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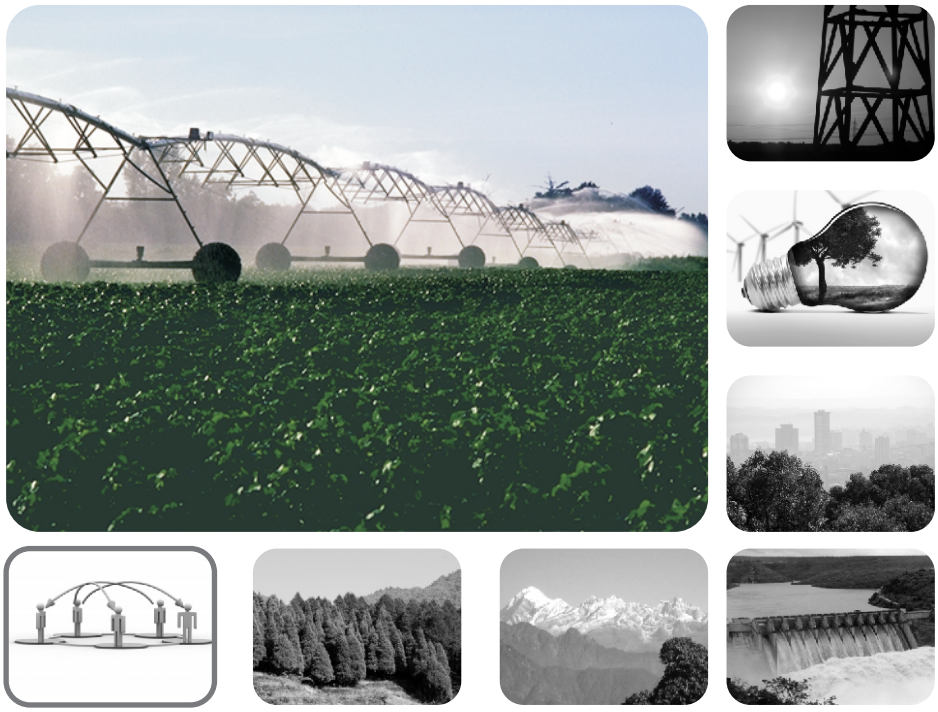
National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture



Mission Brief prepared as part of the Study: Implementation of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) - Progress & Evaluation

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National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

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This is one of the eight-brief series prepared as part of the Study titled `Implementation of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) – Progress & Evaluation'. The Study report, along with the eight briefs, can be accessed at **http://ifmrlead.org/napcc-progress-and-evaluation/**

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About the Study

This Study has been undertaken to provide pointers to facilitate effective implementation of the National Missions under the NAPCC, as well as to highlight key policy aspects that augur well to further this national mandate. Specifically, the Study has sought to track the progress achieved by each of the National Missions since their launch up to March 2015 and also evaluate them through the lens of core policy implementation functions.

Using a combination of desk research and expert interviews, the Study has consolidated informed insights on strategies to accelerate and enhance the efficacy of the Missions' implementation, apart from documenting details of their progress. The Study team has interacted with key Government officials, domain experts in affiliated technical and academic institutions and independent research organizations to gain perspectives from all relevant stakeholders in this context. A distinct format has been followed for reviewing the Missions which have achieved quantifiable progress against their targets.

The findings of this Study were disseminated at a policy workshop, hosted by IFMR LEAD in June 2015 at New Delhi, bringing together policymakers from the concerned Union Ministries, bilateral agencies and other relevant stakeholders. The event marked a focused dialogue on the progress of the NAPCC thus far as well as the way forward for the Missions. Inputs from the workshop have been incorporated into the Study report. While the Study objectives, methodology adopted and findings across Missions have been summarised in this report, detailed findings on each Mission have been elaborated in individual Mission briefs.

Introduction

The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) seeks to devise appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies in the agriculture sector in the context of risks associated with climate change. These are towards achieving the larger milestones of ensuring food security, equitable access to food resources, enhancing livelihood opportunities, improved farm practices using new technology and contributing to economic stability at the national level. The Mission additionally classifies its strategies into functional components viz. *Research and Development*, *Technology and Practices*, *Infrastructure* and *Capacity Building* to cross-analyze their technical capacity and financial requirements. The NMSA[1] was accorded 'in principle' approval by Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change (PMCCC) in September 2010.

The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), the designated nodal agency for this Mission, planned to implement the Mission strategies by mainstreaming its ongoing programmes with those of the NMSA. Along with the Mission, the Department also identified 17 goals, annual deliverables and stepwise time frames to implement these in a separate release (Climate Change Resources, DAC, 2010). The NMSA is an apt example of mid-course corrections being carried out wherein programmes initially identified were refurbished to be subsumed under DAC programmes, paving way for exclusive and freshly developed interventions under the Mission.

In 2014, a complete set of Operational Guidelines (DAC, 2014) for NMSA implementation was released, highlighting exclusive interventions which would not be covered through other programmes of the DAC. Consequently, the revamped programmes of the DAC, like the Rainfed Area Development Programme (RADP), National Mission on Micro Irrigation (NMMI), National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), National Project on Management of Soil Health & Fertility (NPMSH&F) and the Central Sector Scheme of Soil and Land Use Survey of India (SLUSI), were subsumed to form the revised programmatic interventions under the NMSA in 2014. These programmes were further stalled from operation and their funds earmarked for the new dimensions under NMSA.

Currently, the revamped NMSA, as an exclusive programmatic Mission intervention, addresses only 4 dimensions with 5 deliverables (DAC, 2010). The Mission, through its Operational Guidelines, identified four interventions namely Rainfed Area Development (RAD), On Farm Water Management (OFWM), Soil Health Management (SHM) and lastly Climate Change and Sustainable Agriculture: Monitoring, Modeling and Networking (CCSAMMN). These interventions came into effect only from the year 2014.

[1] National Mission For Sustainable Agriculture - Strategies for Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change, released by the DAC, Ministry of Agriculture in August 2010

Tracking the Mission's Progress

The various dimensions of progress during the course of implementing the NMSA have been tracked[2] during this study and are highlighted in this section. They are classified into key functions of implementation as *Finance*, *Policy Administration*, *Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation & Revision* and *Compliance & Enforcement*.

Finance

The initial Mission document estimated the overall cost for implementing the activities (addressing all ten dimensions as identified) to be Rs. 1,08,000 Crores (DAC, 2010). After restructuring the DAC programmes in 2014 to cover initial dimensions identified under the NMSA, the estimated cost for implementing the revised set of interventions under the Mission had been projected at Rs. 12,564 Crores[3]. Subsequently, the Mission is stated to have been approved for Rs. 13,054 Crores (Menon, 2015). The details of State-wise allocation of funds for yearly disbursement are yet to be officially disclosed, given that most of the developments are very recent and need further discussion.

Policy Administration

States have to prepare a Mission Implementation Plan (MIP), indicating the strategies they propose to undertake within a period of 5-7 years. These plans have been directed to integrate strategies from both State Agricultural Plans as well as those from the State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs). Currently, none of the States have finalized their MIP. However, it is notable that the Annual Action Plans (AAPs) for the year 2014-15 have already been prepared by the nodal agencies for implementation and secured approvals from the DAC.

As the States were directed to initiate implementation immediately after the release of the Operational Guidelines, this has reduced the incubation time for their initiatives under the Mission. This has indirectly impacted the State and decentralized level consultations in the planning process, thereby delaying the preparation of MIPs.

Additionally, lessons learned under the National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), which is an exclusive project undertaken by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), are expected to be incorporated into the States' MIPs. The main objective of this project is to enhance the resilience of Indian agriculture to vulnerabilities caused by climate change through strategic research and technology demonstration.

The Operational Guidelines state that Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) should be actively involved in planning and implementation of the NMSA at the District level. It also emphasizes the involvement of ICAR, State Agricultural Universities (SAU), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK), ATMAs and reputed NGOs for identifying appropriate technology, farm practices and technical backstops by the implementing agencies. But the participation of different stakeholders with distinct responsibilities is yet to be actualized in a coordinated manner. Mission interventions like the RAD and CCSAMMN are heavily dependent on existing CSS like the IWMP, MNREGS, etc.

[2] The Mission has been tracked through various sources till January 2015, hence developments till this period alone are reflected in this brief.
[3] Based on the information brief released the DAC - http://agricoop.nic.in/dacdivision/NMSA.pdf

Additionally, the AAPs, which are required to be developed in harmony with the District and State Agricultural Plans, feed into the MIP. Hence a scientific chronology as well as comprehensive design needs to be followed in this context.

Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation & Revision

The Operational Guidelines envisage a three tier system (National, State and District level) of institutional framework for planning, implementation and monitoring of various components of the NMSA. This has been constituted only since 2014, after the release of the Guidelines. It was found that while the institutional bodies are being formed at the National and State levels, they are yet to be formalized at the District level. At the National level, the first Standing Technical Committee (STC) review meeting for the NMSA was held in January 2015. The recruitment of full-time consultants/Advisors for supporting the functioning of committees and overseeing the project management works at Centre, State and District levels is under way. As the institutional bodies are being created from 2014-15, the Mission is expected to achieve greater progress in the upcoming year.

Progress of the NMSA is being accounted predominantly through the achievements of the other ongoing programmes of the DAC. However, there is a lack of communication by the DAC on the coverage of revised NMSA programmatic interventions in this regard.

Compliance & Enforcement

The Mission does not include an exclusive mechanism for this purpose, however it is expected that the system in place for the ongoing schemes of DAC would be adopted for the NMSA as well.

Recommendations

1. ***Convergence with ongoing programmes:*** Mission interventions heavily depend on the ongoing flagship schemes and CSS like the IWMP, MNREGS, RKVY, etc. for their implementation. Hence commensurate efforts towards facilitating effective convergence between Mission interventions and DAC programmes need to be ensured. This would further ease monitoring progress achieved by the Mission.

2. ***Coordination between different nodal agencies:*** The District and State level nodal bodies require great levels of synchronization since the former's plans are expected to feed into the latter for further consolidation into the AAP and MIP. Considering that the Operational Guidelines also promote integration of SAPCC initiatives with those of the AAP, Climate Change Cells (CCC) in the States would require to work together with the nodal agencies for the NMSA to achieve them. The need for different tiers of governments with separate mandates to work together reiterates the requirement for greater coordination between them to implement this Mission.

3. ***Chronology of implementation:*** As the village and district level agricultural plans need to be integrated first into the AAPs and ultimately into the MIPs, it is important to prioritize on developing the most decentralized plan first and thereafter consolidating them into higher level plans. Any deviation in this chronology would only reduce the robustness of such plans and could result in overlaps between interventions.

4. ***Incorporating NICRA lessons into NMSA:*** A detailed assessment report to include the findings and lessons from NICRA could be documented and thereafter integrated with the NMSA to enhance its effectiveness and reduce overlaps between the two programmes. Common feedback suggested that such a report could also discuss the enabling factors and barriers in terms of adaptation technologies, institutional set up, financial sources, etc. to be provided as inputs to the States for their AAPs and MIPs.

5. ***Outlining roles and responsibilities:*** The NMSA could provide a mandate for all coordinating institutions to prepare Detailed Project Reports like in the case of the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, outlining their plans and strategies for a stipulated period. Currently, although the Operational Guidelines clearly identify institutions for implementation, their roles are yet to be highlighted.

Conclusion

Although Mission implementation was delayed till 2014, there was a significant revamping of the Mission by mainstreaming the ongoing agriculture development programmes of the DAC with its strategies through a process of restructuring and convergence. Currently, the NMSA comprises of exclusive interventions to cover both adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. The challenge hereafter is to draw a roadmap for effective tracking of the Mission activities which might mostly depend on the DAC for its finances and institutional framework. Nevertheless, strengthening the present implementation process with proper coordination between relevant stakeholders will enhance the effectiveness of the NMSA. In the attempt to adopt a decentralized design of accelerating implementation of Mission activities, subtle overlaps between plans prepared by different tiers of the government need to be avoided.

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