

## Chapter 7: Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 as a universal demand for actions to end poverty, protect the planet and to ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were formally adopted for the next 15 years by the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly with the adoption of the document titled 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' on 25 September 2015. At the session, each of the countries, including India, accepted the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, in relation to the progress made in implementing the goals and targets over the coming 15 years. The SDGs came into effect from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

Target	Description
14.1	By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
14.2	By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
14.3	Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperate on at all levels
14.5	By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

In India, National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) has the overall responsibility of SDGs implementation and aligning government schemes/ programs to SDGs. It was entrusted with the responsibility for identification of national targets for the SDGs and assigning them to the Ministries/ Departments concerned for implementation. NITI Aayog, designated Ministry of Earth Sciences as a nodal ministry for the implementation of activities towards SDG-14. Audit reviewed the efforts of the Government towards achieving targets under the goal. Audit focused majorly on the preparedness of the Ministries strategy as well as the by the relevant institutions.

### 7.1 Incomplete stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder mapping aids the decision maker to assess how the interest of the stakeholder is to be addressed in the project plan, policy and programme or other action. NITI Aayog carried

out stakeholder mapping with respect to the targets under SDG-14. Accordingly, the stakeholder/ line ministries for SDG-14 were- Ministry of Earth Sciences; Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change; Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, & Dairying; Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare. This mapping was revised in August 2017 and August 2018.

Audit examined the stakeholder mapping and found that a few significant stakeholder organisations were not included in the mapping. The Indian Coast Guard, designated as the central coordinating agency for combating oil pollution, has the mandate of surveillance of maritime zones of the country against oil spills. Despite being a significant stakeholder in the activities related to SDG 14.1 (Marine Pollution), Indian Coast Guard was not identified in the stakeholder mapping.

Ship source pollution is one of the significant causes of marine pollution affecting marine biodiversity. Various provisions under Merchant Shipping Act 1958 mandates the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to prevent and contain pollution arising from ships, ship wrecks, ship building and ship repair industries and ship breaking. The stakeholder mapping did not include Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

MoES stated (February 2022) that the recommendations related to stakeholder mapping for achievement of SDG-14 have been noted and the issue would be taken up with NITI Aayog and other stakeholder ministries in this regard.

## **7.2 Inadequacies in the National Indicator framework**

SDG Indicators are the quantitative outputs that helps the implementer to assess the progress of implementation efforts. UN General Assembly in 2017 adopted 232 indicators as the Global Indicator Framework (GIF) of SDGs. The member countries were to prepare the National Indicator framework (NIF) based on the GIF which would give appropriate directions to the policy makers and implementers of various schemes and programmes to track their progress on achieving related SDG targets. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) was entrusted with the responsibility of developing National Indicator Framework (NIF) for measuring the progress of SDGs and associated targets. MoSPI in July 2019 came up with the guidelines for development of SDGs State Indicator Framework (SIF). Given the significance of SDG indicators in assessing the progress towards SDGs, the national indicators were to align with the Global indicators taking into account the country specific environmental aspects. In this regard audit reviewed the indicators framed against the individual SDG 14 targets and found a few shortcomings.

7.2.1 The global indicators for SDG 14.1 include 'Index of coastal eutrophication and plastic debris density'. While the national indicator Coastal Water Quality Index (CWQI) prepared by MoES takes into account the nutrient pollution, MoES was yet to prepare an indicator related to plastic debris density. MoES stated (January 2022) that they have initiated collection of preliminary data with regard to this indicator in 2019.

7.2.2 The Global indicator for SDG target 14.2 was ‘use of ecosystem-based approach to manage marine areas.’ The ecosystem approach promotes integrated management of land water and living resources in a way that achieves mutually compatible conservation and sustainable use and delivers equitable benefits for people and nature. The National indicators for SDG 14.2 were ‘percentage change in area under the mangroves’ and ‘percentage change in marine protected areas. We observe that the indicators do not address holistically the SDG target and do not conform to global indicators to this extent as the indicator essentially measured only the output of the programmes developed for management of mangrove ecosystems. The list of activities planned to achieve the target should have also formed the sub-indicators and biodiversity, fisheries indices should have ideally formed the output indicators for the target.

7.2.3 As per the NIF prepared by MoSPI, ‘Implementation of CRZ notification 2011’ was included as one of the national indicators for Global indicator SDG 14.2.1. We observed that this indicator was later removed in 2020 due to the fact that the indicator was static in nature and that it was not suitable for measurement. However, the enforcement of CRZ is critical to the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in the coastal environment. Implementation of CRZ as well as ICZMP involves a sequence of activities that begin with the preparation of CZMPs, demarcation of CVCAs, demarcation and ground marking of various spatial reference lines. However, these deliverables were not brought into the indicator framework.

### **7.3 Data quality related issues**

Quality data is vital to track the progress on implementation of SDG targets. Tracking progress on SDG targets require collection, analysis and integration of data from different sources. Audit assessed the data gaps related to SDG-14 output indicators and observed the following: a) CWQI is one of the significant indicators to assess the achievement of SDG 14.1 related to marine pollution. Various parameters forming the CWQI are measured by MoES under Sea Water Quality Monitoring Programme (SWQM) by National Centre for Coastal Research. The objective of the SWQM was to periodically monitor water quality parameters in the coastal waters of India. The programme included collection and analysis of data from selected major towns / cities on land-based sources of marine pollution such as domestic, industrial, agriculture and aquaculture wastes. Audit found that the data collection points reduced drastically from 81 locations during 1990-2011 to 17 in the year 2017. The number of data collection points were further increased to 50 in 2021. Also, it was observed that data was not collected continuously for all the four seasons by all the participating institutes. Lack of continuous data will affect the analyses that were to be conducted to understand the data patterns over time.

### **7.4 Localisation of indicators**

While reviewing the state indicators for SDG targets, it was found that most of the coastal states had not come up with localized indicators based on their individual critical

development priorities and data requirements. We observed that the State Indicator frameworks were not prepared by the states of Maharashtra and Kerala. It was observed that with the exception of Gujarat, all other coastal states adopted the national indicators as developed by MoSPI without adapting them to the state specific environmental aspects. Also, in the states where SIFs had been formulated, further localization to District levels was done only by the State of Karnataka by notifying District Indicator Framework (DIF).

## **7.5 Conclusion**

- The stakeholder mapping for SDG-14 does not factor in some of the key players associated to the target achievement.
- Localisation of SDGs is in its nascent stage with two of the coastal states yet to notify the State Indicator Frameworks and only the state of Karnataka developing a District Indicator Framework for SDG-14.