SOCIAL RESEARCH AND UPLIFTMENT

Companion in Transition

SRU India's Strategic Pathway

DISHA 2020-30

[Development Initiative through Inclusive, Sustainable and Harmonized Approach]
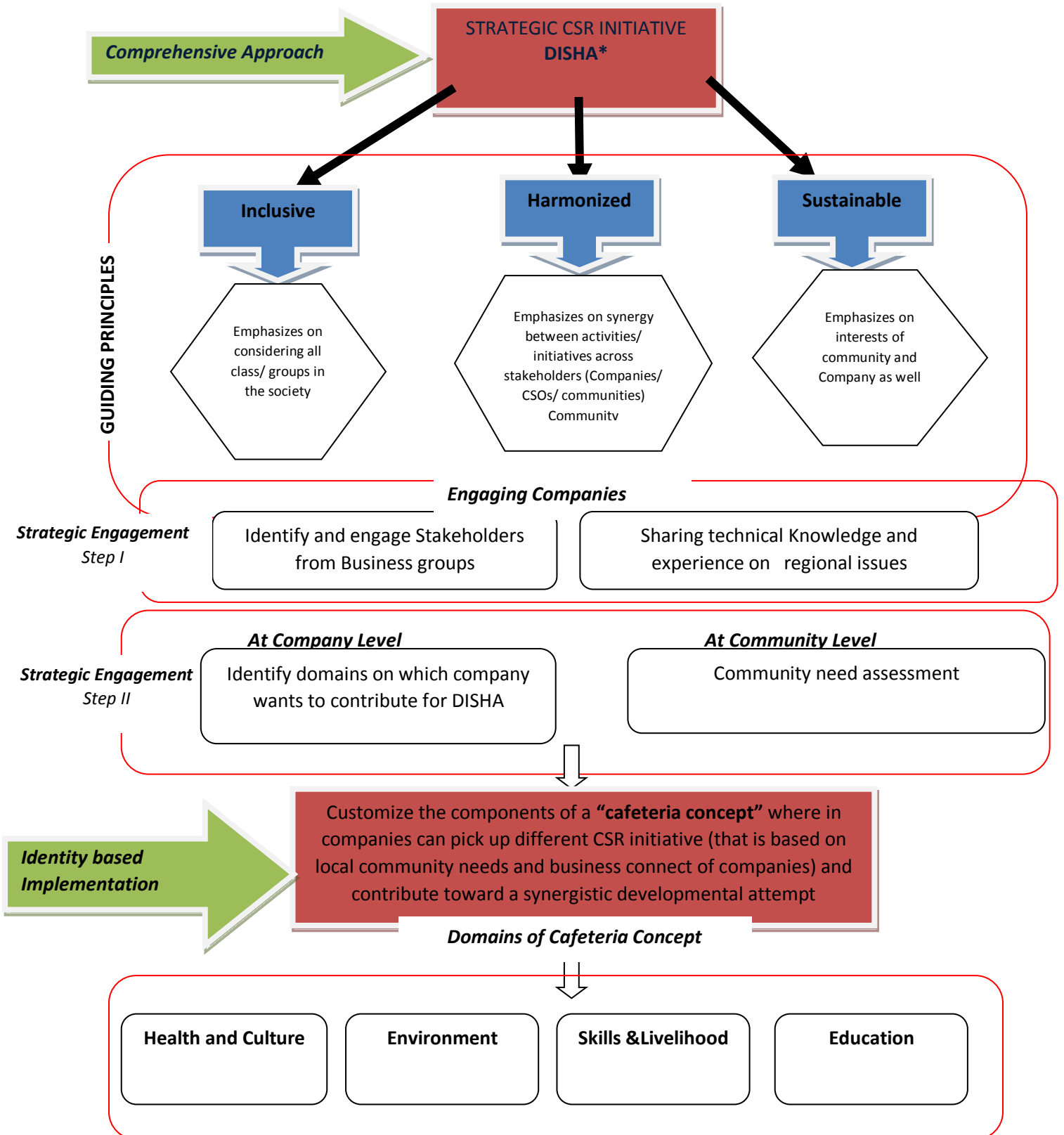
Background and Concept

Civil society has always played a crucial role in the development of a country and more so in case of developing economies. Today, trends for funding of the civil society are changing very rapidly with the economic slowdown and the growing stature of the Indian economy. Grassroots organizations can no longer be dependent on funding from traditional donors in their endeavor to promote a just and sustainable development and have to move out of their comfort zones and explore new opportunities- two key actors shall definitely be the government and the private sectors.

On the other hand, introduction of National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs) by Ministry of Corporate Affairs for companies operation, BRR reporting (Business Responsible Reporting) mandate, and recently section 135 of Companies Act 2013 has formalized the CSR engagement by the companies wherein 2% net profit to be spent on CSR systematically & strategically, through structured guidelines regarding the activities, governance and board owned process of CSR programme. Consequentially, the traditional concept of CSR shall move beyond philanthropic paradigmto core "responsible, strategic and sustainable" business management concept.

It is, thus present most opportune moment for a harmonized collaboration between private sectors and non-governmental organization to work together towards greater societal development in a systematic and sustainable manner. Nevertheless, in the Indian context, CSR is often interpreted to the work that companies do in the general vicinity of their work sites (plants, mines etc). Often these entities engage with the local communities within a 10-20 km radius of their site. In contrary to that, we argue that the need of hour for the companies is to go beyond the impact area and work in less developed area for greater outreach and effective impacts on the community in particular and development of the nation as whole with special reference to health, livelihood, education and environment responsibilities.

Understanding the present situation of CSR and sustainability issues at the local level and responsibilities of the corporate in present context, SRU India proposes a model for CSR initiative called DISHA (Development Initiative through Inclusive, Sustainable and Harmonized Approach) which is comprehensive, holistic and symbiotic at its core and simultaneously capable of reflecting the individual strategic principle of the engaged companies. The concept envisaged harmony of strategic business management concepts with economic-social-environmental imperatives. The model encourages integration of CSR approach with core business strategy for addressing impact of the business (social, environmental, economic and health) and goes beyond the company's stakeholders.

DISHA *(Concept Lay Out)*

Comprehensive Approach → STRATEGIC CSR INITIATIVE **DISHA***

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusive

Emphasizes on considering all class/ groups in the society

Harmonized

Emphasizes on synergy between activities/ initiatives across stakeholders (Companies/ CSOs/ communities) Community

Sustainable

Emphasizes on interests of community and Company as well

Engaging Companies

Strategic Engagement Step I

Identify and engage Stakeholders from Business groups

Sharing technical Knowledge and experience on regional issues

Strategic Engagement Step II

At Company Level

Identify domains on which company wants to contribute for DISHA

At Community Level

Community need assessment

Identity based Implementation →

Customize the components of a **"cafeteria concept"** where in companies can pick up different CSR initiative (that is based on local community needs and business connect of companies) and contribute toward a synergistic developmental attempt

Domains of Cafeteria Concept

Health and Culture

Environment

Skills &Livelihood

Education

The Guiding Principle of the model:

The fundamental guiding principle of the DISHA is developed on the basis of elements from three paradigms which will be reflected any CSR activity that is conducted under DISHA. These three paradigms are-

1. *Inclusiveness:* Wherein the needs of all groups of people (across class, caste, gender) are addressed. This includes stakeholder inside the company, supply chain, value-chain and in wider community. These people will not only harness the benefit of any programme, but also shall contribute to creating opportunities, participate in developing approaches and integrate the standards and principles of human rights within the activities to be sought. Participation in decision-making, non-discrimination and accountability sharing are the driving component to be followed under this paradigm.

2. **Sustainability:** The model strongly argues to make the endeavor sustainable only through defining viable schemes and combining the economic, social, and environmental and Health aspects through good governance (the decision-making process). These four areas must therefore be taken into consideration by communities, companies, and individuals.

3. **Harmonized Approach:** Initiative that strongly argue towards effective communication and collaboration aimed at building capacity and trust (e.g., information sharing, recognition and joint working); This may lead to similar or collaborative approaches paving the way for mutual recognition without hampering individual identity. Thus the corporate/ companies who share the idea of DISHA shall have choices to work independently or in collaborations with-out compromising the individual identity (business links) and at the same time shall have the opportunity to share the experience with mutual consent. This will also pave the path for complementing each other's initiative not contradicting / repeating the activities in the community.

Strategic Engagement steps:

Broadly two steps are strategized to engage stakeholders (Companies/communities) under DISHA.

Step I: The companies will be identified and the idea of DISHA will be shared. SRU India will share the technical experience of various programme relevant to the domain and to target groups. If the alliance has prior experience on implementing programme in the same region or proximal geographical region, the key highlights of the experience will be discussed.

Step II: In succeeding stage, areas on which participating companies are willing to engage, shall be discussed individually and domain of activities/ operation will be strategized in the line of DISHA. Simultaneously community need assessment and stakeholder mapping shall be done in collaboration with companies to understand community feedback and to identify scope of operations. After this, an attempt shall be made to develop a harmonized approach that shall blend strategic & responsible business management interests of the companies and community

needs for each CSR activity to be taken up by each company. Array of careful implementation plans will be developed so that the activities (taken up by different bodies) shall not contradict or merely imitate each other but complement and strengthen mutually without losing personal identity.

The model gives a scope, on one hand, to collaborate SME for implementing CSR on the other hand provide veteran and big firms to own an initiative individually with technical support from SRU India to implement CSR activities.

Activity domains:

At implementation level, DISHA provides a "cafeteria "concept that shall offer an array of activities under four major domains, i.e.-
- Health and Social determinants
- Livelihood
- Environment
- Education

Under each domain, activities shall be tailor-made so that it links the company strategies and community needs (specific to that region). The cafeteria model also provides an opportunity to create knowledge bank for activities and learning hub -Standard operating protocol, monitoring and evaluation tools, impact assessment process, documents on lessons learnt for each of the aforementioned four domains. With each new operations and activities this knowledge hub will get enriched and many new associates shall start with a strong platform, instead of beginning from the scratch. This will automatically infuse harmony in all the initiative that will be taken under DISHA.
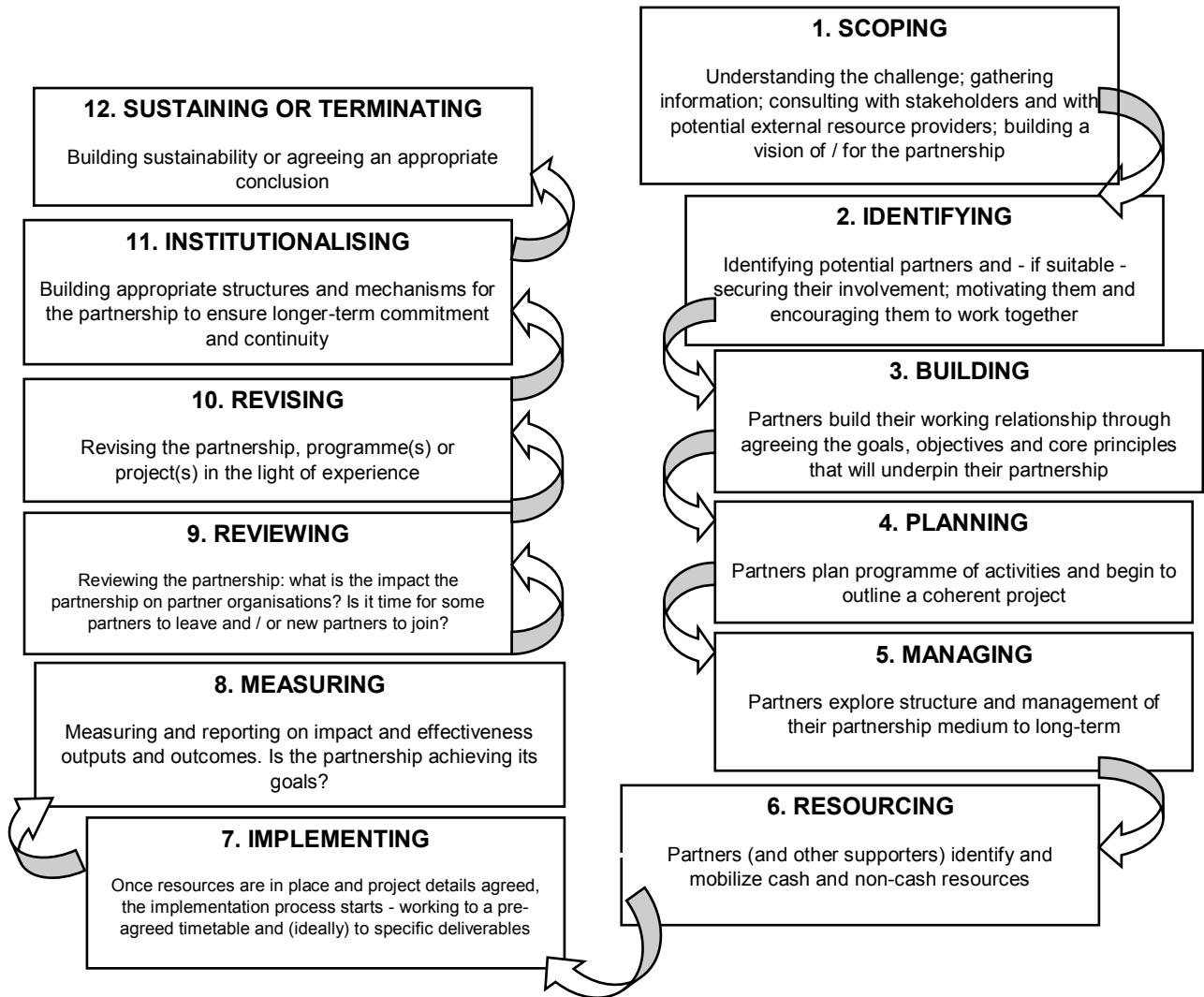
Key Principles of Partnership:

The partnership under DISHA shall runs through three value components and all operational documents shall critically ensure and measure these value components-

1. Equity
2. Transparency
3. Mutual Benefits

These three key principles can be a useful starting point for discussion between potential partners prior to formalizing the partnership, even if they are subsequently replaced by different principles developed by the group. What is important is that all partners accept and agree to abide by whatever the group itself decides is appropriate. Partnerships under DISHA shall provide opportunities to contribute in sustainable, community owned development through recognizing the qualities and competencies of each sector and finding new ways of harnessing these for the common good.

To work with various companies at the same time on varied themes SRU India commits to follow the model of partnership for sustainability and measurable impacts. It will follow 12 phases of partnership (*adopted from The Partnering Toolkit by Ros Tennyson, 2003,IBLF and GAIN*) to maintain the partnership balanced and on course achieve its goals as mentioned schematically below-

1. SCOPING

Understanding the challenge; gathering information; consulting with stakeholders and with potential external resource providers; building a vision of / for the partnership

2. IDENTIFYING

Identifying potential partners and - if suitable - securing their involvement; motivating them and encouraging them to work together

3. BUILDING

Partners build their working relationship through agreeing the goals, objectives and core principles that will underpin their partnership

4. PLANNING

Partners plan programme of activities and begin to outline a coherent project

5. MANAGING

Partners explore structure and management of their partnership medium to long-term

6. RESOURCING

Partners (and other supporters) identify and mobilize cash and non-cash resources

7. IMPLEMENTING

Once resources are in place and project details agreed, the implementation process starts - working to a pre-agreed timetable and (ideally) to specific deliverables

8. MEASURING

Measuring and reporting on impact and effectiveness outputs and outcomes. Is the partnership achieving its goals?

9. REVIEWING

Reviewing the partnership: what is the impact the partnership on partner organisations? Is it time for some partners to leave and / or new partners to join?

10. REVISING

Revising the partnership, programme(s) or project(s) in the light of experience

11. INSTITUTIONALISING

Building appropriate structures and mechanisms for the partnership to ensure longer-term commitment and continuity

12. SUSTAINING OR TERMINATING

Building sustainability or agreeing an appropriate conclusion

In addition to these general attributes, each sector has different competencies, aspirations, approach and process of operation that can - through successful partnering - be brought together to achieve a common vision.

Expected Impact of the Model

Through DISHA Model for holistic development SRU India aims to provide shared value for CSR. To involve all the stakeholders for responsible and sustainable development, We suggest to work in partnership with various companies and key stakeholders based on the needs and business relevance to have a win-win model for both company and community through CSR.

By working together, partnerships for sustainable development can provide:

• **Innovative approaches** to the challenges of sustainable development and the hopes of better health practices and access for all and also ending poverty

• **A range of mechanisms** enabling each sector to share their own specific competencies and capacities in order to achieve both common and complementary goals more effectively, legitimately and sustainably than when each sector operates separately

• **Access to more resources** by drawing on the full range of technical, human, knowledge, physical and financial resources found within all sectors

• **Dynamic new networks** offering each sector better channels of engagement with the wider community and greater capacity to influence the policy agenda

• **Greater understanding** of the value, values and attributes of each sector thereby building a more integrated and a more stable society.