

Terms Of Reference for the Evaluation study of Sector Reform Pilot Projects (SRP)

1. Background

Water is today perceived by the rural public as a social right, to be provided free by the Government, rather than as a scarce resource which must be managed locally as a socio-economic good in order to ensure its effective use. This perception has grown out of the fact that the present rural water supply systems are designed and executed by the Department/Boards and imposed on end-users. Demand preferences of the people are not taken into account while executing the schemes. In other words, rural water supply programme has been adopting a supply driven approach. Experience has shown that the present approach has led to the failure of a large number of water supply systems/schemes due to poor operation and maintenance.

2. An investment of over Rs. 40,000 crore has been made in the sector and huge infrastructure and systems built up since independence. It is paramount that the systems so created are made functional to a great degree to achieve sustainability. There is a general recognition that a transformation from a target based, supply-driven approach which pays little attention to the actual practices and/or preferences of the end users, to a **demand-based approach** where users get the service they want and are willing to pay for is urgently required. Implementation of a participatory demand driven approach ensures that users obtain the level of service they desire and can afford to pay. Further, full cost recovery of operations and maintenance and replacement costs will ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the schemes.

3. The conditions under which people would be willing to maintain and operate water supply schemes are:-

- If they own the assets,
- If they have themselves installed the handpump, or being actively involved throughout,
- If they have been trained to do simple repairs,
- If they know the government will not maintain the asset,
- If they have sufficient funds for maintenance, and
- If they have to pay for O&M.

4. The **Sector Reform Project** (SRP) was launched on pilot basis in 1999-2000 with the objective of institutionalizing community participation and demand responsive approaches in order to ensure sustainability of drinking water systems and sources in the rural water supply programme. The SRP covered 67 districts in 26 States. Later projects in two districts in the State of Sikkim have been closed due to lack of progress in implementation and now 65 districts in 25 States are covered under the project. The Sector Reform Project was to be scaled up to cover the whole country from the Tenth Plan. In December 2002, the reform initiative was scaled up to cover the entire country and was named Swajaldhara. Detailed instructions have been issued to the States regarding the mode of transition of Sector Reform Projects to Swajaldhara. (***Annexure I***)

5. Presently, Government of India desire to undertake an evaluation of the Sector Reform Projects covering all 65 Districts in 25 States to assess the impact of the programme in the rural drinking water supply sector.

Salient Features

6. The salient features of the Sector Reforms Programme are as under:

- Adoption of a **demand-driven** approach based on empowerment of villagers to ensure their full participation in the project through a decision making role in the choice of scheme design and management arrangement;
- Focus on **village level capacity building** (Gram Panchayat and Village Water and Sanitation Committees);
- Emphasis on awareness generation and training of all stakeholders.
- Ensure an **integrated service delivery mechanism** by streamlining the functions of the agencies involved in project implementation ;
- 10% (at least) **capital cost sharing** and 100% sharing of O&M cost by users. The proportion of capital cost shared should increase proportionately with increasing service demand. The community contribution could in the form of cash or kind (labour, land or material).
- Taking up of **conservation measures for sustained supply of water** through rainwater harvesting and ground water recharge structures.
- Process Projects not only aimed to implement a physical scheme, but equip the community to plan, implement and manage for themselves the Rural Water Supply schemes of their own choice.

Institutional arrangements

7. The Sector Reforms Programme provides for a well defined institutional set up at the State, District and Scheme level.

- State level - State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) / Existing setup or any other appropriate setup deemed fit.
- District level- Zilla Parishad / District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) for overall guidance; District Water and Sanitation Committee (DWSC); and Core Team for implementation.
- Scheme level- Gram Panchayat and Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC)

Sequencing Project Activities

8. District is the unit of execution of Sector Reform Project and project period is 3 years. This involves the following stages.

- Institutionalization - 3 months
- Sensitisation and Identification - 12 months
- Scheme/System Planning - 9 months
- Implementation and Commissioning and Atmarpan- 12 months

9. All the above stages may co-exist at any given point of time in various places within the same district. Schemes are to be taken up in GPs/ VWSCs in batches. The VWSC, a Committee of Gram Panchayat, is entrusted with planning, implementation of scheme of their choice in consultation with the users, shoulder the responsibility of O & M and management of the asset created.

10. It must be remembered that the core of the Sector Reform Project lies in community mobilization, its involvement and active participation in planning, execution, operation and management of the rural drinking water supply schemes. The process through which the community has been involved is more important than sticking to the exact time schedule.

So the above-mentioned scheme cycle /time schedule is **indicative but not mandatory**.

Physical & financial progress

11. The list of Districts & States covered, Physical & financial status of implementation is given as ***Annexure II***.

12. The total cost of all 67 Sector Reform Projects was estimated to be Rs.2060.45 crore of which GOI share was to be Rs.1922.85 crore. Till date Rs.920.35 crore has been released and Rs.745.79 crore has been utilized. Rs.104.13 crore has been mobilized from community as their contribution. The total number of contributors is 41.67 lakh.

13. As per available reports, 58,759 schemes have been taken up under Sector Reform Project and so far 42,639 have been completed and 26,168 schemes have been handed over to community for operation and maintenance.

Objectives of the Evaluation study

14. The proposed study will provide a quantitative and qualitative review of the status of implementation of all 65 Sector Reform Pilot Projects. The Study will assess the manner of implementation of schemes under the project and status of community ownership and management of completed schemes.

15. The thrust of the proposed Study should be on

- Assessment of community management of schemes handed over to them.

This should include study of the following:

- Manner of fixation of water tariff by the VWSC

- Rate of water tariff for different types, i.e. those having household connections; taking water from public stand posts; hand pumps etc.
- Periodicity of collection of water tariff
- Percentage households regularly paying water tariff
- System of dealing with defaulter households
- Whether there is any system of incentives/disincentives to ensure regular payment and collection of water tariff
- Whether collection from water tariff is sufficient to meet the O&M cost
- Whether the VWSC is building up any O&M corpus for meeting cost of major repairs in future out of surplus revenue generated
- quantity of water received by each house hold,
- regulation of duration of water supply,
- satisfaction level of consumers
- quality of water supplied
- whether villagers are judicious in use of water and have taken steps to prevent wastage of water
- management of accounts etc. (as explained in detail in para 16.1 below)
- Assessment of involvement of community in planning, execution, operation and management of the water supply schemes (as explained in detail in para 16.2 below)
- Assessment of the institutional arrangements put in place by the State Government for planning, implementation & management of the processes/programmes/scheme as per the Guidelines (as explained in detail in para 16.3 below)
- Assessment of the socio- economic impact of the project in the village/district (As explained in detail in para 16.4 below)

Scope of the Study

16. As already mentioned, the Study will provide a quantitative and qualitative review of the status of Sector Reform Project in the districts. In doing so, the Study should concentrate on the following 4 major areas.

16.1. Impact Assessment (Coverage, Access and Use)

Qualitative and quantitative indicators pointing to change in standard of living of the villagers before and after the project implementation is to be assessed. This assessment should focus on the impact of Sector Reform project and key lessons learnt. It should also focus on a comparative review of impact, assessed in terms of coverage; access (the extent to which marginalized groups, particularly the poor, have been able to access improved water sources); the use of the facilities provided; and system sustainability (addressing technologies, management systems and financial aspects). This also involves the quantity of water received by each household, their satisfaction level, the quality of water, the purpose for which water is used, sustainability of the source, water conservation measures undertaken to ensure source sustainability etc.

16.2. Process involved

This is to assess the process through which the community has gone through in planning, implementing and managing the scheme. The study is to understand the processes and the typologies based on the processes. It includes identifying the role of each key stakeholder especially the Panchayat leadership, role of NGOs/volunteers, officials, beneficiaries etc. Systems for monitoring progress and their use and reliability should also be assessed. The assessment should also identify best practices and key lessons learnt focusing on the sustainability of the scheme.

16.3. Institutional Arrangements

This is to assess the institutional arrangements put in place by the State Government for planning, implementation & management of the processes/programmes/scheme as per the Guidelines. These include

- The effectiveness of VWSCs in undertaking planning, implementation, operation & management of the scheme, its legal validity, ability to mobilize stipulated community contribution and resource management. This also involves assessment of its efficacy in fixing water tariff & collection of the same from users, monitoring of water quality and system put in place for ensuring regular and reliable supply of drinking water.
- Identification of key constraints (gaps and bottlenecks) faced in the project implementation process.
- Assess the potential of the community institutions & Panchayati Raj Institutions to successfully operate and maintain rural drinking water supply schemes on a sustainable basis.
- The review should also make assessment of capacity development / HRD /IEC activities required to enable the VWSCs/Gram Panchayats to successfully operate and maintain rural drinking water supply schemes on a sustainable basis.
- Successful approaches (including initiatives undertaken by the non-government sector) and key lessons learnt should be highlighted.

16.4. Socio- economic impact assessment

This is to assess

- The ability of the villagers to participate & take decisions. The participation level of community particularly women, SC and ST in the process.
- The intervention level of political leaders, NGOs, Government officials etc.
- Impact on lives of women in terms of reduction in drudgery, time saved and utilization of time becoming available.
- Community's approach towards implementation methodology of other schemes.
- The assessment should specifically assess the monitoring system in force, its effectiveness and utility.
- Best practice and lessons learnt should be identified and documented, focusing in particular on peoples' ownership, participation, community management of the scheme, ways in which community contribution was mobilised, women's participation etc.

Methodology of the Study

17. The consultant will initially undertake a desk review, compiling and studying the relevant secondary literature, as well as any additional reports/literature pertaining to the sector.

18. The consultant will have to travel to all project districts and undertake a rapid assessment of all 65 Sector Reform Project districts in 25 States. The consultant has to select the villages by random sampling and visit villages where schemes have been completed as well as those where schemes are under execution. The number of villages selected should not be less than 10 in any Sector Reform Project district. The consultant will interact with a cross section of the different stakeholders in the project. i.e. community members including women & deprived groups, members of VWSC, DWSM, SWSM, District & State level officials,

NGOs and experienced practitioners in the field. The consultant will also report on the technical details of the scheme and study the minutes of the meetings of the VWSCs/DWSM/SWSM, instructions issued by the DWSM/SWSM as well as Accounts books /Cash books/bank pass books and other relevant documents such as Audit Reports at DWSM level.

Schedule and Output

19.1. Study Outputs

The deliverables from the study shall be as follows:

- Inception Report: The inception report will detail the preliminary approach to the study, the study tools to be utilized and the outline of the final report.
- Draft Final Report: The draft final report shall compile all of the major findings of the study. It should include an executive summary of the major findings and recommendations, detailed case study of the villages/habitations inspected including technical details of the schemes. (5 hard copies)
- Final Report: The final report will be an edited and refined version of the above. (10 hard copies)
- PowerPoint Presentation: A summary of the major findings of the report pertaining to a State shall be incorporated into a PowerPoint presentation of approximately 30 minutes duration to be presented to the Department of Drinking Water Supply and Monitoring Division of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

19.2 In addition to the hard copies, the consultant will make available electronic copies of all reports and tabulated data by e-mail/CD and/or floppy disc as MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint Files.

Schedule

20 The study shall be completed **within** 16 weeks from the date of the commissioning of the study.

Qualifications or specialized knowledge & experience required

21. A full service agency with experience in the water & environmental sanitation sector is required. The agency must have the following experience

- Experience in conducting similar studies for Government/ private sector.
- Experience in the development sector, especially water, sanitation & hygiene promotion.
- Qualified staff and past experience in conducting rapid assessment studies in the areas of community perceptions and behavior change, using cluster sampling methodologies.
- Strong presentation skills in English and Hindi by the Senior Management team.
- Reputation & good track record for delivery on time.

Consultant Inputs

22 A team of consultants with proven track record in conducting evaluation studies with at least seven years experience in water & sanitation sector in the country will carry out the assignment. The Consultants will constitute multi-disciplinary teams comprising of

- Institutional/Organizational Specialist
- Social/Gender Specialist
- Financial Specialist
- Technical Expert (water supply & sanitation)
- PRI/Local Government Expert

and deploy adequate manpower to complete the task in the stipulated period of 16 weeks. A team leader should be appointed to lead the process from within the team.

23. The schedule for the study shall be as follows:

| Deliverables | Time Schedule | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| | Time to deliver | Cumulative |
| Inception Report | 1 week | 1 week |
| Draft Final Report | 12 weeks | 14 weeks |
| Final Report | 2 weeks | 16 weeks |
| Powerpoint Presentation | at completion | at completion |

24. The funds would be released to the agencies in three instalments of 40%, 40% and 20%. First instalment will be released at inception, second instalment after the draft final report has been received and final instalment after completion of the Study and submission of all reports as mentioned above within the stipulated period.

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