GOI-UN Joint Programme
On Convergence

Millennium Development Goals: This Programme relates to MDGs 1 to 7
Relevant India Development Goals: All targets in the 11th Five-Year Plan

Background

India has experienced considerable economic growth in the recent past with substantial reduction in poverty (about 37.2 percent of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2004-05 according to the expert group report to the Planning Commission, 2009). However, India still faces stiff challenges in achieving several MDGs. In view of these challenges, 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, remains a major challenge in 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 provisioned through the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) and the emphasis placed there on participatory planning by the local governments. The programme is expected to contribute to the achievement of UNDAF (2008-12) Outcome II and III.

While the Outcome II states that governance actors at district level and below are able to ensure equitable public service

Programme Information

Programme Duration:
November 2008 - December 2012

Area: Democratic Governance

Implementing Partner:
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

Budget:
Total USD 14.75 million
USD 5.5 million
(5 M UNDP; 0.5M UNV)
USD 6 million (UNICEF)
USD 0.85 million (UNFPA)
delivery according to local development priorities and with accountability to citizens, the Outcome III would have the 11th Five-Year Plan targets related to the MDGs on track in select districts of seven priority States.

**Objectives**

The Joint UN Programme on Convergence aims to address the obstacles in effective and efficient implementation of government development plans and programmes. It seeks to bring synergy among 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;
- Improved delivery under the government programmes at local level;
- Improved use of information in planning and management of programmes.

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

- **UNDP**: Strengthens State and district level institutions, enhances their capacities, and demonstrates innovative and replicable approaches to inclusive planning and monitoring, it provides human resource and technical support to state and district governments for decentralized planning and inter-sectoral convergence and supports transformation of district planning process into an outcome-oriented one through ‘change management’ initiatives and results-based planning and management (RBM) 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. They conduct analysis of district budget processes in all its stages for improving budgeting and fund flow; analyze bottlenecks in human resource management and service delivery in selected flagship programmes.

- **UNFPA**: Conducts training programmes for senior state and district officials and provides technical inputs on evidence-based planning and monitoring of programmes with a focus on the MDGs. The UNFPA partners with national and state level resource institutions for these exercises. Around 80 state level and 462 district officials from 35 districts have been trained.
Results (2008-todate)

- National Conference on Convergence held in December 2011 in Delhi with participation of 7 UNDAF states, 35 districts, Planning Commission and key nodal Central Ministries led to sharing of experiences and good practices on decentralised district planning and convergence.
- Documents on good practices relating to decentralised planning have been developed for use as knowledge products, and learning-experience exchange facilitated at national level.
- District Planning Guidelines of the focus States have been reviewed and necessary modifications are under process in consultation with the State Governments.
- Comprehensive Training Module on Integrated Decentralised Planning (IDP) prepared and disseminated to States for adaptation and use by State Governments for training of master trainers, districts officials and technical support groups. An interactive E-learning tool based on Planning Commission's 'Manual on Integrated District Planning, developed and shared with the 7 UNDAF states, has also been made available.
- Multi actor partnership initiated with ATIs/SIRDs and other state research/training institutions in 7 UNDAF States for capacity building of functionaries on district planning.
- Based on ground level assessments in Seven UNDAF states, experimentation and consultations, 'change management' models in district planning are being demonstrated in four UNDAF states
- District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) initiated in 7 districts of four UNDAF states – Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh;
- Gender Sub-plans piloted as part of district plans in six UNDAF states – Rajasthan, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Community Monitoring tool, PAHELI rolled out in all pilot districts of seven UNDAF states to assess people's perception of human development and services under government programmes.
- Tools and methods (i.e. Village Index Card/ Urban Index Card) are available for replication from the State of Chhattisgarh on capturing 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 level to support efforts to (a) analyze flagship programmes and district plans, (b) undertake the decentralized district planning process, (c) analyze funds allocated and utilized d) analyze human resources
- Analyses of district budgets, human resources and bottlenecks of flagship programmes have been compiled at the national level.
- Senior government planning and statistics officials have been trained on evidence-based planning and monitoring at State and district levels in all UNDAF states.
Looking to the Future (Expected Results)

- Capacity Development for decentralized planning strengthened through partnerships with ATIs/SIRDs;
- Integrated District Planning training modules customized in all 7 states and trainings rolled out for officials, Technical Support Groups and elected representatives from 35 districts;
- Technical Support for preparation of District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) in Convergence Districts;
- Consolidation of the UNDP pilot interventions on Gender Sub-Plans, change management and result based management in 7 districts (one each in each UNDAF State) for focused impact;
- National Resource Cell on District Planning (NRCDP) developing, accessing and disseminating knowledge related to decentralized district planning and governance;

- Comprehensive analysis of district budgeting carried forward and necessary changes advocated at State and National levels;
- Two flagship programmes (NRHM & TSC) analyzed in terms of HRM, budgeting, fund flow and management bottlenecks for effective service delivery and meeting of MDG goals;
- Human Resource Analysis and Budget Analysis of Sectors feeding into policy dialogue;
- Evidence-based planning and monitoring inculcated in the district planning processes and adequate hands-on institutional capacity support available at the State/district levels.