicator/s is/are considered relevant for a member country. As well, countries should be consulted when data are being re-published for the purpose of thematic SDG4 monitoring, even if these data come from well-established international surveys.¹
3. **Regional indicators:** Indicators developed by regional organizations in order to monitor SDGs from a regional perspective, taking into account priorities and issues of common interest for countries in a particular region, in order to monitor specific regional targets. These indicators will not be *necessarily* comparable between all countries, but should be across the countries of the region they are designed for and will, by definition, not be reported by all countries. These indicators are not under the purview of the Technical Cooperation Group.
4. **National indicators:** Indicators developed by countries that correspond to their own education systems, plans and policy agendas and designed to monitor the national implementation of SDGs. Also not under the purview of the Technical Cooperation Group.

A set of indicators is usually referred to as an indicator framework (e.g. thematic indicator framework or national indicator framework).

Groups responsible for designing and implementation of the different types of indicators

Types of indicators	Responsibility	Comparability
Global (11 indicators)	IAEG-SDGs The TCG also contributes to the IAEG-SDGs to define and implement 11 global indicators. See appendix for the list of custodian agencies ² for the SDG4 global indicators.	International

¹ The thematic indicator framework implemented by the TCG includes the set of global indicators (11) proposed by the IAEG and adopted by UNSC but also the additional set of indicators approved by the TCG. It would be advisable for communication purposes to keep that distinction, using the term “global” for those 11 indicators and the term “thematic” only for the additional set. This should be approved by the TCG.

² The term “custodian agency” has been adopted by the IAEG-SDGs to designate the role described above within the framework of implementing the SDG Global Indicator Framework. The custodian agency is the UN body or organization responsible for the collection and verification of data used to create a particular indicator. These agencies are expected to lead the ongoing development of indicators and standardised methods for data collection and analysis, to establish mechanisms to compile data collected by national authorities, and to maintain global databases which can be used for global SDG reporting.

Types of indicators	Responsibility	Comparability
Thematic (32 indicators)	TCG, with UIS responsible for their production (i.e. UIS is the custodian agency for the thematic indicators).	International
Regional	Economic Regional Commissions lead SDG-specific regional monitoring frameworks. Regional organizations may align their own agendas to SDGs and generate indicator monitoring frameworks.	Regional/sub-regional
National	Countries, local government institutions and civil society, where feasible.	National/sub-national

Types of Geographical Comparability

The level of comparability is a hierarchy that is dependent on the indicator type. Only global and thematic indicators can provide both global comparability and regional comparability, while regional indicators can provide comparability within a region or at a sub-regional level, and national indicators provide comparability only at the national level and below.

Globally comparable: A measure developed with the goal of being used in all countries and comparable for all countries.

Regionally comparable: A measure that has been developed to be used in all countries within a given region, and to be comparable within that region (but not necessarily to countries outside of that region).

Nationally comparable: A measure that has been developed in order to be used within a country and that may be comparable for sub-national geographical units.

Disaggregated indicators and parity indices

Indicators may also be reported for separate groups to shed light on equity issues. Thus, disaggregated indicators are global or thematic indicators which may be disaggregated by sex, age, location, wealth, ethnicity, disability and migratory status, among other factors. One way of reporting disaggregated indicators is through the use of parity indices. Parity indices are ratios calculated by dividing the indicator value for one disaggregated group (the one that is theoretically in disadvantage) by the value for a comparison group (e.g. girls vs boys; poorest vs richest, etc.).



Appendix: Custodian agencies for SDG4 global indicators

Global indicator		Custodian agency
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	UNESCO-UIS
4.2.1	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	UNICEF
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	UNESCO-UIS
4.3.1	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	UNESCO-UIS
4.4.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	UNESCO-UIS, ITU
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	UNESCO-UIS
4.6.1	Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	UNESCO-UIS
4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment	UNESCO-UIS
4.a.1	Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) Internet for pedagogical purposes; and (c) computers for pedagogical purposes	UNESCO-UIS
	Proportion of schools with access to: (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities	
	Proportion of schools with access to: (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)	
4.b.1	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	OECD
4.c.1	Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g., pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country, by sex	UNESCO-UIS

Note: for custodian agencies for all SDG indicators, please refer to this [link](#) on the UNSD website.