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Sustainable
Development
Goals

Bangkok Office
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau
for Education



Into the Future



Acceleration/Reviewing Success
and Remaining Challenges

Regional Roadmap for the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda

in Asia and the Pacific (2015-2030)



Implementation and Mid-term
Review for the region



Clarification of Targets: Towards Implementation,
and First Progress Review for the region



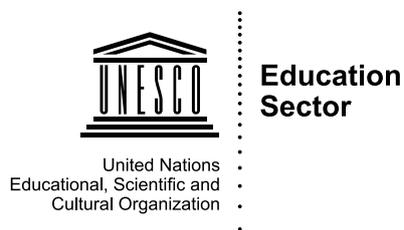
Foundation Building

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UNESCO Education Sector

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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



**Regional Roadmap for the
SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda
in Asia and the Pacific
(2015-2030)**

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I. Introduction

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 marked the start of an ambitious and transformative global agenda, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framed by the following five key objectives: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

As part of the SDGs, the standalone goal on education, SDG4, aims to: ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all’. SDG4 is transformative, holistic and aspirational and is at the heart of other SDGs whose focus areas are deeply rooted in and tied to education development, including: eradicating poverty and hunger; improving health and wellbeing; tackling climate change; fostering peace and justice; and ensuring full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The SDG4-Education 2030 agenda builds upon the achievements of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 and the global goals of Education for All (EFA), the campaign, which ended in 2015. While EFA concentrated on basic education, Education 2030 is more holistic (**Table 1**) focusing on lifelong learning and universally applicable to all countries regardless of their developmental stages.

Table 1: Comparison of EFA, the MDGs and SDG4-Education 2030

	Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2	Education for All Goal (EFA)	Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4
Implementation period	2000 to 2015	2001 to 2015	2015 to 2030
Scope	Primary education (children)	Basic education (children to adults)	All levels and forms of education and lifelong learning
Geographical coverage	Low-income countries	Global, but focus on low-income countries	Global, including advanced economies
Lead agency	UN	UN	Member States
Policy focus	Access and completion of primary education for all	Access and completion of quality basic education for all	Equitable access and acquisition of relevant skills through all forms of quality education and training
No of Targets	2	6	10

The Education 2030 Framework for Action states that the: “Implementation of SDG4 requires national, regional and global mechanisms for governance, accountability, coordination, monitoring, follow-up and review, reporting and evaluation”¹.

¹ UNESCO, 2016. Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.

The aim of this regional roadmap is to facilitate coordination, cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders to SDG4-Education 2030 at the regional level and to serve as a strategic guide to Member States in implementing and monitoring the SDG4 targets until 2030. The roadmap provides an articulation of the region’s intentions and actions toward greater efficiency in implementing SDG4, synergized cooperation and collaboration among key stakeholders within and beyond the education sector and systemic monitoring and reviewing of SDG4 towards improvement and progress – ultimately the achievement of SDG4-Education 2030 in Asia and the Pacific.

The roadmap consists of a set of regional milestones organized into five phases, starting from 2015 and ending in 2030 (Table 2 & Annex D). **It should be stressed that these are all ‘indicative’ timeframes, which could serve as a reference to all regional stakeholders of SDG4-Education 2030. Depending on national education plans and the overall progress of SDG4-Education 2030 in the region, the overall regional milestones will also be continuously reviewed and updated.**

Table 2 : SDG4 Implementation Phases

YEARS	SDG4 IMPLEMENTATION PHASES
2015–2016	PHASE I: Foundation Building
2017–2019	PHASE II: Clarification of Targets; Towards Implementation, and 1 st Progress Review for the region
2020–2023	PHASE III: Implementation and Mid-term Review for the region
2024–2027	PHASE IV: Acceleration/Reviewing Success and Remaining Challenges
2028–2030	PHASE V: Into the Future

II. Regional Context for SDG4

The Asia-Pacific area is one of the world's fastest growing and most diverse regions. In 2013, the total population stood at 4.3 billion, which accounts for 60 per cent of the global population.² The region is also home to the two most populous countries in China and India. Conversely, the Asia-Pacific zone also includes the Pacific Island states, an extremely large area containing many of the smallest and most isolated countries on earth.

Asia-Pacific also embraces the planet's highest territory in the Himalayan mountain range, with over 110 peaks above 24,000 feet (7,300 metres) – including Mount Everest at 29,035 feet (8,850 metres). In direct contrast, some areas in central Asia contain the lowest land points below sea level.

This diversity is also reflected in culture and most easily recognized through the number of languages spoken, for example, Papua New Guinea takes the global lead with over 400 documented languages across this vast country. Almost every regional nation has indigenous communities whose mother tongue is different from the official language.

Conflicts and civil disturbances have created large refugee communities in many countries. Added to these human-afflicted/caused disasters are a greater number of natural disasters than any other region on earth. Climate change affects all countries, but the rising sea level is a significant and imminent threat to the island communities of the Asia-Pacific expanse.

The Asia-Pacific has been highly affected by globalization and Asian countries are increasingly characterized by 'mega-cities' consisting of huge populations concentrated in growing urban conurbations. This demographic movement from rural to urban locations is intrinsically linked to Asian countries' high rates of economic growth since the mid-twentieth century. These trends have provided new economic opportunities for many regional countries, while at the same time shattering traditional customs. Despite this growth in wealth, some countries and many people in the region live in extreme poverty and Asia-Pacific countries have focused social and economic policy, including education, on the fight to reduce disadvantages and prejudice.

All of these prominent factors have impacted on education systems and delivery – from mother tongue teaching to a strong emphasis on sustainable development. Education in the 17 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not restricted to SDG4. The 2030 Agenda places education at the centre of the realization of many of the other SDGs. It is specifically mentioned in the targets of SDG3 (health and well-being); SDG5 (gender equality); SDG8 (decent work and economic growth); SDG12 (responsible consumption and production); SDG13 (climate change mitigation); and it is also linked to almost all of the other SDGs.

The interlinkages between and among SDGs requires going beyond the usual approach to coordination, planning and implementation. The unique features of SDG4 are its emphasis on 'inclusiveness' and 'life-long learning'.

² UNESCAP, 2013. Population trends in Asia and the Pacific (Accessed 7 May 2018).

This means that education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to all learners. The education system must ensure that no one is left behind and guarantee that learning opportunities are available to all. Ensuring the right to free and compulsory education; eliminating barriers to exclusion; ensuring quality; and adapting education to learners are basic principles of inclusive education. In addition, lifelong learning encompasses all types of learning, including formal, non-formal and informal, for people of all ages.

While EFA achieved a great deal, there is still much more to be done. Although EFA and the MDGs called for universal primary completion, there were still over 18 million children of primary school-age in the Asia-Pacific zone who did not go to school in 2015. There are also an estimated 474 million illiterates over the age of 15 in the Asia-Pacific region³.

The region is divided into several sub-regions with shared geographic, historical and cultural ties. These sub-regions are endowed with inter-governmental agencies with programmes of co-operation. For example, the Pacific Islands are brought together in the Pacific Forum.

South East Asian countries are seeking closer alignment in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and their education counterpart the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

South Asian countries come together in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). These sub-regional bodies all have a vital role to play in implementing and monitoring SDGs, which emphasizes a strategic co-operative approach to development.

³ UNESCO, 2016. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for People and Planet: Creating a Sustainable Future for All*.

III. SDG4 Implementation Phases – Strategies, Key Milestones and Outcomes

The roadmap identifies three priority areas of regional cooperation in support of the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda by Member States. These are: **1) Advocacy, information and knowledge exchange; 2) Capacity development; 3) Monitoring.** Under these priority areas, strategies and activities for regional support and cooperation are identified in each of the implementation phase below and will be provided through the collective and coordinated efforts of the Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG)-Education 2030+⁴ and other key stakeholders.

PHASE I
(2015–2016) **Foundation Building**

Phase I focuses on **advocacy and capacity development** as main areas of regional support. It aims to orient Member States and partners on SDG4-Education 2030, by unpacking SDG4, its targets, the global level indicators and indicative strategies as provided in the Framework for Action. The aim is to enhance countries’ understanding of SDG4-Education 2030 in order to contextualize the goal and its targets to national level efforts and requirements. Towards the end of this phase, countries have a better understanding of SDG4, how to appropriately streamline it into their national education development context and they are able to set up coherent mechanisms at national and regional levels to implement SDG4. National Coordinators for SDG4 would have been nominated and national mechanisms for SDG4 established (Annex A).

Regional Key Milestones:	Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1st Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030), November 2015 – Outcome document on key actions to take in 2016 (toward the implementation of SDG4 at the national level). ▶ Pre-Meeting 2016 APMED2 Survey on the status of, and challenges in localizing SDG4-Education 2030 and feasibility of indicative strategies proposed in Education 2030 FFA. ▶ 2nd APMED2030, November 2016 – strategic support strategy on SDG4 (milestones roadmap), Terms of Reference of the regional network of SDG4 national coordinators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All countries have a common understanding of SDG4-Education 2030, targets and the Framework for Action. ▶ National and regional coordination mechanisms and partnership modalities proposed and defined.

⁴ Co-chairs: UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and UNICEF. Core participants: ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, ADB, the WB, SEAMEO, ASEAN, SAARC, PIFS, GPE, Plan International, ASPBAE, Action Aid, ARNEC, EI, ATD Fourth World and SIL International. The TWG-Education 2030+ also serves as a Thematic Working Group on Education of the Regional Mechanism (RCM) in Asia and the Pacific, convened by UNESCAP.

PHASE II (2017–2019)

Clarification of Targets; Towards Implementation, and First Progress Review for the region

Phase II aims to clarify the targets of SDG4 in order to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the concepts, definitions, data requirements, content and linkages between the subject areas of the targets. During this phase, the first regional progress review on SDG4 will be undertaken as part of the regional contribution to the global review on SDG4 for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)⁵ in 2019. By end of this phase, countries should be well prepared to start fully implementing localized SDG4-Education 2030.

As some elements of the SDGs require in-depth and broad-based discussions at all levels in order to be understood and agreed in the national context, the annual APMED 2030 during this phase will focus on a number of targets that have been identified by Member States as being in need of particular attention. These include target 4.7 (i.e. sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship, a culture of peace, cultural diversity) as a matter of priority and targets 4.3 (tertiary education and technical and vocational education and training) and 4.4 (skills for youth and adults), which are the new areas introduced under SDG4. These targets require in-depth discussion at all levels of society to build a shared understanding of their meaning and implications for local communities. It is thus important that the planning and consultation phase at the beginning of the SDGs is not rushed, that time is taken to create awareness at all levels of society and that local people have time to obtain 'ownership' of Education 2030.

The review, revision or development of national education sector plans to streamline SDG4 take us further into Phase II. During this phase, technical support on education sector planning will be provided to Member States to enable localization, integration, implementation, monitoring and reporting of SDG4. Member States are reminded through this process that SDG4 should not be a separate plan, but rather ensure that SDG4-Education 2030 and its targets should be an integral part of the broader national strategy and the national education sector-wide plan. Since SDG4 concerns all levels of education and emphasizes lifelong learning, it will require a truly sector-wide approach to education planning and coordination.

To localize and implement SDG4, four different tracks are proposed for Member States and development partners (see section below, page 18). At the regional and sub-regional levels, capacity development activities on monitoring SDG4 will be conducted and relevant training materials and monitoring mechanisms and frameworks will be developed by a regional collaborative initiative of the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) and UNESCO Bangkok/UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

⁵ The UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the central UN body addressing sustainable development. Its main task is to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its global SDGs. The first HLPF Global Monitoring for SDG4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 goals is set in 2019 (www.globalpolicywatch.org).

As part of the region’s advocacy/knowledge exchange activity, a regional online knowledge portal on SDG4-Education 2030 will be developed to foster knowledge sharing among SDG4-Education2030 national coordinators and partners in education. Wider advocacy will also extend beyond governments. As such, to reach a wider audience and draw greater attention to and understanding of SDG4 in the region, strategic and continuous engagement with the media, communities and the private sector will be sought.

Regional and Global Key Milestones	Expected Outcomes
<p>Regional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3rd APMED2030,— focusing on SDG target 4.7, July 2017. ➤ Regional Capacity Development Training on Planning for SDG4, July 2017. ➤ 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on ECCE: Taking SDG4.2 from Policy to Action, 2018. ➤ Regional Capacity Development Training on Monitoring SDG4, June 2018. ➤ Asia-Pacific Regional Training Manual on Monitoring SDG4, 2018. ➤ Regional Baseline Report on SDG4 (An SDG4 Target-by Target Breakdown for Asia-Pacific), 2018. ➤ Regional Thematic Review of SDG4 targets 4.3 and 4.4 (to be presented at the 4th APMED2030), 2018. ➤ 4th APMED2030, – focusing on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, July 2018. ➤ Follow-up sub-regional workshops on 4.3/4.4 and monitoring SDG4, 2019. ➤ Development of a media training toolkit for reporting on SDG4 and training workshops, 2018. ➤ 5th APMED2030 - focusing on SDG targets 4.1 and 4.6, 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All countries have a better understanding of targets 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7. ➤ All countries agree on coordination mechanism for SDG4 at the regional and national levels and the Terms of Reference of National Coordinators is endorsed. ➤ All countries capacity is enhanced to undertake SDG4 monitoring and reporting. ➤ The region’s input to global education meetings and HLPF review are provided.
<p>Global</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Global Education Meeting (GEM), December 2018. ➤ 1st Global monitoring of SDGs (HLPF), 2019. 	

PHASE III
(2020–2023)

Implementation and Mid-term Review for the region

During Phase III, Member States will have already integrated and progressed in their planning for, and implementation of SDG4. Therefore, the focus of regional support and coordination will increasingly be on monitoring SDG4. Additional in-country technical support on localizing SDG4 targets and a review of national education data collection to incorporate the monitoring of SDG4 will be provided. Countries will also be supported to prepare for the regional mid-term review (MTR) of SDG4, contributing to the second global review for the HLPF in 2023.

The annual APMED meetings will focus on preparing countries for the regional MTR. At the sub-regional level, reporting on SDG4 support to countries will be carried out by sub-regional bodies. The sub-regional bodies will also continue to conduct policy dialogue, undertake collaborative research and identify promising practices and innovations in the region. Towards the end of this phase, countries will be close to finalizing their mid-term review and the gaps, challenges and best practices in achieving SDG4 will be identified.

As countries review their progress, they need to define their review/evaluation questions in relation to the objectives of their national education plan. Review and evaluation can also take a number of forms involving different degrees of qualitative and quantitative assessment.

A certain number of quantitative indicators such as graduation/completion rates, or jobs obtained/established creates a number of objective statements – but these do not present a complete picture without parallel qualitative assessment. Hence, systematic and continuous capacity building and technical support to countries on qualitative and quantitative evaluation, including documentation of good practices should also be prioritized.

Regional and Global Key Milestones	Expected Outcome:
<p>Regional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC 2) – ministerial, 2020. ▶ 6th APMED2030: Preparation for the mid-term review, 2021. ▶ Sub-regional workshops on monitoring SDG4 to prepare for the mid-term review, 2021. ▶ Mid-term review completed, 2023. ▶ 7th APMED2030, 2023. <p>Global</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 2nd global review of SDGs (HLPF), 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Countries' gaps, challenges and best practices identified. ▶ Regional input to 2nd global review provided.

PHASE IV
(2024–2027)

Acceleration/Reviewing Success and Remaining Challenges

Phase IV begins with the completion of the regional mid-term review and the second global review of SDG4. Based on the results of these reviews, countries' prioritized areas will be identified for acceleration. As such, this phase will be dedicated to accelerating SDG4 efforts in the region. As part of continuous advocacy, a regional roll out campaign on SDG4 acceleration will be launched. Towards the end of this phase, sub-regional workshops on SDG4 monitoring will be continued in preparation for the final review of SDG4.

As countries begin to fix their sights on the 2030 deadline, it will be necessary to undertake a broad-based appraisal as to how much progress has been made and what remains to be done to meet the SDG4 goal. The appraisal must be launched early enough to allow problems to be addressed, for example focusing on the education of particular minorities and successfully tackled before 2030. UNESCO and UNICEF, as members of the Regional TWG-Education 2030+, may lead the provision of capacity building support to countries in developing national level acceleration plans.

Regional and Global Key Milestones	Expected Outcome
<p>Regional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advocacy campaign on SDG4 acceleration. ➤ 8th APMED2030: Acceleration of efforts towards the achievement of SDG4, 2024. ➤ 9th APMED2030: Preparation for the final review of SDG4, 2026. ➤ Sub-regional workshops on monitoring SDG4 to prepare for the final review of SDG4, 2027. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Countries' prioritized areas to address and accelerate what is identified. ➤ Regional TWG-Education 2030+ and country levels acceleration plans prepared.
<p>Global</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3rd global monitoring of SDG4 (HLPF), 2027. 	

PHASE V
(2028–2030)

Into the Future

Drawing from the findings of the region’s final review of SDG4, consultations and dialogue at regional and national levels and reflecting on lessons learned, trends and developments across sectors, the state of the world and the future of education, Phase V will focus on **shaping the next education agenda**. The collective voice of the Asia-Pacific region and its key priorities in education will be documented and endorsed at the highest level for further contribution to global level discussions and decisions on the next global education agenda.

Regional Key Milestones	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 10th APMED2030: Shaping the next education agenda, 2028.▶ 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC 3) – ministerial, 2028.▶ Final Review of SDG4, 2028.▶ 11th APMED2030: Orienting Member States on the next global education agenda, 2030.▶ Reporting of SDG4 progress, remaining challenges and achievements, 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ SDG4 progress, achievements and remaining challenges identified.▶ Regional key priorities in education identified and endorsed to contribute to the next global agenda.▶ Next global education agenda identified.▶ Member states oriented on the next global agenda.

IV. Coordinating and Prioritizing Regional Support to Member States

While all countries are committed to achieving SDG4 by 2030, each Member State stands at a different starting point with different priorities. This means that each Member State will be adopting different strategies for the integration of SDG4-Education 2030 into their national education plans and policies and as a result will be pursuing different paths towards achieving the goal.

Technical and financial support by the regional partners for SDG4-Education 2030 to the Member States will need to be well coordinated (Figure 2) and prioritized according to these various national needs.

In order to facilitate the coordination and prioritization of regional efforts for the localization and implementation of SDG4-Education 2030, four different tracks are proposed as a reference for Member States, as well as development partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

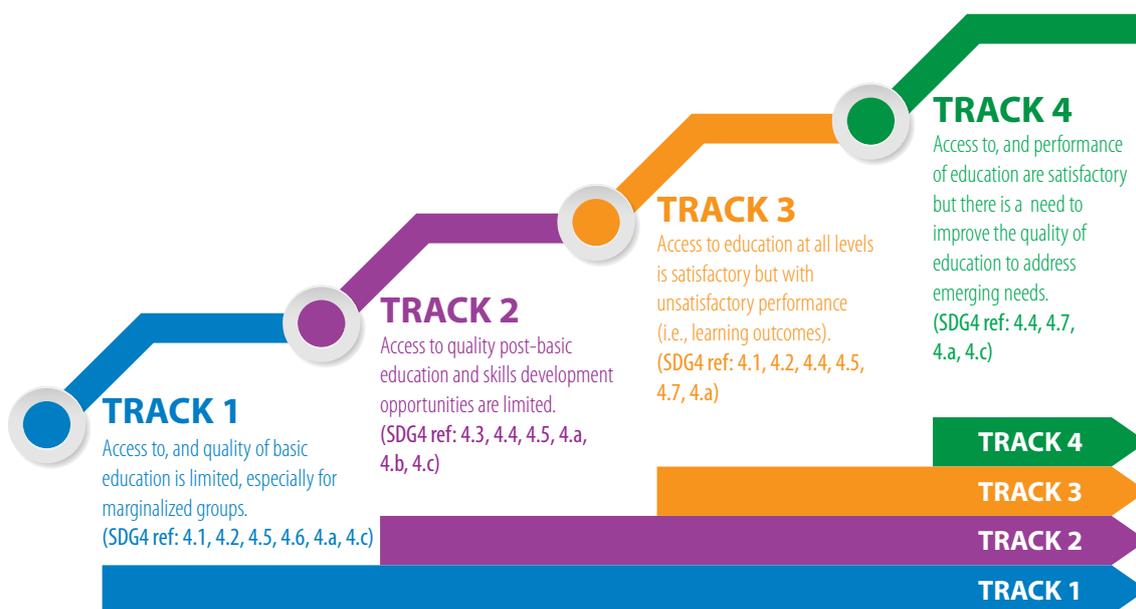
More specifically, the tracks are intended to help Member States and regional partners in prioritizing capacity building needs and resource allocation to align the SDG4 targets to national education plans, policies and programmes.

Since SDG4-Education 2030 covers the entire education system, the reference point for the 'starting point/initial benchmark' of each track is the status of 'access, quality, and equity' at the different levels of education.

By no means do these tracks represent linear progression from one to another, nor are they mutually exclusive or hierarchical, but rather they are complementary. Each track indicates the different challenges Member States may face and the implications for the provision of technical and financial support at the regional level.

Depending on Member States' priorities and the current status of the SDG4 target concerned, the different tracks could be pursued at the same time as well. The nature, intensity and depth (and resource needs) of the technical support strategy will differ between tracks as indicated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: The Four Tracks with reference to the relevant SDG4 targets for prioritization



Considering the strong and direct impact the different sub-sectors can have on one another in/ at all tracks, it is critically important for all countries to have a long-term sector-wide strategy to prioritize policy actions to address the challenges that encompass various sub-sectors of education.

1) Track 1: Access to and quality of basic education is limited, especially for marginalized groups (SDG4 ref: 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.a, 4.c)

While access to basic education has been substantially improved in most of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region, there are countries that still face challenges of getting children into schools. Gender gaps are also evident, affecting both boys and girls to a varying extent.

Based on 2015 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data for 39 countries in the region, up to 26 per cent of boys in the western Pacific island nation of Palau and 32 per cent of girls in Pakistan are out of primary school. These are also countries where the gender gap is the widest at the primary level. In the Solomon Islands, both boys and girls have a high out-of-school rate (OOSR) above 29 per cent.

At the lower secondary level, Afghanistan and Palau show a very high OOSR and over 50 per cent of girls are out of school. In 24 out of the 39 countries, boys are often not in primary school and in 21 out of 39 countries; boys are more often not in lower secondary schools either⁶. Available data and monitoring reports continue to show that countries suffering from conflicts, disasters and, or lacking targeted, effective policies and provisions to combat socio-economic or cultural exclusion are particularly challenged and are at risk of not meeting the access goal under SDG4.1 by 2030, if current trends persist.

6 UNESCO, 2018. Paving the Road to Education 2030: An SDG4 Target-by-Target Breakdown for Asia Pacific.

Evidence abounds that children with early childhood care and education experiences are more likely to enrol, attend, complete and perform better in primary education and beyond. Therefore, the importance of ensuring strategies that will build systems and mechanisms for effective transition between early childhood, primary and secondary education cannot be overemphasized. Yet, despite policy makers' awareness on the importance of organized learning in preparation for school and thereafter, invested commitment is still low in the region⁷.

Successful completion of formal basic education also requires good teachers (target 4.c) and a good school environment (target 4.a). Countries might be well advised to ensure an adequate pre-primary education, a sufficient supply of well-qualified teachers and a well-maintained and supplied school system. In light of this, countries often need to make difficult investment choices.

Countries on Track 1 could therefore consider prioritizing the following actions and strategies:

- **Expand access and quality of ECCE provisions (SDG4.2):** ECCE builds a strong foundation for learning throughout life. Increased access to quality ECCE provisions is therefore one of the most critical preconditions for achieving universal completion of primary and secondary education. Increasing investment in and prioritizing ECCE within education policies and plans would not only help to accelerate the achievement of target 4.2, but also ensure good results under SDG4.1.
- **Ensure provision of targeted interventions (SDG4.5):** An audit of the existing baseline in formal education, including enrolment rates, completion and transitions would be an effective strategy in identifying groups and communities that are falling behind, as well as identifying the necessary targeted interventions to remove barriers faced by marginalized groups, in order to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment (target 4.a).
- **Leave no one left behind through flexible/alternative learning provisions (SDG4.6):** Where access to formal schooling continues to be a challenge, flexible alternative provisions for learning must be guaranteed for those learners who remain outside the system, such as the introduction of an equivalency education programme/provision so that every child/learner will benefit from the same quality of education as formal schools, with equivalent certification/qualifications upon successful completion.
- **Invest in teachers (SDG4.c):** Teachers play a critical role in improving and sustaining the quality of education. Investment is needed not only in terms of increasing and ensuring an adequate number of teachers in basic education, but also in safeguarding the professional status and development support for basic education teachers.

Areas of potential technical support to countries in this group may include the following intervention activities, together with technical support proposed in Tracks 2, 3 and 4:

- Conducting situation analysis to identify barriers to learning opportunities;
- Formulating targeted policies (e.g. alternative learning policies) to expand access to education at all levels, but with special attention given to ECCE and primary education;

⁷ Ibid., 37

- Using education simulation models to project long-term trends in access to education and the impact on education systems (e.g. demand for teachers);
- Use of technology/innovation to offer online training/qualifying courses for teachers;
- Reviewing and reforming school finance systems to ensure equity, efficiency and sufficiency of resource allocation;
- Enhancing capacity of monitoring and evaluation systems for education;
- Strengthening management information systems and staff capacity to disaggregate, analyze, and interpret data appropriately for planning, decision and policy making.

2) Track 2: Access to quality post-basic education and skills development opportunities is limited (SDG4 ref: 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.a, 4.b, 4.c)

Some countries are already well on their way to achieving nine-years of universal basic education. This is particularly the case in East Asia and increasingly so in Southeast Asia. In these countries, governments may need to prioritize the expansion of good quality post-secondary education and training and work to eliminate disparity at this level, as set out in targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

However, since post-secondary education is not compulsory in many countries, the provision of post-secondary education and training cannot be just supply-driven, nor be provided through the formal system alone. Potential students/learners will have to be convinced that education and training at this level will give them the skills and the learning outcomes that they require for employment, entrepreneurship, as well as for ongoing learning.

Given the need to meet a rapidly changing skills demand in the labour sector, post-secondary education and training will need to be particularly flexible and adaptable to individual needs. Flexibility and adaptability are also important in addressing disparities and inequality persisting at this level of education. For example, while technical and vocational education and training (TVET) participation in formal secondary education increased over the past decade, participation is still limited and is in favour of male students, as reported by 26 out of 31 countries in the region where data is available.⁸

Despite the growth of tertiary education in the region, there is a large disparity in terms of completion between the most advantaged (i.e. males in urban areas and from the richest households) and disadvantaged groups (i.e. females in rural areas from the poorest households⁹).

Even when schools are available, quality often varies across countries. There may be issues of resource constraints, as difficult geographical conditions (e.g. small and scattered populations, isolated and difficult-to-reach habitats) also affect school availability and quality, especially at higher levels of education where more specialized teachers and facilities are required. The provision of well-trained and qualified teachers (target 4.c), availability of scholarships (target 4.b) and inclusive

⁸ Ibid., 41

⁹ Ibid., 44

and safe learning environments (target 4.a) are crucial preconditions to achieving post-secondary education as well.

It is extremely important that qualifications obtained in different non-formal and formal education programmes at post-secondary level be clearly accredited and allow students to move from one framework to another, particularly from non-formal skills training to full-time tertiary education.

Many countries have found that national qualifications frameworks are an effective tool for this. Accreditation of prior learning also allows those with skills acquired on the job to translate these into certificates for entry into non-formal and formal lifelong learning programmes.

Technical support for countries starting from this track may cover the following approaches and technical support proposed in Tracks 3 and 4:

- Development of a master plan and related policies for the use of ICT in education;
- Creating alternative learning paths and ensuring accreditation of prior learning;
- Exploring innovative financing and public-private sector partnerships;
- Curriculum and teaching reforms to improve the relevance of education;
- Teacher policy reforms (e.g. training, deployment, appraisal and remuneration);
- Reviewing and reforming school finance systems to ensure equity, efficiency and sufficiency of resource allocation;
- Improving monitoring and evaluation for transparency and good governance.

3) Track 3: Access to education at all levels is satisfactory but with unsatisfactory performance (SDG4 ref: 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.a)

All Asia-Pacific countries have made significant investments in education and achieved high levels of participation at all levels of learning. However, success in access/participation has not necessarily led to all countries achieving higher performance in terms of learning achievements and outcomes. In TVET, there is a general skills mismatch between the output of education or training and labour market demands across the Asia-Pacific region¹⁰. For these countries, it is high time increased attention is paid to improving the quality of their education sector. They may consider this a priority for the reasons cited:

- To improve the skills of the country in order to increase their development and competitiveness (Target 4.4);
- To improve performance of education systems to make sure their investments are producing positive results; and/or
- To increase the relevancy of education for remote rural, minorities, women, or other sectors of the population (Target 4.5).

¹⁰ Ibid., 45

Identifying the key bottlenecks that affect the quality of learning and addressing them through reforms that focus on improving learning environments (e.g., school facilities, teaching and learning materials, teachers) will be critical (Target 4.a). At the same time, enhancing governance and accountability through, for instance, more open and transparent information disclosure may be necessary to improve efficiency and effectiveness of education systems.

Some areas for potential regional technical assistance and cooperation for improving efficiency and effectiveness of education systems may include the following strategies, together with the technical support proposed in Track 4:

- Reviewing and reforming school finance systems to ensure equity, efficiency and sufficiency of resource allocation;
- Curriculum review and reform;
- Assessment system review and reform;
- Teacher policy reforms (e.g. training, deployment, appraisal and remuneration);
- Improving monitoring and evaluation for transparency and good governance.

2) Track 4: Access to and performance of education are satisfactory but needs to improve quality of education to address the emerging needs (SDG4 ref: 4.4, 4.7,4.a, 4.c)

Lastly, there are countries that have achieved universal basic education with a high participation of post-basic education, with an internationally renowned high-level of performance. Students of these countries often top the league tables of international assessments. However, there is a growing consensus that their performance is not to be confused with the high 'quality' of their education.

Frequently, their education systems are criticized for being overly exam-oriented and their learners are under high levels of pressure. There is also a question as to whether or not such an education is relevant for preparing learners for a rapidly changing world. For these countries, their education sector plans, policies and strategies may need to give particular priority attention to SDG targets 4.4 and 4.7 (as well as 4.a and 4.c).

An appropriate baseline for quality issues might be to combine: 1) A review of curricula, especially updating the SDG related skills of sustainable development, global citizenship, TVET and entrepreneurship, with 2) A review of practice including teaching styles, teaching and learning materials, and assessment.

This phase may be particularly important, as greater clarity is needed before reforms are set out including:

- A literature and research review on learning/acquisition of social and emotional skills/21st century skills /transversal competencies;

- Creating assessment frameworks and tools for social and emotional skills /21st century/ transversal competencies;
- A review of international practices;
- Debate, consultation and agreement on core concepts to be included in the curriculum, textbooks, teacher training, and assessments.

Technical support may also be given to the above-mentioned areas. Development partners and academic networks may also act as a catalyst for mutual learning and the exchange of experiences.

It should be noted that this does not mean that those countries in Tracks 1 or 2 do not need to address these targets. Targets 4.4, 4.7, 4.a and 4.c are cross-cutting in nature and must be addressed together with the other sub-sectoral targets. They must be fully integrated into policies and interventions for basic and post-basic education, as these are critical to inclusive and equitable quality education.

V. Principles for Implementation

The Incheon Framework for Action considers implementation of SDG4 (Education 2030) targets to be dependent on the following three factors: 1) Governance, accountability and partnerships; 2) Coordination; 3) Monitoring. This section considers some broad principles regarding these factors.

1. Governance, accountability and partnerships

a) Governance and accountability

Governments have the main responsibility to deliver the right to a good quality public education. However, an ambitious education goal cannot be achieved by governments alone. They need the support of all stakeholders, including schools, teachers, students, parents and the wider community.

While accountability policies usually hold governments, schools and teachers responsible for delivering a quality education, parents and students and the community have important roles to play, for example, through providing a stimulating home and community environment. To ensure a quality education and effective education outcomes, governments should strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms through increased involvement of different stakeholders in planning, implementing and monitoring SDG4.

Improving governance and accountability can increase efficiency and effective use of resources and ensure that financing reaches the classroom. The international community stated that a

significant increase in financing is required to achieve SDG4. The Incheon declaration adhered to the benchmark of allocating at least 4–6 per cent of GDP, and/or devoting at least 15–20 per cent of public expenditure to education. However, mobilization of domestic resources alone will not suffice, especially for low-income countries and this will require external funding sources to be able to reach the specified targets. Hence the need for more effective aid and South-South cooperation.

b) Partnerships

The Incheon Framework suggests that implementation needs to bring together the following stakeholders: governments, civil society organizations, teachers and educators, private sector philanthropic organizations and foundations, the research community, and youth. In particular, countries should look and go beyond existing structure and mechanisms when implementing SDG4, by:

- Further engagement with the private sector to obtain resources and favourable employment outcomes to education and skills acquisition, and;
- Strengthening and widening national and sub-national co-ordination to broaden ownership of targets to create local champions for implementation and to attract local investment in education and skills.

Strong multi-stakeholder partnerships, linked to broader SDG processes, are essential for successful translation of 2030 commitments into national education development efforts at global, regional and national levels¹¹. At the national level, countries are encouraged to undertake extensive consultations on SDG4-Education 2030 at both national and sub-national levels and invite the participation of all stakeholders of education and training, within and beyond the education sector. The SDGs are also inter-related and inherently require a partnership to attain each target. For example, higher education institutes, whose researchers may help produce innovative policy solutions as SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, can explicitly identify the need for TVET and skills development. This and the aim of universal secondary education (target 4.1) denote the need for engagement with employers, without whom there is a risk that education and training will be irrelevant and graduates will not get jobs.

The wider scope and the larger number of targets suggest the need for an increased resource requirement. This may be understood in financial terms, but it should also be seen in human resource terms. It may indeed be more important to secure enough people working to implement the SDGs than to obtain a massive amount of financing, since it can prove hard to spend money effectively when there is not enough staff to implement the programme. A wider partnership is one way of increasing the number of people working on the SDGs. Moreover, there should be financial efficiencies when several agencies combine their efforts. The private sector in particular may bring money directly to bear on the SDGs if it sees that this will result in an education system that will produce the skills they are looking for.

At the regional level, the regional TWG-Education 2030+, co-chaired by the UNESCO regional office in Bangkok and UNICEF regional offices for East Asia and Pacific and South Asia, will actively engage not only with the traditional education sector partners, but also with non-

¹¹ UNESCO, 2016. Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4, Education 2030 Guide.

education sector partners, including the private sector for the partnership for SDG4-Education 2030. An enlarged partnership is required to provide collective and coordinated action and support to regional and sub-regional advocacy, capacity building and monitoring progress.

2. Coordination

SDG4-Education 2030 requires continuing broad-based and in-depth coordination.

National level

Member States are encouraged to form a national coordination mechanism that will bring, first and foremost, all education stakeholders from all levels and fields to the same policy dialogue table to unpack and localize SDG4-Education 2030. The national coordination mechanism could make use of existing education sector coordination platforms, such as the education-sector working group, LEGs, etc., as relevant in order to avoid duplication of efforts. In respect of the principle of inclusion, the national coordination mechanism should be inclusive of all stakeholders, from government, civil society to the private sector.

The holistic coverage of education targets also implies the need for engagement with sectors and institutions that may have not been involved in education. The national coordination mechanism for SDG4-Education 2030 should be the platform to ensure cross-sectoral coordination and integration of policies and strategies for implementation and monitoring. Learning from the successful experience of the National EFA Coordinator system during the EFA period, Member States are also encouraged to appoint a SDG4 national coordinator at a senior policy level who essentially could lead or chair the national coordination mechanism (**Annex B proposed profile of SDG4 National Coordinators**).

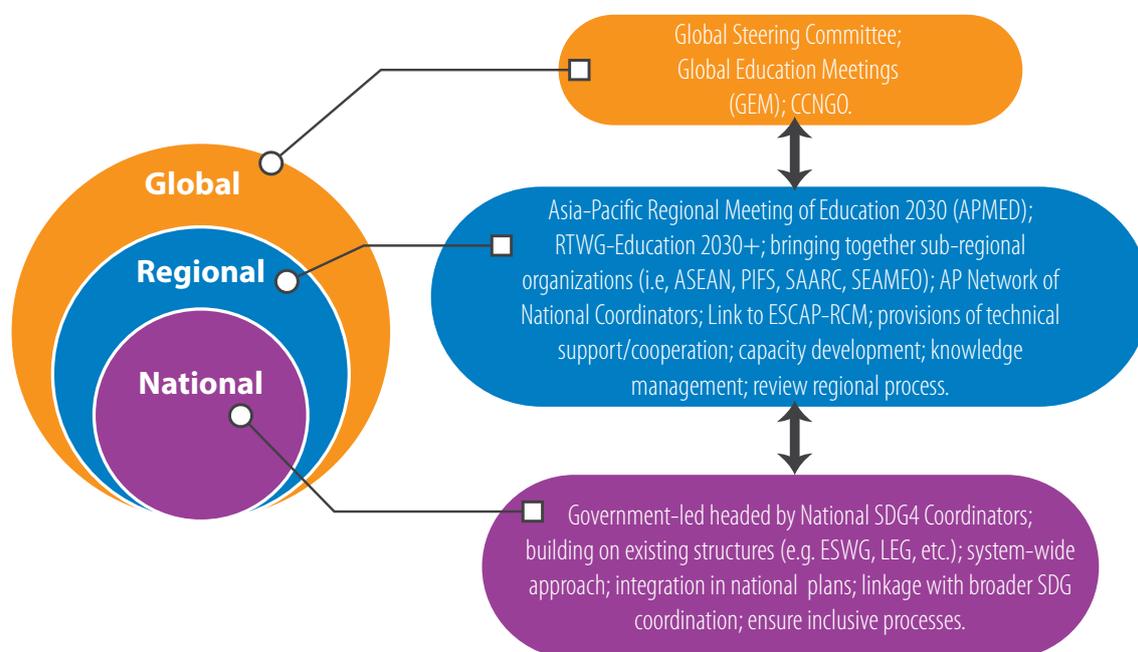
Where a higher-level coordination mechanism/forum for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda has been created in a country, the national coordination mechanism for SDG4-Education should ideally be an integral part of such a national forum or it should be closely linked.

Regional level and sub-regional level

The Regional TWG Education 2030+ serves as the regional coordination mechanism and APMED2030 will serve as the regional consultation platform for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and support to countries in all aspects of the implementation and monitoring of SDG4-Education 2030. TWG-Education2030+ will be the host of the annual regional consultation platform, the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030), through which, regional inputs to global level consultation and policy dialogue will be generated and contributed. Under the umbrella of APMED2030, a SDG4 National Coordinators' Network will be formed as the main body for policy-level discussions and endorsement of regional level recommendations coming out of APMED2030, or other work of the TWG Education 2030+ (**Annex C TOR for National Coordinators Network**).

The regional coordination mechanism also brings together the following sub-regional organizations: the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF). Each of these has their own education sector strategies aligned with SDG4-Education 2030 and they also participate in broader regional level efforts. Given the huge geographical spread of the Asia-Pacific, the sub-regional organizations play a significant role in the efficient coordination of regional level actions and they contribute to the implementation of the three thematic areas of the regional roadmap, i.e. advocacy, capacity building and monitoring, within their respective sub-regional contexts. UNESCO Bangkok, as the secretariat of the regional TWG-Education 2030+, represents the Asia-Pacific region and ensures regular communication and information exchange with the global coordination mechanism, guided by the SDG Education 2030 Global Steering Committee (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Articulating SDG4 Coordination Mechanisms: Global, Regional and National



3. Monitoring SDG4 progress

Monitoring SDG4 progress requires coordination among all stakeholders (government and non-state actors) in order to establish and institutionalize procedures and harmonize monitoring and reporting at various levels and across sectors. Further, regional and sub-regional collective efforts are critical in bridging global and national initiatives.

In the Asia-Pacific region, there will be an added challenge in terms of monitoring and reporting SDG4 progress due to fragmented monitoring and evaluation systems, unavailability of data and the huge differences in the level of education development across sub-regions and countries. The survey conducted by UIS in 2015, shows that the Asia-Pacific region had the lowest result

in terms of data availability of global (40 per cent) and thematic (60 per cent) indicators¹². The TWG-Education 2030+, in close cooperation with UIS/AIMS and other relevant partners within this region, will need to provide direct and targeted interventions to countries to strengthen their planning, monitoring and statistical capacities to monitor SDG4 progress.

National Level

The main responsibility for monitoring SDG4 lies at the national level. It is therefore crucial for countries to establish an effective monitoring mechanism adapted to national contexts and priorities. SDG4 monitoring must be an integral part of the existing national M&E system of the national education sector plan. In addition, the universality of SDG4 requires more reliable, timely and disaggregated data. This has a profound implication on current readiness and capacity of governments to set-up mechanisms to collect and analyze data from different sources (administrative and households) and to continuously use them for planning and policy making purposes.

Countries are also encouraged to adopt relevant indicators from the SDG4 indicator framework that will monitor progress towards their own priorities within the SDGs. UIS-AIMS will work with countries to identify suitable indicators and continuously capacitate countries in this area. Furthermore, education ministries (in charge of SDG4) are encouraged to take an active part in the Voluntary National Reporting (VNR) exercise in their respective countries in order to ensure that reporting on SDG4 is also well reflected in the VNR.

Regional level and sub-regional levels

The regional and sub-regional levels are critical to ensuring that the global level is informed of regional realities and national priorities and translating global guidance into national level actions¹³. The active role of sub-regional bodies such as SEAMEO, ASEAN, PIFS, and SAARC – who are also members of the Regional TWG-Education 2030+ – in monitoring SDG4 is expected so that countries' priorities, issues, challenges and effective practices are systematically reported at both regional and global levels. In particular, when a country opts to undertake the VNR, sub-regional bodies and regional partners should advocate and support the active participation of the education sector to reflect SDG4 progress in the VNR concerned.

This region will also conduct at least three progress reviews on SDG4 between 2018–2028. These regional reviews will inform both the GEM meetings and the two High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Global Monitoring on SDGs, scheduled in 2023 and 2027.

Global Level

At the global level, UIS remains the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education and the annual Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report is the global mechanism for monitoring on SDG4 and on education in other SDGs¹⁴.

12 UNESCO-UIS. 2016. Laying the Foundation to Measure Sustainable Development Goal 4.

13 UNESCO. 2016. Mainstreaming SDG4-Education 2030 in sector-wide policy and planning: technical guidelines for UNESCO field offices.

14 UNESCO.2016. Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4 Education 2030 Guide.

There are 11 global indicators, one for each target except for target 4.2, which has two indicators. These indicators will form a universal foundation, which must be compiled by all countries. Beyond these indicators there is a thematic group of indicators, totalling 43 indicators, consisting of up to six additional indicators per goal.¹⁵

UIS will aim to compile all these indicators for all countries, but at the national and regional level, countries may decide whether or not to use them in national monitoring with the help of UIS and their regional arm in Bangkok – the Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit (UIS/AIMS) and UIS sub-regional statistical advisers based in UNESCO-Apia (for the Pacific SIDS) and UNESCO New Delhi (South and West Asia). The full group of global and thematic indicators will form the basis for reporting for the annual Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) and HLPF Global Monitoring on SDGs.

The HLPF has the central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 SDGs at the global level. Under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it annually examines a set of goals and their interlinkages with other goals.

It aims to facilitate an in-depth review on progress of all 17 goals over the course of a four-year cycle. The 2019 HLPF Review is devoted to SDG4 (Education) and other goals such as decent work, (SDG 8), inequality (SDG 10), climate change (SDG 13), peace (SDG 16) and partnerships (SDG 17). The progress on SDG4 as part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be provided through the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to the HLPF. The outcomes of the SDG4-Steering Committee Meetings including the regional consultations (e.g. APMED), will contribute to HLPF reviews.

15 UNESCO-UIS, 2016. Laying the Foundation to Measure Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Annex A: Status of SDG4-Education 2030 Localization (as of 9 July 2018)

Status	Number of countries done	Number of countries planned
Nomination of national coordinators for SDG4	34	2
Establishment of national mechanism for SDG4	24	7
Organization of national consultations on SDG4	24	9
Organization of sub-national consultations on SDG4	13	10
Review and/or alignment of national education sector plans/policies in light of SDG4	23	9

Note: Information received from 42 countries.

Annex B: Proposed Profile of National Coordinators

Senior level officials (preferably director-general level, or above) from the Ministry of Education, responsible for overall national education sector policy and plans.

- If the national coordinator is at the minister or vice-minister level, a 'focal point' at a director-general/deputy director-general/director level or technical officer level, should be appointed. This person will have responsibility for daily coordination and contact with the UNESCO Bangkok (Secretariat).
- Where there is more than one responsible ministry for the education sector (e.g. basic and higher education; general education and TVET, etc.) there should be a focal point in each of the ministries concerned and one overall coordinator.
- In case there is no suitable position in the education ministry (or relevant ministry for SDG4), the national coordinator could be the Secretary-General of the National Commission for UNESCO.

The national coordinators should have the following experience, qualities and skills:

- Have a convening role for broader partnerships around SDG4-Education 2030;
- Possess excellent communication skills;
- Be available to represent their ministry in key regional meetings on Education 2030;
- Be given time and other logistical support to carry out their functions effectively by their host ministries;
- Have a designated deputy who can represent him/her when required.

Annex C: Terms of Reference Asia-Pacific Regional Network of SDG4 National Coordinators

Terms of Reference Asia-Pacific Regional Network of SDG4-Education 2030 National Coordinators Endorsed at the First meeting of the Regional Network of National Coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030 (July 2017)

Background and context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 attach critical importance to enhancing cooperation and coordination among all countries, at all levels in the education sector and across other sectors¹⁶. The enabling role of education in achieving the other SDGs and the contribution of other SDGs towards education have also been underscored.

In response, under the aegis of the United Nations regional SDG coordination mechanism, at the Asia-Pacific level, the Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) on Education 2030+ was formed in March 2016. The RTWG-Education 2030+ builds on the work of the TWG on EFA, which operated as a key TWG within the framework of the Asia-Pacific regional coordination mechanism under the MDG framework.

To complement the TWG-EFA, a regional platform for EFA National Coordinators was established in 2002. Its main purpose was to coordinate and synergize national and regional efforts to promote collaboration and networking among the 46 Member States to plan, implement, monitor, assess and report on the status of national EFA plans.

The EFA National Coordinators gathered annually and played a pivotal role in facilitating Member States to participate in regional-level monitoring of EFA. This resulted in three major regional monitoring exercises: the Mid-decade assessment (2008); the End-of-decade review (2010); and the EFA country review (2015). The EFA National Coordinators regional platform helped sustain momentum on EFA over 15 years.

At the first Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of Education 2030 (APMED 2030) in 25–27 November 2015, the participating Member States agreed to ‘establish or strengthen a national coordination mechanism for SDG4... and identify an appropriate SDG4 coordination focal point’ (APMED 2030 Outcome document, ‘Next Steps: Actions for 2016’). Since then, over 25 countries in the region have nominated a national coordinator/focal point for SDG4, under whose leadership, national coordination mechanisms are being established in respective countries.

It is expected that these national coordinators for SDG4-Education 2030 will serve as the first point of contact for the regional TWG and its partners in coordinating and supporting technical support, as well as evidence-based policy advocacy for the effective implementation and monitoring of progress on SDG4.

¹⁶ SDG 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The second APMED 2030 unanimously agreed to renew the National Coordinators regional platform of Member States and endorsed the terms of the regional network proposed in this document herein.

Objective

To serve as a regional platform for SDG4 National Coordinators for sharing of knowledge, good practices and experience, as well as for promoting South-South-North cooperation, for the effective implementation and progress monitoring of SDG4-Education 2030.

Members

- National Coordinators of SDG4-Education 2030 or their representatives/alternates (Member States).
- RTWG Education 2030+ (mainly represented by the Co-chairs UNESCO and UNICEF).
- Asia-Pacific regional representatives of the SDG4-Education 2030 Global Steering Committee.
- SDG4 focal points of the sub-regional organizations: SEAMEO, ASEAN, SAARC, PIFS.
- Secretariat: UNESCO Bangkok.

Proposed profile of National Coordinators (see Annex B)

Main functions of the regional network

- The regional network of SDG4 national coordinators will serve as a regional platform for national coordinators to share knowledge and experiences on implementing and monitoring SDG4-Education 2030 through:
- Building partnerships and networks around SDG4-Education 2030 to stimulating and guiding a holistic vision of education as per SDG4, including the responses to emerging challenges;
- Providing synergy between education and other sectors in support of the broader SDG framework;
- Facilitating mutual learning among Member States to effectively implement the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda at national and sub-national levels;
- Fostering South-South-North cooperation across the various thematic areas of SDG4;
- Facilitating country-level participation in regional and sub-regional level monitoring exercises on SDG4-Education 2030;
- Organizing high level joint advocacy and awareness raising;
- Ensuring regular communication between regional and global level coordination (through the Global SC representatives);
- Exploring opportunities to generate and mobilize resources for effective implementation of SDG4 within the country.

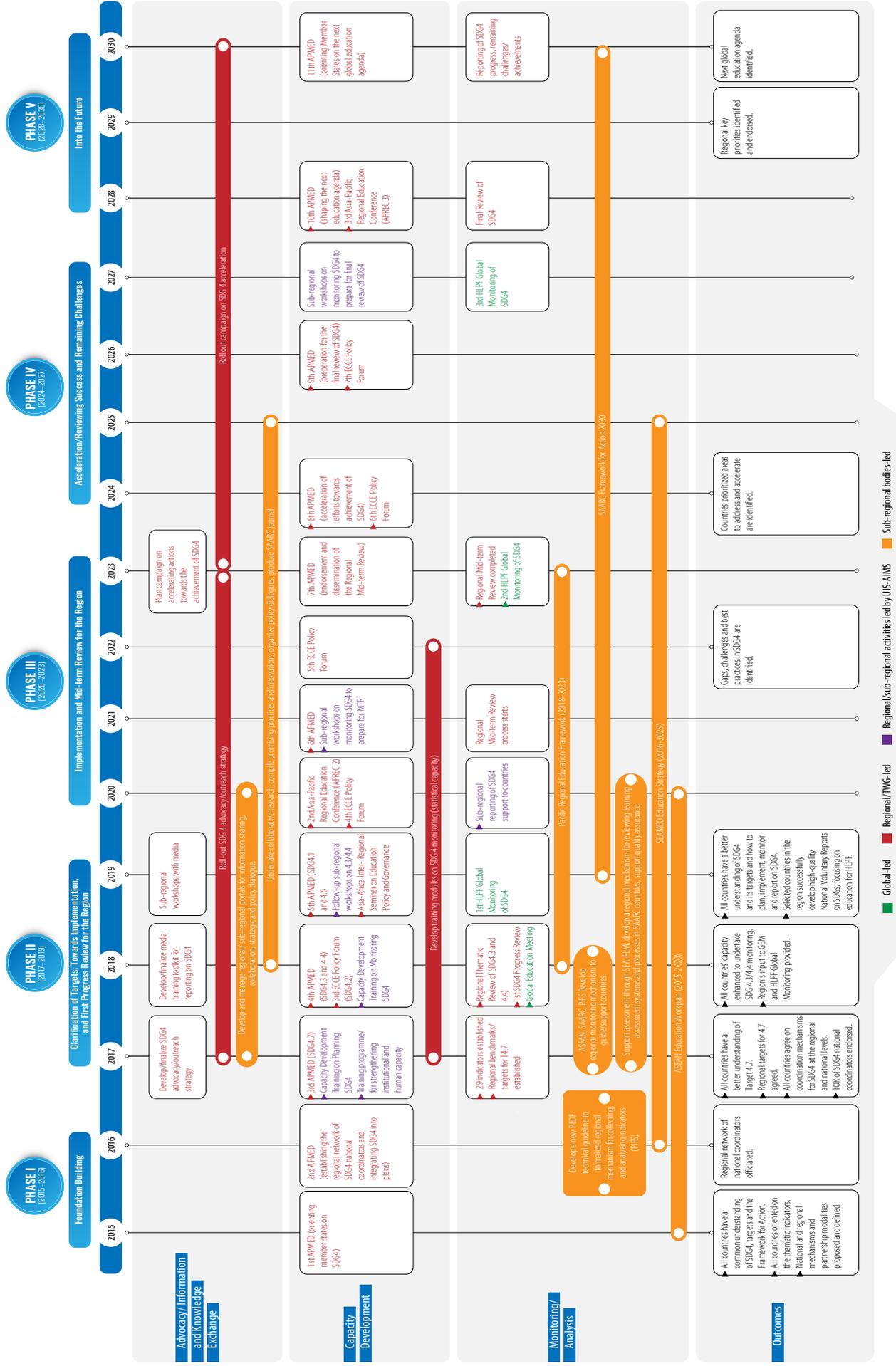
Main activities (foreseen/proposed)

- Organization of regional SDG4-Education 2030 meetings, including APMED;
- Organization of periodic regional monitoring exercises;
- Development of joint communique and/or advocacy messaging, communication materials;
- In partnership with the RTWG, conducting cross-national studies on key common issues in implementing the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda.

Timeframe

The regional network will be initiated at the second Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (18 November 2016). It should remain in place until 2030. An evaluation of its effectiveness should be undertaken by the end of 2020 and thereafter at regular intervals to ensure that the mechanism remains relevant to emerging needs.

Annex D: Asia-Pacific Regional Support Milestone



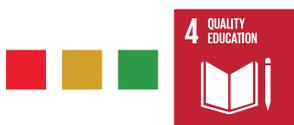


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