

## Chapter 7

### Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 The success of the poverty reduction strategy would require a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the progress in implementing the strategy. To ensure that the targets set in the strategy are met, a comprehensive poverty monitoring system will be used to help the policy makers to monitor progress and adjust the actions to make them more effective and efficient. This will also be used as a system of dissemination of poverty data to relevant stakeholders thus contributing to fuller participation of the civil society in poverty reduction efforts. For the purpose, a list of core indicators required to track trends in poverty and the institutional framework for monitoring and evaluation of the strategy would be worked out.<sup>28</sup> The framework will be further elaborated based on consultations to serve as the guiding mechanism for poverty monitoring in the country. Existing survey instruments such as HIES, LFS, CNS, DHS, CMI, VRS to name a few, would be strengthened further for periodic generation of data and appropriately re-designed to facilitate the monitoring of national targets under the poverty reduction strategy. One of the key outputs of the system will be an annual Report on Poverty Reduction and Social Development, which will provide an overview of progress in achieving economic growth, human development, poverty reduction, gender equality targets and analysis of factors behind the observed trends and their policy implications.

7.2 For ensuring effective development of the system, several information and data gaps would have to be filled in through appropriately designed baseline surveys, studies, assessments and evaluations. This would also require adoption of adequate benchmarking and selection of internationally comparable data set on relevant indicators. Along with specifying the sources and streamlining the mechanisms to generate reliable data on all indicators of the monitoring system, poverty-focused surveys and assessments would be required on a regular basis for analyzing the impact of policies and programs and identifying the causal relationships. This would call for a sustained effort of capacity building both within and outside the government.

7.3 The indicators of the system will serve multiple actors providing information on changes in poverty and causes behind the outcomes. The Government will use the information for informed policy and decision-making, re-set priorities, and guide the implementation of the strategy. This will ensure that the country is on track to achieve poverty reduction targets. For the people and the civil society, this will help in assessing how effective and accountable the Government is in reducing poverty.

#### **A. Institutional Mechanisms**

7.4 A *Poverty Focal Point* would be created in the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission for effective poverty-monitoring and tracking progress in implementing anti-poverty policies and programs envisaged under the national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction. The focal point will be designed such that it can grow and function as an institutionally effective and technically competent Poverty

<sup>28</sup> Bangladesh is one of the countries selected for assessing and monitoring the extent to which it has been able to attain the MDGs. This requires the Government to develop a clear, integrated and co-ordinated framework for national monitoring along with regular small-scale research to give insights into quality dimensions and develop respective indicators.

Monitoring Unit with strong inter-Ministerial linkages and interactions with various types of stakeholders outside the Government. Participatory consultations will be an integral part of the work of the Focal Point both before and after the preparation of the full-blown strategy. The Unit will also act as the key agency in the preparation of the full-blown strategy and periodic revision of the medium term agenda within the framework of the long-term vision set under a Perspective Plan. This would require *measures to equip the Unit with adequate capacity and incentives to undertake its stipulated functions* and carry out poverty reduction strategy related research and monitoring and evaluation activities.

7.5 A National Poverty Reduction Council (NPRC) chaired by the Prime Minister with participation of Ministers and the Secretaries of the relevant Ministries as well as representatives from the private sector like FBCCI, women's groups, academia and research institutes like BIDS, NGOs and the civil society will be formed. Since the implementation of the strategy is the central task, the key objective of the Council would be to address comprehensively the problems of implementation. The Council will also address the strategy and policy-related issues arising out of the monitoring and evaluation work of the Poverty Focal Point. The Focal Point will act as the Secretariat for NPRC. The Council would meet at least quarterly.

7.6 One of the key tasks of the Unit would be to monitor progress in the implementation of the national poverty reduction strategy and outcome indicators. The poverty diagnostics, drawing on qualitative and quantitative information, would be used to set medium and long-term outcome-oriented targets for the country. These targets would be linked to macroeconomic, structural and social policies that together comprise a comprehensive strategy for achieving these outcomes. Setting clear targets in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would add transparency to the process of allocating resources and provide a benchmark against which to monitor the progress.

7.7 The Poverty Monitoring Unit would engage in regular consultations with the civil society including the poor and the women at suitable levels of social and regional disaggregations as part of *participatory poverty assessment* (PPA) in tracking progress in the implementation of national poverty reduction strategy as well as for identifying new areas of anti-poverty interventions and/or corrective actions.

7.8 The poverty reduction monitoring initiative, however, will not be restricted to the efforts on the part of the Government alone. Civic initiatives for monitoring poverty—similar to the *Social Weather Station* in the Philippines—would be supported for getting an independent assessment of trends in poverty as well as effectiveness of poverty reduction policies. Such a group of concerned citizens will act not only for *poverty-monitoring*, but also function as an *advocacy group* for influencing policy. The activities of the group would help trigger collective action in respective sectors for reducing poverty and vulnerability.

## **B. Monitoring Indicators**

7.9 The matrix of proposed poverty reduction tracking and monitoring indicators is given in Annex-12. A central aspect of poverty and social development monitoring would be to collect information on a wide variety of socially-differentiated, sex-disaggregated and regionally differenced poverty indicators. Evidently, the institutionalization of a comprehensive and efficient mechanism to ensure timely monitoring will require capacity building and coordination among the relevant agencies and departments. The details of the

requirements will be worked out along with technical assistance requirements for meeting the needs. A sustainable poverty reduction strategy requires an effective system of managing the macroeconomy. Annex 13 provides a detailed description of tracking and monitoring indicators for macroeconomic management.

### **C. Road Map to Full Strategy**

7.10 The national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction, as outlined in this paper, may be considered as the equivalent to what is often termed as the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP). Three important elements will be considered in transforming Bangladesh's current approach to anti-poverty policy making into a full-blown poverty reduction strategy: (i) continuous and effective interaction and consultations with all stakeholders to make it 'dynamic' with capability to address on-going development and emerging priorities along with consensus to guide and pull poverty reduction efforts of all actors including the Government, NGOs, civil society and development partners in an integrated manner; (ii) devising and implementing specific policies and programs and time-bound action plans to support the strategic thrust of the strategy; and (iii) installing an effective institutional mechanism to monitor the progress and provide regular and timely feed back to articulate actions needed to achieve the proposed targets.

7.11 The poverty reduction strategy, as delineated in the present paper, provides the broad (e.g. national) directions for achieving the poverty reduction goals. The efforts will be to move towards disaggregated targets to facilitate the formulation of specific programs/ projects and detailed costing and its financing by the time the full-blown strategy is designed (Table 7). These sectorally disaggregated targets will be set not only by social and regional distinctions, but also made sensitive, as far as possible, to the emerging gender dimensions. During the period, the institutional framework and monitoring indicators along with their sources, benchmarks, and mechanisms for ensuring regular information flows will also be finalized such that an adequate monitoring and evaluation method becomes operational. The civil initiatives for regular monitoring of poverty and progress towards achieving the goals would also be developed during the period.

**Table 7**  
**Time Line for Full Strategy**

Activity	Completion Date
Consultations with stakeholders and adjustments in the framework	<b>October 2003</b>
Specification of disaggregated targets, programs/ projects, and detailed costing and financing	<b>January 2004</b>
Operationalization of the Poverty Focal Point and civic initiatives	July 2003
Finalization of the full Strategy	December 2004