

'Water budgeting will help'



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WE HAVE developed a model template for the preparation of State Specific Action Plans (SSAP) with a dedicated component on water budgeting which will be useful for any future planning. SSAPs are plans made by states for the National Water Mission. Although no SSAP has thus far been finalised, plans from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh are almost final. We expect the final drafts by December. States are becoming sensitised to the impacts of climate change. Though baseline studies have been conducted in only six states so far we are confident that an expansion is imminent and several workshops are being conducted to facilitate the same.

were badgering developing countries to reduce their emissions. In 2007, China released its national plan to address climate change issues, leaving India as the only big developing country without such an instrument. As a result, the government wanted a policy instrument before the G8 Summit at Tokyo in 2008 and the Conference of Parties at Copenhagen in 2009.

To this end, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government constituted the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change (PMCCC) in mid-2007. The 26-member council included ministers, independent experts and retired government experts. Over three high-powered sessions, between July 13, 2007 and June 2, 2008, the government managed to announce NAPCC a month before the G8 summit to be held in July 2008. The plan, which has eight sectoral missions, was to be overseen by six Union

ministries. However, overall 10 ministries, including finance and external affairs, too, were involved in its implementation.

The rushed manner in which NAPCC was formulated ensured that the document merely provided broad objectives and did not address strategy. While PMCCC had representation of diverse sectors on paper, the document's content was primarily shaped by a three-member group from within the council—the principal scientific advisor, former secretary to the then Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, and the director general of Delhi-based non-profit The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The final draft was prepared by the Prime Minister's Office, further limiting the significance of inputs from the council.

Following the hurried announcement of NAPCC in 2008, the ministries concerned took six more years to approve the missions. By then, the new National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government had formed in 2014. Under the new dispensation, PMCCC has met, reportedly, just once in 2015. Though the government has announced new schemes to meet the climate change objectives, it has not aligned or integrated them with NAPCC. Due to this, the missions have lost homogeneity and functionality.

There are several other challenges that the missions face. One, the monitoring system is either absent or ineffective. Two, the budgetary support by the government is very limited. Considering the scant domestic and international channels for finance, the government needs to mobilise funds from different sources. Three, states have to frame their own action plans, or State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC), in line with NAPCC. But SAPCCs framed by almost all the states are vague.

Politically, the most significant part of NAPCC is the introduction of co-benefits—“measures that promote our development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively”, as per PMCCC. But 10 years after it was announced, are we closer to realising the targets NAPCC sought to meet? A look at how the missions have performed:

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