

Domestic Financing Campaign Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1) What does GPE mean by taking a “holistic” approach to education financing as part of its new strategy?

Recognizing that education systems transformation requires not just mobilizing resources, but also improving the effectiveness of spending, GPE’s new operating model and domestic financing campaign focus on a more holistic approach to domestic financing:

Volume: Ensuring partner countries allocate adequate resources to education to accelerate progress towards delivery of quality education for all, and that this spending is directed at key sector reforms.

Equity: The poorest households often bear a disproportionate burden in funding education, as public education expenditure tends to favor wealthier, more powerful groups. Public financing for education should be focused on the most marginalized, ensuring both access and quality learning across a full cycle of education.

Efficiency: It is estimated that almost one third of education spending is lost to inefficiencies. Of key concern is technical efficiency (using minimum resource levels to achieve best outcomes) and internal efficiency (minimizing dropout and repetition).

2) Why has GPE shifted to the term “commitments” rather than “pledges” for the Global Education Summit: Financing GPE 2021–2025?

The domestic financing agenda remains central to the GPE model. Given the roll out of the new operating model which encompasses this broader approach to domestic financing, GPE has shifted from the term “pledges” to “commitments” to elevate domestic financing to the highest political level.

The Global Education Summit in July 2021 will be a key opportunity for countries to share their commitment to prioritize, protect and increase domestic financing at Head of State and/or Minister of Education level. But efforts to keep domestic financing high on the political agenda do not stop there.

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Political will generated through the financing campaign and the summit will be leveraged to support and protect commitments to domestic financing through the roll out of GPE's new operating model.

Lessons learned from previously replenishment campaigns: in the past GPE Secretariat had adopted a 'bean counting approach' by tallying up commitments to the last dollar. This also involved a complex pledging framework looking at different budget parameters. This was not effective for tracking, nor did it result in high-level political commitment of the nature President Kenyatta is driving.

At the individual country level, GPE has shifted from asking for exact dollar values countries would spend over next five years, to asking for the share of budget that will be spent on education. This is a more meaningful, realistic and trackable number at country level, that more easily lends itself to accountability e.g. by X year country Y committed to be at 16% of the budget.

3) What is GPE's ask of partner countries in its 2021 financing campaign?

The vision of the 2021 Raise Your Hand financing campaign is to drive a step-change in education financing to address the learning crisis in developing countries. One of the goals is to leverage more and better domestic finance for education.

GPE's strategy to encourage more and better domestic financing has two components:

- (1.) A high-level collective political statement championed and driven by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, inviting heads of state and government from GPE partner countries to prioritize, protect and increase education within their budgets. The statement also calls on bi- and multilateral donors to support efforts to expand fiscal space for social sector spending. The statement calls on both partner countries and donors to improve spending on education.
- (2.) Individual commitments by Ministries of Education in GPE partner countries that outline commitments in two parts:
 - a. VOLUME: to ensure education expenditures remain at least at pre-COVID levels and move towards the 20% global benchmark where possible. Commitments should clearly indicate how these objectives will be achieved, ideally over a 5-year timeframe, in line with the duration of GPE's strategy. It is recommended

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that commitments be presented as a share, in line with internationally agreed benchmarks.

- b. EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY: commitments might include introduction of gender-responsive budgeting, better development and management of the teacher workforce and payrolls, improvements in timeliness and accessibility of data for mutual accountability, national recovery stimulus spending targeting education, as well strengthened cross sector initiatives, including restoring/expanding school health and nutrition programs to leave no one behind. GPE also encourages commitments to strengthen the working relationship between Ministries of Finance and Education.

4) How do countries articulate their commitments to domestic financing at the Global Education Summit in July 2021?

First, through endorsing President Kenyatta' statement on domestic financing at the head of state/government level. This statement will be featured at the summit.

Secondly, by the Minister of Education making an individual country commitment on domestic financing, on behalf of the government and Ministry of Education. It is expected that the commitments will be developed in collaboration with other relevant ministries, including Ministry of Finance as relevant. Ministries are also encouraged to share the commitment with the Local Education Group (LEG), including civil society partners.

5) Which countries have been approached to make commitments?

Countries eligible to receive GPE's main grant (systems transformation grant) have been invited to make a commitment. Roughly 70 in total, and this is the same list of countries President Kenyatta has invited to endorse his statement.

6) If a country attends the summit, is there a requirement (or at least an expectation) that they will sign on to (endorse) President Kenyatta's political statement? Similarly, is there a requirement or expectation that attendance means making an individual country commitment?

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There is an expectation that countries who attend the summit will have endorsed the President Kenyatta's political statement at the Head of State/Government level.

There is an expectation that a country attending the Summit will also be ready to make an individual country commitment.

Participation at the summit by a country that has not endorsed the political statement nor made an individual commitment will be considered by the co-hosts on a case by case basis.

7) **How do we meaningfully contextualize the volume of education expenditure?**

The value of education expenditure only has meaning in context – for example, monetary expenditure is highly positively correlated with population size and country income (bigger or richer countries are likely to spend more in dollar terms on education). As such, we typically report education spending relative to the size of one of two other variables:

(1.) Education expenditure as a % of total government spending

Total government spending incorporates all spending by the federal government, funded by sources including money raised through domestic resource mobilization (primarily taxation), government borrowing, and aid money received from donors.

What does this tell us? When measured this way, we can consider education spending as a measure of how much of its total resource pool (budget) government is willing to commit to, and actually spends on, education (i.e. how does government prioritize education relative to other sectors?)

A value of 20% is often cited as the "ideal" for this measure in international agreements.

(2.) Education expenditure as a % of gross domestic product (GDP)

GDP is the most commonly cited international measure of a country's wealth, or the extent of its economic activity. Technically, GDP is defined as the monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders during the course of a year. Note that GDP therefore also includes goods and services produced by foreign entities within a country.

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What does this tell us? Considering education expenditure relative to the size of GDP allows us to understand what proportion of a country's total resources are committed to education, i.e. how much a government spends on education relative to the wealth or capacity of the country as a whole to pay for education. Notice that the key difference between this and measure (1.) lies in government capacity (and willingness) to mobilize domestic resources as a revenue source: inefficient or ineffective tax systems (or a political philosophy that dictates lower tax rates) means a smaller tax base, and therefore less government revenue raised for a given level of GDP.

A benchmark of 4 to 6% of GDP dedicated to education expenditures is codified in international agreements.

8) **What is contained in the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#) which the GPE Secretariat shared? How do I navigate the different tabs?**

The [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#) shared with advocacy partners is intended to help guide volume commitments.

The data sheet records as many as possible of the following variables from country budget documents for fiscal years 2013 to 2019 (not all countries have full coverage of all variables or all years, as budget reporting formats differ across countries.):

- Total government expenditure, with capital/recurrent breakdown
- Debt servicing payments (interest and capital)
- Education expenditures with capital/recurrent breakdown

Both budget information and actual expenditures (or estimated actuals) are recorded, if available. In addition, the Secretariat has added information on historical (actual) GDP from the IMF. Together, these allow for calculation of a variety of education expenditure indicators, as reflected in the tab "Summary" (the tab "Summary inputs" lists the underlying information by country). To reduce the density of information provided, only figures from 2016 – 2019 are provided in summary.

The individual country tabs reflect more granular information as available: sources of revenue (domestic vs. external), salaries and pensions, local government transfers, and line ministries from which education expenditures originate. Sub-sectoral breakdowns for primary and pre-primary are also provided where budget reporting allows. All figures reported are in national currency.

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NOTE: many countries do not track accounts from January to December, but rather have a “fiscal year” that ends in the middle of a calendar year. As such “2019” refers to the fiscal year ended in 2019; countries in the sample will inevitably have different fiscal years.

9) What is the source of the information in the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#)? Can we get more recent information? And what about projections for future years?

The Secretariat undertakes an annual exercise to review national data sources to assess actual education expenditures across all partner countries to inform its results report. This includes review of official national data sources including budget books, financial laws, annexes to budget speeches, financial reports, budget reports, and medium-term expenditure frameworks. Only publicly available information is used for this exercise, and where possible the source of information is hyperlinked in the country data collection template. In some instances, the Secretariat relies on hard copy budget documents obtained from in-country partners.

Since the purpose of the results-framework exercise described above is ideally to reflect actual (i.e. executed budget) rather than projected expenditures, we do not collect future budget projections. Furthermore, given the resource-intensive nature of this exercise, the Secretariat only has capacity to undertake data collection on an annual basis. Data are only made publicly available once they have been reviewed by relevant partner country government focal points.

Note: other institutions and countries themselves (including information submitted in GPE grants) may report education spending figures that look somewhat different to GPE results framework information. This is because the perimeter of education spending (i.e. “what is included in education”) may differ, as may the choice of denominator (whether or not debt service is included). The GPE Secretariat’s purpose for the results framework is to construct and create a comparable indicator, hence the application of a standardized methodology across all countries.

10) In the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#), what exactly is included in GPE’s measure of “education expenditure”?

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“Education expenditure” is understood to refer to public (or government) expenditure on education only and excludes private (largely household) expenditure on education. Note that while GPE’s focus is on basic education, here we consider the full sector, which includes all levels of education (from early childhood through higher education), as well as non-formal education and vocational training. The budget perimeter for education expenditure includes:

- Expenditure by ministries in charge of education: where necessary, expenditures not related to education (for example, sports, culture or religious affairs) are deducted when under the responsibility of the ministry in charge of education;
- Education expenditure from any other line ministries: this includes identifying educational activities or institutions within other ministry budgets, for instance, Health, Defense, Agriculture, Labor, or Civil Service;
- Education expenditure by local governments/entities where these are funded by transfers from the central government budget (or if revenues/expenditures from all levels of government are consolidated in the national budget); and
- Adjustments for social contributions (i.e. employers’ contributions to non-salary social benefits): where these are not charged to the budget of individual line ministries but instead draw on a common pool across the whole civil service (often the case for pension schemes), an equivalent to employers’ contribution is calculated using an approach detailed in this [methodology sheet](#).

Note that the figure reported by the Secretariat includes all “on budget” expenditures (i.e. all expenditures reported in the national budget), regardless of revenue source (i.e. may include both expenditures funded by governments from taxes and loans, as well donor funds).

11) In some instances in the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#), the GPE data refers to “estimated” values. What does this mean? Are estimates undertaken using UIS or World Bank data?

In the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#), columns in country data tabs are labelled “2016 exercise” through “2020 exercise”. This reflects the fiscal year for which data collection was undertaken (e.g. “2016 exercise” reflects data collected for the two previous fiscal years, ended in 2014 and 2015). For each iteration of the exercise, best efforts are made to collect both budget data and executed budget data (actual expenditures). This is helpful for two reasons:

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First, it provides a clear picture of “execution rates” or the variation between budgeted and actual expenditures. *For example, if the execution rate for capital expenditures in education is 40%, it means that only 40% of the amount allocated to capital education expenditures was actually spent that year.* If the Ministry is not spending the full amount allocated to it, this may indicate either that treasury has not provided the promised funds, or that the ministry has encountered challenges in carrying out planned activities. It is important for budget advocates to understand what the key bottlenecks are in cases where actual expenditures are significantly different from what was planned at the start of the fiscal year.

Second, it can take considerable time to fully audit national accounts. Therefore, in many instances actual expenditures are not available for the most recent fiscal year at the time GPE undertakes data collection. By applying the historical execution rate from the previous fiscal year, the Secretariat approach makes it possible to estimate what the past suggests about education spending today. With every annual iteration, these “estimates” are replaced by “actuals” whenever better data becomes available. *None of the data presented in the data sheet represents estimates based on any outside source, including UIS or the World Bank.* Furthermore, no estimates are undertaken for countries who are entirely missing budget documents as a source. As a quick reference, for every year of data provided, the “Summary inputs” tab includes a column indicating whether data is B (budgeted, where no actuals are available for any year), A (actual, where actual expenditures are available), or E (estimated, where actuals are not available for the year under consideration, but have been estimated based on a previous year’s execution rates).

12) **The values recorded in the [Domestic Financing Data Sheet](#) for my country look different from values in the UIS database on education expenditure and/or those recorded by my Ministry of Education. Why might this be?**

There are a number of reasons these values may differ, but it is most likely that GPE Secretariat and UIS or the national ministry may define the perimeter of education expenditures somewhat differently (see above for GPE’s definition). In addition, GPE’s estimation of “actual expenditures” (described above) may result in differences across sources.

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13) Why is expenditure information not available for all countries/states? What can I do if there is no information available for my country?

There are three primary reasons the GPE Secretariat is unable to collect complete data across the full cohort of GPE partner countries:

1. Budget reporting is in a language in which the Secretariat lacks proficiency.
2. The country follows a federal fiscal structure, where a large share of national revenues and expenditures are controlled at sub-federal level. In these instances, information may be available for states/provinces with active GPE grants, but it is not logistically feasible for the Secretariat to collate and aggregate all information for all sub-national units.
3. Budget data is not publicly available.

For (1) and (2) advocacy partners may be able to obtain and decipher relevant budget information themselves to produce comparable data. However, if the core issue is (3), this represents an important advocacy opportunity: timely and easily accessible data is fundamental to mutual accountability. The extent to which education financing data is lacking is significant. Without core spending indicators it is difficult to track overall levels of financing and how these funds are utilized. This is why there is need for greater transparency and accessibility of data. Building the capacity and systems to collect and track education spending are also needed to improve both the quality and coverage of existing sources. This should be a key ask of partner country governments.

14) What information is not available from the GPE data?

GPE data provides only a high-level overview of sector expenditures and is not able to provide fuller insight into the equity and efficiency of expenditures. It should be interpreted in parallel to other country indicators and mitigating circumstances in order to assess a country's commitment to education. These include factors like demographic context, security context that resulting in high military expenses, and the need to mitigate the impact of crisis or disaster. Considering constraints on budgets imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic is a key example.

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15) I think I understand how to approach volume commitments, but what is meant by “equity and efficiency commitments”? What might this look like?

As with volume commitments, equity and efficiency commitments need to be credible and monitorable. However, since these are multi-dimensional concepts, it is challenging to provide a clear formula that such commitments should follow. For *illustrative purposes only*, some simplified theoretical examples follow below:

Equity: *Currently, transfers to provinces for education expenditures are made on a per capita basis. In pursuit of the goal of leaving no child behind, we commit to adopting a needs-based formula for transfers of public expenditure on education from the federal to provincial governments by 2024. This reflects the broader strategy of XXX towards fiscal decentralization but reinforces the importance of placing equity at the center of allocation decisions.*

Efficiency: *By phasing in improved procurement rules starting in 2022, we aim to halve the unit costs for textbook acquisition at the primary level by 2024.*

MoE and advocacy partners will know what to push on and include in the equity and efficiency commitment relevant to their context. Including a complementary policy commitment on equity and efficiency opens the door to what happens after the Financing Campaign. There will be a number of countries going through GPE’s new Operating Model and there will be a focus on improving equity and efficiency in spending. The campaign and commitment can be leveraged to also further the dialogue nationally and globally for a deeper understanding for what equity and efficiency in spending looks like and that is a good conversation to have.

16) In a country where GPE grants have been focused on specific states, will GPE be interested in both national and state level political commitments?

The political commitments are expected to be national commitments. Sub-national data is not always disaggregated sufficiently for advocates to probe into disparities in spending. The determination of data requirements vis-à-vis political commitments in federal states and sub-national units will need to be considered according to each country context.

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17) When countries return the DF template, do their commitments need to be signed by the Minister or HoS/Prime Minister?

The domestic financing commitment template does not require a signature. However, an official stamp/signature can be added if it is deemed necessary as per internal protocols by the ministry. The template can also be enclosed to a cover letter signed by the Minister.

18) How will the country commitment in the template be processed?

The commitment will be checked by GPE technical staff and validated by our Chief Technical Office. We will communicate to countries how they can announce their commitments on stage. Whether or not a country can attend in person will be dependent on the guidelines to be issued by FCDO with regard to their COVID protocols.

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20) How will GPE monitor and report on countries' domestic financing commitments?

On volume, it is likely that GPE will keep the same volume indicator as used in the past (currently Results Framework Indicator 10). GPE is also in the process of developing equity and efficiency indicators for domestic financing as part of its new results framework. The Local Education Group (LEG) will be encouraged to use the country-level sector dialogue

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mechanism (typically joint sector reviews) to advocate for transparency and timely financial reporting as central to mutual accountability. In addition, CSOs will be able to use data collected under GPE's new Results Framework, updated annually, to follow up with governments to encourage them to honor and fulfill their commitment.

As there is broad alignment between what GPE is asking governments to commit to as part of the operating model and the financing campaign, individual country commitments for the Campaign will be a useful tool in the country level dialogue during the rollout of the new Operating Model. As part of the Financing Campaign, GPE is encouraging countries to share their commitment with the LEG and the letter inviting them to commit will copy Coordinating Agency and DCP focal points who work with GPE on the country model so they are aware. As is standard procedure, it is at the governments and CA's discretion to share the letter/any relevant info with the LEG.

What will be the relationship between Campaign commitments and the grant requirement from partner countries? Will GPE make it a requirement that countries stick to their Global Education Summit commitment to be eligible for a GPE grant?

There is no firm requirement on having countries stick to what they committed to in the Campaign in order to be eligible for a GPE grant. However, countries cannot access GPE grant financing if there is no commitment to domestic financing in their application - in that respect, the grant is an incentive. The Campaign commitment will be a useful tool in the policy dialogue and country level advocacy and accountability. See above response to Q16.

21) What are some useful resources on domestic financing to inform advocacy work and expand on the multidimensional nature of equity and efficiency in financing?

GPE's DOMESTIC FINANCE CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

- Domestic financing on the GPE [Case for Investment page](#)
- Domestic Education Financing page – GPE [webpage](#) (including education expenditure data)
- [Domestic Financing Campaign Toolkit](#)
- [Take Action page](#), including youth letter action to world leaders
- [Social Media toolkit](#)
- [GPE blog](#) on President Kenyatta's call to countries on DF

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- Domestic Financing [Take Action](#) page (coming soon)
- [Joint Statement on More and Better Financing for Education](#), GPE/Global Campaign for Education, 2021 / [Joint virtual event](#)
- GPE blog for GCE-US - [Why funding education for all children is a path to better world and sustainable recovery](#)

DOMESTIC FINANCING TRENDS

A Post-Pandemic Assessment of Sustainable Development Goals, International Monetary Fund, 2021 – Provides the current state of play on funding SDGs in five key development areas: education, health, roads, electricity, and water and sanitation, using a newly developed dynamic macroeconomic framework.

Investing in Human Capital for a Resilient Recovery: The Role of Public Finance,

World Bank, 2021 – Outlines areas for short and long-term action including policy priorities, governance, and fiscal space for building and utilizing human capital.

Education Finance Watch 2021, UNESCO and World Bank, – Monitors education financing trends, highlighting relationship to macroeconomic outlook. *Global Platform for Education Finance Booklet* and *Briefing Note* summarizes advocacy points.

Act Now: Reduce the Impact of COVID on Financing SDG4, UNESCO, 2020 – Explores financial and organizational cost implications of safe and effective re-opening of schools, explains a growing SDG4 financing gap.

Africa Economic Outlook 2020: Developing Africa's Workforce for the Future, African

Development Bank – Country performance on finance, spending, and education indicators with focus on growth and productivity. Chapter 3 describes policies and strategies for improving efficiency and effectiveness in spending.

Situation Analysis on Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 in the Education Sector

in Asia, UNESCO Asia-Pacific, 2021 – Webinar Presentation 3 in the South Asia and East & Southeast Asia groups present situation analysis of effects of COVID-19 effects on financing for these regions.

TRACKING AND MONITORING EDUCATION BUDGETS AND SPENDING

Guidelines for the Monitoring of National Education Budgets, Global Partnership for Education, 2019 – A useful primer on budgets, stages in the budget lifecycle and monitoring domestic resource allocation.

Financing Matters: A Toolkit on Domestic Financing for Education,

Global Campaign for Education/Action Aid/Education International, 2016 – More-indepth primer outlines issues and strategies for increasing the share; opening fiscal space to increase size; analysis with an equity lens; and citizen scrutiny through transparency, accountability and participation.

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[Financing Sustainable Development Goal 4, Action Aid, 2021](#) – Frames a progressive domestic resources mobilization process using seven African country examples.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION:

[International Parliamentary Network for Education](#) – Brief and webinar series with Parliamentarian focused on improving education financing finance, equity and learning impacts of COVID-19. IPNEd is the first global parliamentary network dedicated to education and to SDG4. This briefing focuses on what members of parliament can do to encourage their government to prioritize, protect and increase financing for education.

[Conference of Speakers and African Heads of Parliaments](#) –A forum for African leaders of Parliament to establish a cohesive [pan-African parliamentary voice](#) for the continent to support global campaigns advocating for Africa’s debt cancellation.

The resources below provide an initial view on financing for equity, inclusion and efficiency. The section on efficiency provides comprehensive references on major costs which impact access and learning – teacher management (including quality), materials and school health and nutrition.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

[How Committed? Unlocking Financing for Equity, UNESCO, 2021](#) – Discusses four categories of financing policies that support equity objectives using comprehensiveness, targeted coverage and allocation level as dimensions. A first attempt to monitor SDG target 4.5 by mapping 78 countries’ equity policies and programs.

[Spending Better for Gender Equality in Education, UN Girls’ Education](#)

Initiative/Malala Fund, 2021 – Highlights two promising tools to allocate resources equitably, effectively and efficiently – gender-responsive public expenditure management and costing and cost-effective analysis.

[Budget Advocacy to End Child Marriage, Girls Not Brides, 2021](#) – Webinar and case study presents a multi-sectoral approach for budget advocacy in countries with high incidence of child marriage.

[Inclusive Education Financing in the Era of COVID-19, Inclusive Education Initiative, 2021](#) – Webinar provides parameters, noting cost-savings of inclusion versus segregation. IEI is a World Bank-funded multi-donor trust.

EFFICIENCY

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World Food Programme's [School Health and Nutrition](#) and [School Feeding](#) pages, and **African Union's *Biennial Report on Home-Grown School Feeding 2019-2020*** – Both policy areas are a substantial cross-sector input that impacts (re-enrolment, retention and learning, with ripple effects across an economy to stimulate growth. More than 90% of the cost of school feeding programs is from domestic funds.

Biennial Report on Home-Grown School Feeding 2019-2020 – Both policy areas are a substantial cross-sector input that impacts (re-enrolment, retention and learning, with ripple effects across an economy to stimulate growth. More than 90% of the cost of school feeding programs is from domestic funds.

[Transforming the Education Workforce, The Education Commission, 2019](#)– Highlights efficiency problems that render teacher management cost-ineffective. Chapter 7 focuses on planning, costing and financing, including for payroll management and teacher allocations.

[Getting textbooks to every child in Sub-Saharan Africa : strategies for addressing the high cost and low availability problem](#) (Chapter 6, 9), **World Bank, 2015** and **[Textbook Policies in Asia](#)** (Chapters 12,13), **Asian Development Bank, 2018** – Explains the continuing challenge of high recurrent costs and low availability of materials. Cost-saving, effective distribution was addressed by REACH's **[Track and Trace initiative](#)**.