GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence

Millennium Development Goal: The project relates to MDGs 1 to 7
Target: All targets relevant
Relevant India Development Goal: All targets in the 11th Five-Year Plan

Background

India has experienced considerable economic growth in the recent past with substantial reduction in poverty. However, India faces stiff challenges in achieving several MDGs. In view of this, the country’s 11th Five-Year Plan placed strong emphasis on decentralized and outcome-based planning to improve effectiveness of development programmes and to facilitate inclusive growth. However, lack of convergence, which limits absorption and effective utilization of funds, still remains a major challenge in the implementation of development programmes. Against this background, a joint programme on convergence has been initiated with the Planning Commission, Government of India, in five districts in each of the seven United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) states. The programme is strategized to leverage the capacity building support provided through the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) and the emphasis placed there on participatory planning by the local governments. The programme contributes to the achievement of UNDAF Outcome III, which states that by 2012, the 11th Five-Year Plan targets related to the MDGs are on track in select districts in seven priority states.

Objectives

The Joint UN Programme on Convergence aims to address the obstacles in effective and efficient implementation of government’s development plans and programmes. It seeks to bring synergy between the various efforts undertaken in selected 35 districts of the seven UNDAF states. Following outcomes are expected from the programme:

- Adoption of integrated and inclusive district planning
- Effective utilization of resources from government’s programmes and other sources by the districts
- Improvement in the delivery of government programmes at the local level
- Monitoring used for management and planning purposes

The outcomes achieved from the programme are further expected to support related initiatives by the Planning Commission and the state governments to strengthen district planning. Key roles of the agencies in the joint programme include:

Project Information

Area: Democratic Governance

Budget: Total US$ 14.75 million
- US$ 5.5 million (5 million- UNDP; 0.5 million- UNV)
- US$ 6 million (UNICEF)
- US$ 0.85 million (UNFPA)

Duration: 2008-2012

Implementing Partner(s): Planning Commission, Government of India

UN Partners: UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNV

Other Partner(s): State Planning Departments, State Governments

Location(s): 35 districts in the seven UNDAF states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh
• UNDP: Strengthens state and district-level institutions, enhances their capacities, demonstrates innovative and replicable approaches to inclusive planning and monitoring, and develops sustainable partnerships with Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs)/State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and other sectoral training institutions for district planning. Supports transformation of district planning to be outcome-oriented through change management initiatives and results-based management trainings
• UNICEF: Deploys district facilitators (multi-skilled development professionals) as part of the district technical support team to the District Planning Committee in 35 districts, reporting to the district collector, and upwards to the State Planning Board/Department
• UNFPA: Conducts training programmes and provides technical inputs on data needs for the development of MDG-oriented plans of the districts, and for the orientation of senior officials at state and district levels. The UNFPA will utilize national resource institutions for this exercise

Results so far

• A set of three modules on Integrated District Planning for training of master trainers, district officials and technical support groups prepared. An interactive e-learning tool based on the Planning Commission’s ‘Manual on Integrated District Planning’ also prepared
• Multi-stakeholder partnership initiated with ATIs/SIRD and other sectoral training institutions in seven UNDAF states for capacity building of functionaries on district planning
• Change management in the district planning process initiated in all the seven UNDAF states, and ground-level assessment completed to prepare a model on change management
• District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) initiated in seven districts of four UNDAF states- Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh
• Preparation of gender sub-plans initiated as part of the district plans in all pilot districts of six UNDAF states – Rajasthan, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; gender sub-plan for 2011-12 prepared in Udaipur, Rajasthan and draft chapter prepared in Korba, Chhattisgarh; gender sub-plan for the year 2012-13 being prepared in Nalanda and Rajgarh
• Community monitoring tool, PAHELI rolled out in all pilot districts of seven UNDAF states to understand how people perceive and rank the impact of various governmental interventions. The tool monitors sectoral schemes and progress at local levels towards the achievement of MDGs
• Village Index Card/Urban Index Card developed in Chhattisgarh to capture essential sex disaggregated data for planning on human development indicators and monitoring of MDGs
• Technical support provided by 43 district facilitators at the district, state and national levels to support efforts to (a) analyze flagship programmes and district plans (b) undertake decentralized district planning process (c) analyze funds allocated and utilized
• Programmes for senior government officers and district statistical officers on the use of data for planning and monitoring purposes at the sub-national level developed

Looking to the Future

• Consolidation of work from existing 35 districts in seven UNDAF states to seven districts
• Integrated District Planning training modules to be customized and adapted to the specific needs of each of the seven UNDAF states
• Partnerships with ATIs/SIRD to be strengthened
• Mid-Term Evaluation to be undertaken to identify the ways forward
• Models of change management process to be launched in all seven UNDAF states
• National Resource Cell on District Planning (NCRDP) to be established for initiating, developing, accessing and disseminating knowledge related to decentralized district planning and governance

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