

Implementation of SDGs in Assam

Activities Progress Report January 2016-June 2017

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were universally adopted in January 2016 as a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 Goals which are to be achieved by 2030, were designed based on the learnings from Millennium Development Goals, through a global consultative process, to include many more new areas of focus such as Climate Change, Sustainable Consumption, Peace and Justice, and Innovation among many other key areas. The SDGs are based on the principle of forging partnerships and setting clear guidelines to achieving these targets as per the needs of each region.

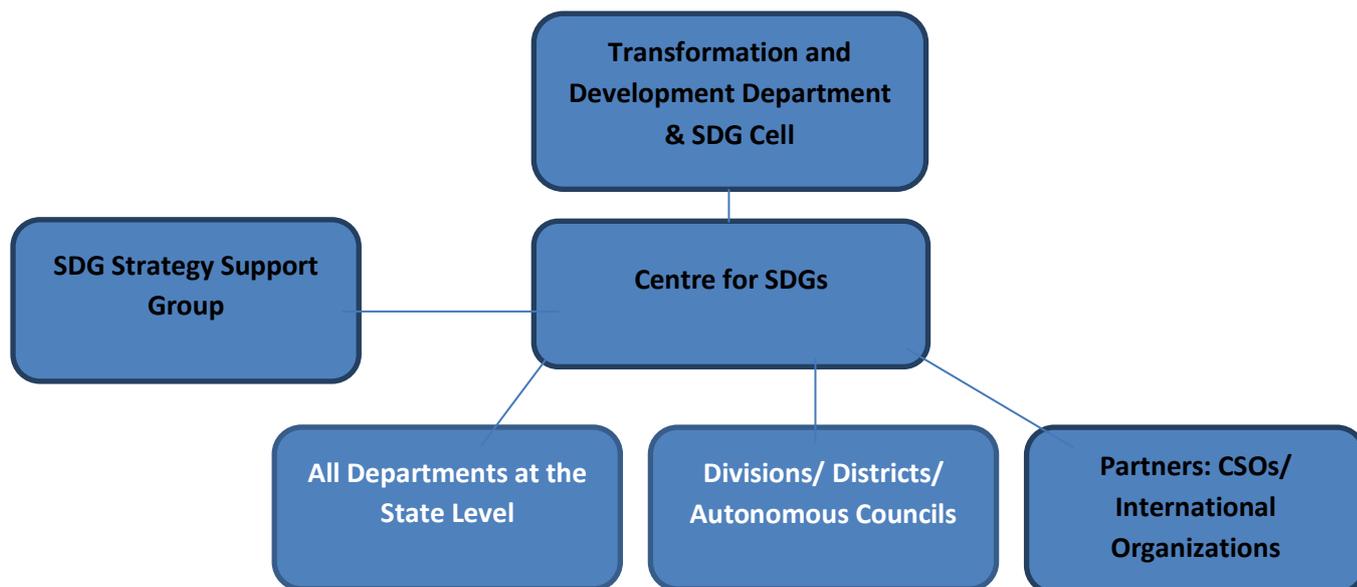
The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, in his speech addressing the United Nations on 25th September 2015 at the UN Sustainable Development Summit stated, 'Today, much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals'. Government of Assam, mirroring this commitment, strive to take forward the SDGs in Assam. On **28th December, 2015**, by issuing a Government Order, Government of Assam **launched "Assam 2030 Initiative" on 1st January 2016** towards achieving the SDGs. Under the guidelines structured in the vision document called, 'Assam 2030: Our Dream, Our Commitment', a strategy was created to start the process of inducting SDGs into the policy planning processes of the Government of Assam. It is one of the first states in India and globally to start bringing SDGs into the policy discourse of the state. Subsequently, all departments of the Government have been asked to implement SDGs to realise our vision through a Government Order of 4th March, 2017.

1. Institutional framework for implementation of SDGs:

To take forward the SDGs in Assam, the **Centre for Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs)** was established by Government of Assam in the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara, Guwahati in **January 2016**. The CSDGs as an institution, is a think-tank which provides research and technical support to all departments in the Government of Assam to take forward their SDG targets. The **Transformation & Development Department (T&D)** is the nodal department since **January 2016** for coordinating all the activities within departments for achieving the SDGs. An SDG Cell was established in the T&D Department to provide support in taking forward SDG related activities. It reports directly to the Additional Chief Secretary, T& D Department. In collaboration with T&D Department, CSDGs is guiding the Departments in developing the framework for planning towards achieving the SDGs and in devising a monitoring mechanism for the same. The Centre is also organising SDGs related training and capacity building programmes for different stakeholders of the State's SDG initiative.

The Chief Secretary has also constituted a semi-formal body, **SDGs Strategy Support Group (SSSG) based on the GO issued on 4th March 2017**. This group of volunteers comprises officers passionate about implementation of SDGs, cutting across Departments and their formal responsibilities. This Group supports the Chief Secretary and the Departments in multiple ways to catalyse implementation of SDGs as a Single Synergised Holistic Initiative (SSHI), as also create and sustain energy and momentum in this mega initiative.

Figure 1.1: Institutional Setup for SDG implementation in Assam



2. Activities undertaken/ongoing/planned:

2.1 Working Groups for initial planning of SDG implementation (January 2016-May 2016)

The initial planning process was done through 10 working groups of Departments for preparation of plans in line with implementation with SDGs. These working groups had focused discussions and based on these discussions presentations were made by all 52 departments on the initial understanding, planning and implementation of SDGs at the state level.

2.2 Release of vision and strategic document, ‘Assam 2030: Our Dreams, Our Commitment’ (July 2016)

The SDG vision and strategic architecture document, ‘Assam 2030: Our Dream, Our Commitment’ was launched in July 2016. This document was presented to the NITI Aayog for as the state’s vision document for achieving the SDGs.

2.3 Training and Capacity Building (July 2016- March 2017)

A series of 9 capacity building trainings were held with government officials from various departments. These trainings focused on;

- i. Understanding SDGs
- ii. Contextualising SDGs in Assam
- iii. Policy planning for SDGs in Assam
- iv. Developing mechanisms for successful implementation and monitoring of SDGs in Assam

2.4 Economic Survey Assam (August 2016 – March 2017)

The Economic Survey of Assam 2016-17, has included a chapter on indicators and targets for monitoring the progress of achievements of Assam 2030. These indicators and targets have been designed in sync with the SDGs and they set out the baseline on which the monitoring platform (refer to point 2.7). 59 state specific core indicators for SDGs were developed through consultations and discussions with various stakeholders. These were published in the Economic Survey, Chapter XX in March 2017.

2.5 SDG Strategy Paper and Action Plan (October 2016- ongoing)

Process of preparing the 7-Year Strategy Paper and 3-Year Action Plan (SPAP), as desired by NITI Aayog, was initiated in mid-2016. The first round of Department-wise consultation regarding the same was held in the last week of October, 2016. For preparing these two documents, the Departments are following the Guidelines and the tentative State Specific Core Indicators of SDGs prepared by Government of Assam. Through continuous brainstorming and consultation sessions, held with the departments from October, 2016 onwards, the departments have revised their 7-Year Strategy Papers and 3-Year Action Plans and submitted the same to the Transformation & Development Department.

Of late, a road-map has been envisioned for finalising the departmental SPAPs, and compiling the same into 7- year Assam Development Agenda and 3-year Assam Action Plan. For this process, the 17 SDGs are divided into 8 definite clusters. Accordingly, 8 cluster-wise conclaves, involving the concerned departments, aiming at final reviewing of their SPAPs, are being held from last week of April, 2017. Once the conclaves are concluded, the concerned departments will resubmit their final SPAPs incorporating the relevant additional inputs within a specific time-frame, which will be then compiled into Assam Development Agenda and Assam Action Plan. These conclaves are attended by representatives from concerned Central Ministries and experts of concerned fields from several significant national and international organisations like UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, along with others.

2.6 Outcome Budget 2017-18 (February- March 2017)

The Government of Assam took on the exercise of reviewing the outcome budget for the year 2017-18 and tracked the relevant components for each scheme/programme and outlay against the Assam Vision 2030 Document and tracked the relevant SDG targets to these schemes/programmes. This was the first time such an exercise was undertaken by the government with SDGs being strategically mapped in the entire programmatic exercise.

2.7 Monitoring and Documentation of Progress (March 2016- ongoing)

Government of Assam has been working on identification and determination of state-specific core SDG indicators and benchmarks for SDG targets. A set of 59 State-specific Core Indicators have been identified and are planned to be monitored at regular interval at different disaggregated levels. Centre for SDGs, in collaboration with others is working on a MLE (Monitoring Learning and Evaluation) system to strengthen the State Government for effective implementation of SDGs, and to build capacity of the Centre for SDGs as a monitoring, evaluating and resource organization (Knowledge bank).

The Government has proposed to develop a State level Dashboard wherein the system will synchronize relevant secondary and primary data from the different sources like Census, National Family Health Survey, and Statistical Handbook of Assam etc. to monitor the overall progress of the SDGs and track SDG indicators related to government schemes. The departmental monitoring systems and existing MIS of the government departments will be the primary source of data input to the central SDG dashboard. Efforts are on to understand the functional status of existing data collection, MIS system, periodicity etc. of various Departments and developing an integrated common platform. The mapping will be done for flagship programmes against the set of SDG indicators which have a definite impact on the targets and Goals set under SDG. Piloting will be done initially for selected SDGs in selected blocks.

3. Events

- i. Conclave on Goal 3 and Goal 6**
- ii. Conclave on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**
- iii. Conclave on Goal 1 and Goal 2**
- iv. Conclave on Goal 4**
- v. Conclave on Goal 12, 13, 14 and 15**

4. Timeline of activities:

4.1 Activity list

1. Institutional framework for achieving SDGs (completed, provisions kept for further expansion)
2. Forging partnerships for successful implementation of SDG-based plans and programmes (expanding)
3. Orientation of government staff about the SDGs (completed at state level, ongoing at sub-state levels).
4. Adoption of long term vision with monitorable indicators: Assam 2030 (completed).
5. Development of core SDG indicators with baselines and targets and incorporation in Assam Economic Survey -2016 -17 (completed).
6. Development of SDG-based outcome budget (completed with further refinements ongoing)
7. Finalisation of strategy papers and action plans and holding conclaves to receive expert feedback (ongoing)
8. Field level conclaves to strengthen SDG implementation (ongoing)
9. Preparation of monitoring system for real-time monitoring of SDG indicators for tracking progress (ongoing)
10. Preparation of strategy document viz., Assam Development Agenda on SDGs based on conclave outcomes (ongoing).

4.2 Activity Timeline

1. **28th December, 2015:** Issue of Government Order adopting the 17 SDGs into policy planning of Government of Assam
2. **1st January, 2016:** Launching of “Assam 2030 Initiative”
3. **January, 2016:** Designating Transformation & Development (then Planning & Development) Department as the Nodal Department
4. **January, 2016:** Formation of Centre for SDGs
5. **January, 2016:** Formation of 10 Working Groups of Departments for preparation of plans in line with implementation of the SDGs
6. **February, 2016:** Release of Assam Vision 2030
7. **February-May, 2016:** Working Group-wise discussion and presentations in Conference Hall of Chief Secretary, Assam
8. **July, 2016:** Preparation and release of vision & strategic architecture document “Assam 2030: Our Dreams Our Commitment” and onward submission to NITI Aayog

9. **July, 2016-March, 2017:** Training and Capacity Building of Government Officials through 9 Nos. of Training Workshops during the period
10. **August-September, 2016:** Mapping of Budget Highlights 2016-17 with SDG Targets
11. **August, 2016-March, 2017:** Finalisation of 59 State Specific Core Indicators of SDGs
12. **October, 2016-March, 2017:** Preparation and continuous review of Departmental SPAPs
13. **October, 2016:** Innovation Lab in collaboration with UNDP
14. **February-March, 2017:** Preparation of SDGs Outcome Budget 2017-18
15. **March, 2017:** Issue of Government Order by Chief Secretary for guiding implementation of SDGs by all Government Departments
16. **April, 2017 onwards:** Organising SDG-wise Conclaves for finalisation of SPAPs and compiling into Assam Development Agenda and Assam Action Plan – Conclaves of SDG 1, 2, 3 & 4 completed
17. **April 2017 onwards:** Preparation of SDGs monitoring & evaluation platform – in progress
18. **May, 2017:** Conclave on synergising CSR with SDGs in the state
19. **June, 2017 onwards:** Conclave of SDG 5-17 and Divisional Conclaves for sensitising the District Functionaries about SDGs

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