A. Background

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000) foresaw the need for regular monitoring and reporting of progress and gaps in the achievement of Education for All as a basis for continuous review of national policy and international support towards education for all.

These General Guidelines have been prepared and endorsed by the Regional Thematic Working Group in Bangkok, Thailand to assist Governments in planning their own national assessment of Education for All (EFA). The procedures outlined here may need to be adapted to fit the particular situation of each country. However, Governments are strongly encouraged to set up as soon as possible a national assessment group with a technical sub-group (see section D).

B. Purpose

The EFA Mid-Decade Assessment is a major, global endeavour that aims to enable the participating countries (i) to construct a comprehensive picture of their progress towards their own Education for All goals since 2000, (ii) to identify priorities and promising strategies for overcoming obstacles and accelerating progress, and (iii) to revise their national plans of action accordingly. The results should be useful for policy makers, planners and managers both within and outside government. The Assessment process will also provide an opportunity to refocus attention on the goals and targets of EFA and reinvigorate efforts to provide lifelong learning opportunities of good quality for all.

C. Scope: What Needs to be Reviewed?

Education for All (EFA) refers to the provision of lifelong learning opportunities in the sense of the "expanded vision" proclaimed in the Dakar Framework for Action adopted in Dakar, Senegal. Consequently, the Assessment should cover public and private programmes, activities and services, both in school and out-of-school that aim to provide for the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults through quality educational opportunities. The Assessment should seek to cover the six EFA goals set forth in the Dakar Framework for Action (see box on next page), giving particular attention to gaps in progress towards the achievement of EFA and to any disparities in the provision of education. It should also examine (i) the principal steps taken in the country since the World Education Forum in line with the Dakar Framework for Action; (ii) the implementation of EFA strategies and plans; (iii) the mobilization and use of financial and other resources for EFA; and (iv) the results obtained.
The goals set out in Dakar are designed to enable individuals to realize their right to learn and to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the development of their society. They are global in nature, drawn from the outcomes of regional EFA conferences and the international development targets to which countries are already committed. Individual countries, through a process of consultation among all stakeholders in education and with the assistance of the wider international community and EFA follow-up mechanisms, should set their own goals, intermediate targets and timelines within existing or new national educational plans.

The six EFA goals in their entirety:
1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

D. National EFA Assessments
Who should participate? In accord with the principle of partnerships towards EFA, it is important that the Assessment involve the principal "actors" at all levels. While the Ministry of Education is usually the primary provider of basic education, other government services as well as local authorities, the media, and voluntary and private organizations concerned with basic education should participate in the Assessment. Their involvement is necessary and useful: (i) to obtain a comprehensive picture of EFA, (ii) to collect, analyze and interpret information from varied perspectives, and (iii) to mobilize partners and to plan further work to achieve EFA goals. Governments should consider also inviting the local offices of the principal sponsors of the World Education Forum (UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank), principal members of the Thematic Working Group on EFA, and other multilateral and bilateral
cooperation agencies that support EFA activities to participate in the Assessment.

**Who should manage the Assessment?** Drawing from experience in carrying out the Mid-Decade Review of EFA (1995-96) and EFA 2000 Assessment, it is strongly recommended that each country re-constitute or re-establish, if necessary, an **EFA Assessment Group** (committee, task force, team) led by the **National EFA Coordinator** (a senior level person released to work full-time, with staff support), to be responsible for (i) organizing the group’s work, (ii) liaising with the EFA Forum, and (iii) preparing the country’s EFA assessment report. The assessment group’s members should be selected on a pragmatic basis, with representatives of several government departments involved directly or indirectly in the provision of education (e.g. ministries of education, social affairs, women and children, local government, labour, agriculture, health, information and broadcasting, finance, development planning, etc.), national universities and research institutes, as well as representatives of the interested actors outside government (e.g. parliamentarians, religious organizations, community associations, NGOs, newspaper groups, broadcasting companies, trade unions, employers’ groups, etc.) It is recommended that governments with an existing national EFA coordinating body assign it the important capacity of steering and advising the Assessment.

**How should the Assessment be carried out?** In planning the Assessment process, five considerations need to be taken into account: (i) how to make best use of existing information and to obtain any additional information needed (from ad hoc surveys, non-governmental sources, UN agencies, etc.); (ii) how to involve the principal EFA "actors" in the Assessment; (iii) how to best use available tools such as DevInfo for data collection and presentation; (iv) how to make use of the Assessment process to update strategies and plans for expanding and improving basic education; and (v) how to use the Assessment findings to build public and political support for Education for All.

Various actors may be constructively involved in the Assessment through committee work, interviews, commissioned reports and studies, position papers, questionnaires, etc. Since the collection and analysis of data and other information are essential for the Assessment exercise, the EFA Assessment Group should immediately appoint a **technical sub-group** composed of a mix of planners, school inspectors, statisticians and researchers, to supervise and carry out this important function. Where possible, some of this work could be entrusted to a competent research institute or university. Principal UN agencies and partners have pledged support for capacity-building and training in use of DevInfo (point iii above) and further technical support as necessary.

**E. The Regional Assessment Process**

All countries are invited to participate in the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and take charge of their own **national EFA assessment** in line with the following calendar:
Calendar of Mid-Decade Assessment Activities
in the Asia and the Pacific Region

2006
- First Quarter: prepare and distribute guidelines and generic national report template; global strategy meeting and launch of national assessment
- Second Quarter: advisory and technical assistance missions and national workshops
- Third Quarter: sub-regional peer review of draft policy reports and data compilation and analysis workshop
- Fourth Quarter: draft national data and policy analysis reports

2007
- First Quarter: penultimate draft national reports (technical working document)
- Second Quarter: final national reports approved and released by governments
- Third Quarter: sub-regional peer review of draft sub-regional synthesis reports
- Fourth Quarter: regional synthesis report

2008
- Mid-term regional policy review

F. Reporting

Reporting the results of the national Assessment can be useful in building public awareness and in shaping public policy. A "reporting strategy" should be seen as an important part of the Assessment. Several versions of the Assessment report may be envisaged, e.g. a full technical report with detailed data analyses for planners and senior administrators; a narrative report stressing policy implications for the Cabinet, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament, the National Education Council, etc.; and a summary version or ‘People’s Report’, using non-technical language for the press, local school committees, and the interested public.

In addition, Governments are requested to report their principal findings to the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA, which will analyze all the country reports with a view to establishing a regional picture of progress toward Education for All and drawing conclusions for consideration by the international community.

Please note that Members States should continue to use existing channels for reporting education statistics to UNESCO. The Mid-Decade EFA Assessment will utilize ‘raw’ data\(^1\) used by Member States for their own internal analysis. As this data are not ISCED standardized and UIS quality-controlled and therefore may not be appropriate for comparison across countries with different education structures.

---

\(^1\) Caveat: Please note that the "raw data" utilized by the countries for their own internal analysis are not ISCED standardized and UIS quality-controlled and therefore may not be appropriate for comparison across countries with different education structures. For comparative purposes, you may refer to the data set published by UIS (www.uis.unesco.org). ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education.
G. First steps at country level
   • Reconvene the EFA Assessment Group
   • Appoint a Technical Sub-Group
   • Communicate the National EFA Coordinator’s name, title, postal and e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers to the EFA Regional Coordination Team (address below).

   Further communications concerning the Assessment will be addressed to the designated National EFA Coordinators.

H. For information about the Assessment contact:

   EFA Regional Coordination Team
   UNESCO Bangkok
   Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
   920 Sukhumvit Road
   Bangkok 10110 Thailand
   Email: efa@unescobkk.org
   www.unescobkk.org/efa

   Regional Adviser – Education
   UNICEF
   East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
   P.O. Box 2-154
   Bangkok 10200, Thailand
   Email: cmeyers@unicef.org
   www.unicef.org