



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO
INSTITUTE
FOR
STATISTICS



TECHNICAL
COOPERATION
GROUP

Working Group 3: Data reporting, validation and dissemination

Terms of Reference



Background

1. With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN General Assembly in September 2015 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) at the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015, greater attention has turned to the processes which aim to set out an appropriate plan for monitoring progress towards the targets associated with SDG 4 on education. At the level of global monitoring, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) has made a proposal for global indicators which was approved by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016. A slightly refined version was agreed in March 2017 and formally adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017. At the level of sectoral thematic monitoring, the Technical Advisory Group on post-2015 education indicators (TAG), established by the UNESCO, set out a proposal for 43 thematic indicators that was included in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.
2. In this context and to lead the development and implementation of the thematic indicators for education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the UNESCO Education Sector's Division of Education 2030 Support and Coordination (UNESCO ED/ESC) convened the Technical Cooperation Group on the SDG 4-Education 2030 Indicators (TCG) in May 2016. The TCG provides a platform to discuss and develop the indicators used for monitoring the Education 2030 targets in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, involving the main stakeholders. The TCG will make recommendations on the necessary actions to improve data availability, as well as the development of methodologies for the production of thematic monitoring indicators. Additionally, it should guide the production of technical documentation needed for clear communication of the thematic indicators to monitor SDG4 - Education 2030. It includes experts from 28 Member States, international partners (OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank), civil society (Education International and Collective Consultation on NGOs), and the Co-Chair of the education 2030 Steering Committee representing Member States.
3. To facilitate the implementation of the thematic indicators for education, during the first TCG meeting (Washington, D.C, in May 2016) the creation of Working Groups was proposed to diagnose implementation difficulties of specific indicators and to provide recommendations. Currently, three Working Groups within the TCG have been created to work on three areas: indicator development, statistical capacity development at the national level, and country reporting.



4. Given the complexity and breadth of goals and targets for the SDG, and the need to assess national trends in the context of monitoring progress towards the goals, there is a need to define common principles and guidelines for data reporting by countries, data validation and data sharing/dissemination on internationally-comparable SDG indicators which are part of both global and thematic indicator frameworks.
5. There are three broad imperatives that are relevant at both national and international levels that justify the need for articulating a comprehensive set of standards for data reporting, validation and presenting statistics and metadata for publication. These concern the need to improve data quality – in all its dimensions, the need for transparency regarding the flow of data from data collection to indicator publication and to minimise the burden on countries when reporting data and metadata to international organisations.
6. Finally, it is vital to develop and adopt a common set of global indicator reporting criteria in the context of closer integration and co-ordination across international organizations. All international organizations are committed to improve the quality, coverage, transparency, and reporting of all indicators in order to enhance a coherent global monitoring of all SDGs. To achieve this end, organizations will continue to work through the IAEG-SDGs, in coordination with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and in accordance with the guidance provided by Member States through the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) (see Appendix A for documentation).

Principles to guide the activities of Working Group 3 on data reporting, validation and dissemination

7. This process starts from defining key guidelines and principles for data sharing, data validation and reporting. These principles are:
 - a. Transparency of the processes through which data are reported from national organizations to regional and international organizations, validated and finally published as indicators.
 - b. Efficiency of coordination between the many actors that provide, process and publish SDG 4 data, requiring clear communication between these actors, and the reduction of response burden for countries.
 - c. Ensure that the data and supporting metadata comply with the principles that guide statistical activities and respect the quality frameworks developed by the



- UN system Coordination Committee of Statistical Activities (CCSA) (see Appendix A for an example of a quality framework);
- d. Achieve and maintain public trust in official statistics through objective, transparent and professionally independent work by respecting the adopted set of Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities and other important standards (see Appendix A);
 - e. Identify approaches, including through capacity-building where needed, to ensure countries' reporting of quality data for all Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives and tasks

8. The objectives of the Working Group on Data Reporting, Validation and Dissemination include the following:
 - a. Increase the transparency of the flow of information from data collection to indicator publication, including clear identification of decision-making processes and the actors involved in this data flow.
 - b. Ensure that the data reporting process includes adequate metadata and clear communication of timelines and deliverables to ensure effective data validation
 - c. Ensure that there is a well-defined process whereby countries may choose to opt out of a chosen indicator because it is not relevant in that context
 - d. Ensure that there is clear communication between the international agencies that publish SDG 4 indicators and the national entities that supply the data, including adequate time and documentation for comments and feedback.
 - e. Ensure effective coordination within the international statistical system and between the international and national statistical systems by providing common and shared guidelines for defining concepts and definitions, data collection, processing and reporting practices; and define principles for effective and efficient data reporting system from the national to international level.

Membership



9. The Working Group consists of six to ten members, including three to seven member countries, one representative from civil society, one multilateral partner agency (both members of the TCG), and one representative from the UIS. Regional and organizational diversity is desirable.
10. The countries that are not presently members of the TCG but are members of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee can be invited to join the Working Group to act for underrepresented regions in the TCG.
11. The Working Group will be chaired by a member country elected by the members of the Working Group.

Roles and responsibilities of members

12. The roles and responsibilities of the Working Group members include:
 - a. Commit sufficient time and effort to achieve the tasks described in the terms of reference and additional tasks proposed by the Working Group and by the TCG.
 - b. Contribute towards successful communication and positive motivation among the Working Group members.
 - c. Link, harmonise, and coordinate with other TCG Working Groups to improve outcomes and efficiency.
13. The Chair of the Working Group and the UIS representative are responsible for meeting agendas and for supplying background information needed for discussions or for decision making. The Chair can request support from the TCG Secretariat – the UIS.

Governance

14. The Working Group will work under the auspices of the TCG and work closely with the designated UIS representative. The Working Group will report to the whole TCG at each meeting.

Organization of the work

15. The Working Group may work via electronic exchanges (e.g., emails, conference calls, UNESTEAM--a UIS maintained online workspace). The group should conduct its work in an open, inclusive, transparent and coordinated manner. The group may invite or consult experts, as appropriate, to contribute their expertise and experiences on the different areas to help achieve the objectives.



Appendix A: References

United Nations Statistical Commission (2017). Statistical Commission: Report on the forty-eighth session (7-10 March 2017)

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/>
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/Report-on-the-48th-Session-of-the-Statistical-Commission-E.pdf>

(Some of them are relevant for SDG indicators discussion)

United Nations Statistics Division (2005). Principles governing international statistical activities.

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/Principles_stat_activities/principles_stat_activities.htm

(referred in Principle 7.d in this ToR)

United Nations Statistics Division (2014). "Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics". Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 29 January 2014.

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>

(referred in Principle 7.d in this ToR)

United Nations Statistics Division (2017). UN Statistics Quality Assurance Framework

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/unsystem/Documents-March2017/UNSystem-2017-3-QAF.pdf>

(This is an example of quality frameworks promoted for the production of statistics by UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities)