

## Essential Elements of Strategy Paper and Action Plans (SPAPs)

### A. Baselines, targets and annual achievement levels

1. For each SDG Goal, all the indicators supporting it should have the 2015 baseline, the 2030 target as established in Assam Vision 2030, and the annual achievement levels of the indicators for each of the years 2016 to 2030 consistent with these two end points and increasing (or decreasing) annually to reach the target level, to be calculated and used for monitoring. In the hypothetical education example it is assumed that both ECD and secondary enrolment reaches 100% from current baseline values by 2030 as assumed under SDGs. The annual levels could be based on an assumed growth (or decay) path as would be technically most appropriate. In the hypothetical education case used for illustration, an exponential growth path has been assumed with a constant growth rate 'r' in the following:

$$X_t = X_0 \cdot e^{rt}$$

2. Consistent with the indicator levels, the target population numbers (in the case of the example the number of students enrolled at the early childhood level ages 3-5 years; and the secondary age group 12-18 years) has to be calculated using population tables and age structure of the target population needed. The target population could then be disaggregated according to requirement. In the case of secondary education in the example, it has been broken up into general secondary and vocational streams on the hypothetical current baselines and assumption that by 2030 the vocational stream would consist of 25% of total secondary enrolment.

3. This method is based on back-casting and as it sets out all the years annually till 2030, allows for rolling plans to be developed for any cluster period such as 3 years or 5 years as the case may be. (Ref. AG Question 7).

### B. Using Unit Costs to convert target populations to resources required

4. Arriving at correct unit costs is essential for this exercise. The SPAPs must focus prominently on this. In the hypothetical education example, the cost per ECD child is assumed at Rs. 5000; for a general secondary student at Rs. 20,000; and a vocational secondary student at Rs 25,000. The costs should reflect all components correctly (for example recurrent as well as capital) and should not be based merely on historical costing but also what would be needed to deliver services at proper quality. Currently education quality is extremely poor and this is partly because enough is not being spent or spent inappropriately.

### C. Encouraging participation, improving efficiency of public service delivery, and fostering technological, institutional and organizational innovation

5. While unit costs will enable base costs to be computed, further assumptions will lead to a correct reckoning of public sector costs. The more important of the factors that need to be considered are:

- a. *Participation.* If private sector and communities take on more responsibility to deliver services, then the costs to the public sector will fall. In the hypothetical education example, it has been assumed for example that in case of ECD, 50% of the burden is shared with communities and private sector; 30% for general secondary education; and 50% for vocational education. The SPAP should discuss strategies to achieve greater participation (for example of private sector participation and participation with communities, panchayats, autonomous hill councils etc) and target realistic increases and monitor them. (Ref AG Questions 4 &5)
- b. *Improving efficiency of public service delivery.* Currently considerable leakages and wastages reduce efficiency. The SPAP should identify the sources of inefficiencies in the major national and state level programs supporting the SDG Goal and develop a strategy to make targeted improvements that would increase productivities and reduce costs of delivery. The strategy should also tackle issues such as better targeting of beneficiaries and weaker sections such as (a) char areas; (b) tea garden laborers; (c) scheduled castes and scheduled tribes; and (d) women. (Ref. AG Question 9).
- c. *Fostering technological innovation.* Service delivery can be made more efficient and productive (and thereby also lower costs) through technological innovations which given the long term time frame of 15 years for the SDGs should be possible. Innovations need not be inventions but merely adaptations from innovations achieved with success elsewhere. A strategy to pursue innovations has to be developed in the SPAP which should provide some examples of technical innovations already adopted elsewhere which Assam could use. (Ref. Anurag Goel Questions 6,8).
- d. *Institutional changes to facilitate service delivery.* The policy framework to better achieve the SDG Goal needs to be scrutinized to see if there are policy or regulatory constraints affecting better service delivery. For example, would it be better to provide scholarships or student loans with public guarantees for vocational or higher education students rather than directly provide vocational education by state agencies? Are there regulatory barriers to speedier land acquisition for infrastructure projects that could be removed? Would more devolution to *panchayats* help better service delivery? Such questions as relevant for the SDG Goal needs to be asked and addressed in the SPAP.
- e. *Organizational reforms.* A needed organizational reform is better coordinating the work of departments which help to achieve a particular outcome. For example, early childhood education (ECD) requires both education and child nutrition and health support which falls under different departments. What organizational changes could be made to achieve coordinated support to children for ECD? There are many organizational innovations

such as this needed to better achieve the SDGs. Such issues need to be tackled under the SPAP (Ref. Anurag Goel Question 3).

#### **D. Planning for human resource requirements**

6. Apart from financial resources, human resources can pose a major constraint. The rough scale of requirements can be worked out if norms have been established for delivery of an SDG service. For example, in the education case, there are standard norms for student:teacher ratios that exist and could be used to work out roughly the scale of teacher requirements needed between 2016 and 2030 for ECD, general secondary and vocational education based on hypothetical ratios. Similar exercises need to be carried out in the SPAP to present an idea of need if Assam Vision 2030 is to be achieved, and to plan out the strategy to produce the necessary human resources through teacher training or recruitment from outside as feasible and appropriate. Such a human resource plan must form an essential element of the SPAP. (Ref. AG Question 11).

#### **E. Planning for infrastructure requirements.**

7. School, hospital, housing and other physical infrastructure will also need to expand along with growth in services to achieve the SDGs. In this hypothetical education case, the assumption is made that ECD will not need expansion of classroom and existing community infrastructure such as community halls, temples, masjids and churches could be utilized for the purpose. On the other hand, there will be need to expand classrooms, laboratories and demonstration workshops for vocational education. Using hypothetical classroom: student ratios and assuming that the number of shifts per classroom can be expanded, the resulting number of secondary and vocational classrooms needed have been worked out. Other essential needs such as laboratories, workshops etc. can be derived according to norms (but not shown). Such an exercise is needed for the SPAPs and strategies to provide them consistent Assam Vision 2030 presented.

#### **F. Assessment of existing programs and extent of scaling up needed.**

8. The SPAPs will also need to assess carefully all the national and state level schemes and programs in place and critically assess the gaps remaining and extent of scaling up needed after accounting for efficiencies and improvements possible through measures listed under 5 (a) to (c) above. Innovative ways of filling gaps will have to be considered (Ref. AG Question 10).