



**12<sup>TH</sup> FORUM EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING**

**ICT Video Conference Room 1, University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, Fiji**

**13 - 14 April 2021**

**SESSION FIVE: Regional SDG 4 Benchmarking exercise (Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+), UNESCO Institute of Statistics, SPC**

*(PacREF(21) FEdMM.09)*

*(Theme: Building resilience in Pacific education systems)*

*(Paper prepared by SPC/EQAP and UIS)*

<b>Title/Topic</b>	ESTABLISHING REGIONAL BENCHMARKS FOR SDG4-RELEVANCE AND PROCESSES
<b>Presenting Agency/Unit</b>	Education Quality Assessment Programme (SPC/EQAP) UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
<b>Purpose of the Brief</b>	The brief is to inform Ministers of the relevance of establishing regional benchmarks for SDG4 and PacREF indicators and its processes.
<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PacREF provides a means for identifying and understanding similarities and differences across the Pacific region. It offers organizing mechanisms for sector planning, reporting and collaboration, and it provides development partners with an understanding of where the region’s resourcing priorities lie. It supports activities that are politically feasible and technically sound and that have a high probability of producing the desired outcomes. The Pacific Regional Education Framework has adapted SDG4 goal and targets in six principles: 1) Regionalism and mutually beneficial partnerships; 2) Application of evidence to policy and practice; 3) Efficiency in the use of resources; 4) Equity in access and opportunity; 5) High quality and relevant inputs and; 6) Sustainable and high-quality outcomes.</li> <li>• Establishing Regional benchmarks of the SDG4 in one hand help regional partners and agencies to promote appropriate policies and advocacies in achieving the SDG4 targets in another hand it helps in systematic monitoring of SDG4 in the region. A set of indicators to benchmark was adopted by the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) in August 2019. The proposal was based on a review of proposals by TCG members, which concluded that it would be possible to set benchmarks for 6 of the 43 SDG 4 indicators – plus the Framework for Action expenditure indicators – based on past trends, country coverage, frequency of data and policy relevance. As the regional benchmarks should reflect the regional and national situations and be relevant for regional and national educational policies, the (sub) regional organization has a critical role to play in coordinating and establishing the benchmarks. The paper discusses the relevance of the Regional benchmarks and its processes – political and technical processes.</li> <li>• The process of establishing regional benchmarks should align with PacREF MELF and reflects the regional and national situation. The <b>Technical process</b> will include the technical consultations and discussions involving technical expertise and officials from member states in setting the benchmarks for different indicators. Such consultations will be coordinated by regional bodies like SPC and PIFS with the support from UIS and Asia and Pacific TWG-Education 2030. The <b>Political process</b> will include discussion during the high-level political forums such as FEdMM and PHES and mobilize commitment from Member States for the process and endorsement of the benchmarks.</li> <li>• The SPC together with other regional partners such PIFS would be the main partners and can take the lead in setting up of benchmarks for the region and organize regional consultation meeting with UNESCO/UIS.</li> <li>• UIS and SPC is providing technical support to establish regional benchmarks for SDG4 indicators and provided interim benchmarks. The proposed benchmarks have been presented</li> </ul>	

<p>and discussed during regional technical consultations. The benchmarks are also consulted through sub regional consultation to get countries’ feedbacks. Eventually, the benchmarks will be finalized reflecting countries’ feedback and inputs.</p>	
<p><b>Critical Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing Regional benchmarks of the SDG4 is an important process for prioritizing education agenda and promoting appropriate policies and advocacies in the region</li> <li>• The establishing of regional benchmarks will be very relevant to Pacific and can help to harmonize PacREF and global monitoring framework and monitoring regional SDG 4 progress through developing systematic data collection strategies.</li> <li>• Establishing Regional benchmarks for the SDG4 indicators mobilized commitments from different partners and it is a collective effort of all the partners in the region.</li> <li>• The benchmark indicators are fully aligning with PacREF MEL framework and will help to monitor the progress towards its implementation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Ministers are requested to note:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that setting regional benchmarks would be very useful for UNESCO Member States to develop appropriate policies and strategies to achieve the key targets as well to steer regional and international organizations assistance towards improving availability and quality of key data against those targets;</li> <li>• the adoption of regional benchmarks requires the political commitment of the ministers of education and technical leadership of the members of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES);</li> <li>• the challenges facing the ministries of education in collecting, analyzing and reporting against large scale data requirements and therefore need to prioritizing specific targets and indicators by which progress will be measured;</li> <li>• the need to align the priority targets with the expected outcomes of the PacREF programme;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ministerial decision required:</b></p>	<p><b>Ministers are invited to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>agree</b> to the development of regional benchmarks for bridging the national, regional and global processes in monitoring and reporting of SDG 4;</li> <li>b) <b>support</b> harmonization of methodologies, tools, and periodicity of reporting on progress of SDG 4; and</li> <li>c) <b>request</b> for a comprehensive update from the UIS and SPC on progress of SDG4 based on regional benchmarks in the next FEdMM</li> </ol>
<p><b>Minister’s Position</b></p>	