Frequently Asked Questions-Answers on SDGs National Indicator Framework

1. What are the SDGs and how they were formulated?

The SDGs were formulated as a continuation of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**and are beingimplemented globally. The SDGs consist of 17 Goals with 169 targets and form a comprehensive framework for global development. Adopted by UN, it came into force on 1st January, 2016. The SDGs were formulated after prolonged negotiations led by UN.

2. What are the differences between MDGs and SDGs?

The MDGs were adopted in the year 2000 and the MDG goals were mainly limited to certain aspects of social and economic development. In the 8 MDGs goals, there were only 18 targets. The SDGs on the other hand, are more comprehensiveand comprising of all three dimensions of development viz. economic, social and environment.

3. What is the difference between the National Monitoring Framework and National Indicator Framework?

The National Monitoring Framework (NMF) is being defined as National Indicators with different SDG targets alongwith its reporting mechanism and periodicity. The statistical indicator which forms the National Indicator Framework (NIF) is the base for National Monitoring Framework. The National Monitoring Framework relies on nationally defined indicators responding to National priorities and needs.

National Indicator Framework is a set of national indicators which will form the backbone of monitoring progress towards the SDGs. The NIF can help provide a report card/dashboard to measure progress towards sustainable development and help ensure the accountability of all stakeholders for achieving the SDGs. A sound indicator framework will turn the SDGs and their targets into a management tool to help develop suitable implementation strategies and allocate resources accordingly.

4. How are SDGs implemented in India?

The NITI Aayog has been entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of SDGs in India. The MoSPI has been entrusted with the responsibility of developing National Indicator Framework for measuring the progress of SDGs and associated targets.

5. Is achieving SDGs by 2030 mandatory and whether India has committed to UN to achieve the SDGs?

SDGs are defined as a comprehensive development Agenda to be implemented by all countries based on their national circumstances and feasibility. India is a signatory of the UN resolution adopting SDGs.   However, achieving SDGs is not legally binding or mandatory. Targets are defined as aspirational and global with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition, but taking into account the national circumstances.

6. What are the SDGs' national targets?

At present, the global targets are presumed to be national targets. However, it would be advisable if periodical targets are set against each SDG target in the SDGs and communicated to the Ministries by NITI Aayog.

7. What would be the role of MoSPI after approval of the Indicator Framework?

MoSPIcan take a lead in compiling data based on the approved Indicator framework and publish the same as periodical reports   MoSPI will coordinate with allthe respective data source Ministries for compilation of data.   Appropriate analysis of these data may be made by the NITI Aayog for monitoring purpose.

8. Whether the proposed Indicator Framework will help in current monitoring of the programme?

Proposed Indicator Framework is for periodical reporting of the progress of implementation of SDGs based on survey data/administrative data.   Real time monitoring of the progress of SDGs is not envisaged in the proposed framework.   Towards real time monitoring, respective Ministries may devise their own indicators.   For example, while Indicator Framework reportthe Maternal Mortality Ratio periodically for larger States and for the country, the current problems if any, faced by any hospital are to be dealt by a separate mechanism.   For example, a hospital in a district may have shortage of qualified doctors/skilled staff on a particular day or may have a power failure on a particular day, etc. These type of problems have to be monitored on day today basis by the respectiveMinistries/authorities. A combined effect of suchmonitoring will reflect in the overall reduction of MMR   which is reported periodically as Time Series Data.

9. What are the sources of data as per the NIF?

The major sources of data are administrative data, sample surveys (NSSO& NFHS) , agriculture surveys and census data.   An example of administrative data isthat of crime

statistics produced by NCRB, based on FIR information from states. NFHS is a major source of survey data particularly for health related indicators. NSSO surveys and other official sample surveys are other sources of data.

10. How were the proposed indicators in the NIF decided/finalised?

The NIF was finalized as a result of 2 year consultation process with the Central Govt. Ministries, State Governments and other stakeholders. A public consultation on Draft Indicator list was held in March, 2017 and responses were received from about 70 Organisations including UN organizations and Civil Sector Organisations. Further, NITI Aayog convened meetings of the nodal Ministries to discuss the indicators in the draft list, which were chaired by Members/PrincipalAdvisors of the NITI Aayog. Followed by these consultations, the draft Cabinet Note was formulated and circulated to all concerned Ministries. Considering that the indicator framework is a technical process,maximum time was allotted to the Ministries for responding to the proposal contained in draft Cabinet note. Suggestions/modifications proposed by the Ministries were suitably incorporated in the draft Cabinet Note. Therefore, it is presumed that the present indicators proposed are acceptable to all Ministries.

11. What is the relationship between Global Indicator Framework and National Indicator Framework?

The Global Indicator Framework of SDGs was developed by an Expert Group consisting of NSOs of 28 countries as per the decision of UN Statistical Commission. A set of 232 indicators have been adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in July, 2017 as the Global Indicator Framework. The Global indicators are categorized in three tiers. Tier I indicators are indicators where methodology is existing and data are produced by majority of the countries. Tier II Indicators are indicators where methodology is existing but data are not regularly produced by countries. Tier III Indicators are those for which internationally accepted methodology is under development. As per the classification, there are 93 Tier I Indicators, 63 Tier II Indicators, 68 Tier III Indicators and 5 multiple Tier Indicators in the global list.

From the list of Global Indicators, India accepted Indicators for which data are produced in India or can be produced from the existing data sets. There are about 80 Indicators common to Global Indicator Framework and National Indicator Framework.

Remaining Indicators proposed in the NIF are based on the consultations/suggestions by Ministries.

12. How are the Global Indicators to be reported from India?

India needs to develop data for Global Indicators for which data are not currently available in the country. As and when the data are produced in the country, the same need to be reported for Global Monitoring. Till such time, International agencies (UN) may use the existing data sets to generate proxy indicator sets against such indicators. However, such data will be included in the global monitoring only with the consent ofthe country.

In the next few years, India will require to produce data of all Indicators in the Global Indicator framework adopted by the UN General Assembly. An action plan is required to be developed for this.

13. What is the time line of Base Line Data and Meta Data?

A meta data on the indicators for the NIF will be prepared by MoSPI in consultation with respective Ministries in 3 months after approval of the NIF. Followed by finalization of meta data, a base line data set will be generated for indicators for which data are available now, in three months.

14. Can the Indicator Framework provide feedback on implementation of Govt. Schemes?

The draft Indicators are not specific to any particular Govt. scheme in general. However, data generated based on the indicators will reflect the success of various Govt. schemes related to the target.

15. Several targets have multiple indicators. Whether categorization in terms of criticality of the indicator in the achievement of goal/target has been done? Can these indicators be combined to give a statement on the progress made towards achievement of the goal/target?

Many targets have different components that are often not related. Therefore, there is a need for multiple indicators. In many cases, these multiple indicators will assess targets fully and an appropriate measurement can be generated combining the indicator values for assessing the achievement of the targets. However, there are some targets which are complex and only a part of the target is covered by the indicators. In such targets, a complete

assessment of the targets may not be possible utilizing the proposed set of indicators only. Additional evaluation   may be needed for the left over components for complete assessment of the targets .

At present, we have not developed a methodology for assessing the targets or goals using a single figure generated by combining indicators.

16. **How many indicators can be reported for any particular year?   There are indicators chosen from Census/Quinquennial surveys -what would be the inter-survey values of those indicators (repetition of the value may lead to biasedness in reporting)**

A number of indicators are generated from data sets based on periodical sample surveys like NSSO, NFHS and also through census (population, agriculture, livestock). These surveys are not conducted annually.   Therefore, while annual reporting of dataon indicators, the recent data of the survey has to be reported in subsequent years, until result of new survey is generated.

Interpolation of data based on statistical principles for the intervening period wherever possible may be attempted.

17. **What is the expected time lag for a report containing data for any particular year?**

Normally, progress as on 31st Dec. of a year will be reported by end of next year. This is because the time lag for getting the data from the Ministries and data sources. We will attempt to reduce the time lag to less than six months by improving the data reporting system.

18. **Have the Ministries/Departments been intimated of the expectations from them?Is the machinery already available in the Ministries/Departments for reporting under the framework?**

As the DCN was circulated to all Ministries, Ministries are aware about the requirement of data reporting against the proposed indicators. It is expected that appropriate institutional mechanism is being set up by Ministries. MoSPI will inform the Ministries about the requirement of data for base line report and subsequent reports after the approval of NIF. Ministries have been requested for preparing meta data.

19. **Though MoSPI has not proposed any financial implication with respect to this framework, is it likely that the concerned Ministries/Departments need more funds**

for the task?   In that case, has any assessment been made about the amount of funds likely to be required?

SDGs require additional resources or redeployment of   resources in various Ministries.   However, no immediate financial implication is expected for Monitoring.In general,most of the key data already available in the system is used for monitoring.   We will advise the Ministries to assess the requirement of resources for generating data for indicators for which currently no data are available in the system and also for the new global indicators.

20. **As there are two frameworks, the global indicators and national indicators will there be a duplication of efforts?**

The global indicators are designed for global monitoring of the SDGs.   These indicators are limited in number and generally do not cover many components of the targets. These are used for global comparison of SDG achievements.   On the other hand, national indicators are defined based on the national priorities and attempt made to cover major components of the targets.   The purpose of national indicators is for national reporting. Global indicators   for which data are available in the national official statistics system are included in the national indicator framework. Additional indicators are included in the NIF based on the assessment of data availability in the system. Therefore, there is no duplication of efforts in this exercise.

21. **What is the Statistical system at Union/State level ?**

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is the nodal agency for planning and facilitating the integrated development of the statistical system in the country including laying down norms and standards in the field of official statistics, evolving concepts and definitions, suggesting methodologies of data collection, processing and dissemination of results.

The Directorates of Economic and Statistics (DESs) in the States / UTs act as the nodal agencies for coordination of all statistical activities in the States/UTs.

The DESs perform almost the same functions in the States/UTs as the NSO at the Centre viz. bringing out some key statistics, coordination with the Central and State statistical agencies, dissemination of statistics, etc.

22. **What are the strengths of national statistical system and how the flow of data is ensured for SDG monitoring?**

India has a federal structure of Government and the Indian Statistical System functions within the overall administrative set up of the country. The subject "Statistics" is included in the "Concurrent List" of the "Constitution" where both the Union and State Governments can operate.

There is a further division of responsibility, by subjects or groups of subjects, among the different Ministries/Departments of the Union Government and among the Departments of State Governments, on the basis of their administrative functions. The Indian Statistical System, therefore, may be treated as both decentralized and centralized system.

For example, the large-scale statistical operations conducted all over the country like Population Census, Economic Census, Agricultural Census and Livestock Census, as well as nation-wide sample surveys including the Annual Survey of Industries and the Socio-Economic surveys is the responsibility of Central agencies. Similarly, compilation of national accounts, preparation of all-India Prices and Industrial production indices are also Central activities.

In the case of States, the State statistical organizations collect and generate data on a number of variables.

The Central Government acts as the coordinating agency for presentation of statistics on an all-India basis even in fields where the States have the primary authority and responsibility for collection of statistics. The State Directorates of Economics and Statistics (DESs) carry out the responsibility of coordination of all statistical activities at the State level and keeping liaison with the MOSPI for the purpose of maintaining uniformity and consistency in the data produced and consolidated at different levels.

Thus, there is well structured statistical system and data collection mechanism at the Union Government level as well as State Governments 'level and well coordinated data flow mechanism from the State to Union Ministries and Departments

23. What is the Legal Support for Collection of Data?

Data collection in India has been largely based on a voluntary response except for the statutory support provided through the erstwhile 'Collection of Statistics Act, 1953' to collect industrial data.

This Act has since been amended as the new 'Collection of Statistics Act 2008' which is much more comprehensive to enable collection of various socio-economic data. The 'Collection of Statistics Act 2008' is administered by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Census Act 1948 is administered by the Office of the Registrar General of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, to collect population and other demographic data.

Besides these two important Acts, there are a number of other Acts, Rules and Procedures being administered by concerned subject Ministries/Departments, to collect statutory administrative returns which help in generating different subject related data.

24. Custodian Agency

UN Statistical Division has identified a Custodian Agency responsible for the methodological development of indicators, establishment of data flow mechanisms, monitoring and dissemination of data on each of the global indicator. Custodian Agencies are generally UN bodies or internationally recognised agencies. The Custodian Agency is required to involve the National Statistical Offices of the countries in the indicator development process. The global reporting on SDGs will be done by UN based on the Global Indicator Framework using data from the National Official Statistical System compiled by the Custodian Agencies.

An agency is referred to as "custodian" when:

It has an existing mandate for global monitoring of the indicator in question and established data reporting mechanisms from countries; or it does not have an explicit mandate from its intergovernmental process but has a well established global data reporting mechanism, recognized by Member States, and clearly identified counterpart in countries' government agencies.

Responsibilities include:

a) Working with the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) on implementation of the indicator.
b) Coordinating on indicator development with national statistical systems, other international agencies and stakeholders.
c) Methodological development of indicators, in particular for Tier III.
d) Compile internationally comparable data in the different statistical domains;
e) Support increased adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards;

25. Partner Agency

An agency is referred to as **"partner agency"** when it does not have an explicit mandate for global monitoring but has a well established data reporting mechanism for some countries; or it has been involved in the methodology development of the indicator.

Responsibilities include:

a) Work with data custodian agency on indicator development;
b) Facilitate the compilation of the international data series;
c) Support increased adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards; and
d) Support countries in strengthening their national statistical capacity.

26. Proxy Indicators

The 49th UN Statistical commission in March 2018 expressed its appreciation on the progress made on the methodological development of Tier III indicators, but expressed concern that some of the Goals still have a majority of indicators in Tier III and stressed that the further development of Tier III indicators will need to continue to advance with urgency. The Commission requested the IAEG-SDGs to consider the feasibility of using tentative existing indicators as proxies for immediate use to monitor targets, while Tier III indicators are finalized.

Accordingly the 7th IAEG-SDGs meeting in April 2018 decided that a list of proxy indicators may be suggested by the IAEG-SDG for the 50th session of the Commission.

Proxy indicators are hence essentially indicators which are well defined and have established methodology and the data are produced regularly by countries and can be used as alternate indicator to the proposed Tier-III indicators. These indicators hence may be used to monitor the progress of a target while the methodology/data for the Tier III indicator is being established and reviewed by the IAEG-SDG.

27. Additional Indicators

Two comprehensive reviews of the indicator framework are planned, and their results are to be submitted for consideration and decision by the Statistical Commission at its 2020 and 2025 sessions. They could include the addition, deletion, refinement or adjustment of indicators on the basis of the following:

(a) Indicator does not map well to the target;

(b) Additional indicator(s) is needed to cover all aspects of the target;

(c) New data sources are available;

(d) Methodological development of tier III indicator has stalled or has not produced expected results;

(e) Indicator is not measuring progress towards meeting the target.