

Government of Assam  
Planning and Development Department  
Dispur, Guwahati

No. PDP.55/2015/Pt-III/9

Dated, Dispur the 4<sup>th</sup> March'2017

To,

All Additional Chief Secretaries  
All Principal Secretaries  
All Commissioners and Secretaries  
All Secretaries to Government of Assam  
All Principal Secretaries of Autonomous Councils/ Developmental Councils  
All Head of Commissionerates/Directorates/PSUs; and  
All Heads Autonomous/ Semi-autonomous organizations under the Government of Assam

Subject: Implementing Sustainable Development Goals: Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas

Dear Colleagues,

I am directed to invite your attention to letter no PDP. 55/2015/63 on implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), issued by Planning & Development Department, Government of Assam on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2015, communicating the Government's decision and strategy to implement the 17 SDGs with 169 targets.

2. The above document indicated the approach of the State Government for achieving the SDGs, which included realigning of existing programmes, structures & processes and forging strong partnerships with all stakeholders, supported with requisite capacity building initiatives. It also laid down the institutional structure for implementation of SDGs as a Single Holistic Synergized Initiative (SHSI), and highlighted the need for use of latest technology and tools like Big Data, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Foresight etc.

3. The Vision & Strategic Architecture Document brought out in July, 2016, outlined the mega-initiative "Assam 2030: Our Dream, Our Commitment" of the Government for achieving SDGs. The Vision is captured in the following extract from the document:-

"In brief, our dream is to recreate a *Xuroxhito Axom, Vikoxito Axom, Xarbasreshtha Axom* (Secure Assam, Developed Assam, Great Assam ), where prosperity and well-being of all citizens is assured across the Brahmaputra Valley, Barak Valley and the two Hill districts, regardless of their caste, creed, ethnicity, religion, language and gender. We are committed to fulfill this dream, and create a prosperous, healthy and happy Assam, free from poverty and hunger, with opportunity, equity and access to all. We are committed to making citizens active stakeholders in the decision making process including in the different stages of policy cycle, in the spirit of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas (partnering with everyone for everyone's development), to make Assam one of the most developed and frontline states of the country, leaving no one behind."

4. The Strategic Architecture for implementing SDGs envisages three over-arching components, as indicated in the following extracts from the above document:

" i) Implementing SDGs as a Single Synergized Initiative: SDGs will be implemented as a Single Synergized Mega-Initiative, integrating effectively all sectoral initiatives of the Government through a single powerful IT/Technology-based platform. The entire

governmental machinery would be restructured and rejuvenated for this purpose, to put in place the best in the country future-ready governance system. The focus would be on ensuring citizen/ community-centric delivery/ systems, seamless efficiency, communicating effectively both between different arms of the government & with all external stakeholders, and global standards of competitiveness, delivered through an ubiquitous " People, Partnerships, Projects " approach.

ii) Technology, Innovation, Knowledge Management, and Management of Change: The ever accelerating pace of change, with exploding technologies & disruptive innovation, would not only be factored in our strategy but would become powerful instruments for actualization of our Vision. The entire transformational change would be ensured through a carefully crafted strategy for management of change.

iii) Mobilization & Utilization of Resources: Unprecedented levels of resources would be required for the actualization of our Vision. A paradigm shift in resource management is a must, starting with the realization that resources are "money plus" and we need to think in terms of "budget plus". We will adopt a new strategy of " 7 Resources for 17 Goals ( 7-for-17)", with 3 pivots, namely mapping & categorization of existing resources by departments and their mobilizing additional resources, Finance Department reorienting budgetary processes for SDGs, with augmentation of resources by Finance Department as the third pivot."

5. As brought out in the Vision & Strategic Architecture Document, resources do not mean just funds. In the context of SDGs, major resources may be, i) Financial Resources, ii) Land Resources, iii) Labour Human Resources, iv) Capital Infrastructure, v) Biological Resources, vi) IT Resources, and vii) Institutional Resources. We can focus on these seven resources for achieving the 17 SDGs, in short '7 for 17'. This requires a complete paradigm shift. Departments shall estimate and mobilise the resources to prepare Goal (SDGs)-based Budget. Each department shall explore all possible ways within these seven resources. "They need to go through the systematic sequential process of i) Resource Identification, ii) Resource Provider Identification, iii) Identification of mechanism to receive Resources, iv) Expansion of relation with the Resource Provider, v) Right use of resources, vi) Knowledge and skill to resource mobilisation, vii) Human skills, service, information, equipment, viii) Seeking out new resources, ix) Thought of Institutional Sustainability, x) Lower Financial Risk, and xi) Cost and Spend Analysis."

6. The Government also launched two path-breaking initiatives in July, 2016, which have greatly strengthened the initiative for implementing SDGs, namely, i) presentation of the first SDG-oriented Budget in the country, and ii) formulating a new innovative scheme called "Chief Minister's Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY)", with the objective of doubling farm income in 5 years, which would have otherwise taken 80 years at the historical rate of growth. CMSGUY being an important component of the overall strategy for achieving the SDGs, the CEO, CMSGUY will put appropriate strategies and systems in place for ensuring that the two initiatives deliver synchronized outcomes.

7. The State Government has also undertaken intensive internal deliberations, and external consultations with all stakeholders and the UN agencies, for preparation of 7-Year Strategic Plans and 3-Year Action Plans, with department-wise details, in sync with the framework laid down by NITI Aayog, comprising a 15-Year National Development Agenda, a 7 -Year Strategy Document and 3-Year Action Plans. This work has been supported by the Centre for SDGs, AASC, Government of Assam.

8. The recently presented Budget 2017-18 is a landmark document, being the first in the country to be a SDG-oriented, Outcome-focused Budget. Budgetary processes and monitoring would thus drive and support the implementation of SDGs. Once the Budget is passed, all departments will be required to put in place internal support systems for optimizing outcomes, by ensuring 'Value for Money' while utilizing the budgetary provisions. They must also put in place effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems for time-bound achievement of SDGs/Outcomes.

9. As the nodal department, Planning & Development Department will design necessary systems for this purpose, and also coordinate the activities of all departments. This will include setting up of effective IT based monitoring and data collection systems. The IT platform already in place for different schemes, like the Electronic Vaccine Intelligent Management (EVIM) system, may be assessed and built upon by the IT Department for this purpose. Centre for SDGs, AASC will support the P&D Department, and will also work with the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, for preparing an annual monitoring report to assess the annual progress made by the State towards achieving SDG targets.

10. The following specific activities will be ensured, inter alia, by the departments, with P&D Department and Centre for SDGs being responsible for coordination:-

- i) Departments must finalise their 7-Year Strategic Plan and 3-Year Action Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 in due consultation with Centre for SDGs.
- ii) Each Department will be responsible for achievement of targets as decided by them in their 3-Year Action Plan, comprising the Annual Plans for the 3 years.
- iii) Every Department will notify a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Officer for collecting and updating the data on implementation of their Annual Plans, and shall coordinate closely with the P&D Department and Centre for SDGs. A quarterly Newsletter, in collaboration with the Centre for SDGs, will be published by Information and Public Relations Department on the SDG-related activities and achievements.
- iv) The Centre for SDGs shall act as a coordinating body with various Departments of the Government of Assam and other agencies, including Societies working under the Departments, UN agencies, academic and research institutions, corporate houses etc., and report to Planning & Development Department of Government of Assam, for this purpose.

11. Centre for SDGs will also take action to set up the SDGs Strategy Support Group (SSSG) as per the decision in an earlier meeting of the Chief Secretary, and convene its first meeting in March, 2017. The composition, structure and activities of SSSG are indicated briefly in the Annex. The Centre will also be responsible for creating a high quality knowledge management and capacity building system, catering to the needs of all levels in the Government, to support the P&D and other Departments in implementing SDGs. It will work in close coordination with Centre for Innovation & Future Studies (CI&FS), AASC, with the activities of the two Centres converging for this purpose. CI&FS will also analyse the reasons for Assam's position in India's State Innovation Report, 2016 being the fourth from the bottom in the country, and suggest strategies for improving this, including through the Innovation Lab proposed to be set up with the help of UNDP.

12. Centre for SDGs will also liaise and coordinate with all other agencies, including the UN agencies, and may seek the guidance/support of State Innovation & Transformation Aayog (SITA) as and when required. All departments are required to extend full support to the Centre for SDGs, and accord high priority to the Centre's requests and also to the training programmes organized by the Centres for SDGs and Innovation & Future Studies.

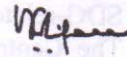
13. Centre for SDGs will be responsible for initiating action for convening of conclaves, conferences and workshops on SDGs related issues, as also meetings at Government level, as and when required. The Centre will also immediately start organizing field level Partnership Conclaves at the Divisional Level, for creating awareness about SDGs at the divisional/district levels as also for finalizing modalities for preparing field level action plans. These Conclaves will be chaired by the Chief Secretary, with the participation of the Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, SDOs (Civil) and field level departmental officers, apart from key State level officers. The first three Divisional level Partnership Conclaves will be organized in early April, 2017. In addition, Goal-wise Partnership Conclaves will be organized beginning mid-March'2017 and Partnership Conclaves with corporate sector from April/May'2017.

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14. It is important to mention that these instructions are meant to set the stage for the next major phase in the government's strategy for implementing SDGs, namely to infuse a high level of awareness and motivation amongst the field-level officers in regard to this holistic initiative. P&D Department will draw up a detailed strategy by 31<sup>st</sup> March' 2017, with the support of Centre for SDGs, for launching this phase and convene a meeting of all departments in April 2017, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, to deliberate on this strategy. Concurrently, Centre for SDGs will formulate a strategy for capacity building and training of field-level officers, including for developing suitable training modules and grooming Master Trainers. The Centre will also take up a project through an appropriate agency, for identifying, collecting and disseminating best practices and success stories from Assam, relevant in this context.

15. All departments are requested to take immediate necessary action as indicated above. The Additional Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries/Commissioner & Secretaries/Secretaries to Government of Assam and all Heads of Departments/Directorates will urgently hold internal meetings and issue necessary instructions to all concerned in this regard. Additional Chief Secretary, P&D will also hold such meetings as may be required with various departments, with the support of the Centre for SDGs. These meetings will be followed by meetings at the level of the Chief Secretary from time to time.

Yours Sincerely



(V K Pipersenia)

Chief Secretary

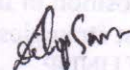
Government of Assam

Dated, Dispur the 4<sup>th</sup> March'2017

No. PDP.55/2015/Pt-III/9-A

Copy to:-

1. All Divisional Commissioners/Deputy Commissioners/SDOs (Civil)
2. Head, Centre for SDGs and Centre for Innovation & Future Studies, AASC, Guwahati, Assam
3. Shri Anurag Goel, IAS (Retd.), Mentor & Adviser, AASC, Guwahati, Assam
4. Dr Shiladitya Chatterjee, IAS (Retd.), Adviser, Centre for SDGs, AASC, Guwahati, Assam



Additional Director (PC)

Planning & Development Department

**SDGs STRATEGY SUPPORT GROUP**

SDGs Strategy Support Group (SSSG) is being set-up to provide a platform for collective generation and incubation of new ideas & innovations, and as a knowledge exchange, functioning in a semi-formal manner. It will be chaired by the Chief Secretary, and comprise Shri K V Eapen, Additional Chief Secretary, P& D, Dr Ravi Kota, Commissioner & Secretary, Finance, Shri Samir Kumar Sinha, Commissioner & Secretary, Health, Dr. K K Dwivedi, Commissioner & Secretary, IT, Ms Aruna Rajoria, Mission Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Dr R M Dubey, Head, Centre for SDGs and such other officers as may be nominated by the Chief Secretary, or may be volunteers who are passionate about SDGs and are included with his approval.

2. The focus of SSSG would be on finding pathways, and directly supporting action on the ground, for effective implementation of SDGs. It is envisaged as a fountain of ideas to support the Government and the departments in multiple ways, to catalyze and enable implementation of SDGs as a Single Holistic Synergized Initiative (SHSI), as also to create and sustain energy, momentum and direction in this mega-initiative.

3. SSSG would also support strategic thinking, integrated implementation, data collection/analysis, and overall oversight for the State's SDG related activities, as illustrated in the following activities:-

- i) Consider the overall strategy within the framework of the Vision & Strategic Architecture document finalized for SDGs in July, 2016, taking a State/ Government-wide macro-perspective, and also look at Goal-wise strategies.
- ii) Design a holistic institutional infrastructure for implementing SDGs as conceived in SDG 16, and suggest modalities for strengthening existing institutions for this purpose. It will also encourage new perspectives/ approaches for key governance and other issues like financial/ human resources, organizational structures/ processes, innovative use of existing and emerging technologies, data mining and management, legal framework etc.
- iii) Deliberate on, and provide guidance to departments for, integrated thinking on holistic implementation of SDGs, and on thematic cross-cutting issues like sustainable consumption, water resources, gender, weaker sections, border/char areas etc., so as to ensure effective coordination and inclusive approach, leaving no one behind.

4. Following are some illustrations of the kind of activities of SSSG, which could be initiated straightaway:-

- i) It will be useful for all Members of SSSG to develop a shared common platform of understanding and approach towards SDGs. All Government orders, vision & strategic documents, guidelines etc. are available on relevant websites of different departments. Centre for SDGs will provide to all the Members a basic note on the journey so far and the present status, along with appropriate links to the relevant documents.
- ii) Centre for SDGs has undertaken a mapping exercise for all the SDG targets, indicating the main department responsible for it's achievement, as also other departments which need to contribute/support. A presentation to the Members will help them identify targets which have been "adopted" by departments, as also the "unattended targets", and then suggest innovative non-traditional strategies for moving forward.
- iii) Finance Department will collect data from departments about their resource requirements, analyze it in the 7-for-17 framework laid down in the budget, and bring the issues to SSSG for deliberation and strategic suggestions.

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- iv) Set up a system for oversight of selected activities which are critical for achievement of these targets i.e. the Mission Critical Activities ( MCA), with a view to ensure timely resolution of problems/ issues, including those involving inter-departmental coordination,
- v) Develop a strategy for creating awareness, support and demand for SDGs. This could include having Mobile Exhibition Units, writing/ encouraging articles on SDGs in English and vernacular languages, use of social media etc.
- vi) Think of a set of innovative USPs which could be developed for positioning Assam differently, drawing on it's inherent strengths, whether related to natural beauty and wild life or clean air/ water, or it's geographical location.
- vii) Support creating a culture of innovation in the governmental machinery by putting together a group of champions to work with the Innovation Lab initiative of Finance Department, supported by the UNDP, and guiding/ strengthening this initiative.
- viii) Encourage and support the activities of the Centre for Innovation & Futures Study, AASC to create awareness of Foresight techniques and their adoption by the departments.
- ix) Commission a set of studies in diverse areas relevant in the context of SDGs, like how to make Assam more competitive, how to improve Assam's position in Innovation Index (currently 4<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in India) etc.
- x) Develop a strategy for putting in place a good disaggregated data-system in real time, to support timely policy and strategic decisions.

5. Centre for SDGs, AASC will be the Convener for SSSG, and will provide the secretariat support. Meeting of SSSG will be convened at least once a month. Officers, who want to volunteer to join as Members, may inform the Centre for SDGs, for obtaining the approval of the Chief Secretary. Suitably designed semi-formal processes will be put in place to facilitate out-of-the-box thinking. Ideas and useful material may be shared freely by Members through email/WhatsApp groups to be set up as part of the relatively flat and semi-formal structures/processes of the Group.

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