

## 5. Bangladesh: Linking Evaluation Systems and National and Local SDG (Development) Planning

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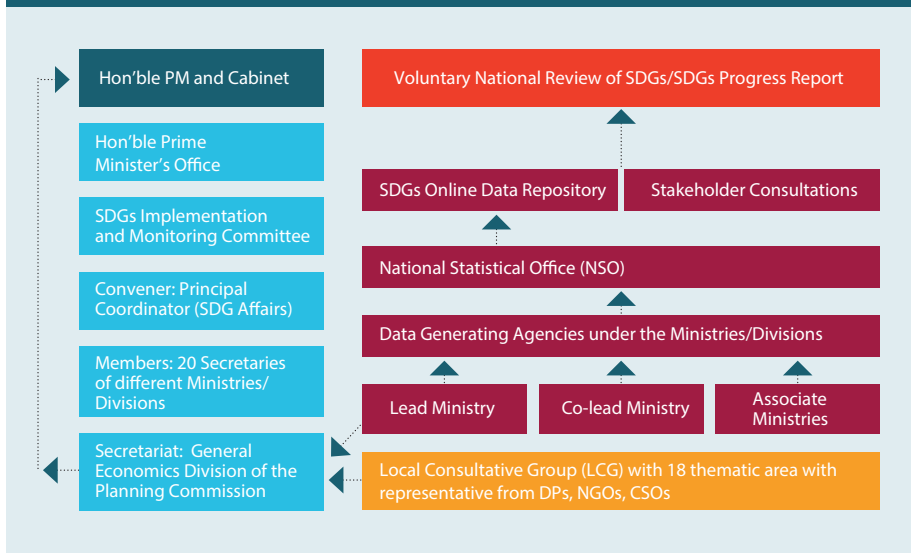
It is well accepted that government plans and policies need to address the complex and dynamic interactions required for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh had a unique opportunity to be present at both the Millennium Summit held in 2000 and the Sustainable Development Summit held in 2015 where the Millennium Declaration and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted respectively at the United Nations. Bangladesh's success in achieving many of the Millennium Development Goal targets and the Prime Minister's dynamic leadership which was instrumental to this achievement were globally acclaimed. This in turn underlined her championship and ownership for the SDGs.

The Government has a long-term Perspective Plan (2010-2021), which envisions that Bangladesh will be a middle-income country by 2021. The plan is being implemented through two successive five-year plans, i.e., the 6th and 7th Five-Year Plans. The Government has also approved a National Sustainable Development Strategy (2010-2021) with a view to addressing the balance between the economic, social and environmental requirements of development.

The flagship planning document of the Government of Bangladesh at this moment is the ongoing 7th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). In compliance with the request of the United Nations Secretary-General, Bangladesh participated in the process of formulating the post-2015 development agenda. In an inclusive and participatory manner, Bangladesh proposed 11 goals, 10 of which were incorporated in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. So, while the 7th Five-Year Plan was in the process of finalization, Bangladesh could incorporate its proposals into its own national development plan. Hence, analysis reveals that 82 percent of the global goals are well aligned with the ongoing national plan. It is believed that Bangladesh will require three successive five-year plans for full implementation of the SDGs by 2030.

A 20-member SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee has been formed, of which the secretaries of the most relevant ministries are the members. A new high-level post, that of Principal Coordinator of SDG Affairs, has been created in the Prime Minister's Office to spearhead the process and serve as the convener of the committee.

**FIGURE 1. NATIONAL SDG COORDINATION AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF BANGLADESH**



The first task of the SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee was to approve the SDG mapping. It reflects concerted, well thought-out efforts by the Government following a “whole of society” approach (involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and development partners) in delineating government responsibilities by the ministries for each of the SDG targets. The mapping (who is responsible for what in terms of targets) has given responsibility to 43 ministries acting as lead, along with 34 ministries acting as co-lead and 61 ministries/divisions/independent commissions earmarked as associates for the implementation of 169 targets of the 17 SDGs. The mapping also highlighted actions to be taken by the lead and co-lead ministries to achieve the SDG targets during 7th Five-Year Plan. It has also captured existing policies, strategies and regulations that will be instrumental for achieving the different targets.

Bangladesh has introduced the Annual Performance Agreement (APA), a results-based performance management system across the whole spectrum of the public sector with a view to improving efficiency and ensuring transparency and accountability. Under the APA system, each ministry enters into a memorandum of understanding with the Cabinet Division at the beginning of each financial year. The APA outlines the goals and targets of each ministry with corresponding performance indicators. The Government is in the process of integrating the SDG targets into the APA system so that the long-term objectives can be translated into the annual workplans of the ministries. The ministries have been instructed to incorporate SDG-related activities in their APAs so that they will be accountable in the implementation of the SDGs. All government training institutions have been directed to incorporate SDG-related issues in their training curricula.

The Government of Bangladesh has also undertaken an SDG data gap analysis with the assistance of all data-generating agencies including the National Statistical Organization of Bangladesh/Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The analysis revealed that out of 232 indicators, data related to 70 indicators are readily available in the existing system; data for 63 indicators are not available; and the rest are partially available (nine indicators are repeated two or three times in the 232 indicators). Since quite a few administrative data sources will be required, institutional linkages have to be established among the National Statistical Office and the administrative data-generating agencies of the different ministries to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of the data.

The Government of Bangladesh has finalized a web-based data repository system focusing on data disaggregation (“SDG Trackers”). The Government has also finalized an SDG Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for the country. The framework has prioritized the SDG indicators based on the country context and availability of data and also benchmarked the base and target figures for the indicators up to 2020, 2025 and 2030 so that they can be well articulated in the upcoming five-year planning cycles.

The Government of Bangladesh has also conducted a study, “SDGs Needs Assessment and Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective”, to assess the resources needed to achieve the SDGs and map out a financial strategy for successful implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh. The study provides a well-defined framework that outlines the goal and target-wise additional estimated cost at 2015-2016 constant prices. It is estimated that gross domestic product (GDP) growth would be 8 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2020, 8.5 percent in FY 2025 and 9 percent in FY 2030. The report estimates that the additional amount required over the current provision of investment related to the SDGs by the public sector and external sources, would be US\$928.48 billion at 2015-2016 constant prices. This amount would be required for implementation of the SDGs over the period FY 2017 to FY 2030, which is 19.75 percent of the accumulated GDP under the extended growth scenario of the 7th Five-Year Plan. The annual average cost of the SDGs would be \$66.32 billion (at constant prices) for this period.

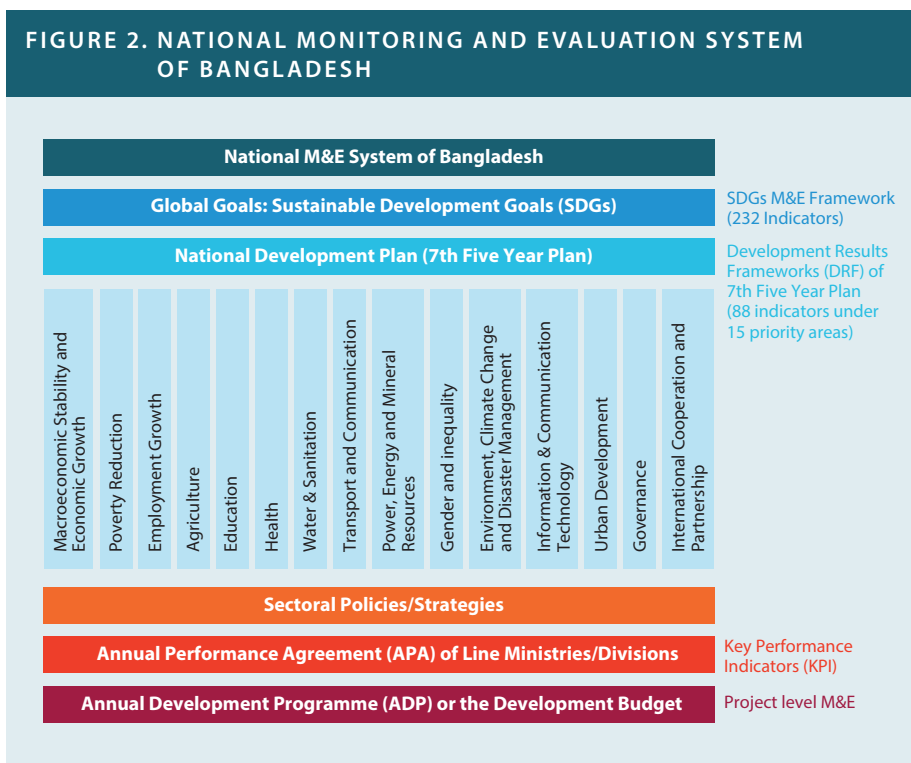
The study suggests five potential sources for meeting the financing gap: (1) public financing; (2) private sector financing; (3) public-private partnerships (PPPs); (4) external sources including foreign direct investment and foreign aid and grants; and lastly (5) NGOs. During the period FY 2017 to FY 2030, on average, the public sector would account for 34 percent of the financing requirement. The private sector would have to provide 42 percent of the investment through reenergizing of business activities. The average share of PPPs is determined to be 6 percent. The external source would have an average share of around 15 percent in the face of dwindling prospects for official development assistance. Finally, the contribution of NGOs is estimated to be around 4 percent of the total additional cost.

Based on the SDG mapping, the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission has drafted a National Action Plan for SDG Implementation in accordance with the objectives of the 7th Five-Year Plan, which will be instrumental for achieving the SDG targets. Once finalized, the National Action Plan for SDG Implementation will guide ministries in undertaking priority projects against the specific targets of the SDGs in the coming years, while

also taking special measures for their speedy implementation and giving greater impetus in parallel to monitoring and evaluation.

Bangladesh participated in the voluntary national review of the SDGs in 2017 at the high-level political forum of the United Nations. The focus of its report was to highlight activities for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Bangladesh submitted its report along with 42 other countries. The voluntary national review was prepared through a consultative process and presented to the high-level political forum on 17 July 2017 by the Planning Minister at the Ministry of Planning.

Data and evidence are the foundation of development policy and effective programme implementation, and countries need data to formulate policy and evaluate progress. Data are what drives resources towards development. The ongoing 7th Five-Year Plan of Bangladesh takes specific steps to move towards results-based M&E. This system is likely to bring about major political and cultural changes in the way governments and organizations operate, leading to improved performance, increased accountability, transparency, learning and knowledge. In the specific context of “Vision 2021” and the 7th Five-Year Plan, results-based M&E is recognized as critical to helping the Government track and monitor progress with implementation of the respective targets and take corrective actions when major gaps or divergences emerge.



The 7th Five-Year Plan has identified 15 priority areas: (1) macroeconomic stability and economic growth; (2) poverty reduction; (3) employment growth; (4) agriculture; (5) education; (6) health; (7) water and sanitation; (8) transport and communication; (9) power, energy and mineral resources; (10) gender and inequality; (11) environment, climate change and disaster management; (12) information and communication technology; (13) urban development; (14) governance; and (15) international cooperation and partnership. Figure 2 shows that all the priority areas of the 7th Five-Year Plan capture the SDGs. The 7th Five-Year Plan has identified a Development Results Framework (DRF) with 88 results against the 15 priority areas; each indicator has benchmark and target figures. Around 20 percent of the SDG indicators are reflected in the DRF.

The lack of capacity and broad-based awareness of the importance of results-based M&E is a major challenge. Data generation for the set of indicators and their useful analysis remains a formidable task. Most importantly, there is a clear lack of institutions and institutional coordination in terms of who will manage the overall M&E process which involves:

1. Ensuring that the necessary data are generated in a timely and reliable fashion;
2. The data are examined adequately to find insights on the progress;
3. The findings are disseminated to all relevant state and non-state actors so that better public policies are formulated and implemented to support the progress.

Thus, to mitigate such institutional, structural and policy deficits, which undermine the overall results-based M&E system within the public sector, the principle strategy of the Government of Bangladesh is to undertake major institutional reforms and implement a comprehensive set of activities that will create a conducive environment for an effective M&E culture.

As the National Statistical Organization, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics will assume the core responsibility for producing official national statistics. It will not only generate 101 data points related to SDG targets but also spearhead the process of coordination with other government data producers to generate the relevant data in a timely way. The commitment to “leave no one behind” has been a key feature of the SDGs and disaggregated data are the only means to identify who is being left out. It is believed that producing data at disaggregated levels will be challenging but initial efforts have to focus on generating high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated primarily by gender, age, income and geographic location. Globally enhancing capacity for data generation through financing, technology, logistics and human capital has been identified as a challenge that has to be resolved in a coordinated manner to get better outcomes.

In Bangladesh, the Government has already provided political support and interest in developing effective results-based M&E as articulated in the 7th Five-Year Plan and has developed the online SDG data repository. Even where political will prevails, technical capacity and data limitations will likely constrain the scope and approach to M&E. The assignment of the Planning Commission as the focal point for M&E strategy is a welcome development. Simultaneously with the adoption of the medium-term budgetary framework as the main instrument for coordination with national planning and fiscal management, the role of M&E

at the line ministry level also gains significance. While the Planning Commission rightly focuses on developing a nationwide M&E framework in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the line ministries, its own M&E focus is on high-level outcomes related to the implementation of the national plans and major policies. Hence, to further strengthen the capacity of the Planning Commission in guiding the overall M&E process, more institutional reforms and capacity-building measures are required under the 2030 Agenda timeframe.

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