TECHNICAL COOPERATION GROUP

9TH MEETING

POST-MEETING CONSULTATION RESULTS

March 2023

INTRODUCTION

The Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 indicators (TCG) has always played a major role in the measurement and monitoring of education. The TCG will continue to be instrumental in this era of 'transforming education' which focuses on putting education at the top of the political agenda, as called for during the Transforming Education Summit (16-19 September, 2022).

The 9th meeting of the TCG was held on the 24th of November 2022 and it was preceded by meetings of the following working groups on the 22nd and 23rd of November: teachers, administrative data/EMIS, joint household surveys/EMIS, finance and the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML).

The meetings discussed a variety of topics including inter alia: implementation of the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T); global minimum standards of teachers' qualification; UIS data collection mechanisms; criteria for use of national population data; establishment of the ISCED committee; use of the net enrolment ratio instead of the gross enrolment ratio for SDG indicator 4.2.4; use of surveys as data sources; greening education; school connectivity; school meals; use of model estimates to report on out-of-school rates, completion rates and minimum proficiency indicators; financing education; progress in monitoring learning; progress in benchmarking process; and organization of the first international conference of education statistics in 2023.

Following the meetings of the working groups and TCG, a number of decisions were proposed and a consultation of the TCG Members was launched in December 2022 to vote on these decisions, as per the TCG Rules for Voting. The consultation questionnaire is found on the TCG9 meeting page. Most voting countries and organizations submitted their votes (90%) which ensures regional representation. All the results of the post-TCG consultation are presented in this report by working group and they are summarized in tables 1 to 6.

A. WORKING GROUP ON TEACHERS

The two decisions proposed following the working group on teachers were approved.

1. Approved the implementation plan of the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) and the proposed questionnaire for data collection.

ISCED-T was developed in close consultation with the TCG since 2019 and was adopted by the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2021 ([41 C/resolution 15](#)). Further to the adoption of the classification, the UIS developed an implementation strategy, with inputs from the ISCED-T Technical Advisory Panel. The plan and proposed questionnaire for data collection were both approved by the TCG.

2. Approved the prevalence rate that will be set and used to determine the global metrics for minimum standard teachers' qualification for each level of education.

The definition of a global minimum standard of teacher qualification by level of education taught has a direct impact on the quality of preparation of teachers for their profession. Setting this important standard requires consideration to the existing countries' standards, many of which are low to yield 'sufficient' quality teaching and learning for all.

While a low global standard is not an option, a too high global standard may be too ambitious to achieve, especially for countries where enrolment rates in higher levels of education are relatively low, limiting the pool of potential candidates to the teaching profession and making achievement of the global standard realistically challenging.

The prevalence rate and minimum country standard will be determined to guide the definition of a global minimum standard of qualification to teach a specific level of education (ISCED 02, 1, 2, 3).

Table 1: Consultation outcomes of the working group on teachers

Decision	Options	Results (%)
T1	**Approve the implementation plan of the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) and use the proposed questionnaire for data collection on the classification.**	**76**
	Delay the implementation plan of ISCED-T to further discuss it.	24
T2	**Approve suitable country coverage (prevalence rate) to be used to determine the global metrics for minimum standard teachers' qualification to teach a specific level of education (ISCED 02, 1, 2, 3).**	**75**
	Refine further the proposal of the global metrics for submission to the next TCG meeting in 2023.	25

Reference documents:
- [WG/T/2](#) Progress with the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) ([Presentation](#)) ([Proposed questionnaire](#))

- **WG/T/3** National definitions of trained and qualified teachers: results from the metadata collection and feasibility survey - Proposal of a global minimum standard of teacher qualifications by level of education and political process of validation (Presentation)

B. WORKING GROUP ON ADMINISTRATIVE DATA/EMIS

1. Approved the criteria for use of national population data in indicator calculation and the operational implementation process.

The criteria and the operational implementation process are available in the reference documents below.

2. Approved the establishment of the ISCED Committee and its mandate, size, composition, proposed work assignment and timeline.

The purpose of the ISCED committee is to advise on the classification of national programmes and qualifications, to review the current version of ISCED and to identify areas for further development.

3. Approved the use of a net enrolment ratio instead of a gross enrolment ratio for SDG indicator 4.2.4, if it can be assured that the necessary data are available for most/all countries.

The decision made may help overcome the challenge of over-estimates of enrolment associated with the use of the gross enrolment ratio and will hence allow policymakers to take better informed decisions.

The challenge will remain to ensure that the requested data by age are available for most or all countries. Currently, good data by age are available for almost all OECD countries and some non-OECD countries.

Table 2: Consultation outcomes of the working group on administrative data/EMIS

Decision	Options	Results (%)
A1	**Approve criteria for use of national population data in indicator calculation and the operational implementation process.**	**92**
	Review and amend the proposed criteria and operational implementation process and resubmit to the next TCG meeting in 2023.	8
A2	**Approve the establishment of the ISCED Committee and its mandate, size, composition, proposed work assignment and timeline.**	**92**
	Do not establish ISCED Committee.	8
A3	**Use of a net enrolment ratio instead of a gross enrolment ratio for SDG indicator 4.2.4, if it can be assured that the necessary data are available for most/all countries.**	**83**
	Further explore the availability and feasibility for more non-OECD countries to report data for NER calculation.	17

Reference documents:
- **WG/EMIS/3** National Population Data: criteria for use in UIS indicator calculation (Presentation) (Download the national population questionnaire)

- WG/EMIS/5 Terms of Reference: International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Committee (Presentation)
- WG/EMIS/4 Use of a net enrolment ratio instead of a gross enrolment ratio for indicator 4.2.4 (OECD proposal) (Presentation)

C. JOINT WORKING GROUP ON HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS AND EMIS

1. Approved the use of household surveys as a data source to report on SDG indicator 4.1.5, or the percentage of children over-age for grade in primary and lower secondary education.

The majority of TCG members agreed on the use of household surveys as an additional source to report on indicator 4.1.5, where possible with centralized processing and quality control provided by regional statistical agencies, in agreement with the UIS and with validation by Member States.

However, it is important to note that when both administrative and household survey data are available, the priority will be to use administrative data for indicator 4.1.5.

2. Support the further development of a 'green schools' indicator and a 'green policy intentions' indicator.

These 2 indicators are being developed in response to the High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) decision to identify indicators to follow-up the TES greening education global initiative to monitor at least one of the four dimensions identified: Greening Schools; Greening Learning; Greening Teacher Capacity and Readiness; and Greening Communities. Please note that these two indicators are not mutually exclusive. They are the following:

- 'Green schools' indicator: Percentage of schools with green accreditation in compliance with the UNESCO Quality Standard on Green Schools.
- 'Green policy intentions' indicator: National policy intentions based on the analysis of the content of relevant policy documents.

3. Approved to add global indicator 4.a.1 on the proportion of schools connected to the internet as a benchmark indicator.

The global indicator 4.a.1 was proposed as the indicator for the digital learning initiative which aims to monitor at least one of the three dimensions of the public digital learning for all global initiative launched at the Transforming Education Summit (TES): content, capacity, connectivity.

There was a general approval that indicator 4.a.1 on schools connected to internet could be used as a benchmark indicator to reflect on digital learning.

4. Approved the proposal to add a thematic indicator on the proportion of school children receiving school meals under the SDG target 4.a framework.

The development of this new indicator under the SDG 4 framework was important to shed light on the relation between hunger, malnutrition and education. Following the Transforming Education Summit, a broad constituency called for the explicit inclusion of a school meal indicator in the SDG4 framework.

The health and nutrition of school-aged children has been neglected in global measuring and accountability frameworks until recently when several initiatives from UN agencies and governments began to address the issue. Today, there is strong consensus that we need to measure the extent to which school children are supported with health and nutrition interventions as part of our efforts to assess child wellbeing, support learning, foster human capital development and sustainable and resilient communities.

5. Approved the proposal to use model estimates to report the following:
- Regional and global averages for out-of-school, completion and minimum proficiency indicators
- National values of out-of-school rates for countries that have not reported data during the last 5 years

6. Approved to discontinue the reporting on SDG indicator 4.6.3

Indicator 4.6.3 or the participation rate of illiterate youth/adults in literacy programs has not been reported for the last 11 years and the coverage rate for this indicator in the UIS database in the period from 2010 to 2022 is 0%.

Table 3: Consultation outcomes of the joint working group on household surveys and EMIS

Decision	Options	Results (%)
S1	**Use of household surveys as a data source to report on SDG indicator 4.1.5, where possible with centralized processing and quality control provided by regional statistical agencies, in agreement with the UIS and with validation by Member States. When both administrative and household survey data are available, the priority will be to use administrative data.**	**87**
	No action.	13
S2	**Support the further development of the 'green schools' indicator: Percentage of schools with green accreditation in compliance with the UNESCO Quality Standard on Green Schools.** *(not mutually exclusive with decision S3)*	**70**
	Do not consider a 'green schools' indicator.	30
S3	**Support the further development of the 'national policy intentions' indicator based on analysis of the content of relevant policy documents (e.g. national curriculum frameworks, education sector plans, laws and policies)** *(not mutually exclusive with decision S2)*	**67**
	Do not consider a 'green policy intentions' indicator (e.g. explore other prospective ideas, such as official timetable analysis in grades 1-8; subject-specific syllabi for select grades or global census/mapping of climate focused organizations).	33
S4	**Approval of proposal to add global indicator 4.a.1 on the proportion of schools connected to the internet as a benchmark indicator.**	**92**
	Do not approve the proposal.	8
S5	**Approval of proposal to add a thematic indicator on the proportion of school children receiving school meals under the SDG target 4.a framework.**	**70**
	Do not approve the new indicator.	30
S6	**Approval of proposal to report regional and global averages using model estimates on out-of-school, completion and minimum proficiency indicators.**	**83**
	Do not use model estimates for regional and global averages.	17
S7	**Approval of proposal to report national values using model estimates on out-of-school rates for countries that have not reported data during the last 5 years.**	**91**
	Do not use model estimates for countries with no recent data.	9
S8	**Discontinue the reporting on SDG indicator 4.6.3 (the participation rate of illiterate youth/adults in literacy programs)**	**58**
	Discontinue the reporting of the indicator and explore new sources and alternative framing.	38
	Do not know	4

Reference documents:

- WG/HHS/5 Feasibility analysis for the construction of new indicators (Preliminary version) (Presentation)
- WG/HHS/6 Content analysis of national policies towards greening education
  Presentation of a 'Green schools' indicator
  Presentation of a 'Green policy intentions' indicator

- WG/HHS/7 Connecting the dots: the link between hunger, malnutrition and education: Proposal for a new indicator under the SDG 4 framework (Presentation)
- School meals coalition leaders' declaration
- WG/HHS/2 A Bayesian Cohort Model for Estimating SDG Indicator 4.1.4: out-of-school rates: A proposal by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report - Out-of-school rate estimation
- WG/HHS/3 A Bayesian model for estimating Sustainable Development Goal indicator 4.1.2: School completion rates
- Presentation Estimating SDG 4 Indicators with a Bayesian Modelling Framework: Completion and Out-of-School Rates
- WG/HHS/8 Using Labour Force Surveys to report on indicators SDG 4.6.3, SDG 4.6.2, and SDG 4.3.1

D. WORKING GROUP ON FINANCE

1. Approved the proposed indicator on initial financing for education by financing unit as a percent of GDP (general government, private sector households, rest-of-world ODA).

The monitoring framework for financing education includes indicators on public expenditure nationally as a percent of GDP and on spending per student (SDG 4.5.4) by source. However, it currently omits expenditure nationally by households or by source more broadly. The data needed to estimate expenditure on education including household expenditure collected by the Formal Education Survey of the UIS has limited coverage particularly for low- and middle-income countries, but alternative data sources do exist.

The objectives of this indicator are:
- To measure the total amount of expenditure, both public and private, on education
- To understand the source of this expenditure
- To measure this indicator using data that can be feasibly collected.

The indicator is calculated as follows:

$$initial\ government\ financing\ \%\ of\ GDP =$$

$$total\ expenditure\ as\ a\ \%\ of\ GDP$$

$$-\frac{Rest\ of\ world\ education\ receipts}{GDP}$$

$$-\frac{private\ sector\ transfers\ received}{GDP}$$

Table 4: Consultation outcomes of the working group on finance

Decision	Options	Results (%)
F1	**Approve as indicator initial financing for education by financing unit (general government, private sector households, rest-of-world ODA) as a percent of GDP.**	**82**
	No action.	18

Reference documents:

- [WG/F/3](#) Total initial financing for education as a percent of GDP by financing unit: Proposed Indicator ([Presentation](#))

E. GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO MONITOR LEARNING (GAML) WORKING GROUP

1. Endorsed the updated definition of Minimum Proficiency Levels (MPLs)

The MPLs definitions contained in 'Minimum Proficiency Levels Unpacked version 2, 2021' were previously agreed by the TCG/GAML 7. The main changes include revised and extended sample items for the reading MPLs; a summary description of changes to the MPLs spanning from 2018 to 2022; and a statement on the alignment between the SDG 4.1.1 MPLs and the Global Proficiency Framework.

It is worth noting that the current updates to the MPL document do not affect the correspondence with the MPL cut-off points of each cross-national assessment, as previously defined.

2. Endorsed the decision of not using science scores in TIMSS grades 4 and 8 as a proxy for the minimum proficiency in reading at the end of primary and lower secondary respectively.

The analysis did not provide enough evidence to support the use of science scores in TIMSS grades 4 and 8 as a proxy to measure reading at the end of primary education and lower secondary education.

3. Acknowledged the work of the International Standard Setting Exercise (ISSE) and took note of the progress made in identifying cut-points on an empirical learning progression scale for each of reading and mathematics.

The ISSE rationale is to further develop approaches to harmonise quantitative data across assessment programs, and to provide substantive information about children's learning levels and progress benchmarked against international standards. Its main goal is to place thresholds on empirical reading and mathematics Learning Progression Scales. The ISSE is a step closer to building a high-quality global framework for countries around the world to use their own regional or national learning assessments for monitoring progress towards achieving SDG4.

4. Approved the proposal to discontinue the reporting on SDG indicator 4.7.6 which measured the extent to which national education policies and education sector plans recognize a breadth of skills that needs to be enhanced in national education systems.

The reason behind the proposal to discontinue the reporting on indicator 4.7.6 is the low coverage. In fact, only four countries have reported on this indicator, as a result of a project that has not been continued: the coverage rate for indicator SDG 4.7.6 in the UIS database is therefore just 2%.

Table 5: Consultation outcomes of the GAML working group

Decision	Options	Results (%)
L1	**Endorse the update to the MPL document, whereby the current version will supersede the previous version.**	**100**
	Do not endorse the update to the MPL document.	0

L2	Use of science proficiency in TIMSS grades 4 and 8 as a proxy for the minimum proficiency in reading at the end of primary and lower secondary respectively.	18
	Do not use science scores as a proxy.	**82**
L3	**Take note of the progress made in identifying cut-points on an empirical learning progression scale for each of reading and mathematics.**	**89**
	Do not endorse MPL cut points on the empirical progression scale.	11
L4	**Discontinue the reporting on SDG indicator 4.7.6 (extent to which national education policies and education sector plans recognize a breadth of skills that needs to be enhanced in national education systems).**	**54**
	Discontinue the reporting of the indicator and investigate more into the appropriate sources to capture the 3 identified aspects of the indicator: teaching and learning, assessment and accountability, enabling environment	**46**

Reference documents:
- WG/GAML/4 Minimum Proficiency Levels Unpacked (October 2022) (Presentation)
- WG/GAML/6 The feasibility of using science scores from different educational assessments as proxy measures of literacy to measure SDG 4.1.1 (Presentation)
- WG/GAML/5 International Standards Setting Exercise: Final Report (November 2022) (Presentation)

F. TCG MEETING

1. Approved the organization of the first international conference on education statistics during the second half of 2023.

The conference will have the following objectives:
- To reflect on the experience and lessons of SDG 4 benchmarking process
- To promote common understanding of recent methodological developments
- To reach broader constituency and capture the needs and demands of Member States
- To provide an opportunity to the community of practice to meet
- To identify potential process improvements
- To discuss the future agenda

Table 6: Consultation outcomes of the TCG meeting

Decision	Options	Results (%)
P1	**Organize the first international conference on education statistics to achieve broader understanding of recent methodological developments in SDG 4 monitoring and approve the preliminary agenda.**	**96**
	Do not organize a conference.	4

Reference documents:
- International conference on education statistics: A proposal (Presentation)