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# **Summary Report of Asia and Pacific Regional Technical Consultations on Regional Benchmarks for SDG4**

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## **Final Outcomes Document**

This document summarizes the outcomes of the regional and sub-regional technical consultations on regional benchmarks for SDG4 in the Asia Pacific Region.

# Asia and Pacific Regional Technical consultation on regional benchmarks for SDG4

## 1 Background

The Education 2030 Framework for Action 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), a request that remains unrealized. The extraordinary session Global Education Meeting in October 2020 reminded countries of this commitment. Its Declaration called on “*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). Fulfilling this neglected commitment to set benchmarks would help renew emphasis on achieving SDG 4. Countries have started from different points and move at different speeds. Unless there is a clearer and shared understanding of where countries started from in 2015, what minimum levels they should achieve and how fast, there is a risk that lack of progress will go unnoticed. But to be effective, benchmarks must be designed to mobilize action and communicated in a transparent and informative way.

In this context, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and its partner agencies discussed the approaches and processes of identifying and establishing benchmarks at global, regional and national level. A set of indicators to benchmark was adopted by the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) in August 2019. The proposal was based on a review of proposals by TCG members, which concluded that it would be possible to set benchmarks for 6 of the 43 SDG 4 indicators – plus the Framework for Action expenditure indicators – based on past trends, country coverage, frequency of data and policy relevance (see Table 1).

Table 1: Proposed benchmark indicators

No.	Benchmark Indicators	Level
1	<b>indicator 4.1.1</b> Minimum learning proficiency in reading and mathematics	Global
2	<b>indicator 4.1.2</b> Completion rate	Global
3	<b>indicator 4.1.4</b> Out-of-school rate	Thematic
4	<b>indicator 4.2.2</b> Participation rate one year before primary	Global
5	<b>indicator 4.c.1</b> Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications	Global
6	<b>indicator:</b> Education expenditure as share of budget and GDP	Education 2030 Framework for Action
7	<b>indicator Equity</b> (to be defined)	Global

This report is structured as follows. After this introduction, section 2 describes the approach of the UIS regarding the benchmarks. Section 3 describes the process followed to date to engage Member States in

the technical consultation. Sections 4, 5 and 6 describe the roadmap, the deliberation and outcomes and the partnerships that supported the process. Section 7 describes the next steps. Annex 1 describes the list of participating countries in different stages while Annexes 2 and 3 summarize the key definitions and **the regional minimum values for the 7 global indicators**.

## 2 Benchmarking SDG 4 and UNESCO Institute for Statistics' proposed approach

**The effectiveness of benchmarking SDG 4 rests primarily on two factors. First, political commitment is needed.** Setting benchmarks as requested by the Framework for Action cannot be done at global level, given the very large differences in starting points between countries. Benchmarks need to be feasible, reflecting countries' realities but also be owned nationally. A global process that ignores countries' own starting points, contexts or aspirations may undermine the effectiveness of benchmarking. Defining benchmarks regionally offers a balance between globally and nationally defined benchmarks, particularly when countries in a region share many of the same challenges, and a regional approach in conjunction with a national benchmark setting process enables engagement across countries to better understand common challenges and opportunities and to learn from each other. **Second, technical challenges of measurement need to be overcome. UNESCO Institute for Statistics has developed a proposed approach<sup>1</sup> to benchmarking SDG 4 to help guide regional entities and national governments in setting SDG 4 benchmarks.** The proposed approach is based around the following **FERST** principles.

- **Fairness:** Countries accept the value of benchmarks and that their values are set in a fair way taking SDG 4 aspirations, their initial conditions and feasible past progress into account.
- **Efficiency:** The data that need to support the benchmarks are available for the largest possible number of countries, on a regular basis and in a timely way.
- **Relevance:** The indicators are selected to correspond to national and regional agendas and the assessment of whether the benchmark has been met can be linked to policy responses.
- **Simplicity:** Benchmarks need to be understood by all countries, while striking a balance between the three objectives outlined above.
- **Transparency:** The process by which benchmarks were developed needs to be verifiable and, to the extent possible, systematic, while it needs to be communicated clearly.

**In order to support countries and regional bodies to establish their own regional and national benchmarks, UIS has developed a projection model to propose regional and national benchmarks for identified benchmark indicators for 2025 and 2030 that balance meaningful progress with what is feasible based on historical trends. Using the model, UIS provided three reference points for 2025 and 2030 for each indicator: (1) a country-specific minimum benchmark, (2) a region-specific minimum benchmark, and (3) a country-specific feasible benchmark (see Box 1 for details). Countries and regional entities can investigate those reference points and either adopt these benchmarks or use these three reference points as guidance in establishing their own benchmarks.**

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<sup>1</sup> UIS (2020). TCG paper on benchmarking, UIS (2020). BENCHMARKS FOR SDG 4 INDICATORS: A POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. Background paper for the 2020 TCG. UNESCO

### Box 1 Core concepts used in the proposed benchmark approaches

**Country-specific minimum benchmark for 2025/2030:** This is the value that a country could achieve by 2030 given the progress made by other countries historically on average with the same starting point. For the country-specific minimum benchmark, a feasible growth rate was defined as the median annual growth witnessed historically for each level of the indicator. Using this conditional median is considered feasible because its growth rate is balance of probabilities: half of countries were able to achieve higher and half were able to achieve lower.

**Country-specific feasible benchmarks for 2025/2030<sup>2</sup>:** The country-specific feasible benchmarks provide more ambitious benchmarks that countries are expected to achieve by 2030 based on global 75<sup>th</sup> percentile annual growth rate that is conditioned by levels of indicators.

**Regional minimum benchmark for 2025/2030:** This is the minimum acceptable level that all countries in a region should achieve. Because many regions have a diverse range of countries with both high and low performers, this benchmark may not apply to countries that are expected to or could feasibly achieve a higher level—in these cases countries are expected to set their own more ambitious benchmarks or use the feasible national benchmarks. For the examples presented in Annex 3, the minimum regional benchmark for 2030 is the average<sup>3</sup> of the country-specific minimum benchmarks for the lowest third of countries.

**Nationally set benchmarks for 2025/2030:** Countries are expected to set their own national benchmarks reflecting national priorities and goal. The above three reference points are provided to assist in deriving their own benchmarks.

## 3 Organization of Regional Technical Consultation Meetings

**As a technical lead in the monitoring of SDG4, the UIS has been partnering with UNESCO Bangkok and Learning and Education2030+ Networking Group (formerly known as Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+) in establishing regional benchmarks for the region.** The regional partners and Member States need to look carefully into the benchmark indicators that UIS proposed and their values and their relevancy for regional and national level. In this regard, 5 sub-regional technical consultations were organized to discuss with Member States on the processes and approaches of benchmarks and agree on the benchmark indicators and their levels during March and April 2021.

Table 2: Organization of sub regional consultation, dates and partners

Sub region	Date	Partners
South East Asia	24 March 2021	SEAMEO/ASEAN
East Asia	30 March 2021	UNESCO Beijing
Pacific	1 April 2021	SPC
South and West Asia	6 April 2021	UNESCO New Delhi/ROSA/SAARC
Central Asia	29 April 2021	UNESCO Almaty

<sup>2</sup> These are described for 2030 but are applicable to any reference year.

<sup>3</sup> A school-aged weighted average was used.

**As the regional benchmarks should reflect the regional and national situations and be relevant for regional and national educational policies, the (sub) regional organization has a critical role to play in coordinating and establishing the benchmarks.** Therefore, as part of the process, a (sub-) regional organization will need to:

- **confirm** that it is willing to support a benchmarking process among its Member States (with whatever adaptations they feel are needed)
- **coordinate** with other organizations where memberships overlap
- **identify** a timeline of consultation and other steps that will lead to benchmarks being approved
- **communicate** these steps to the TCG to develop a global roadmap
- **request** technical support, where necessary, to facilitate a regional benchmarking process

### 3.1 Objective and expected outcomes:

The overall objective of the sub regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 was to review the proposed benchmark indicators and approaches used to set the levels of benchmarks and collect inputs and comments for finalization. The consultation also updated the progress of aligning SDG4 indicators in national education monitoring framework and discuss to expand the scope of the benchmark indicators and discussed additional indicators that could be interest of the sub region.

### 3.2 Expected outcomes of the consultation were:

- Update on the status of SDG4 indicators alignment at country level
- Agree on the benchmark indicators for the region with additional indicators relevant for the region.
- Seek expert advises and inputs to finalize the levels of regional and national benchmark for 2025 and 2030
- Develop a follow up plan for the national consultations

### 3.3 Participants

The sub regional consultation meetings were participated by more than 300 country representatives comprised of Education monitoring officials, EMIS managers, planners and policies makers, NSOs and civil society organizations. (List of countries are in Annex 1)

### 3.4 Deliberations

The sub regional consultations generally have 3 segments:

- General concepts of deriving at benchmarks
- Methodologies in generating 3 reference points for national and regional benchmarks for consultation and discussion
- Updates on country progress towards SDG 4 monitoring and alignment of indicators

Each of the sessions was followed by the discussions moderated by experts from the region.

#### 3.4.1 General concepts of deriving regional benchmarks

UIS through presentation provided a general concept and process of establishing regional benchmarks for SDG4. The presentation discussed the global commitments towards establishing regional benchmarks, its importance and relevance in promoting and achieving SDG4 at regional and national level. It discusses

how the benchmarks indicators are linked with global key policy areas in achieving SDG4 through generating evidence through regularly generating data. The presentation also discussed the objectives of establishing regional benchmarks, key principles in identifying and defining global indicators set for benchmarks and how these indicators are relevant for existing education measurements frameworks.

One of the objectives of the consultation is also to discuss the additional indicators which are specifically relevant for the (sub) region. During the presentation, list of possible indicators based on the criteria of identifying benchmark indicators such as availability of the data, relevance to policies, simplicity etc. were discussed for participants' review.

Finally, the presentation discussed the regional roadmap in establishing regional benchmarks in the Asia Pacific region.

After the presentation, a guided discussion was organized inviting country representatives to provide their opinions and thought towards the regional benchmarks and its processes based on following questions:

- What do you think of the relevancy and usefulness of the proposed **7 global benchmark indicators** for the monitoring of the education agenda in the region and the countries?
- Do you have additional suggestions for the proposed process of setting regional benchmarks?
- Apart from 7 benchmarks, could you please choose 2 to 3 additional indicators that could be useful and relevant for the region?

***(Country/participants opinions/selection were collected through launching an opinion poll)***

The discussion was very useful to get participants and Member States understanding the usefulness of establishing regional benchmarks and identifying additional indicators for the region further stimulated feedback and understanding from the Member States.

### 3.4.2 Methodologies in generating 3 reference points for national and regional benchmarks for consultation and discussion

UIS has developed a projection model to provide various reference points – 1) national minimum benchmarks 2) national feasible benchmarks and 3) regional minimum benchmarks. During the technical meeting, UIS presented and discussed methodologies in projecting each of the reference points based on historical growth rates conditioned to level of indicators. During the presentation, an example has been presented to demonstrate how each of the reference points could be calculated using proposed methodologies. A dashboard prepared and hosted by UIS under Regional benchmark portal which shows all the 3 reference points by countries and region was also demonstrated (<http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/benchmarks-dashboard/>).

After the presentation, a guided discussion was organized inviting country representatives to provide their opinions and thought towards the regional benchmarks and its processes based on following questions:

- Has your country set its own benchmarks for the SDG 4 indicators?
- If yes, a) what are the benchmark values and b) for which indicators?
- Do you think setting benchmarks would be useful in your country?

The discussion helped to understand how countries have been setting targets in their national education sector plans and their plans to include benchmarks for various indicators.

### 3.4.3 Country updates on adaptation of SDG4 targets and indicators into national policies and plans

At least 3 sub-regional consultations – East Asia, South and West Asia and Central Asia, countries discussed their status of adaptation/localization of SDG4 targets and indicators into national policies and plans. Member States also shared their efforts in establishing national indicator frameworks and strengthening data collection system for education.

## 3. 5. Outcomes of the meeting

Through presentation and discussion in the 5 sub-regional technical consultations, the key outputs/outcomes including the agreements are summarized below:

### *Process of regional benchmarks*

- **A general consensus on the benchmark indicator process for the region and subregions has been achieved.** Countries in all the sub region have overwhelmingly supported the process of establishing the regional benchmarks with feasible and achievable levels of indicators;
- Individual country representatives delivered SDG 4-related status updates with the intent of showcasing the progress that has been achieved in SDG 4 targets and/or the monitoring of those targets. Most of the countries have established national SDG4 coordination committees and reviewed their national policies and plans to integrate SDG4 targets and indicators. **Many countries have developed monitoring mechanism with data collection strategies. However, there are big data gaps in calculating indicators in many of the countries.**

### *Agreement on regional benchmarks*

- Member States fully agreed that the key indicators identified for the benchmarks are very much aligned with the (sub)regional policy priorities and will be very useful for regional and sub regional SDG4 progress monitoring, **thus agreed with all the proposed indicators for regional benchmarks.**
- The Member States understood that the proposed reference points provided by UIS and the technical support to countries and region to establish their own national benchmarks would be very useful for establishing national benchmarks.
- Participants expressed that the methodologies used for generating various scenarios for deciding on regional and national benchmarks are clear, simple and easy to understand.
- The country representatives confirmed that **there is a need for national consultation meetings to finalize the national and regional minimum benchmarks.** UIS with partners should start a process for the national consultation to finalize and agree on the levels for each of the identified indicators.

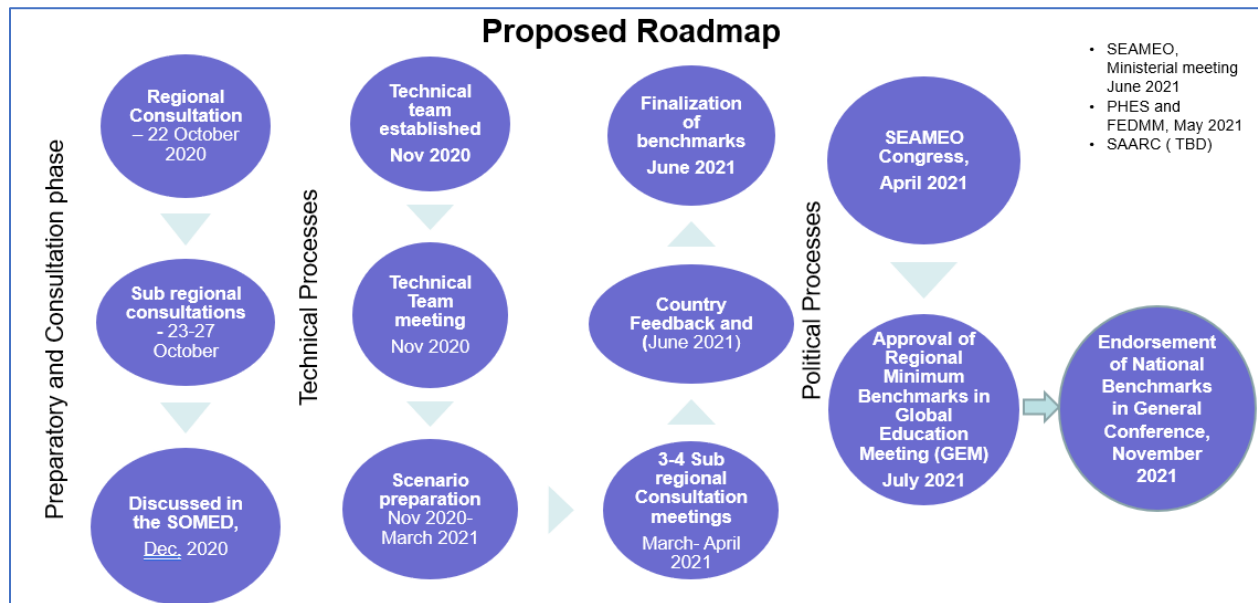
### *Additional benchmarks*

- Interest in additional indicators has been identified in each subregion, depending on the relevance for each subregion. The participants reviewed various indicators through an opinion poll and selected appropriate indicators to be added to the global indicator set. Following are the possible additional indicators commonly suggested by the participants from all 5 sub regions:
  - Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training
  - Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education
  - Participation rate in technical and vocational education programmes
  - % of students in tertiary education in STEM field

### Affirmation of Regional Roadmap

- The meeting discusses the technical processes and political processes of regional benchmarks. The region has developed a regional roadmap for establishing regional benchmarks identifying the possible timeline for both technical and political processes.
- The consultation meetings affirm the regional roadmap to complete all the technical process and political processes to finalize Regional Minimum benchmarks to submit to GEM meeting in July 2021 and to submit National benchmarks for endorsement in UNESCO General Conference in November 2021.

Figure 1: Asia Pacific Roadmap for establishing regional benchmarks for SDG4



### Support on plan for national consultations

- A national technical consultation is needed to discuss further to agree on the proposed benchmark values for different indicators. UIS and UNESCO and partner agencies should develop viable approaches to organize national technical consultation. Such technical consultation should discuss the proposed benchmark values following various approaches and agree on the national benchmark values for different indicators and should collect national benchmarks if the country has already established. Many of the countries have set their national targets for some of the indicators though not for all the indicators proposed for benchmarks.
- UIS has developed a dashboard presenting the benchmark values for three different reference points for countries to learn from and consult to establish their own national benchmarks values. There is a need to orient national and regional counterparts on using the dashboard for establishing their own benchmarks. <http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/benchmarks-dashboard/>
- UIS with UNESCO need to develop appropriate tools and strategies in reaching out to the countries in orienting the use of dashboard for national consultation processes and to establish national benchmarks.



## 4 Presentations and discussions of regional benchmarks in various sub regional political forums

Apart from technical consultation at different sub region, the regional benchmarks and its process and approaches including the methodologies were presented in various sub regional forum to promote the advocacy to enhance the political commitment. Some of the key forums where regional benchmarks were presented and discussed were:

Forum	Dates
ASEAN Meeting of Senior Official of Ministry of Education (SOMED) on <b>Inception Workshop of the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025</b>	21 January 2021
Forum of Education Minister's Meeting (FedMM)	13-14 April 2021
SEAMEO Congress	28-29 April 2021

Presenting and discussing the regional benchmarks and its processes helps to promote advocacy with policy makers of the Member States for their support and commitments towards regional benchmarks.

### *Box 2: Endorsement of Pacific regional benchmarks processes and indicators*

Ministers of Education of the Pacific Islands Forum member countries met for their 12<sup>th</sup> meeting which was held virtually, on 13 – 14 April 2021, with the theme, ***“Building Resilience in Pacific Education Systems”***. In attendance were Ministers of Education from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, New Zealand, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and together with representatives from Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. The meeting was also attended by various development partners, international agencies, and Civil Society Organizations.

During the meeting, a paper on **Regional SDG 4 Benchmarking** jointly prepared by UIS, SPC and Regional TWG on Education 2030+ was presented and discussed. During the meeting, the ministers were asked for their endorsement for the regional benchmark indicators and processes. The ministers at the end of the meeting made the following decision and endorsement on the Pacific regional benchmark:

- (i) **agreed** to the development of regional benchmarks for bridging the national, regional and global processes in monitoring and reporting of SDG4;
- (ii) **supported** harmonization of methodologies, tools, and periodicity of reporting on progress of SDG4; and
- (iii) **tasked** the UIS and SPC to provide a comprehensive update on progress of SDG4 based on regional benchmarks in the next FEdMM.

Source: 12<sup>th</sup> FORUM EDUCATION MINISTERS' MEETING, Outcome document, page 9-10

## 5 Partnerships for achieving regional benchmarks

The Asia Pacific region has a very strong regional monitoring mechanism for SDG4 with the well-functioning **Learning and Education 2030+ Networking Group**. The working group has been co-chaired by UNESCO Bangkok, UNICEF EAPRO and UNICEF ROSA. In order to harmonize the benchmark process with regional monitoring processes, UIS has partners with UNESCO Bangkok and Regional TWG- Education 2030+ in establishing regional benchmarks in the region.

Apart from UNESCO Bangkok and Learning and Education 2030+ Networking Group, sub regional bodies have been playing key roles in shaping the educational development and its monitoring in the region. They are efficient in reaching out to Member States and very much involved in development of national monitoring development systems. To organize technical consultations efficiently and effectively in various sub regions, partnership has been established with following regional bodies/agencies:

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- SPC Pacific Community

Civil Society, through the Civil Society Organization (CSO), has also played a key role in supporting the process and ensuring all actors are represented.

## 6 Finalization and agreement on regional minimum benchmarks and additional regional indicators

After taking into consideration of feedback and advice from the Member States through a series of sub-regional consultations, UIS together with GEMR proposed the levels of regional minimum benchmarks for the SDG4 indicators in compliance with paragraph 10 of the 2030 Framework for Action and paragraph 10 of the 2020 Global Education Meeting declaration (Annex 2). A summary report of regional consultation with regional minimum benchmarks values for SDG4 indicators was prepared and reported to Member States for their acknowledgment and records and for their approval. The consultation was carried out during the month of June 2021 through an online survey. In the consultation, Member States:

- **agreed with all the proposed indicators for regional benchmarks**
- **approved on Regional Minimum Benchmarks values** for each of the sub regions
- confirmed the regional process to establish national benchmarks values for the benchmarks indicators

Further to regional benchmarks, Member States also agreed to include all 4 additional regionally relevant indicators in the regional benchmarking indicators framework:

- Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training
- Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education
- Participation rate in technical and vocational education programmes
- Proportion of students in tertiary education who are in STEM field

However, some of the Member States posed concern about the lack of data for some of the indicators, e.g. Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training.

The consultation also confirmed that **there is a need of national consultation meetings to establish and finalize the national benchmarks in the next stage**. The Member States expressed their willingness in working with UIS and partner agencies in establishing more realistic national benchmark values for the selected indicators.

## 7 Endorsement of Regional Minimum Benchmarks and way forward in defining national benchmark values

Based on the consultation, the UIS and GEMR submitted proposal on regional minimum benchmarks to Ministerial segment in Global Education Meeting (GEM) on 13 July 2021 for the endorsement. The meeting took note that:

- The success of the Global Education Coalition Mechanism very much lies upon the progress of the countries in achieving SDG4 and the regional benchmarks is the tool for aligning global, regional, and national targets and monitoring processes.
- The process of establishing regional benchmarks has been fully aligned with the regional education agenda and frameworks recognizing regional education policies and priority in determining benchmark indicators and their values.

With the meetings' approval/endorsement of the proposed regional minimum benchmarks for sub regions, **the first milestone of the regional benchmarks process has been achieved successfully**.

In the process of achieving the 2<sup>nd</sup> milestone i.e. establishing national benchmarks, UIS and GEMR will continue working with regional organizations, bodies and partners in supporting Member States in establishing national benchmark values for the indicators.

### ***In that process:***

- UIS and partners will send request with relevant documents and guides to the Member States to submit their national benchmarks for selected indicators by 30 September 2021
- Compile and finalize the national benchmark values by 15 October 2021

### ***While defining the national benchmark values, it is advised that Member States:***

- Use national targets available in existing national policies/strategies and plans
- Consult UIS dashboard on benchmarks in making decisions, where such national targets do not exist ( <http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/benchmarks-dashboard/>)
- Hold discussions and consultations with and among relevant national stakeholders to establish national benchmarks.

## Annex 1: List of countries participated in the consultation

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>East Asia</b></p> <p>China Japan Democratic People's Republic of Korea Republic of Korea Mongolia</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Central Asia</b></p> <p>Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan Turkmenistan Uzbekistan</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>South East Asia</b></p> <p>Brunei Darussalam Cambodia Indonesia Lao People's Democratic Republic Malaysia Myanmar Philippines Singapore Thailand Timor-Leste Viet Nam Afghanistan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>South and West Asia</b></p> <p>Bangladesh Bhutan India Iran (Islamic Republic of) Maldives Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pacific</b></p> <p>Cook Islands Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Micronesia (Federated States of) Nauru Niue Palau</p> <p>Papua New Guinea Samoa Solomon Islands Tokelau Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu</p>	

## Annex 2: Definitions utilized in Annex 3

### Definitions

Minimum benchmark	The minimum benchmark is based on a rate of growth that is feasible given a country's current level. Each successive year's benchmark is defined based on the previous year's benchmark and the median growth rate historically conditional on that level. It is doable because half of countries at the same level have achieved this level of growth or higher. For indicators on expenditure, it is 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education; and 15% of public expenditure to education <sup>4</sup> , when the country has not reached any of those values yet, or nothing, when the country has reached at least one of those values.
Feasible benchmark	It is defined the same way as the country-specific minimum benchmark but using the conditional 75th percentile rather than the median for defining benchmarks. However, if a country has been high performing relative to its level historically and its projection exceeds this benchmark, then the country's projection is used as the ambitious benchmark; achieving a rate of progress higher than this is not likely given historical trends.
National benchmark (to be determined)	This is the benchmark to be set by each country on a voluntary basis.
Minimum regional benchmark	This is the average of the country feasible benchmarks for the lowest tercile of countries in the region weighted by the school-age population, except for indicators on expenditure  For indicators on expenditure, it is 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education; and 15% of public expenditure to education.
Regional average at baseline	Average of regional values at 2015 (+2/-2); for expenditure data median regional value.
Minimum Regional Value at Baseline	Minimum value observed for the region at baseline.

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<sup>4</sup> The [Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4](#) sets regional benchmarks as follows: allocating at least 4% to 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education; and/or allocating at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education.

### Annex 3: Minimum sub regional levels for the benchmarks indicators

Indicators/Regions	Minimum Regional Value at Baseline	Regional Average at Baseline	2025 Minimum regional benchmark	2030 Minimum regional benchmark	2025 Average of National Feasible Values	2030 Average of National Feasible Values
<b>1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)</b>						
Asia - Central	12.2	16.1	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
Asia - East	8.4	13.3	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
Asia - South East	8.6	13.7	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
Asia - South and West	11.0	13.2	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
Pacific	10.7	13.6	15.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
<b>1.a.GDP Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP</b>						
Asia - Central	2.8	5.5	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Asia - East	3.0	3.3	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Asia - South East	1.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Asia - South and West	1.5	3.3	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
Pacific	2.0	4.7	4.0	4.0	6.0	6.0
<b>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</b>						
Asia - Central			57.2	69.2	60.8	76.7
Asia - East	83.4	84.6	97.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East			75.2	87.3	87.7	100.0
Asia - South and West	14.5	46.1	45.2	57.2	72.2	88.1
Pacific	70.2	70.5	53.1	65.2	88.8	99.4
<b>4.1.1.a Proportion of students in Grade 2 or 3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</b>						
Asia - Central			59.6	69.3	75.9	85.3
Asia - East	81.8	82.1	75.5	81.3	92.6	97.1
Asia - South East			70.7	77.7	97.0	100.0
Asia - South and West	22.0	45.2	59.0	68.8	76.6	85.7
Pacific	71.4	93.5	53.7	64.8	99.0	99.4
<b>4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</b>						
Asia - Central	37.3	67.7	42.8	49.3	73.6	82.3
Asia - East	96.9	82.0	64.1	70.7	95.9	96.9
Asia - South East	17.5	17.8	21.8	28.4	47.5	54.7
Asia - South and West	11.0	41.5	28.3	34.9	52.0	60.7
Pacific	58.6	64.3	33.6	40.1	77.0	85.3
<b>4.1.1.b Proportion of students at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</b>						
Asia - Central	38.3	81.2	37.5	41.1	87.8	90.7
Asia - South East	97.3	97.3	12.8	16.4	79.7	86.1
Asia - South and West	13.0	46.7	41.1	44.7	63.7	73.8
Pacific	57.8	84.8	26.3	29.9	96.5	98.1
<b>4.1.1.c Proportion of students at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics</b>						
Asia - Central	35.1	35.1	28.6	33.3	53.1	57.4

Indicators/Regions	Minimum Regional Value at Baseline	Regional Average at Baseline	2025 Minimum regional benchmark	2030 Minimum regional benchmark	2025 Average of National Feasible Values	2030 Average of National Feasible Values
Asia - East	78.9	79.1	62.1	64.7	84.8	87.5
Asia - South East	9.9	42.0	27.7	32.4	47.3	51.9
Asia - South and West	34.1	40.9	27.5	32.3	49.8	54.2
Pacific	78.0	78.1	19.2	24.4	82.0	84.8
<b>4.1.1.c Proportion of students at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading</b>						
Asia - Central	48.5	48.5	38.1	42.6	50.6	57.0
Asia - East	79.6	79.9	70.8	72.8	83.2	84.7
Asia - South East	7.5	52.1	31.2	36.2	52.0	58.3
Asia - South and West	21.3	40.5	33.5	38.3	53.0	59.0
Pacific	81.9	82.1	31.0	36.0	83.1	84.6
<b>4.1.2.i Completion rate primary</b>						
Asia - Central	98.4	99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - East	98.8	98.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East	79.3	94.4	90.6	92.9	98.4	99.1
Asia - South and West	57.3	89.8	83.1	86.8	95.4	98.0
Pacific	63.0	65.6	78.6	83.1	76.5	83.6
<b>4.1.2.ii Completion rate lower secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	89.4	97.7	98.4	98.8	99.0	99.3
Asia - East	90.9	90.9	95.1	96.6	94.9	96.7
Asia - South East	44.4	77.9	67.2	72.8	87.3	90.7
Asia - South and West	40.6	77.1	68.1	73.5	86.9	90.5
Pacific	24.8	29.2	50.0	56.3	38.5	46.3
<b>4.1.2.iii Completion rate upper secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	67.8	88.1	83.7	86.8	94.4	97.1
Asia - East	33.1	33.3	61.9	65.8	41.5	49.1
Asia - South East	22.1	50.4	43.5	48.3	63.5	70.3
Asia - South and West	22.4	45.6	33.8	38.6	60.7	67.6
Pacific	5.6	10.2	19.8	23.0	12.4	14.8
<b>4.1.4.i Out-of-school rate, primary</b>						
Asia - Central	2.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asia - East	0.9	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asia - South East	9.5	1.7	4.4	2.0	0.0	0.0
Asia - South and West	37.2	5.4	15.2	11.7	2.0	1.3
Pacific			9.6	6.8	18.3	13.0
<b>4.1.4.ii Out-of-school rate, lower secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	3.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asia - East	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Asia - South East	26.2	5.2	14.5	11.7	1.6	1.1
Asia - South and West	39.1	10.4	19.7	16.2	5.5	2.2

Indicators/Regions	Minimum Regional Value at Baseline	Regional Average at Baseline	2025 Minimum regional benchmark	2030 Minimum regional benchmark	2025 Average of National Feasible Values	2030 Average of National Feasible Values
Pacific			15.1	12.2	14.5	10.5
<b>4.1.4.iii Out-of-school rate, upper secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	27.7	12.6	22.5	19.3	8.4	5.5
Asia - East	17.4	17.4	10.6	8.0	6.7	2.0
Asia - South East	61.2	15.6	43.6	39.2	9.4	7.2
Asia - South and West	56.7	32.1	39.6	35.5	22.1	16.8
Pacific			40.1	36.0	29.5	23.7
<b>4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age)</b>						
Asia - Central	11.7	57.0	39.1	45.5	70.9	79.3
Asia - East	92.2	94.5	99.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East	13.5	87.0	53.8	59.3	92.5	94.5
Asia - South and West	43.8	88.0	51.8	57.4	86.5	90.7
Pacific	29.3	80.4	64.4	69.3	91.9	96.8
<b>4.c.1.a Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, pre-primary</b>						
Asia - Central	97.6	98.9	94.4	96.8	98.3	99.7
Asia - East	95.4	100.0	98.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East	61.0	98.1	85.9	92.3	99.3	100.0
Asia - South and West	79.9	87.0	80.7	87.8	98.6	100.0
Pacific	41.7	60.4	80.1	87.5	88.6	96.6
<b>4.c.1.b Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, primary</b>						
Asia - Central	93.7	98.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - East	93.7	100.0	98.1	99.7	99.0	100.0
Asia - South East	85.0	99.7	98.3	99.4	100.0	100.0
Asia - South and West	49.5	70.1	73.4	78.2	85.5	94.0
Pacific	65.4	71.8	83.3	87.9	96.8	100.0
<b>4.c.1.c Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, lower secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	99.0	99.0	95.4	98.2	100.0	100.0
Asia - East	84.3		98.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East	92.0	98.1	97.3	99.2	100.0	100.0
Asia - South and West	57.9	73.5	71.2	78.5	87.5	97.7
Pacific	21.5	74.1	72.4	78.9	99.1	99.4
<b>4.c.1.d Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, upper secondary</b>						
Asia - Central	93.4	93.4	85.8	89.9	100.0	100.0
Asia - East	85.9		92.1	95.7	100.0	100.0
Asia - South East	90.1	98.0	87.5	91.3	99.9	100.0
Asia - South and West	57.4	74.8	77.4	82.4	87.7	96.1
Pacific	34.6	67.2	72.1	77.6	98.9	99.5