



# Assam Vision 2030 Document – A Review by Development Alternatives

---

August 2016

**Authors:**

Anshul Bhamra, Development Alternatives  
Zeenat Niazi, Development Alternatives

## About Assam Vision Document

---

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, 2016, the Government of Assam released the **Assam 2030 in light of SDGs – Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Assam**. The document defines the ambition of the state to ensure the health, happiness, prosperity and well-being of each and every citizen of Assam, as also on the conservation and preservation of the State's unique bio-diversity, which is critical for the sustainable development and economic growth of Assam.

The process of developing the document has included consultations across the government departments and inputs from experts over a series of meeting in January and February 2016. The document is now located in a portal managed by the Planning and Development Department of the Government of Assam. It also includes the discussion presentations and documents that have guided the preparation of this document so far. The scrutiny of the portal indicates an institutional anchoring of the SD Agenda 2030 by the state Government.

**The State Government has requested inputs to this document from various agencies and individuals in order to make it more robust and in parallel, a strategic action plan for various departments is being developed.**

## Overview of Assam Vision Document

---

The Assam Vision 2030 (AVD 2030) document is a commendable exercise in acknowledging and formally adopting the 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 304 indicators that represent the consensus of the global community on things to be done by different Governments in the interest of the well-being of the entire world and humanity. Assam is the first state in the Federal republic of India to have applied the framework of the Global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 as a guide for the long term development strategy and plan for the State. This exercise is largely a target setting exercise. The document looks at each of the 17 goals and 169 targets and expected 304 indicators and proposes a broad approach that seeks to:

1. *Achieve the SDGs through adjustments of existing government programmes by:*
  - a) *Re-orienting, re-aligning and re-prioritizing the existing programs;*
  - b) *Integrating, synergizing and re-energizing the different components of SDGs; and*
  - c) *Re-defining the structures, retooling the processes and rejuvenate the people*
2. *Forging strong partnerships between State Governments and all stakeholders, ranging from Global to National to Local levels, corporates to communities, academia to civil society etc., supported by effective communications and management of change, would be important.*
3. *Bringing in expertise for knowledge and capacity building from global and national institutions such as the UN organizations such as United Nations Global Compact Network India (UNGCNI), the World Economic Forum, premier academic institutions like The Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, local research organization like OKD Institute, Guwahati, Central & State Universities in Assam and corporate technology giants like Google, IBM, Microsoft, Apple etc.; while supplemental local resources and expertise may be provided by corporate partners and established institutions in India.*

## Scope of the Review

---

The aim of this review document is to provide a critical assessment of the State SDG plan in this early stage and provide constructive inputs to improve and strengthen this plan document. Broad outline of the AVD 2030 document is:

- Status quo and ambitions of the Government of Assam for 2030
- Overall perspective and broad approach to pursue the vision/ ambition set

The two questions answered under each of the Goals are: ‘**Where am I Today?**’ and ‘**What do I Have to Achieve by 2030?**’ The “**How to Achieve My Aim for 2030**” question is currently beyond the purview of this document and is to be covered in the upcoming strategic plan of the state.

As the document mentions, this exercise is basically to map the state’s status quo and the ambition it wants to set to achieve by 2030. This document will be followed by a strategy paper and action plan that details on the methods and road map to achieve the target set by this vision document.

## Framework of Review

---

The document has been reviewed at two levels. The overall analysis section highlights some important points from the broad principles that this Vision Document of Assam Government comprises of. It critically analyses the principle, and the rationale behind this Vision, as described in the overview and conclusion of the Vision Document.

The second section of the report conducts a detailed goal wise analysis of the Vision Document. The framework used for assessment is to mark the key information put forth in each of the Sustainable Development Goals. It maps the measures and indicators used by the Assam Government in quantifying its status and target by 2030. It then assesses the indicator used by Assam Government as to whether it is suitable and relevant to the target that the SDGs framework has listed. The assessment is guided by the list of indicators and measurements provided by United Nations Statistics Division, as well as the relevant data conditions in case of India. The list of indicators for UN- Stats can be accessed [here](#) and a study on India’s indicators for SDGs can be accessed at this [link](#).

GOAL X	
Area of study	Review
Target 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the SDGs targets set by the state?</li><li>• Are there any relevant targets missed?</li></ul>
Indicator used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Map the indicators used to track progress of the target</li><li>• Are these indicators measurable, relevant and suitable?</li></ul>
Current Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the baseline identified with respect to indicator chosen?</li><li>• What is the current situation with respect to the target, measured by the indicator?</li></ul>
Current Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are current programmes and schemes that impacts the target?</li><li>• Are there new schemes or programmes announced/hinted (if any)?</li></ul>
UN-IAEG Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UN-IAEG indicator list that are not included in the document but needs attention</li></ul>

## Overall Analysis of the Vision Document

---

The document aims to incorporate three profoundly inter-connected elements of sustainable development- achieving faster growing economy that ushers in prosperity by making process of development socially inclusive and at the same time achieving it in environmentally sustainable manner. The sub-title of the document is indicative of the tone of the document. It says “Everything for everyone”. The document has also highlights the formation of SDG cells from the local to state level in each of the ministries. An SDG charter for each ministry is also proposed for streamlining development according to the targets of the SDGs.

The Vision Document 2030 by Assam is a critical first step in strategising towards achievement of SDGs at the state level. Assam has surely taken the lead amongst the 29 states in adopting this agenda and defining targets for its state for the next 15 years. While the intent of the document is promising, there are some takeaways from the overall analysis of the document.

The aim of the document to achieve faster growing economies while being inclusive and green does not follow the spirits of SDGs. It keeps fast growing economies at the centre of development. The Sustainable Development Goals, on the other end, aims for people and planetary prosperity with economic activities as the means of achieving it. The inherent assumption in the first case is that faster growing economies can lead to inclusiveness in a green manner. However, there is literature that indicates stagnation or slower growth rates if a country or the world wishes to aim for sustainability and inclusivity.

The sub-title one-liner- “Everything for everyone” needs careful examination. Everything for everyone may have contrasting connotations depending on specially the definition of “everything”. Also, “everything” for everyone may not be truly representative of the spirit of SDGs. Natural resources that the earth can provide at a time is finite and the world is extracting the resources at higher rate than it’s the earth’s capacity to regenerate. India is extracting its natural resources at 1.7 times its bio-capacity. As there are constraints from the supply of resources that can cater to “everything” everyone wants, this principle can lead to potential exploitation and degradation of natural endowments. The idea of having everything, consumption based society; typical to the West has contributed immensely to the state of environment with high carbon emission levels and resource consumption rate. These are surely not the kind of lifestyles sustainable in the resource constrained world like ours. At the same time one person’s tendency of having everything may come at the compromise of another persons’ something. A better idea that represents in spirit of SDGs would be the principle of sufficiency and social equity, a principle of “leaving no one behind” where certain basic standards of living are ensured to everyone irrespective of their identities.

The document aims to achieve all the targets of set up SDGs by 2030. The vision is appealing but a common thread of resource constraints- natural, human, financial, technological has not been detailed to ensure promising outcomes. The integrated nature of different Sustainable Development Goals has somewhere been missed in the document in detailing vision under each Goal.

## Section-wise Analysis

---

The Assam Vision document details on “Status quo and ambition of Govt. of Assam” with respect to each of the seventeen goals of the SDGs. Broadly, the document has provided goal wise details on the following points:

- What does SDG X demand/target?
- Status quo of Assam on the target of the SDG
- Various government initiatives/programmes/plans in Assam that help in achieving SDG X
- Highlighting the target of the government under SDG X and statement on its adoption

The following goal wise sections inform the reader of the data used and the ambition set under each of the goal. It provides a perspective of the ambitiousness of these targets guided by the indicators/measurements developed by the UN-IAEG and/or relevant in measuring the progress of a target in India. This is in order to ensure that Assam sets itself targets and uses apt indicators to track the progress of its targets, preventing unexpected outcomes.



### Goal 1: End Poverty in all its Forms Everywhere

The narrative highlights the poverty ratio of 27.3 % against target of 29 % in 2015 of Assam and aims to completely eradicate poverty in the state. Assam aims to eradicate with policies on food, shelter; loans for farmers, MGNREGS and other safety net schemes of the government.

Poverty ratio may not alone be sufficient as an indicator to measure poverty eradication action and achievements of the government. Poverty as mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals is a multi-dimensional concept. Poverty ratio calculates proportion of people below the poverty line of India. This may not enough as an indicator to ensure eradication of multi-dimensional poverty which includes access to productive assets like land, finance, access to basic needs and decent standards of living. It is essential for the government to look at more suitable indicators to ensure Assam eradicates all kinds of poverty by 2030. Also poverty gap ratio is an indicator that tracks outcome while Assam Government may also need to assess the process and systems for achieving the outcome. These indicators must assess the robustness of the policies and resources, actions directly for poverty eradication.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Percentage of population (different categories) covered under social protection schemes, percentage of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes and expenditure of government expenditure on essential services from the total budget of the government are some indicators used by the UN-IAEG to track the action towards eradicating poverty.



## Goal 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

Goal 2 highlights Assam Government's aim to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all by 2030. Proportion of underweight children under age of three in Assam is at 29.5 percent, which is above the MDG target of 24.6 percent. Government is committed to complete elimination of malnutrition amongst children in Assam. The Vision document also points out at some promising numbers in state of agriculture in Assam. The rate of growth of agriculture in Assam has gone high from 1.9 percent to 4.5 percent from 2005-2013. Also since 2007, the state has witness 11 percent rate of growth in food production. Despite these improvements in agriculture sector, Assam has the food availability of 430 gms per person per day which is 80 gms less than what is available in the country as a whole. Increasing crop intensity and improving agriculture productivity are the two targets Government has set for its agriculture sector in order to ensure food security for all people of Assam.

The government aims to address the access to food via public distribution systems and other relevant missions for food access. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Credit Schemes are some important agriculture schemes in Assam that it has mapped for achieving SDGs.

While Assam has set itself a very ambitious target of eliminating malnutrition amongst children in Assam, some of its other food security aspects may be missing. It aims to ensure food security by increasing agriculture productivity but fails to recognize access of food as a critical concern along with availability of food. Increase in food grain production may not necessarily mean that everyone in Assam will become food secure. Malnutrition may also require the state government to assess the use of micro-nutrition amongst children's diet.

Further there are some critical concerns in using growth rates of agriculture, agriculture productivity and availability of farm power as indicators to assess agriculture systems. Firstly, it uses rate of growth in agriculture and yield. Growth rate tells the speed of development but does not indicate the condition pre and post intervention in absolute terms. Second, growth rates may not necessarily mean healthy state of development. According to the neo-classical Solow model of economic growth, growth rates are usually higher at lower stages of development and slow down with high stage of development. In addition to that, growth rate of agriculture can be a misleading target to track as growth may be caused by various possible reasons like change in choice of crops from food to cash crops, increase in agriculture production of large farmers, etc. There are also no specific indicators on farmers' income. This is an important indicator as SDG 2 aims to double farmer incomes by 2030 and small farmers in India face livelihood threat due to depleting natural resources, climate change and fluctuating markets.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Prevalence of undernourishment, stunting, severe food insecurity are some other access indicators by UN-IAEG. The UN-IAEG indicators value of production per labour unit, area under sustainable agriculture, percentage area under irrigation. These qualities of agriculture systems ensure healthy and safe food production systems for the state. The status quo and ambition under this goal must therefore broaden its horizon from mere tracking of growth rate of agriculture.



### Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

The Goal narrative highlights the poor state of child mortality and maternal mortality rates of the State of Assam. The child mortality under age of 5 years is 73 deaths per 1000 children (national average – 49). Maternal mortality rate is also double the national average of 167 per 1 lakh women at 300. The document says increase in Primary health centres and Medical Colleges, it also recognizes the shortfall and sets target of improving health facilities to improve health conditions in the state. The state has set the target of reducing child and maternal mortality to a minimum by 2030. The means of achieving these targets seems to be the National health Missions and improving reach of health facilities to everyone in the state.

The document aims to reduce mortality to a minimum which is not defined. Such a target is not easily measured. Some of the vital concerns that arise in this goal are also related to the quality of health care services. There is a need to assess the service quality of these centres as the health outcomes are not satisfactory despite a number of such centres in place. Hygiene conditions and proper knowledge of diet and maternal and child care are also important factors that impact health outcomes which needs to be recognized and addressed.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** There have not been targets and indicators that the Vision Document highlights related to non-communicable diseases like cancer, tuberculosis, HIV-Aids. Reproductive health and adolescent health are also important components of health goal which are currently not a part of the targets under this Goal.



### Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

The Goal 4 throws light on Assam's literacy rate at 75 percent, similar to India's average, grown by 10 per cent point since 2001. Gross enrollment ratio and drop out share shows positive improvements at the primary and upper primary level, according to the sources of the Vision document. The goal also highlights low number (50 percent of the total) students who continue schooling after elementary education. Need to promote tertiary education and to achieve complete literacy in the state are two targets set by State of Assam.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and other programmes that ensured easy access to school, separate toilets for girls and boys, scholarships for meritorious students have resulted in positive outcomes for the state.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Proficiency levels of students attaining education is an important indicator for assessing quality of education outcomes. Also quality of teachers, their training; targets for vocational training facilities are important targets within this goal.



## Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The Goal 5 elaborates on the promising gender parity in the education systems in Assam. The ratio of girls to boys enrollment in school is favourable towards girls at all levels of education. Chief Minister in his vision for Women, 2012 identified 16 Goals to be achieved by 2016 including reduction in IMR, MMR, total fertility rate, reduction in anemia, establishment of women cells in police stations, promotion of SHGs for women empowerment. The document aims to bring gender equality in employment similar to line of what the state has achieved in education through various skill development programmes.

The government has a large programme targeted on women for their health and basic needs and also certain skill based targets. The targets lack quantification. Most of the targets of CM's vision for women are about reduction or improvement of certain condition without actual targets. Also, sexual violence and other forms of violence against women are missing a mention and should be included. Representation of women's voice at the family, community, *panchayat* and legislative level is also an important indicator of translating access and opportunity into empowerment of women. This seems to be missing in current framework.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Proportion of women subjected to violence, average daily spent unpaid daily care work by women, proportion of women in state and local governments, number of women in managerial positions are some important indicators identified by UN-IAEG that broadens the scope and understanding of gender equality.



## Goal 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All

The Government of Assam under Goal 6 aims to ensure universal and safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities for all. It tracks indicators of access to safe water and sanitation of the population at a sad state of 62 % and 39 % of the total population respectively. The Government recent scheme- MANASA aims for sustainable, green clean and open defecation-free state. While these are important indicators at serving the needs and demands of water, the document misses the supply side indicators of management and rejuvenation of water bodies as mentioned under SDG 6.

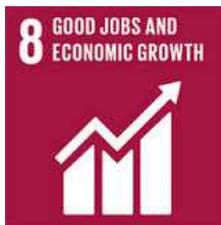
**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Percentage of wastewater safely treated , disaggregated by economic activity; Percentage of receiving water bodies with ambient water quality not presenting risk to the environment or human health; Percentage change in water use efficiency over time; Percentage of change in wetlands extent over time. These indicators assess the management of supply of clean and safe water by proper management and conservation of water bodies and are essential for state to track in order to not only ensure the drinking water and sanitation targets but also to ensure safe supply of water, for drinking, agriculture, industrial purposes, now and in the future.



## Goal 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

This Goal in the outcome document rightly tracks the total population with access to electricity as well as the source of electricity (renewable and non-renewable). The state has put forth a massive target of providing access to electricity to all its population when less than half of the population (~37%) has access to electricity currently. This has only increase 12% points from 25 % in the last 15 years (2001). This would approximately mean to have five times the rate of growth in access to electricity than in the last 15 years.

On the supply side of the electricity, much has been emphasized on the renewable sources of energy specifically hydro power projects and biogas plants. Various hydro-electric projects are planned or are in process like *Karbi Langi* Hydroelectric project, *Bongwaigaon* thermal power plant. Looking at hydro-power as source of electricity must be seen with a caveat of various environmental and social displacement concerns that are usually connected with this source. The state has identified that it only utilizes 6 percent of its total potential of renewable energy, but has not announced any targets for exploring this potential in their Vision Document.



## Goal 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

The Goal 8 highlights the higher growth rate of Assam compared to India in the period 2004-2014. The agriculture growth rate increased from 1.9 per cent to 4.5 per cent. Industrial growth rate increased from 3.53 per cent to 4.28 per cent in the same period. The highlighting concern identified by the state is their low per capita GSDP, 40 per cent lesser than the national average. Also, unemployment is identified as another concern for the state with 7 percent of the working population unemployed. The document identifies the need to have higher per capita growth and efforts are also planned to improve skills of youth population. Skill development mission, Farm entrepreneurs, Smart villages, promotion of ease of doing business are some key strategies for enhancing employment as identified by the state.

Growth rates as an indicator for health of the economy will not show complete story. It needs to include factors of GDP contribution along with employment as well as environmental factors of the production systems. Informal employment market and greener and sustainable modes of production is an important target in Goal 8 which misses its mention in the Vision document.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Work conditions of labour, share of informal unemployment, resource productivity in production systems, and percentage of youth not in education, employment or training and financial inclusion are important components highlighting health of the economy which has not been mentioned in the document. These indicators will help in assessing economy's contribution in social development and its relation with environment.



## Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 9 in the document emphasizes the need for transport connectivity—road, railways, waterway and air. A systemic linkage of all these modes can support the state in free mobility of goods and inputs, link production units to markets, provide access to basic facilities to the population of Assam. While there is a fourfold increase in the road length in Assam since 2001, there is 23 percent of the habitation that still needs to be covered with all-weather roads, according to the document. The document highlights the tremendous potential of the rural economy in Assam particularly small and medium scale agro processing units, sericulture, horticulture, floriculture, handlooms and textiles. The Government aims to fully utilize the potential of small, tiny, micro and medium enterprises for fostering industrialisation.

The transport system and focus on small enterprises in Goal 9 is rightly guided by the targets of the Goals. While current state of transport with respect to roads is defined, the document has missed to scope the current status of small enterprises in the state of Assam. The document has also not come up with any targets or quantifiable indicators to measure the progress of MSMEs and transport systems in Assam.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Some important indicators suggested by UN-IAEG under this goal are percentage of employed population in manufacturing sector, percentage share of small scale industry in total industrial share, percentage of MSMEs with loan and line of credit. These indicators will be useful in assessing the robustness and quality promotion of MSMEs. Carbon emissions generated per unit of value added is also an important indicator for ensure sustainable production systems in MSMEs.



## Goal 10: Reduce inequalities within and amongst countries

The SDG 10 in the document identifies land as one of productive assets that is critical for enhancing equality. It also identified the need for special considerations for marginalised and vulnerable population and mentions that government has implemented various programmes specially for Scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, tea garden population, religious minorities and will continue to do so in order to address inequalities in the state.

This Goal misses some relevant targets. While land is one of the productive assets that is essential for fostering equality, there is a need to broaden the understanding of inequalities in terms of access to basic needs, opportunity of economic activity (including productive assets like land, financial capital), outcome (income, lifestyle) and voice (political representations).

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** The UN-IAEG identifies income per capita among bottom 40 percent of the population, percentage of population reported discrimination are indicators that can measure the outcome level of impact of programmes that aim to address inequalities.



## Goal 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

The Goal 11 in the outcome document highlights concerns of urban sector-risks from natural disaster, lack of proper housing (5.7 per cent of the population) and drinking water (24.5 per cent), open defecation (5 per cent), lack of electrification (16 per cent) and urban slum population (2 lakh people). Urban transportation and waste management are other two sectors identified as important area of work under this goal.

Basic needs access in urban cities are addressed in different goals from Goal 6 for water and sanitation, Goal 7 for electricity for all. The intent of this goal is focusing on urban slums. While this is one concern highlighted in this goal, there is no base line of the urban slums. Additionally, there is no specific target that the document highlights in case of urban slums as well as in transportation, waste management. Other missing concerns include land consumption rate to population growth rate; sustainable town planning and access to green public spaces in cities.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** The UN-IAEG suggests using proportion of slum population to total population, proportion of population with convenient access to public transport for ensuring inclusive settlements. In order to ensure sustainable cities, indicators on land use pattern, mean levels of particulate matter, percentage of waste disposed well are other important indicators that can be used.



## Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

Goal 12 in the outcome document identifies minimum resource use and increase efficiency of resource use as two guiding principles for ensuring least ecological footprints. It mentions use of renewable energy, organic farming, bio-fertilizer use in agriculture, and increase in energy and water use efficiency as actions in other Goals that will lead to Sustainable Consumption and Production.

While this Goal is always seen as cross-cutting and dependent on strategies and actions of other goals to achieve these indicators, there are important movements to be tracked under this goal. This Goal demands the State governments to assess their policies on four features: Reaching critical thresholds, impacts decoupling, resource decoupling and social benefits. The details can be available [here](#). The regulatory, fiscal and planning instruments of the state in various sectors like environment management, waste, renewable energy, purchase procurement, clean technology and climate change needs to be vetted against the four features that define SCP in a policy as designed by UNEP. There are also implications on business on how they understand sustainability and their action towards sustainable production systems.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** The UN-IAEG provides with range of indicators to ensure sustainability of public policies, corporate policies and action. Countries with SCP action plan, Food loss index, Material footprint, national recycling rate, companies publishing sustainability reports, sustainable procurement policies are some of important indicators for Goal 12.



## **Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts**

The Vision document states the vulnerabilities that Assam is expected to face due to climate change. It also states that the state has developed its state action plan for climate change (SAPCC). The SAPCC identifies vulnerabilities and plans for action with respect to adaptation, mitigation and resilience building. The Plan proposes to set up a separate State Climate change management society to combat the consequences of climate change in the state.

The document rightly designates plans and action to the SAPCC Assam. However, climate change is going to impact the achievement of all other SDGs. The 17 goals of the Agenda 2030 comprises of concerns on agriculture and food security, water and energy for all, sustainable habitats, healthy terrestrial and water eco-systems. Most of the Goals therefore have a strong connect with climate change concerns in the country. Some SDGs which have targets of agriculture productivity, access to water and sanitation, forest will be vulnerable to climate change due to changing weather patterns and water availability. There will also be SDGs achieving which will have impact on the climate mitigation targets of the country. The means to achieve electricity for all, carbon emissions from the country will depend on the plans for industrialization (SDG 9) and economic growth (SDG 8) targets. There is a need for Assam to envision sectoral inter-linkages and identify climate integrated development plans.



## **Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

The Goal 14 identifies Brahmaputra and Barak rivers as important water systems of the state. It has also identified 3500 fresh water natural wetlands covering 1800 square kilometer as important water system resources. The document mentions that conservation and sustainable use of river systems have always been a priority of the government. Guwahati Water Bodies Act 2008 aims at preservation, conservation and protection of four wetlands.

While the need is established, the document has not identified indicators that measure the quality of these water systems. This may include their acidity levels, proportion of fish stocks compared to optimum levels. These may be useful for assessing the health of river systems.



## **Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of territorial eco-system, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**

Goal 15 of the Vision document focuses on healthy forest cover (approx. 33 per cent of the total geographical area), owing to an increase of 16.8 per cent between 2000 and 2015, because of conscious efforts by the Government of Assam. The document also highlights Assam as a biodiversity hotspot with 2 biosphere reserves and elaborate network of protected areas. Flood and erosion are two important concerns of the state identified under this goal. According to the document, approximately 0.8 million hectares of land is annually affected by flood and 800 hectares of land is lost every year due to erosion.

Goal 15 in the document does not have quantifiable targets to be achieved by 2030. It aims to promote use of territorial eco-systems but have not set itself any target to achieve with respect to increase in forest cover, or reduction in land affected due to floods/erosion.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Net permanent forest loss, coverage of protected area, proportion of degraded land to total land, red list index, implementation of Nagoya Protocol are some of the indicators to measure for tracking progress in sustainable land systems according to UN-IAEG report that can be of use for Assam to track on.



## **Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

The Vision Document recognizes geographical, social and cultural diversity in the state of Assam. It states to have worked on inclusive societies by ensuring regular *panchayat* elections, and reservation of seats for women at all tiers of the governance. For assessing Assam's state with respect to rule of law, it states that Assam has moved a long way to peaceful conditions than the troubled years of 1990s. Further, it sets its target to decrease crime rate particularly against women through legislative and administrative procedures.

The section on Goal 16 in the Vision Document lacks evidence of peaceful Assam and rule of law, and also its current situation of crime rate. Without these numbers, and the target outcome to reach in both, there is vagueness in the Vision for this Goal.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** Some important indicators that measure access to justice, and accountability of institutions have got missed. Some of the indicators suggested by UN-IAEG are population subjected to sexual violence in last 12 months, percentage of children who witnessed violent punishment in last 12 months, number of detected and non-detected victims of human trafficking, un-sentenced detainees as percentage of overall prison population, primary government expenditure as to the approved, percentage of population satisfied with last experience of public service are some critical indicators in this regard.



## Goal 17: Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The Goal 17 in the outcome document has put forth the need for increasing efficiency in management of public finance and use of information and technology for raising accountability of the government. Review and monitoring frameworks, regulation and incentives structures of the government will require revisions in accordance to principles of Sustainable Development Goals. The state government recognizes the importance and critical value in building partnership with neighboring states. It also states that administrative boundaries may be different than ecological boundaries, stating the need to have meaningful collaborations with south east countries having similar concerns. The Government of Assam is committed to realize high end technology platforms in pursuing the SDGs.

**Suggestive Indicators of UN-IAEG:** The vision document does not set targets but states principles of work in this Goal. It may be useful to measure Total tax revenue/ GDP, net ODA as a proportion of total GNI, total capital inflow, access to patent systems in order to track the progress in finance and technology partnerships that fructified for State of Assam in the coming years.

### NEXT STEPS

---

The Government of Assam has done a commendable exercise of developing the Vision document, and become the leader in adopting and planning in accordance to the Sustainable Development Goals. Some important next steps post this Vision Document are:

- The Vision document should be followed with a guiding framework of indicators for each of the SDG targets, guided by the UN-IAEG document and the conditions at the state level. There is a need to have baseline to be collated or/and collected (wherever data is not yet collected) for each of these indicators in order to track progress in the coming 15 years.
- The process of detailed roadmap is in the process as mentioned in the document. It should ensure to have milestones at short term span to monitor progress. The roadmap to must also include indicators to measure the process as well as impact of a certain intervention in order to guide revisions or omissions required in a policy/programme.
- Given the overlaps in the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change issues, its important to ensure these two processes at the state level do not occur in siloes and adequate integration can be sought from the planning. This requires mapping problems, plans and the targets of a state with respect to its sustainable development goals over its climate concerns, plans and targets (SAPCCs). Further, the SDGs Plan and the SAPCCs have to be integrated with Annual state plans that decide public financial flows and tax incentives, etc. Without integration of the all three or synergizing resources on all three, mainstreaming in policy and development plans is difficult to achieve at the state level.
- There is a need to foster multi-stakeholder partnership amongst academic professionals, civil society, corporates for research, finance and technology needs that the state would require in order to achieve the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

**Word Headquarters**

B-32, Tara Crescent, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi – 110016, India

Tel: +91 11 2654 4100, 2654 4200, Fax: +91 11 2685 1158

Email: [mail@devalt.org](mailto:mail@devalt.org), Website: [www.devalt.org](http://www.devalt.org)