



सत्यमेव जयते

RAJIV GANDHI PANCHAYAT SASHAKTIKARAN ABHIYAN (RGPSA)

SCHEME GUIDELINES

2013



Panchayati Raj

Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj



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GUIDELINES

RAJIV GANDHI PANCHAYAT SASHAKTIKARAN ABHIYAN

1. RATIONALE

1.1 The need and demand for good governance has increased with the rapid expansion of the economy and the growing awareness and assertion of rights by an increasingly educated population. Accountable, participatory and good governance is critical for ensuring social inclusion. The significant rise in expenditure on programmes for social inclusion in recent years needs to be matched with improved implementation for enhanced impact at the local level. The role of Panchayats, the constitutionally mandated local authorities, is critical in this context.

1.2 As per the Constitution, a three tier structure of Panchayats is in place across the country, excepting areas where Part IX of the Constitution does not apply. There are nearly 2.5 lakh elected Panchayats and 28 lakh Elected Representatives (ERs). The Constitution leaves it to the discretion of the States to devolve funds, functions and functionaries (3Fs) to the Panchayats and States vary a great deal in the extent to which they have devolved powers to Panchayats and equipped them with manpower, buildings, infrastructure, training etc. to enable them to perform their functions.

1.3 Traditionally, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) and Additional Central Assistance (ACAs) have been developed along the jurisdictional lines of the Ministries and Departments, based on vertical management decision systems. In such vertical implementation structures, it is difficult to ensure that context-specific measures to address the issues at hand in a holistic manner are taken up. Only through Panchayats, which are constitutionally mandated local democratic institutions, can people's participation and accountability to people be ensured. A strong Panchayati Raj system is critical for good governance.

1.4 An important concern that is often raised by Central Ministries and State Governments regarding devolving more programmes and activities to Panchayats is that Panchayats have poor capacity and will not be able to deliver. And in fact, the weakness in terms of administrative and technical capacity within Panchayats is an area of concern. This leads to a vicious cycle, i.e. low capacity, leading to inadequate devolution, leading to disempowered institutions. It is therefore essential to build the capacity of Panchayats and related institutions. In particular, Gram Sabha processes have to be supported for the sake of transparency, accountability and efficient delivery of services.

1.5 The Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act 1996 lays a framework of self-governance and people's control over resources through the Gram Sabhas in Schedule V areas. Yet, the implementation of PESA has not been satisfactory, partly because of the lack of interest shown by States to amend State laws in compliance with PESA provisions, but also because of the inadequacy of efforts to strengthen Gram Sabhas. Strengthening of Panchayats and implementation of PESA in Schedule V areas has significant national importance as it can lead to improved governance and accountability in these areas.

1.6 Following a decision of Committee of Secretaries in April 2010, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), with the participation of Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of DoNER, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Urban Development has been taking up the cause of decentralized democratic governance in the North East (NE) in consultation with State Governments from 2011. It is necessary to follow this up with technical and financial support for democratic decentralization through elections, women's representation, accountability to the Gram Sabha, and devolution in these areas.

1.7 Developing a strong Panchayati Raj system, essential to improve governance and delivery of services, involves redistribution of power, institution building and development of processes that improve accountability to the people. It requires planned and strategic interventions tied to specified deliverables on the part of States to enable them to stay committed to strengthening Panchayats and elected local bodies in NE where Panchayat do not exist, and to receive technical financial support under the scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), as per context specific needs.

2. OBJECTIVES OF RGPSA

2.1 The Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan will strengthen the Panchayati Raj system across the country and address critical gaps that constrain it.

2.2 RGPSA seeks to:

- 2.2.1 Enhance capacities and effectiveness of Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas;
- 2.2.2 Enable democratic decision-making and accountability in Panchayats and promote people's participation;
- 2.2.3 Strengthen the institutional structure for knowledge creation and capacity building of Panchayats;
- 2.2.4 Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats according to the spirit of the Constitution and PESAAct;
- 2.2.5 Strengthen Gram Sabhas to function effectively as the basic forum of people's participation, transparency and accountability within the Panchayat system;
- 2.2.6 Create and strengthen democratic local self-government in areas where Panchayats do not exist;
- 2.2.7 Strengthen the constitutionally mandated framework on which Panchayats are founded.

3. COVERAGE

RGPSA will extend to all States and Union Territories of the country. For the purpose of these guidelines, wherever 'State' is mentioned, it will include Union Territory also, and whenever 'Panchayats' are mentioned, these will include elected local governments in areas where Panchayats do not exist in the North East.

4. SCHEME MODALITIES

4.1 Strategic Planning as per State Needs

4.1.1 As the status of Panchayats varies across States, States need to undertake different activities to strengthen their Panchayati Raj systems with reference to their specific requirements and context. RGPSA will allow a range of activities to be undertaken by States as per State needs, so that each State can bring about needed changes to strengthen its Panchayati Raj system.

4.1.2 States that have strong Panchayati Raj systems, will seek to enhance their capacities, promote innovations, improve the supporting institutional structure and draw up manuals of processes and procedures to enable Elected Representatives and staff to undertake their designated roles and responsibilities. States where Panchayats are not well developed, may focus on creating the required physical infrastructure and building the administrative and technical capacities of Panchayats first.

4.1.3 To access funds, States will need to prepare perspective plans for five years, i.e. the Twelfth Plan period, and annual plans for strengthening Panchayats, detailing out the activities and deliverables, from among the permitted components in the scheme.

4.1.4 State Election Commissions (SECs) and State Finance Commissions (SFCs) may also submit plans to MoPR which will be considered in consultation with the State Governments.

4.2 Performance Linked Fund Allocation

RGPSA will provide performance linked funds from 2014-15 onwards. Twenty percent scheme funds will be tied to State performance on identified deliverables in the State Plan.

4.3 Conditions to be Met for Accessing Funds

4.3.1 Strengthening the Panchayati Raj system involves not just provision of capital and human resource assets such as provision of expertise, buildings, training etc. but also adequate devolution, bottom-up planning, convergence, accountability and free and fair elections. Under RGPSA, States are expected to show appropriate progress on the above-mentioned aspects, as they access funding for various components under the scheme.

4.3.2 States would be required to fulfill some essential conditions for accessing any RGPSA funds which would include:

- Regular elections to Panchayats or local bodies in non-Part IX areas under the superintendence and control of the State Election Commission (SEC).
- At least one third reservation for women in Panchayats or other local bodies.
- Constitution of SFC every five years, and placement of Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the SFC in the State legislature.
- Constitution of District Planning Committees (DPCs) in all districts, and issuing of guidelines/rules to make these functional.

States that do not fulfill the above essential conditions would not be eligible for funds under RGPSA.

4.3.3 Twenty percent scheme funds (see para 4.2 above) would be linked to action taken by the States for implementation of the provisions of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India in the following areas:

- 4.3.3.1 Articulating an appropriate policy framework for providing administrative and technical support to Panchayats.
- 4.3.3.2 Strengthening the financial base of Panchayats by assigning appropriate taxes, fees, etc.
- 4.3.3.3 Provision of untied funds to Panchayats and timely release of SFC and Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants.
- 4.3.3.4 Ensuring devolution of funds, functions and functionaries.
- 4.3.3.5 Preparing and operationalizing a framework for bottom-up grassroots planning and convergence through the DPC.
- 4.3.3.6 Ensuring free and fair elections, and making the SEC autonomous.
- 4.3.3.7 Strengthening the institutional structure for capacity building of Panchayats, selecting suitable partners for capacity building, and improving outreach and quality of capacity building.
- 4.3.3.8 Putting in place a system of performance assessment of Panchayats.
- 4.3.3.9 Strengthening Gram Sabhas, promoting Mahila Sabhas/Ward Sabhas
- 4.3.3.10 Institutionalizing accountability processes such as voluntary disclosure of information and social audit.
- 4.3.3.11 Strengthening the system of budgeting, accounts and audit, including use of e enabled processes. Maintenance of Panchayat accounts on-line at least for District and Intermediate Panchayats. Issuing of guidelines/rules for voluntary disclosure of budget and accounts by Panchayats.
- 4.3.3.12 Ensuring compliance of State laws and rules with PESA.
- 4.3.4 States will be expected to make progress on the above facets over the Twelfth Plan period. On some issues, such as framing an appropriate policy framework for technical and administrative capacity of Panchayats, States will be expected to show progress within the first two years.

4.3.5 The perspective plans prepared by States will contain targets and milestones with respect to the above areas over the Twelfth Plan period. Annual plans will contain annual targets on the above aspects (detailed explanation in Annex 1).

4.4 Perspective and Annual Plans of States under RGPSA.

4.4.1 Through the perspective five year plans, States will articulate their vision for Panchayati Raj and goals for the Twelfth Plan period. The perspective plans will detail out:

Budget

- The current status of Panchayats in the State in terms of devolution of 3Fs, manpower, infrastructure, financial resources with Panchayats, training needs, accountability systems etc.
- The status of the institutional structure for Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) and provision of other types of support to Panchayats.
- Goals of the State Government over the Twelfth Plan period for strengthening Panchayats and supporting institutions in terms of devolution, capacity enhancement (including administrative and technical support, infrastructure, financial resources and training) and accountability measures
- Key strategies and activities to strengthen Panchayats in the State as per the stated goals
- Funds required (for the Perspective Plan, the broad requirement of funds may be stated).

4.4.2 The annual plans will provide the targets and milestones for the year, details of the activities to be undertaken, and estimated budget.

4.4.3 If activities planned in a particular year are not completed in that year, these may be 'carried over' in the next year plan. After the first year, annual plans may comprise 'carry over activities' and new activities.

4.5 National Plan for Technical Assistance

4.5.1 MoPR will provide assistance to States in the following ways:

4.5.1.1 Supervise the programme, especially from the point of view of scrutinizing plans and assessing performance for performance-linked funding;

4.5.1.2 Provide technical assistance to States for various aspects of the programme such as planning, visualization of the administrative and technical support to Gram Panchayats (GPs), development of eco-friendly low cost building designs for GP buildings which meet concerns of disaster management, quality of capacity building and training etc., through activities such as training of State teams, cross-State sharing, identification and dissemination of best practices, development of materials that can be adapted by the States etc. (details in Annex-6);

4.5.1.3 Promote innovation by government and non-government resource institutions;

4.5.1.4 Incentivize best performing Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, while supporting States in developing a performance assessment system for Panchayats, to assist them in identifying Panchayats that need special inputs along with best performing Panchayats.

4.5.2 For the above activities, MoPR will set up a National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) and support a suitable mechanism at the national level for technical and academic support.

4.5.3 MoPR will prepare perspective and annual plans for the activities it will undertake through the NPMU to support the States as per para 4.5.1 which will be called the 'National Plan for Technical Assistance'

4.6 Implementation and Supervision

- 4.6.1 The overall policy direction of the scheme will be provided by an empowered Central Steering Committee (CSC, RGPSA) headed by the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj. The CSC will also monitor the progress of the scheme. The composition of the CSC is at Annex-2.
- 4.6.2 There will be an empowered Central Executive Committee (CEC, RGPSA) at the National level to oversee the implementation of the scheme. CEC will be headed by the Secretary Panchayati Raj. The composition of the CEC at Annex-2.
- 4.6.3 The CEC will be empowered to approve State plans and National Plan for Technical Assistance. Once approved, the releases of funds will be made as per normal procedure pertaining to financial sanctions.
- 4.6.4 The CEC will be empowered to approve detailed guidelines for various aspects of the scheme.
- 4.6.5 The CEC will be assisted by officials and experts who will scrutinize the plans.
- 4.6.6 While approving the annual plans, the CEC will review the extent to which a State has fulfilled the goals stated in the previous year's plan, and take decisions regarding the allocation of the 20% performance share.
- 4.6.7 The CEC may commission studies and/or depute a team of officials and experts to States to verify the progress made in each year, before the approval of annual plans.
- 4.6.8 The CEC will also approve projects submitted for 'Innovation' under the National Plan for Technical Assistance.

4.6.9 At the State level, each State will set up a State Executive Committee for finalizing plans, monitoring the scheme etc. States may also set up a State Steering Committee to provide policy directions, as needed. These committees will include representatives of MoPR, and also representatives from among best performing Panchayats.

4.6.10 RGPSA will be implemented through the regular departmental mechanisms, which will be assisted by Programme Management Units at the National, State and District level.

4.7 Collaboration with Resource Institutions

4.7.1 RGPSA will encourage collaboration with resource institutions and NGOs.

4.7.2 Existing best practices in administrative and technical support to Panchayats, including staff selection, capacity building, accountability processes such as social audit etc. will be documented and shared. For this, States as well as MoPR will build networks with resource institutions and NGOs.

4.7.3 MoPR will play a supportive role in locating expert institutions and taking their assistance for training State personnel, developing processes and training modules, promoting research, enabling cross-State learning etc.

5. FUNDING

5.1 The funding of RGPSA for State plans will be on a 75:25 sharing basis by the Central and State Governments respectively. For NE States, this ratio will be 90:10.

5.2 For the National Plan for Technical Assistance, up to 5% RGPSA funds may be used for supervision and technical assistance activities described in paras 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.1.2. In addition, up to Rs. 10 crores per annum may be utilized for support to innovation as described in para 4.5.1.3 and up to Rs. 50 crores per annum for incentivization of best performing Panchayats and Gram Sabhas as per para 4.5.1.4.¹ These National level activities will be 100% centrally funded.

5.3 The rest of the funds (called Central Share) will be provided to States to implement their plans. A matching share of 10% by NE States and 25% by other States would have to be provided against the Central share of 90% and 75% respectively. A minimum of 10% of State plan funds will be available for North Eastern States.

5.4 The eligibility of States to access the Central share will be as per their rural population, the area of the State under Schedule V of the Constitution, the plan approved, utilization of funds provided, and from 2014-15 onwards, performance as per parameters indicated in para 4.3.3. Ten percent of the Central share will be disbursed on the basis of the population and area of a State under Schedule V. In 2012-13 and 2013-14 the eligibility of States to access funds available under RGPSA will be as per their share in the rural population, the area and population under Schedule V in the State, the plan approved, and the utilization of funds provided.

5.5 From 2014-15 onwards, 80% of Central share would be based on State's rural population, the area and population under Schedule V in the State, the plan approved and the utilization of funds provided, and 20% on the extent to which a State shows progress on goals stated in its action plans as per para 4.3.

5.6 Of the 20% funds to be allotted on the basis of performance, States that show greater progress will be entitled to a larger share of funds.

5.7 The CEC, RGPSA will be fully competent to decide the quantum of funds to be provided to each State.

5.8 For funds set aside for NE States, the eligibility of funds for each State within the NE region will be as per paras 5.3 to 5.6.

5.9 Each State will be entitled to spend 5% of its approved funds on programme planning and management over the Twelfth Plan period. The percentage of funds to be spent on planning and management may exceed 5% and go upto 25% in the first two years, as it will take time for expenditure on activities to pick up and planning and management costs in the initial years would be high.

5.10 A State may spend upto 25% of its plan funds on construction and repair of GP buildings. Cost of land will not be funded under the scheme.

5.11 A State may spend upto 1% of its plan funds on IEC activities.

5.12 Unit costs/expenditure ceilings for various activities to be funded under RGPSA are at Annex-3. For activities for which it is not possible to fix a unit cost or upper expenditure ceiling, the CEC, RGPSA will be competent to approve the expenditure outlay in the plan.

5.13 Unit costs may be revised upto 25% by the CSC, RGPSA, as per need. If unit costs are to be enhanced by more than 25%, approval processes as mandated for approval of scheme guidelines would be needed.

5.14 As soon as RGPSA is approved, each State may access upto Rs. 50 lakhs to prepare a perspective plan and the annual plans for 2012-13 and 2013-14. These funds may be used to hire consultants, hold workshops, undertake studies etc. to make perspective and annual plans. If a State has already accessed funds under the scheme 'Resource Support to States' in 2012-13 before the approval of the RGPSA guidelines, the upper limit to be accessed for planning will be reduced by the amount already accessed in Resource Support to States.

5.15 Salaries and other expenditures that are already funded by the State Government on the date that the scheme is approved cannot be transferred to RGPSA.

5.16 Activities already approved under any of the schemes of MoPR in the Eleventh Plan which have been subsumed in RGPSA may continue to be funded during the Twelfth Plan under RGPSA.

6. ACTIVITIES TO BE INCLUDED IN STATE PLANS

States are expected to prepare plans under the scheme to undertake activities as per their requirement/priorities, from a menu of activities permitted in the scheme. Each State is not expected to necessarily undertake all the activities. Activities that can be included in State plans under RGPSA are as follows (detail in Annex-4):

6.1 Administrative and Technical Support

6.1.1 Each State is expected to visualize the administrative and technical support needed at each tier of Panchayats and ensure that the Panchayats have appropriate staff or other administrative and technical support to discharge their functions.

6.1.2 Funds will be provided for administrative and technical support at the Gram Panchayat (GP) as per the States visualization. For the block and district level Panchayats, States will be expected to devolve appropriate functionaries to the Panchayats.

6.1.3 Expenses of existing technical and administrative support mechanism in Panchayats cannot be transferred to RGPSA.

6.2 GP Buildings

In general, States will be expected to obtain funds for GP buildings from various sources, especially through schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development. However, where funds cannot be accessed from other schemes, RGPSA will fund new GP buildings, repair of existing buildings, construction of barrier free access, construction of toilets (including separate toilets for women) and electricity and water supply connections. While the maximum amount to be provided under RGPSA would be as indicated in Annex 3, States may add their own funds or funds from other schemes for better or larger buildings as needed. States will be expected to focus on low cost and eco-friendly designs for such buildings.

6.3 Capacity Building and Training of Elected Representatives & Functionaries:

The aim will be to ensure that all Elected Representatives (ERs) as well as functionaries of Panchayats have appropriate knowledge and skills to discharge their functions. Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) activities will be funded as per the National Capability Building Framework (NCBF). It is envisaged that on an average, each ER and Panchayat functionary would be trained for five days per year, through various modes such as face to face training, exposure visits, handholding support, help desks etc. CB&T programmes may be conducted through government institutions, NGOs and Resource Persons.

6.4 Institutional Structure for Training at State, District & Block level

CB&T of ERs and Panchayat functionaries is a wide area, as it is necessary to address basic concepts, skills of ERs and Panchayat functionaries, including literacy, as well as domain knowledge of subjects handled by Panchayats, such as drinking water, rural development, education, health, women's issues, social forestry, livelihoods etc. To address all these issues, a sound institutional structure and partnership with resource institutions are required. Under RGPSA, State Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRCs) may be established at State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) or any other State level institution, District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs) may be strengthened in existing institutions or new centers established, and block level satellite resource centers may be established at the Block Panchayat.

6.5 e-enablement of Panchayats

The Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) will form the bedrock of e-enablement of Panchayats to increase their effectiveness for governance and service delivery. States would be expected to make all efforts to ensure appropriate CB&T for e-enablement of Panchayats.

6.6 Support to Panchayat Processes and Procedures in Panchayats with Inadequate Revenue Base

Many Panchayats, especially those in Schedule V areas, lack resources for such basic activities such as Gram Sabha meetings, planning, social audit, public campaigns, forming federations etc. which hampers their functioning. These Panchayats will be supported to carry out their basic processes/procedures.

6.7 Special Support for Gram Sabhas in PESA and NE Areas

Special activities may be undertaken to strengthen Gram Sabhas in PESA areas and in NE areas where part IX does not apply, in terms of organizing themselves and also knowledge and assertion of their rights.

6.8 Programme Management

The present strength and capacity of State Panchayati Raj departments needs to be enhanced to enable them to undertake the task of preparing State plans and implementing RGPSA for the development of Panchayats in the State. To support the Panchayati Raj departments of the States, Programme Managements Units at the State and District level may be set up for planning, implementation and monitoring of the scheme from within the 5% available in management costs.

6.9 Information, Education, Communication (IEC)

6.9.1 States will be expected to undertake IEC activities to raise the awareness level of Panchayats.

6.9.2 IEC activities to be funded would include TV and radio programmes including community radio, newsletter, print material etc.

6.10 Strengthening of SECs

6.10.1 Free and fair elections are the bedrock of Panchayati Raj. There is need to strengthen the State Election Commission (SECs) to ensure free and fair elections. It needs no iteration that the SECs must be constituted as per Article 243K of the Constitution and be vested with the powers and responsibilities as recommended by the MoPR Task Force of 2011 to enable them to carry out their mandated constitutional role effectively.

6.10.2 The SECs may be provided financial assistance as per proposals made by the SECs. These proposals may include strengthening of infrastructure, purchase of EVMs, process development etc.

6.10.3 These proposals may be sent directly by SECs to MoPR, or be included in the perspective and annual plans of the State. In case proposals are submitted directly by the SECs these will be considered by the CEC (RGPSA) in consultation with State Governments.

6.11 Innovative Activities in States

6.11.1 Innovative activities, processes or projects to strengthen Panchayati Raj may be included in State plans for upto Rs.2 crores per annum.

6.11.2 These may be undertaken through government or non-government agencies.

7. ACTIVITIES UNDER THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The aim of the National Plan for Technical Assistance will be to provide technical and other support to States for implementing RGPSA, and supervise and monitor the programme. The following activities would be taken up by MoPR under National Plan for Technical Assistance:

7.1 Institutional Support at National Level: A suitable institutional mechanism at the national level will be developed for overall academic and technical support including capacity building of SPRCs and DPRCs.

7.2 Planning, Management and Supervision

7.2.1 State plans will be scrutinized and appraised before these are placed before the Central Executive Committee.

7.2.2 There will be an annual assessment of the implementation of the goals of the scheme in States, which will provide basis for disbursement of 20% funds on the basis of performance.

7.2.3 MoPR will supervise the implementation of the programme on a continuous basis through meetings, field visits etc.

7.3 Technical Support to States

States will be provided technical support for implementing RGPSA. The types of technical support activities would include:

- Orientation of State teams on various issues such as planning, techniques of capacity building, women's issues, Gram Sabha mobilization, accounts, e-enablement etc.
- Preparation of model manuals such as accounts manuals, works manuals etc.

- Cross-State sharing and documentation of best practices.
- Other measures as needed.

7.4 Performance Assessment and Incentivization of Panchayats and Gram Sabha

7.4.1 An important focus of institutional development of Panchayats would be feedback on their functioning and support to processes of democratic and accountable functioning. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan, MoPR has developed processes for assessing Panchayats and Gram Sabhas on their performance and linked these with small incentives.

7.4.2 These assessment exercises will be continued and further refined. States will be supported in creating a system whereby Panchayats that are unable to perform their role adequately are also identified along with best performing Panchayats. The former will be supported in improving their performance while the latter will be incentivized.

7.4.3 The number of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas to be incentivized per State and amount of incentive would be as per GoI guidelines.

7.4.4 The format of the operation of incentivization of Panchayats is at Annex-5.

7.5 Support to Innovation

7.5.1 The improvement in Panchayat capacities and processes can come about only if government and non-government actors are encouraged to innovate with new forms of capacity building and accountability processes. While a small number of organizations have worked in these areas, there is need to encourage more such practices, which can be up-scaled subsequently.

- 7.5.2 Funds will be provided upto Rs. 10 crores per annum for innovative activities, such as developing processes of planning, strengthening of the Gram Sabhas, capacity building etc. to government as well as non-government agencies.
- 7.5.3 Projects for innovative activities will be approved by the CEC (RGPSA).
- 7.6 National Programme Management Unit
- 7.6.1 A National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) will be set up at the National level to provide technical support to States and MoPR.
- 7.6.2 The NPMU will have experts from relevant disciplines, and will also hire short term consultants and consulting organizations. The activities to be undertaken by the NPMU are at Annex 6.

8. FUND FLOW

8.1 Funds for the State Plans under RGPSA will be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of State Governments / body designated for such purpose by the State Government through the Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS). It will be mandatory for State Governments to create a separate budget head for RGPSA.

8.2 Funds under RGPSA will be provided in two installments. In the first installment, 50% of the funds approved in the annual plan will be provided. The remaining 50% funds will be provided after a Utilization Certificate for 60% of the first installment has been received.

8.3 As the time period available for implementation during 2012-13 is brief, 100% funds for the plans approved will be provided in a single installment for 2012-13. For the year 2013-14 onwards the releases in the respective year would be adjusted to the extent of unspent balances remaining at the close of the previous year.

8.4 The interest amount accrued on deposits shall be utilized as per the guidelines of the programme.

8.5 In case, funds are to be transferred to a training institution or Panchayats by the State Government, the transfer should take place within 15 days of receipt of such funds. In case of delays a penal interest at the rate equal to the RBI bank rate shall be transferred to the training institution/Panchayat.

Operation of Performance Linked Funding under RGPSA

Strengthening the Panchayati Raj system involves not only input-related activities such as provision of administrative and technical support, buildings, training etc. for which RGPSA provides, but also adequate devolution, a framework for bottom-up planning and accountability measures such as strengthening the Gram Sabha. Further, in order to maximize gains from inputs such as manpower, training etc., States need to put in place appropriate policies such as training frame work, devolution of powers and responsibility and accountability measures. Twenty percent RGPSA funds would be disbursed to States on the basis of the progress made in the following areas:

- Articulating an appropriate policy framework for providing administrative and technical support to Panchayats.
- Strengthening the financial base of Panchayats by assigning appropriate taxes, fees, etc.
- Provision of untied funds to Panchayats and timely release of State Finance Commission (SFC) and Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants.
- Ensuring devolution of funds, functions and functionaries.
- Preparing and operationalizing a framework for bottom-up grassroots planning and convergence through the District Planning Committee (DPC).
- Ensuring free and fair elections, and making the State Election Commission (SEC) autonomous.
- Strengthening the institutional structure for capacity building of Panchayats, selecting suitable partners for capacity building, and improving outreach and quality of capacity building.

- Putting in place a system of performance assessment of Panchayats.
- Strengthening Gram Sabhas, promoting Mahila Sabhas/Ward Sabhas
- Institutionalizing accountability processes such as voluntary disclosure of information and social audit.
- Strengthening the system of budgeting, accounts and audit, including use of e enabled processes.
- Ensuring compliance of State laws and rules with Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act.

States will access funds as per perspective and annual plans which will be approved by the Central Executive Committee (CEC), RGPSA, chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj. In the perspective plan, each State would state its overall state-specific goals for Panchayati Raj over the Twelfth Plan period. The progress to be made on conditions or goals listed above, as well as activities to be funded under RGPSA, would derive from these state-specific goals. The perspective plan will contain, along with administrative and technical support, infrastructure, training etc. required by the State, the progress to be made in each of the above areas or conditions. Annual plans will contain the annual targets for the conditions as well as activities to be funded.

For example, in its perspective plan, a State may articulate a goal for the plan period that 'Panchayats will plan as per their local area developmental needs in a participative manner and 20% State plan funds will be spent as per these local needs.' There are several activities necessary for operationalizing this goal, such as earmarking untied funds for Panchayats, putting in place a process of grassroots planning, and training elected representatives and grassroots functionaries to prepare appropriate plans. The annual targets on these aspects over five years may be as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare guidelines for decentralized planning by Panchayats • Develop training modules and train resource persons for decentralized planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure one round of training to all representatives and functionaries on basic planning process as well as training in important sectors such as watershed, agriculture, education health etc.. • Make provisions in next year's budget for untied grant • Develop criteria for funds to be provided to Panchayats on the basis of population, backwardness etc. • Ensure Panchayats prepare plans for following year and get these approved by Gram Sabhas and DPC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue training in various sectors important for planning such as watershed, agriculture, education, health etc. • Provide 5% of State plan funds as untied grant to Panchayats • Scrutinize plans made by Panchayats, identify lacunae and areas of concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reformulate guidelines on planning, on the basis of learnings of previous year, if needed. • Training on areas of concern addressing issues in planning as needed • Provide 10% of State plan funds as untied grant to Panchayats • Scrutinize plans made by Panchayats, identify lacunae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on areas of concern. • Provide 20% of budget as untied grant to Panchayats

As can be seen, while some annual goals, such as training, would require funds under RGPSA, several others would require policy changes regarding the planning process, devolution of funds etc. by the State Government, which would form 'conditionalities' for the year. Progress on all these aspects, i.e., funded activities as well as policy shifts, would be assessed each year. For each year, as annual plans and budgets are approved, 20% funds would be sanctioned on the basis of the performance on these conditionalities or policy decisions in the previous year. States that perform well on the conditionalities will get more funds than States that do not.

Composition of Central Committees

1. Central Steering Committee to oversee RGPSA

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Minister for Panchayati Raj | Chairperson |
| 2. Ministers/States Ministers for Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitations, Education, Health, Agriculture, Social Justice and Welfare, Tribal Affairs, North East | Members |
| 3. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission or his Representative, Dr. Mihir Shah Member, Planning Commission | Member |
| 4. State Minister for Finance (D/o Expenditure) | Member |
| 5. Ministers responsible for Panchayati Raj in the States from well performing States as per Devolution Index/Panchayat Strengthening Index (to be decided by chairperson) | Members |
| 6. Secretary Ministry of Panchayati Raj | Member |
| 7. Two eminent persons working in the field of Panchayati Raj (to be nominated by Chairperson) | Members |
| 8. Five Elected Representatives of Panchayats from among best performing Panchayats (to be nominated by the Chairperson) | Members |

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 9. Five Elected Women Panchayat Representatives from among best performing Panchayats (to be nominated by the Chairperson) | Members |
| 10. Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, MoPR | Member |
| 11. Additional Secretary, MoPR | Member Secretary |
| 12. Joint Secretary, MoPR, handling RGPSA | Rapporteur |

The Chairperson of the Steering Group may additionally invite to the meetings, as special invitees, such persons as may be necessary.

2. Central Executive Committee of RGPSA

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Secretary, MoPR | Chairperson |
| 2. Representative of Planning Commission | Member |
| 3. Secretary, Expenditure, M/o Finance | Member |
| 4. Secretary, Agriculture, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Education, Health, Social Justice Welfare, Tribal Affairs, DONER | Members |
| 5. Additional Secretaries, Financial Advisor and Joint Secretaries of Ministry of Panchayati Raj | Members |

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 6. Director General, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad | Member |
| 7. Secretaries responsible for Panchayati Raj of well performing States as per the Devolution Index/Panchayat Index
(to be decided by Minister for Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 8. Representatives from 3 NGOs
(to be nominated by Minister for Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 9. Five Elected Representatives from best performing Panchayats (to be nominated by the Minister of Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 10. Five Elected Women Panchayat Representatives from best performing Panchayats
(to be nominated by the Minister of Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 11. Joint Secretary handling RGPSA | Member Secretary |

The Chairperson of Executive Committee may additionally invite to the meetings, as special invitees, such persons as may be necessary.

Cost Norms under RGPSA

S.No.	Activity	Cost Norms
1	Technical and administrative support at GP level	Upper ceiling for administrative and accounting & data entry support to GPs @ Rs. 25,000/- per month for a population of 5000 and technical assistance @ Rs. 30,000 per month per Block.
2	Construction and repair of GP buildings	
a	Construction of new GP buildings	For GPs upto 5000 population: Rs.12 lakhs per GP building. For GPs with more than 5000 population: Rs. 15 lakhs per GP building.
b	Repair, construction of barrier free access, construction of toilets, drinking water and electricity in existing GP buildings	Upto Rs. 3 lakhs per GP building

3	Capacity Building and Training	
Training Programmes		
(a) Unit cost per participant per day for training of Elected Representatives and Panchayat Functionaries under RGPSA		
S.No.	Category	* Cost per participant per day (in Rs.)
1	ERs and Functionaries of District Panchayat	1850.00
2	ERs and Functionaries of Block Panchayat	1470.00
3	ERs and Functionaries of Village Panchayat	780.00
4	Village Level Training (Training of Gram Sabha, on-site support to Panchayats etc.)	447.00
<p>Note : (*) This cost has been arrived in each case keeping in view of the factors of variation in cost of different items likely to be incurred per participant per day of training course at respective level. The States can, however, incur expenditure on different components of training programme as per their convenience and requirement but the maximum ceiling of total expenditure on all components will remain as indicated above.</p>		

S.No.	Category	* Cost (in Rs.)
b	Computer training per head / day	@Rs.1500/-
c	Training Needs Assessment	Upto Rs. 5 lakhs per year per State/UT
d	Development of Training Modules	Upto Rs. 5 lakhs per year per State/UT
e	Development of Training Material including film and electronic material	Upto Rs. 10 lakhs per year per State
f	Exposure visits within State	Upto Rs.2000/- per day per participant
g	Exposure visits outside State	Rate and duration to be proposed by State/UTs
h	Evaluation of training	Upto Rs.5 lakhs per year per State/UT
4	Institutional Structure	
a	Additional building and equipment at SPRC	Upto Rs. 1 crore per State over the plan period
b	Recurring cost on additional Faculty & maintenance of SPRC	Upto Rs.40 lakh per annum per SPRC
c.	Construction of building of new DPRC and provision of basic equipment.	Upto Rs.2 crore for new DPRC for plan period
d	Up gradation of ETCs/ District Institute of Panchayati Raj	On the basis of proposals of State Government with a limit of Rs.50 lakhs per institution for plan period.
e.	Recurring cost on additional Faculty & maintenance of DPRC	Upto Rs. 10 lakh per annum per DPRC
5.	Distance learning facility through SATCOM or IP based technology	Rs.5 Cr. for studio at State level, SIT cost to be proposed by State
6.	Intermediate/Block level Resource Centre	Rs.10 lakh per centre
7.	E-enablement of Panchayats	
a	Computer, UPS and Printer	Rs.40,000/- per Panchayat
b	Additional Manpower/ Service Provider	To be assessed separately for each State
8.	Panchayat processes for Panchayats with inadequate resource base	Upto Rs.50,000 per year per Panchayat

S.No.	Category	* Cost (in Rs.)
9.	Special support for Panchayats in PESA areas	
a	Honorarium of 1 Gram Sabha Mobiliser in GP	Rs.2500/- per month per GP
b	Honorarium of 1 PESA Coordinator in Block	Rs.20,000/- per month per IP/block
c	Honorarium of 1 PESA Coordinator in district	Rs.25,000/- per month per district
d	Gram Sabha Orientation	Rs. 10,000 per GP per year
e	Contracting NGOs for regular hand holding	Rs. 5,000 per GP per year
10.	Strengthening SECs	Upto Rs.2 crores per State/UT
11.	IEC activities	Upto 1% of the approved plan fund
12.	Programme management	Upto 5% of the total cost

Note: North-Eastern and hilly States may increase their unit costs by upto 25% as per need.

Activities to be Included in State Plans

States may propose funding under the scheme to undertake activities as per their requirements/priorities from a menu of activities permitted in the scheme. Each State is not expected to necessarily undertake all the activities. Activities that can be included in State plans under RGPSA are as follows:

1. Administrative and Technical Support
 - (a) Each State is expected to ensure that the Panchayats have appropriate administrative and technical support to discharge their functions.
 - (b) Each State is expected to visualize the administrative and technical support needed at each tier and subsequently frame an appropriate policy framework
 - (c) Funds will be provided for administrative and technical support at the Gram Panchayat (GP), as the GP is the most vital unit of local democracy and plays an essential role in provision of civic services such as sanitation, waste management, drinking water, street lights etc. as well as socio-economic development, and adequate capacity to discharge these functions does not exist at present. For the block and district level Panchayats, States will be expected to devolve appropriate functionaries to the Panchayats.
 - (d) Expenses of existing administrative and technical support mechanism in Panchayats cannot be transferred to RGPSA.

2. GP Buildings

- (a) The goal of RGPSA will be to ensure that each GP has an appropriate building, so that it can hold meetings, and manage its day to day office work.
- (b) In general, States will be expected to obtain funds for GP buildings from various sources, especially through schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development. However, where funds cannot be accessed from other schemes, GP buildings will be funded from RGPSA.
- (c) The following civil works in GPs will be funded:
 - New GP buildings
 - Repair of existing GP buildings
 - Construction of barrier free access
 - Construction of toilets with separate toilets for women in existing buildings.
 - Electricity connections and water supply in existing and new GP buildings.
- (d) While the maximum funds to be provided under RGPSA would be as per Annex-3, States may supplement these with their own funds or funds from other scheme for larger or better building.
- (e) States will be expected to focus on eco-friendly designs for such buildings, and ensure that disaster management norms are followed.
- (f) Cost for land for building may not be funded from the scheme.

3. Capacity Building and Training of Elected Representatives & Functionaries
- (a) The aim will be to ensure that all Elected Representatives (ERs) as well as functionaries of Panchayats have appropriate knowledge and skills to discharge their functions.
- (b) Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) activities will be funded as per the National Capability Building Framework (NCBF). The activities to be funded would include:
- Training needs assessment
 - Development of training modules
 - Development of training material including written material, training films, CDs and other forms of material;
 - Training of Master Trainers;
 - Face-to-face training courses for ERs and Panchayat functionaries;
 - Satellite based training for ERs and functionaries
 - Exposure visits;
 - Peer training/learning including workshops;
 - Training through traditional means of communication;
 - Resource centers and Help Lines Desks for Panchayats.
 - Hand holding and continuous support to Panchayats.
 - Newsletters.
 - Certificate courses.

- (c) It is envisaged that on an average, each ER and Panchayat functionary would be trained for five days an year. However, the number of days of training each year may vary as per the training module envisaged. ERs may not be trained in the year immediately preceding elections.
- (d) There will be a special focus on training of SC, ST and women ERs as well as newly elected ERs. Special modules may be developed for these ERs. More days of training may be provided for SC, ST and women representatives and newly elected ERs.
- (e) CB&T programmes may be conducted through government institutions, NGOs and Resource Persons (RPs).

4. Institutional Structure for Training at State, District & Block level

- (a) CB&T of ERs and Panchayat functionaries is a complex task. It is necessary to address basic concepts, skills of ERs and Panchayat functionaries, including literacy, as well as domain knowledge of subjects handled by Panchayats, such as drinking water, rural development, education, health, women's issues, social forestry, livelihoods etc. To address all these issues, a sound institutional structure and partnership with resource institutions are required. Each State will be expected to strengthen its own institutional structure for CB&T while collaborating with existing NGOs and resource institutions to ensure a high quality of CB&T and an extended outreach.
- (b) State Panchayat Resource Centre (SPRC):
 - Establishment of State Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRCs) in State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) or any other nodal State institution, to focus exclusively on Panchayati Raj, and in case of PESA States, on PESA, may be funded.
 - SPRCs may be provided with extra faculty, infrastructure including facilities for distance learning through satellite, and recurring costs.

- SPRCs will develop training curricula, train resource persons, prepare training materials, undertake action research etc. and lead the CB&T effort in the State.
- SPRCs will be the nodal centers for training of ERs and Panchayat functionaries.

(c) District Panchayat Resource Centers

- There are, on an average, 4000 to 5000 ERs in a district. CB&T of these ERs cannot be carried out at the State level, and appropriate district level facilities are vital.
- District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs) need to be strengthened in existing institutions or established at the district level to provide continuous training and hand-holding support to ERs and Panchayat functionaries in collaboration with existing government and non-government resource institutions.
- Wherever Extension Training Centres or Panchayat Resource Training Institutes or other suitable sub-state institutes are in existence, these may be strengthened to function as DPRCs for Panchayati Raj.
- Where district level institutions do not exist, new DPRCs may be established.
- RGPSA will fund faculty, infrastructure including facilities for distance learning through satellite and recurring costs in DPRCs.

(d) Block level satellite resource centers.

- Decentralized and cost effective training of ERs and Panchayat functionaries is possible through the distance learning mode.
- RGPSA will fund the construction of Block level resource centres to facilitate satellite based and other training.

- Such Centres should be attached to the Block level Panchayat to the extent possible.

(e) Partner Institutions.

Each State may identify partner institutions for CB&T. Funds as per RGPSA norms may also be provided to such partner institutions for various CB&T activities.

5. e-enablement of Panchayats

- (a) The Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) would form the bedrock of e-enablement of Panchayats to increase their effectiveness for governance and service delivery. States would be expected to make all efforts to ensure appropriate CB&T for e-enablement of Panchayats.
- (b) Hardware may be accessed through other schemes to the extent possible. Where it is not possible to provide hardware under other schemes, a computer, UPS and printer may be provided.
- (c) Capital and operational expenditure necessary for development of software applications, maintenance, server costs, data center hosting charges, storage, connectivity, security audit and digital signatures will also be funded.
- (d) States that do not have adequate computer literate manpower in Panchayats may provide for service providers.
- (e) States that have progressed with their own software and perceive their software to be better in terms of context specificity will be supported to develop interface software to report to Union Government through PES. Similarly, creation of interface with Gol schemes like MGNREGS will be supported to bring the assets created thereunder in the Panchayat asset register.

6. Support to Panchayat Processes in Panchayats with Inadequate Revenue Base

- (a) Many Panchayats, especially those in Schedule V areas, lack resources for such basic activities as Gram Sabha meetings, planning, social audit, public campaigns, forming federations etc. which hampers their functioning. These Panchayats need to be supported to carry out their basic functions.

- (b) Funds may be provided to Panchayats that do not have an adequate revenue base for their own activities such as preparing plans, Gram/Ward/Mahila Sabha meetings including special meetings of Gram Sabha on specific issues as advised by MoPR, federations of ERs, maintenance of accounts, Nyaya Panchayat processes where these exist, etc.
- (c) States will be expected to assign appropriate revenues to Panchayats. They will also develop a system for estimating the revenue capacity of Panchayats and identify Panchayats that need extra support.
- (d) Limited support for strengthening State Finance Commissions (SFCs) will also be considered where the support is likely to result in raising the capacity of Panchayats to increase their revenue. In particular SFC grants must go as untied for capacity building of Panchayats and related institutions.

7. Special Support for Gram Sabhas in PESA Areas

- (a) Implementation of PESA is possible only if Gram Sabhas understand and perform their role. Gram Sabhas need to be strengthened in terms of organizing themselves and also knowledge and assertion of their rights.
- (b) To strengthen Gram Sabhas, the following activities may be funded in Schedule V areas:
 - (i) Provision of extra manpower as follows:
 - i. Gram Sabha Mobiliser for each GP
 - ii. PESA/Gram Sabha Facilitator at block level
 - iii. PESA/ Gram Sabha Coordinator at district level.
 - iv. Orientation programmes for Gram Sabha members
 - v. Support of NGOs for regular handholding.
- (c) Such support will also be given to States in North East which are not covered under Part IX of the Constitution, but have elected village level bodies with one third representation of women and accountability to the Gram Sabha.

8. Programme Management

- (a) The present strength and capacity of State Panchayati Raj departments needs to be enhanced to enable them to undertake the task of preparing State plans and implementing RGPSA for the development of Panchayats in the State. To support the Panchayati Raj departments of the States, Programme Managements Units at the State and District level may be set up for planning, implementation and monitoring of the scheme from within the 5% available in management costs.
- (b) The function of the State and District Management Units will be to assist the Panchayati Raj Departments of the State in:
 - i. Preparing perspective and annual plans.
 - ii. Implementing the scheme as per the guidelines of RGPSA.
 - iii. Providing technical support for social mobilization, accounting and e-enablement of Panchayats, monitoring and incentivization of Panchayats etc.
 - iv. Monitoring physical and financial progress of scheme.
- (c) State and District PMUs may provide for full time consultants as well as short term consultants, to be hired from time to time as per norms approved by the State Executive Committee.

Panchayat Assessment and Incentivization

Incentivization of Panchayats has been operationalized in 2011-12 and continued in 2012-13 to give due recognition to Panchayats that perform their role well and to give correct feedback to those that do not. This process has brought Panchayat performance into focus, which will encourage all Panchayats to improve the delivery of services in their area and take innovative measures. The process started in 2011-12 and 2012-13 would be followed in RGPSA over the Twelfth Plan period. The main features would be as follows

- a. Best performing Panchayats at all three levels as well as best performing elected Village and District Councils in the North East will be identified in a systematic manner and incentivized.
- b. State Panchayats Performance Assessment Committees (SPPAC) already set up in each State/UT under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/Secretary, Panchayati Raj will continue to guide the selection of best Panchayats. SPPAC will oversee the whole process of selection of best performing Panchayats and make recommendations to MoPR.
- c. Each State will frame its set of indicators, questionnaire and marking scheme for assessing Panchayats which will be approved by SPPAC. These will subsequently be approved by a committee set up by MoPR under the chairmanship of the Joint Secretary handling the scheme.
- d. The number of Panchayats to be awarded in each State and the incentive amount would be determined by MoPR in consultation with States.
- e. Each State will circulate the approved questionnaire to all its Panchayats/Elected Councils.
- f. On the basis of feedback on the questionnaire, SPPAC will shortlist three times the number of District Panchayats (DPs), Intermediate Panchayats (IPs) and Gram Panchayats (GPs) as also Elected Councils to be awarded.

- g. Field visits will be made by a team selected by SPPAC to shortlisted local bodies for verification of information given.
- h. On the basis of answers to the questionnaire and field visits, SPPAC will select the number of DPs, IPs, GPs and District/Village Councils as determined by Gol each year as 'best Panchayats/Council' and forward their names along with supporting documents to MoPR by 15th December.

MoPR will verify through independent agencies the information presented by 'best Panchayats/Village and District Councils' in each State. Awards may subsequently be given to the Panchayats as verified by MoPR

Technical Assistance to be provided to States by National Programme Management Unit

The various types of technical assistance to be provided to States by the National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) would include:

- a. Preparation of plans, management and supervision.
- b. Assessment of State performance, especially for the 20% performance linked grant.
- c. Visualization of the administrative and technical support to GPs in their context with resource support from experts.
- d. Development of building designs for GP buildings including eco-friendly and low cost technologies.
- e. Training of resource persons in 12 common core applications, problem solving and hand holding support under e-Panchayat.
- f. Classifying Panchayats with good, medium and poor resource base and assessing the amount of support needed from the State level to undertake core processes such as Gram Sabha meetings & civic services.
- g. Identification of best practices and dissemination through training and other means.
- h. Advocacy for amendment of laws and rules as per PESA.
- i. Assistance to State level trainers in improving the quality of their training inputs with the help of resource institutions

- j. Development of materials that can be adapted by the States
- k. Promotion of cross-State sharing
- l. Continuous improvement and refinement in Panchayat indicators and process of PRI assessment

The norm for salary/professional fees, TA/DA etc. of consultants and consulting organizations will be decided by the Central Executive Committee RGPSA.

GOOD PRACTICES OF PANCHAYATS
PANCHAYAT SASHIKTICARAN PURASKAR 2012-13



Clean Streets of Manyachiwadi
Maintained by the Gram Panchayat



Members of the Farmers Club in
Kodambal Gram Panchayat



Pond Built in Shelgaon Gauri GP



The School in Hol Gram Panchayat

