Chapter-IV: Monitoring and Reporting

4.1   Introduction

The 2030 Agenda envisages systematic follow-up, monitoring and review of progress at all levels to ensure its effective and expeditious implementation. The Agenda recognises that the core of the review framework would be at the national and state levels which would feed into reviews at the regional and global levels. At the initial stage, these reviews would concentrate on preparedness activities and thereafter on actual implementation of SDGs and reporting on programs. Audit examined preparedness for monitoring and undertaking reviews in terms of existence of institutional arrangements for monitoring; identification of performance indicators for monitoring and reporting on SDGs implementation and mechanisms for ensuring availability of quality, and disaggregated data. The audit findings are given in the following paragraphs.

4.2   Institutional Arrangements for Monitoring and Reporting

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has been assigned the responsibility of development of monitoring indicators for SDGs and related Targets. MoSPI is required to define indicators, periodicity, sources of data, and prepare reporting mechanisms including dashboards. A SDG unit has been created in MoSPI to co-ordinate with data source Ministries and concerned UN and other International agencies.

MoSPI has prepared a National Indicator Framework (NIF) and Government has approved (October 2018) the constitution of a High-Level Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary, MoSPI, for periodically reviewing and refining the NIF for monitoring SDGs and Targets. MoSPI has since finalised the Terms of Reference and the composition of the Committee (January 2019).

NITI Aayog which is the nodal institution responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of SDGs, intimated that pending finalisation of the NIF, it was reviewing progress with respect to SDGs through the multi-disciplinary Task Force, and holding periodic reviews with Central Ministries and Planning departments of States and UTs.

Examination of this aspect in the selected States has disclosed differing levels of progress achieved as discussed in **Table 4.1**:

Table 4.1: Institutional arrangements for monitoring and reporting in selected States	
Assam	The nodal department was yet to formulate any monitoring mechanism and it stated that this would be accomplished through an IT based platform which was yet to be developed.
Chhattisgarh	The State Nodal Organisation for SDG intimated (June 2019) that the institutional arrangements for monitoring would be made.
Haryana	In the State, the SDG Coordination Centre was envisaged as the nodal agency for monitoring and reporting purposes.
Kerala	A State Monitoring Group and a State Steering Group have been set up to review progress with respect to SDGs. The Economics and Statistics Department has been designated as the nodal department for data management.
Maharashtra	State has signed a MoU with UN India for *inter-alia* developing a monitoring system at the State and District levels.
Uttar Pradesh	A monitoring committee for regular review of the implementation of SDG was constituted (January 2018) at the State level. Similar exercise for districts and lower levels or in respect of each Goal was yet to be initiated.
West Bengal	The State Government intimated that it would develop a monitoring system through a State dashboard which was at the pilot stage.

From the above, it is evident that while certain initiatives were undertaken for establishing institutional arrangements for monitoring and reporting of SDGs both at the Centre and States, these were still works in progress. Progress on this front appeared to have been hindered by the delay in finalisation of the NIF and putting in place the required institutional mechanisms for monitoring and reporting.

4.3 Indicators, Data Availability, Monitoring and Reporting

Central level

4.3.1 Indicators, Baselines Data and Milestones

An Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) with India as member, was constituted by the UN (March 2015) for development of a Global Indicator Framework (GIF) on SDGs. Based on the recommendations of the IAEG-SDGs, a GIF with 232 global indicators was adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017. In the GIF, based on their level of methodological development and data availability, indicators were categorised, as Tier-I, Tier-II and Tier-III[15]. Examination of this issue involved ascertaining if data gaps had been assessed, indicators and baselines have been

---

[15]   **Tier-I**-Indicators conceptually clear, established methodology, standards available and data regularly produced. **Tier-II**- Indicators conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available, but data is not being regularly produced. **Tier-III**-Indicators for which there is no established methodology and standards, or methodology/standards are being developed/ tested.

Preparedness for the Implementation of SDGs

established and milestones had been set to monitor and report on implementation and the findings are discussed below:

a) MoSPI, in consultation with the Central Ministries and State Governments, had prepared draft NIF for obtaining approval of the GoI (June 2017). In January 2018, a revised proposal was submitted on which no decision was provided till October 2018, when it was conveyed by the GoI that MoSPI could itself take a decision on the NIF. There was thus avoidable delay in taking a decision on the NIF which has held up tasks such as assessment of data gaps and preparation of baseline data for which MoSPI issued instructions to the Central Ministries only in November 2018.

b) The NIF consists of 306 indicators but does not include indicators with respect to 41 Targets[16] pertaining to 13 Goals. MoSPI has recognised that there are a number of Targets for which either indicators/accepted methodology do not exist/or were being developed, or for which data was not being regularly produced. It was in this context that constitution of a High Level Steering Committee was approved to review and update the NIF from time to time.

c) The GIF had categorised indicators into Tiers I to III. However, no such categorisation has been done in the NIF proposed by MoSPI on the grounds that data on all the indicators included in the NIF would be available with the concerned Ministries/departments and tier-wise classification was not applicable. It was however, noted that MoSPI in its proposal for the NIF, recognised the existence of several indicators for which data was not being produced regularly or methodology was not developed. Non-classification of the indicators into tiers carries the risk of the indicators having been inadequately assessed in terms of availability of data, standards and methodology which could affect their usefulness for measuring outcomes.

d) MoSPI intimated to audit (July 2018) that no milestones for the indicators have been proposed. Non-identification of milestones may affect the preparation of an effective road-map/policy for achieving the related Targets.

e) MoSPI had released a Baseline Report 2015-16 (March 2019) for NIF. The Report provides baseline and metadata for 169 out of 306 national indicators which will serve as a tool for policy making, planning, etc.

4.3.2 SDG India Index: Baseline Report 2018

NITI Aayog has released a SDG India Index: Baseline Report 2018 and Dashboard (December 2018) prepared in collaboration with United Nations and other stakeholders. The SDG Index has been envisaged as a comprehensive index to measure progress of the States/UTs with respect to implementation of SDGs. The index is based on 62 priority indicators pertaining to 13 Goals and 39 Targets. The Report provides the

---

[16]   Includes all 19 Targets for SDG 17.

basis for selecting the priority indicators, identifies data challenges, benefits and limitations of the Index, and seeks to promote competition among State Governments by ranking them on SDGs, using a defined methodology.

The utility of the index would depend upon improved availability of data and increase in coverage in terms of goals, targets and indicators. Further, as MoSPI has commenced an exercise for setting up of a dashboard based on the NIF, the possibility of any ambiguity among stakeholders due to presence of two frameworks would need to be averted at a later stage.

NITI Aayog stated (March 2019) that the purpose of the SDG Index with limited indicators was to make the tool more easily and widely usable as well as less encumbered by data challenges. It also mentioned that the indicators included in SDG Index was a sub-set of NIF and do not constitute any parallel framework. Audit however, noted that according to NIF Baseline Report, data was not yet available in respect of 14 priority indicators. NITI Aayog stated (May 2019) that the next edition of the SDG India Index would be based on indicators drawn from the NIF.

4.3.3   Availability of Quality and Disaggregated Data

As reported in the VNR (July 2017), MoSPI has overall responsibility for ensuring quality and timeliness of statistics and for identifying gaps in data availability. At the State level, the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (or equivalent) is required to perform the same functions as MoSPI. In the VNR Report, it has also been stated that MoSPI regularly organises conferences with data producers and users for updates; identification of gaps in data and methods and take remedial measures.

In the context of MDGs, MoSPI had highlighted several constraints with respect to data availability such as data gap issues at sub-state levels, lack of annual data updates, irregular periodicity of data, and incomplete coverage of data sourced from administrative records. NITI Aayog has also highlighted several challenges with regard to data availability especially at the State, District and *Gram Panchayat* levels.

The VNR Report makes mention of measures to strengthen the statistical system in the country by providing required financial and human resources; bridging of data gaps and identification of new data sources. It also highlighted initiatives for modernising the data system by leveraging technology.

On data availability for indicators, MoSPI informed audit that indicators have been incorporated in the NIF after extensive consultations with data source Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders and after considering the aspect of data availability. A study of the NIF discloses that but for two indicators, periodicity of data availability has been exhibited in the framework for all the indicators with periodicity being annual in the case of 81 *per cent* of the indicators.

4.3.4   Monitoring and Reporting Process

Systematic follow-up, monitoring and review of progress is a key feature of the 2030 Agenda. At a general level, NITI Aayog stated (July 2018) that it is committed to a systematic follow-up, monitoring and review of progress in implementation of SDGs at the National and State levels. As noted in para 4.2, MoSPI is required to prepare reporting mechanisms including dashboards. After the publication of the NIF in November 2018, baseline data in respect of 169 indicators was prepared in March 2019 and a process has been initiated in collaboration with the United Nations to develop a SDG dashboard based on the NIF. However, the delay in finalising the NIF and baseline data, and in the absence of any plan to frame milestones the monitoring and reporting process for SDGs is likely to be impeded. In the meantime, NITI Aayog as the body responsible for overseeing implementation of SDGs, created a SDG India Index and Dashboard based on 62 priority indicators for ranking of the States & UTs, and has released a SDG India Index: Baseline Report which has been dealt with in para 4.3.2 of this report.

4.3.5   Indicators, Data Availability and Monitoring at State Level

While MoSPI had held regional consultations on issues such as NIF, local level data sources, state statistical system for SDG and strategy for bridging data gaps, no written instructions were issued to the States/UTs to use MoSPI's NIF for developing State Indicator Framework. Audit examination in the seven selected States disclosed varying levels of action on aspects such as identification of data sources; preparation of indicators framework and monitoring and reporting process as given in **Table 4.2**:

Table 4.2: Indicators, Data Availability and Monitoring in selected States	
Assam	• 45 out of 59 indicators finalised (March 2018) based on outdated data (as old as 2008). • Lack of mechanism to ensure correctness of data and information to monitor progress of work under SDGs at various levels. • The State Government intimated (February 2018) that monitoring would be done through an IT based platform to be functional by June 2019.
Chhattisgarh	• The State Nodal Organisation for SDG informed (June 2019) that work for State Indicator Framework is under process. It also intimated that the national dashboard would be accessed for uploading state data and a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation would be developed.
Haryana	• The State identified milestones and 108 indicators of the 60 SDG targets based on the current flagship schemes in the Vision 2030. • The State Government intends to take a relook at these indicators based on the NIF prepared by MoSPI. • Though the SDG Co-ordination Centre has been set up (October 2018), mechanism for concurrent monitoring and data feedback through SDG website and online dashboard, though contemplated, is yet to commence.

Preparedness for the Implementation of SDGs

Kerala	• Task Forces discussed availability of data for each indicator, their source, periodicity, reviewed the indicators proposed by NITI Aayog and compiled data for 134 out of 306 indicators. • Steps being initiated for getting consistent data from multiple sources for the same indicator. New surveys are proposed for 32 indicators. • State Monitoring Group (SMG) had not taken any action to build capacity and for undertaking special surveys. • A data management system including dashboard for SDGs is under preparation.
Maharashtra	• No specific action with regard to identification of indicators, data source observed during audit. • Nodal department stated that various data sources with respect to SDGs will be fine-tuned based on the NIF. • The State Government entered into an agreement with UN India *inter-alia* for developing a monitoring system to track progress of key development outcomes at both the State and District level. • The State Government intimated NITI Aayog (February 2018), its plan to develop a dashboard for monitoring SDGs with the help of UN agencies, which was reported to be under preparation (January 2019).
Uttar Pradesh	• Pending finalisation of the State Vision-2030, no action has been taken to finalise indicators or data for monitoring progress of SDGs implementation.
West Bengal	• Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) pertaining to targets under eight sectors developed, however, the sectoral papers were yet to be approved by the State Government. • The State was yet to initiate any action regarding identification of data required for monitoring implementation of SDGs. • The State Government intimated (April 2018) that based on indicators identified by its departments, a robust mechanism for monitoring through a state dashboard would be developed, which was yet to be put in place (January 2019).

It is evident from the above that the critical task of finalising and promulgating the NIF had been delayed, which had held up identification of baseline data and formulation of national targets for the 2030 Agenda. The States were also yet to firm up their indicator frameworks and baseline data with progress being affected due to delay in finalisation of the NIF. These delays would hamper establishment of a robust monitoring and reporting mechanism required for ensuring time bound and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

4.4 Audit Summation

The 2030 Agenda envisages systematic follow-up, monitoring and review of progress at all levels to ensure its effective and expeditious implementation. NITI Aayog is the nodal institution responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of SDGs. To enable monitoring and review, MoSPI was entrusted with the task of developing a NIF which was published only in November 2018. As a result, tasks key

to the institution of a proper monitoring and reporting framework, such as preparation of baseline data was completed only in March 2019. Milestones were yet to be aligned with timeline for targets achievement. In the seven selected States, action on developing indicators and identification of data sources had not achieved required level of progress. The creation of a robust mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and reporting progress on implementation of SDGs therefore, remains an area requiring immediate and focussed action.