

National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning



Go-UN Joint Programme on Convergence



National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP) Completion Report

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55, Lodi Estate, New Delhi – 110003

Submitted by:
National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP)
Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA) – DEBATE
B-32, TARA Crescent, Qutab Institutional Area
New Delhi 110 016, INDIA



GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence



Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Gol-UN Joint Programme on Convergence.....	1
1.2	Introduction to NRCDDP.....	1
1.3	Goal and Objective.....	2
1.4	Functions	3
1.4.1	Developing and Maintaining the Knowledge Repository	3
1.4.2	Providing Training Support	3
1.4.3	Conducting Action Research.....	3
1.4.4	Developing GIS Based Solution for Decentralized District Planning.....	4
1.4.5	Conducting Evaluation of District Plans.....	4
1.4.6	Organized Knowledge Sharing Workshop	4
1.5	Approach	4
1.6	Operational Framework	5
1.6.1	NRCDDP.....	6
1.6.2	State Focal Point.....	6
1.7	Geographical Coverage	7
2	Key Functions and Methodology	8
2.1	Develop Knowledge Repository.....	8
2.2	Evaluation of District Plans.....	9
2.3	GIS Assessment and Developing Solution Package	9
2.4	Action Research	10
2.5	Capacity Building.....	10
3	Key Output and Findings	12
3.1	Develop Knowledge Repository.....	12
3.2	Evaluation of District Plans.....	13

National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP)

3.3	GIS Assessment and Developing Solution Package	15
3.4	Action Research	16
3.5	Capacity Building.....	17
3.5.1	Jharkhand.....	18
3.5.2	Uttar Pradesh.....	19
3.5.3	Bihar	20
3.5.4	Chhattisgarh.....	21
3.5.5	Madhya Pradesh.....	21
3.5.6	Rajasthan.....	22
3.5.7	Odisha.....	23
3.6	Knowledge Sharing Workshop	23
4	Conclusion	24
5	Annexure.....	26
	Annexure 1 - Web analytic of NRCDDP Knowledge Repository website.....	26
	Monthly Statistics for November 2012	26
	Monthly Statistics for October 2012.....	26
	Annexure 2 - Picture of Capacity Building	27

1 Introduction

1.1 GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence

India still faces rigid challenges in achieving several Millennium Development Goals'. 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 UNDAF states. The programme is strategized to leverage the capacity the capacity building support provisioned through the Backward Region Grand Fund (BRGF) and the emphasis placed there on participatory planning by the local government.

1.2 Introduction to NRCDDP

The Indian Eleventh Five Year Plan of India has put strong emphasis on decentralized and outcome-based planning. The focus has been on the bottom-up approach to improve effectiveness of development programmes and facilitate inclusive growth. In order to achieve inclusive growth, the need for equitable participation in the development process and benefit-sharing by disadvantaged social groups has been emphasized. Therefore, decentralized development planning and implementation assumes paramount importance in the pursuit of inclusive growth. Over the last two decades, new policy space and scope for innovative work have opened up for strengthening decentralized planning and implementation. 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts have provided constitutional status and wider platforms of powers to urban and rural local governments. Accordingly, State Panchayat and Municipal Acts have expanded the powers and functions of local governments, District Planning Committees (DPCs) have been established and district planning has come into practice in many States. The Planning Commission of India has circulated guidelines and a manual on district planning to guide the process across the country. Several States have also adopted district planning guidelines to address their own contextual requirements.

The NRCDDP has been launched as a part of the Government of India-United nations Joint Programme on Convergence (GoI-UNJPC). The programme is led by the Planning Commission of India, and supported

by a number of UN agencies, most prominently - the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India. The programme furthers the objectives of the 11th Five Year Plan of the Government of India and UN support to the programme is guided by United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) India 2008-12. The programme is being implemented in seven focus States: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

1.3 Goal and Objective

The overall goal of the NRCDDP is to facilitate capacity development for district planning by adopting a poly – centric approach for developing, accessing and disseminating knowledge inputs on decentralized district planning and decision making to ensure inclusive growth. The NRCDDP would identify partners and institutions in 7 states to function as nodal points in different thematic areas for smooth functioning of the NRCDDP activities. The poly-centric approach would result in institutional strengthening and would be cost effective.



The specific objectives of the NRCDDP are:

- To develop a knowledgebase on decentralized district planning
- To evaluate the district plans of 7 districts in each of the 7 focus states
- To provide capacity building/training support to State and district level identified target groups (government, line departments, ULBs, local government) towards integrated district planning process with the following objectives.
 - To Identify and assess current capacity building needs.
 - To support and strengthen the target groups
 - To provide training support on decentralized district planning, focusing on models for community mobilization; GIS applications and data management in district planning,

environment and climate change adaptation integration into district planning, entitle based planning, facilitating exposure visits

- To conduct action research studies on various aspects of district planning
- To assess the needs of GIS based planning for use in district planning and develop required solutions
- To organize workshop for sharing the issues/information on various aspects of district planning

1.4 Functions

The National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP) acts as a professional support centre for facilitating and providing technical support in decentralized district planning. For institutional networking and collaboration in seven states, the NRCDDP works with identified institutions in different thematic areas. The major functions of NRCDDP were as follows:

1.4.1 Developing and Maintaining the Knowledge Repository

Develop and maintain an adaptive and easy-to-access state-of-the-art knowledge based on decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation containing details of relevant theory and practice in India and other countries in a subject-specific manner and in a comparable perspective:

- Information, articles, analyses on policies, acts, laws and rules related to decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation in India and other relevant developing countries;
- Documentation (written and audio-visual) on methodologies, training modules and research conducted on community-based monitoring and citizens' oversight of planning and programme implementation;
- Documentation of good practices on decentralized district planning by government, inter-government and civil society agencies;

1.4.2 Providing Training Support

- To provide capacity building/training support to State and district level identified target groups (government, line departments, ULBs, local government) towards integrated district planning process

1.4.3 Conducting Action Research

- Action research focuses on various aspects of district planning and associated subjects,

- Contributes to broader advocacy for necessary changes in policies and implementation mechanisms/processes;

1.4.4 Developing GIS Based Solution for Decentralized District Planning

- Assessing needs for GIS applications in district planning (e.g. spatial planning, etc.) and Develop solution package

1.4.5 Conducting Evaluation of District Plans

- Conducting evaluations of district plans

1.4.6 Organized Knowledge Sharing Workshop

- Organize one national workshop focusing on
 - Knowledge repository on decentralized district planning and establishing a network of institutions for its strengthening
 - Data management in the district planning – role of tools and methodologies
 - Documentation of best practices for up-scaling
 - Capacity building – issues and way forward

1.5 Approach

The NRCDDP adopted a poly-centric approach for developing, accessing and disseminating customized knowledge inputs on decentralized district planning in the context of programmatic requirements of the Planning Commission of India and the GoI-UNJPC partners in 7 focus states. It therefore, identified and partnered with institutions with specific subject expertise. For institutional networking and collaboration in 7 states, the NRCDDP identified institutions to function as nodal points in different thematic areas. Such an arrangement would strengthen local partnerships and would be cost-effective.

Packaging of relevant knowledge base on decentralized district planning, monitoring and evaluation and its application through building requisite capacities of various stakeholders will be the principle direction of the programme. As such the project methodology is directed towards capacity building of identified training institutes by developing training modules containing the region specific knowledge to address the decentralized district planning process in areas of need assessment, impact assessment, quality assurance and demand driven skill up gradation (like application of GIS in district planning process) and

subsequently implementing the training modules for training of the government officials of district administrations, various line departments and elected representatives of PRIs and ULBs. The project addresses decentralized district planning imperatives in 7 UNDAF states of India-Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Work in these states is carried out in partnership with respective state governments and local implementing organizations involved in the project. The overall project approach is aligned towards putting in place a model of capacity building which demonstrates the bottom up processes, transparent and accountable institutional functioning and results based programme management for decentralized district planning at various levels. Support from the government is be a core component of the programme and is leveraged in terms of identifying the relevant personnel for training. This has been done with a view to provide inputs into development planning through the training module in order to strengthen the intended impact of the project on policy making processes.

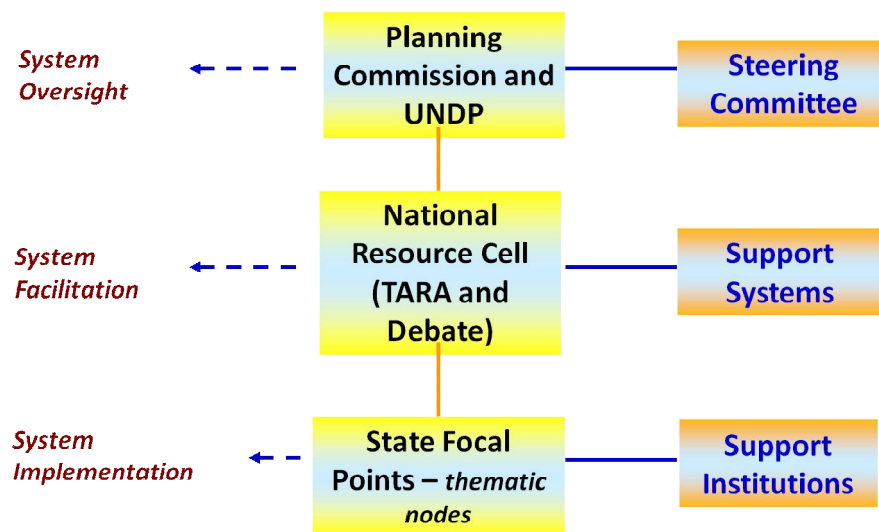
In order to fulfill the above objectives, NRCDDP has completed the following key activities:

- ✓ Develop and maintain an adaptive and easy-to-access state-of-the-art knowledge base on decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation
- ✓ Impart trainings through different methods for better understanding of the substance, technical reinforcement and quality assurance in order to make the district planning process more meaningful and effective.
- ✓ Evaluation of district plans of 7 districts for gap identification
- ✓ Conduct an action research study on various aspects of district planning
- ✓ Assess needs for customized GIS applications for use in district planning and develop solution
- ✓ Organize forums/processes of learning and sharing on decentralized planning and programming solutions

1.6 Operational Framework

The Operational Structure envisaged for the NRCDDP in India is at three levels to perform three distinct and key functions of system oversight, facilitation and implementation. While each level has their support systems and institutions, the prime responsibility is with the designated institution(s). As the nodal point in the Government of India, the Planning Commission and UNDP has exercise substantive and administrative oversight and control over the NRCDDP.

National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP)



1.6.1 NRCDDP

The National Resource Cell for District Planning (NRCDDP) has a critical role as a system facilitator. The NRCDDP has its internal support systems to perform the assigned tasks. To ensure effective facilitation of the District Planning in the 7 States, the NRCDDP judiciously adopted the following working principles:

- ✓ Clearly understand and position itself as a facilitator and not as implementer
- ✓ Provide support and Implement strategically in areas where support and facilitation is critically required, to demonstrate possibilities and maintain time- frames
- ✓ Mobilize diverse and scientifically rigorous partners (thematic nodes/State Focal Points) for the entire process

The key functions to be performed by the NRCDDP include:

- ✓ System Design and Orientation
- ✓ Capacity Building
- ✓ Network Coordination and Monitoring
- ✓ Information and Knowledge management
- ✓ Develop knowledge repository and GIS applications

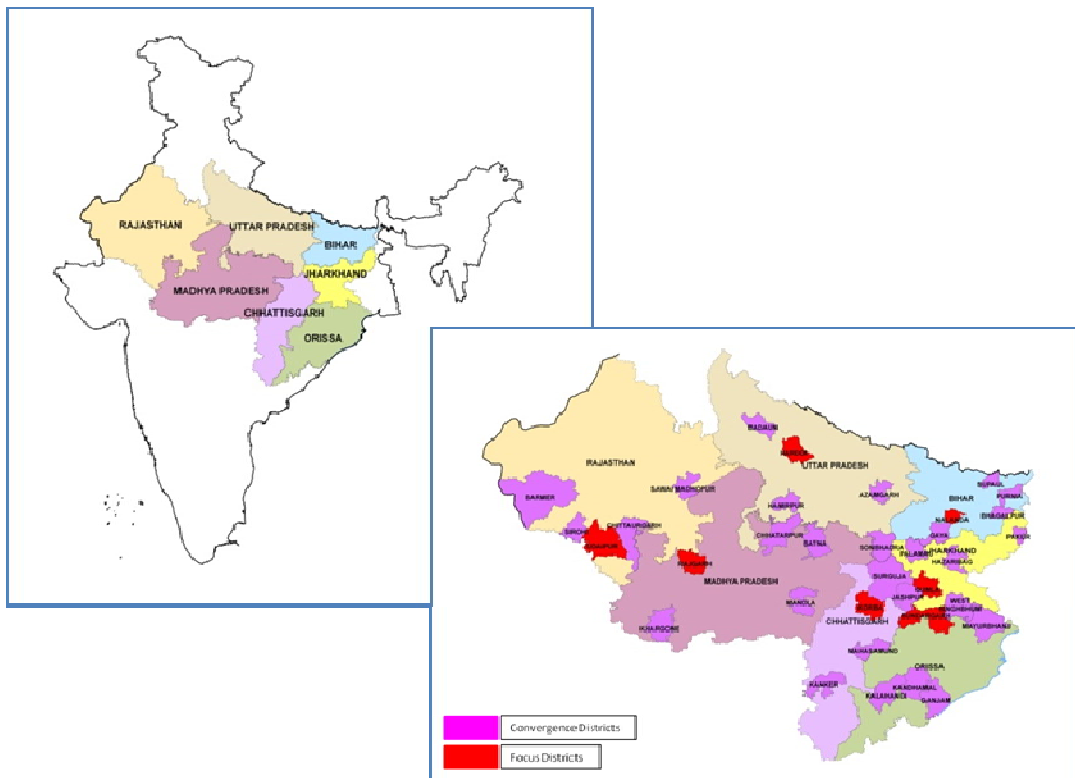
1.6.2 State Focal Point

The State Focal Point in each state is being responsible for coordinating system implementation. This focal point includes designated government personnel and resource institutions or individuals. Their prime function is to:

- ✓ Mobilize and Orient Partners
- ✓ Facilitate Participatory Processes
- ✓ Provide Knowledge Products
- ✓ Provide Feedback to the NRCDDP

1.7 Geographical Coverage

NRCDDP has addressed decentralized district planning imperatives in 7 UNDAF states of India - Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Works in these states has been carried out in partnership with respective state governments and local implementing organizations involved in the project. One district from each state was focused district.



2 Key Functions and Methodology

2.1 Develop Knowledge Repository

This includes developing and maintaining an adaptive and easy-to-access state-of-the-art knowledge base on decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation: the repository would contain details of relevant theory and practice in India and in other countries in a subject specific manner and in a comparable perspective.

- **Literature review:** Literature review is done to collect secondary information/data on through the state focal points and thematic nodes on various aspects of decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation. The information will be collected on –
 - ✓ Articles, analyses on policies, acts, laws and rules related to decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation in India and other relevant developing countries;
 - ✓ Documentation (both written and audio-visual) on methodologies, training modules and research done on community based monitoring and citizens oversight of planning and programme implementation;
 - ✓ Documentation of good practices case studies on decentralized district planning by government, inter-government and civil society agencies in the 7 States
- **Identification of thematic nodes and focal points:** Thematic nodes and focal points (State institutions, planning department, line departments, CSOs, experts, resource persons) were identified.
- **Website Development:** A website is prepared to store the knowledge repository and all the knowledge products. Initially for the 1st year, the website is run from DA-TARA server and in the 2nd year it will be migrated into the NIC or UNDP server after consultation with UNDP and Planning Commission. The website is comprised of a front end and navigational pages. The Knowledge Repository design includes designing the database on the basis of the scope of work. It includes designing of document Library to store and track the document in the system [pdf, ppt, word files etc]. Provide metadata/taxonomy to the documents. Additional information sources is also be included. Document architecture is prepared keeping in mind for easy and user-friendly navigation.

2.2 Evaluation of District Plans

The process of evaluation of district plans involves secondary and primary data collection and analysis, based on the process and sample suggested by the specific state. The process followed for evaluation of district plans of 7 districts in 7 states is as follows:

- **Identification of districts:** For the purpose of evaluation of District plans, seven districts from each of the states were identified in consolidation with UNDP and PMU.
- **Developing participatory methodology and relevant tools:** An appropriate participatory methodology and tools was developed for data/information collection. The methodology and process focuses on the following themes.
 - ✓ Processes promoting democratic decentralization in planning at various levels
 - ✓ Inclusive and Gender based planning
 - ✓ Calculation and use of Resource envelop
 - ✓ Status of response plan by line departments
 - ✓ Integration of district plans into state budget and plan
 - ✓ Status of implementation of district plans
 - ✓ Systems for monitoring and evaluation of district plans at the level of DPC
- **Interaction with Key informants:** Consultations with key informants and departments including health, education, RD, Panchayat, Agriculture, finance, planning etc was conducted for getting an insights on the process and content of the plans and planning process.
- **Analysis and Documentation:** The final evaluation report contains analysis of existing situation, strength, weakness opportunities and constraints (SWOC) of practice and methodology adopted in each state.

2.3 GIS Assessment and Developing Solution Package

GIS is one of the powerful tools available for decentralized district planning. It helps as a decision maker and field level functionaries to prepare development plan and implement at all levels. Decentralized District planning requires availability of data/information in a spatial format at district, block and village level and can be accessed easily by the PRIs and district planning officials. In many states, data is available at the district, block and village level, however the data is very scattered and not accessible and at the same time not spatially represented.

NRCDDP is proposing a District Planning Information System (DPIS) as a solution, which would facilitate in preparing the district plans and also manages the large volume of data from various sources. DPIS is a Geographical Information System (GIS) based application, which provides detailed information pertaining to demography, infrastructure and facilities, education, health and natural resources for every village, block and district. The system is currently designed for one Tehsil (Block) of Rajgarh District of Madhya Pradesh.

2.4 Action Research

The process of the Action Research Studies includes:

- **Identification of Issues:** Identification of issues, processes and gaps at field level in selected state in collaboration with state government.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** NRCDDP documented the action research processes for sharing and dissemination.
- **Pilot Actions:** Pilot action will be done by district and State agencies already implementing the district planning processes. *NRCDDP will facilitate the process of implementation and provide technical support as and when required by the state agencies.*
- Action research studies will be initiated in following areas:
 - ✓ Calculation of resource envelop at different level of institutions i.e. Gram Panchayat, block level Panchayat, Zila Parishad, ULBs and for district as whole
 - ✓ Integrating environmental concerns and issues in decentralized district planning
 - ✓ Rural – Urban integration at the level of DPC

2.5 Capacity Building

This component was detailed out on the basis of situation analysis, conducted at the state level. It will be required to build the capacities of different institutions at the State level. Capacity building is an integral part of the NRCDDP, for its effective implementation and inclusion of the new planning process at all the levels of district planning process. Standardized capacity building modules with flexibility for customization is the foundation for institutionalizing the process and building training capacities. The capacity building was anchored in State Institutions whose capacity was enhanced to ensure that hand-holding and regular refresher are conducted for further training the government officials and elected representatives. Thus, “Training of Trainers” is an important component.

For the district planning to be effective, capacity building of the state institutions and other key stakeholders is critical. The strategy for capacity building has a three pronged approach. The first component includes identification of relevant modules, module design, customization and demonstrative processes. The second is formal training at key milestones of the process. The third component of capacity building focuses on providing necessary support while implementation is in progress. Since the formal training will have to reach out to approximately 20 persons at least three times over a period of one year, it will be undertaken through a two stage process of first – training of trainers, and then – training of state partners.

3 Key Output and Findings

3.1 Develop Knowledge Repository

National Resource Cell on District Planning (NRCDDP) has been established for developing, accessing and disseminating knowledge related to decentralized district planning and governance. As part of this, a knowledge repository has been established in the form of an online and offline repository. The knowledge repository is online and offline storage of knowledge base on decentralized district planning and monitoring & evaluation. The knowledge repository comprises of details of relevant theory and practice in India and other countries in a subject-specific manner. The knowledge repository is available in the public domain as a NRCDDP website (www.nrcddp.org) and also as a document library at NRCDDP premise and can be accessed easily.



The repository contains details of relevant theory and practice in India and other countries in a subject-specific manner and in a comparable perspective including the following:

- Information, articles, analyses on policies, acts, laws and rules related to decentralized planning, monitoring and evaluation in India and other relevant developing countries;
- Documentation (both written and audio-visual) on methodologies, training modules and research done on community based monitoring and citizens oversight of planning and programme implementation;

- Documentation of good practices on decentralized district planning by government, inter-government and civil society agencies;

The knowledge repository is available as a dedicated website and stores the knowledge base on decentralized district planning and governance. The offline repository is available at the NRCDDP premise and has the printed versions of the knowledge repository. The website comprise of a front end and landing pages to store the knowledge repository.

The knowledge repository comprise of the following:

- ✓ Planning acts, rules and legislation
- ✓ Good Practices related to planning exercise throughout the country
- ✓ Fund and budgetary allocations
- ✓ Schemes and programs related to district planning activities
- ✓ Detailed plans (Five Year plans, Annual Plans, State Plans and District Plans)
- ✓ Various press releases and upcoming events related to planning process
- ✓ Scholarly articles, training modules on community based monitoring and planning
- ✓ Statistical data/Geographical Profile

3.2 Evaluation of District Plans

In consolidation with UNDP and PMU, few parameters were designed along which the district plans were to be evaluated. These parameters were decided based on the planning steps mentioned in “Manual for Integrated District Planning”; the following are the selected parameters:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| • Stock – taking | • Process of Planning |
| • District Vision | • Use of Software |
| • Resource Envelope | • Role of Elected Representative & Local Bodies |
| • Capacity Building | |

Based on these parameters, the evaluations for all the 7 districts were undertaken. Basically it will give a clear idea of how far the preparations of district plans are inclusive. During our consolations with the state and district government few issues came on board.

- There is lack of skilled human resource at all the levels
- Plans are just collected from line departments instead of including communities in to it.
- In some cases, even though communities are asked to involve but due to dearth of proper guidelines and framework, communities fail to do so.

- Usually ULB's prepare its own plan and it is not included under district plan.
- Devolution of function is on papers only, not practically followed. This also leads to very weak responsibility of elected representatives. Although states like Rajasthan have successfully devolved 5 functions from XI schedule to the PRI's.
- Budget which is allocated every year to the Panchayats, are not based on previous year performance.
- As well as no resource mapping is done before allocation of budget, as the budget envelope only depicts financing and funding.
- In many cases, the district plans are prepared without any district vision, whereas in case of MIDP states the plan should be prepared keeping the district vision in mind.
- Another problem which came out was, a lead sector is not identified during the stock-taking process.
- Complete absence of vertical and horizontal linkages, throughout the planning process.
- There is huge gap and disaggregation of data, which is the key requirement of convergence planning. Those have data, lack in data management and compilation of it. Since the whole process of resource & budget envelope revolves around the data, there should be proper & updated data collection, compilation and management.
- With the help of GIS, these data can be transferred and stored in form of maps, which can be used in spatial planning.
- Convergence at lower level or lower unit of planning is much easier than at higher levels. Like in case of Madhya Pradesh, according to them convergence should be at block level. It simplifies the planning process to an extent.
- There is lack of untied funds.

Based on the above findings or issues, the following recommendations were suggested:

- It is vital to strengthen the role of elected members in PRIs & ULBs; rural-urban participation and vertical & horizontal linkages across the departments. In order to achieve this goal, the following strategy can be adopted:
 - A training programme can be conducted for both the elected members of PRIs & ULBs on the entire process of planning, as suggested by MIDP. It can be a 2-3 week comprehensive training course.
 - There can be regular exposure visits and group exercises.

- Efforts must be made to develop stronger linkages between line departments and community organizations.
- If the line departments could adhere to the integrated district plans and not promote parallel programmes, the process of planning would certainly improve.
- There are best practices, which needs to be up-scaled, with the help of technical support.
- Spatial planning approach needs to be adopted specifically for resource mapping and grassroots planning as well as for monitoring purposes. Information and database must be strengthened at the local level to improve planning.
 - An ICT/GIS tool can be developed for spatial planning.
 - At GP level, in gram Sabha with the help of villagers, the entire infrastructure can be identified and marked in a map. After the existing infrastructure is marked in the map, it can be transferred into a format of excel sheet.
 - This will result in “People’s Participation” and a list of existing infrastructure in the village will be produced through which the lead sector will be easily identified and it will be used in preparing the plan at the village level.
 - Keeping a track of the schemes, programmes and the existing infrastructure will help in easy and appropriate monitoring & evaluation of schemes right at the grassroots level.
- The planning process could be improved to make it more participatory. The system followed in Kerala, where Working Groups are formed for district planning and whose deliberations are shared with the Gram Sabha could make planning more participatory.
- The calculation of resource envelop need to be done in a manner that provides clearcut information to district authorities about actual resources available to them for decision-making. The current exercise actually informs about resources spent in the district. It does not give authority to DPC to take decision on the same.
- Support the state governments to up-scale and mainstream some of the initiatives already piloted including DPMU, PAHELI, and Change Management.

3.3 GIS Assessment and Developing Solution Package

The prototype of District Planning Information System (DPIS) has been designed and developed for Narsingharh block of Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh. This system is developed in a CD and web based form that provides the required information to various stakeholders for arriving on a best possible decision for local level planning. This tool integrates block and village-level spatial and non-spatial data

in GIS environment into a useful information system for decentralized planning process. The tool would facilitate in district planning process and assists the decision-makers in planning, implementation and monitoring of various activities of development.

The software used for development of DPIS includes Arc GIS-9.3.1 for creation of geospatial database, Autodesk Map guide server for developing the web based application and Tatuk editor and developer for developing the CD application.

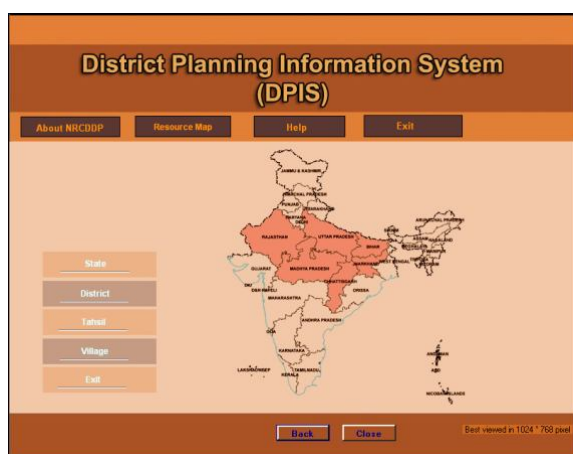


Figure 1 CD Based DPIS

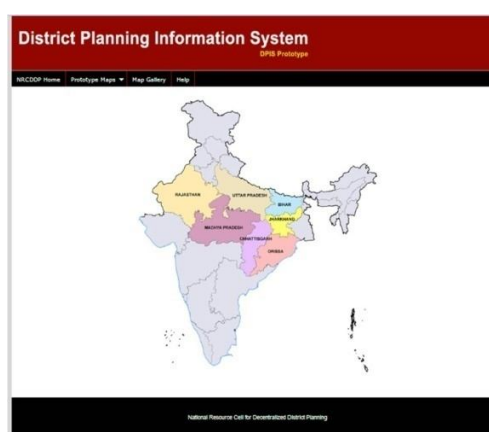


Figure 2 Website of DPIS

3.4 Action Research

The rationale behind the action research was to study on various aspects of district planning and associated subjects contributing to broader advocacy for necessary changes in policies and implementation mechanisms/processes. The action research will try to identify gaps in specific thematic areas associated with decentralized district planning process. Through the pilot study and recommendations in specific thematic areas NRCDDP will try to reduce these gaps accordingly. The action research part will focus more on the process of decentralized planning. The themes that have been identified through intense consultation with Planning Commission and UNDP India are the following:

- Inclusion of environmental dimension in planning process- Sundergarh district (Odisha)
- Rural- Urban Integration at habitation level- Rajgarh district (M.P.)
- Resource envelop- Rajgarh district (M.P.)

The purpose of the action research was to identify gaps in the decentralized planning process. The action research has put forward recommendations to minimize the gaps in the planning process. The recommendations will be tested through pilot study in selected geographical areas by the state and district government and if needed NRCDDP will provide technical assistance. Hence the action research will propose specific actions to minimize the gaps in the decentralized planning process.

3.5 Capacity Building

Our interaction with the States provided useful input on capacity building strategies for different states. Following is the status of planning and capacity gaps in the states.

- **Madhya Pradesh** has initiated comprehensive district planning process where all components are suggested to be used. At the district level the emphasis on vision, calculation on resource envelop and rural urban integration are weak. Moreover state has also stressed the need of focusing more on capacity building for strengthening the implementation process of district planning
- **Rajasthan** is in initial stages of district planning and no capacity building inputs have been organized at district level for government officials. There are separate events of training on some components like gender budgeting, planning under BRGF, SSA, and NRHM. The focus on comprehensive district planning is missing.
- **Chhattisgarh** focuses on comprehensive district planning. At the district level, vision, calculation of resource envelope and rural urban integration are weak. There are several institutions involved in the capacity building process. The convergence project is organizing its own initiative and SIRD is providing a certificate course.
- **Bihar** needs training on facilitating entitlement based planning. The state would need a comprehensive package of training on almost all the components mentioned in the manual, of planning commission, to prepare a district plan.
- **Odisha** is using BRGF for comprehensive district planning. The need there is to strengthen the process of planning for inclusive growth, calculation of resource envelop and environmental integration.
- **Uttar Pradesh** is in initial stages of district planning and no capacity building inputs have been organized at district level for government officials. The need there is to strengthen the process of planning, calculation of resource envelope and environment integration

- **Jharkhand** is using BRGF for comprehensive district planning. There has been some training organized for PRIs and others, but there is lack of understanding of comprehensive district planning process, calculation of resource envelope, rural-urban integration and environment integration.

NRCDDP value adds and focuses in the training support:

- ✓ Data Management for Planning and Monitoring
- ✓ Vision Mapping
- ✓ Calculation of Resources Envelop
- ✓ Rural Urban Integration
- ✓ Environment Inclusion
- ✓ Process of Implementation

Based on the need and interactions with the identified institutions, NRCDDP has initiated the training support in the seven states. The training support has been completed in *Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar*. In Odisha, Chhatisgarh and Rajasthan, the training support is in progress. Following is the brief update on the training support interventions provided in Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

3.5.1 Jharkhand

A three day training programme was conducted in Ranchi from 22-24th November 2012, in collaboration with “State Institute of Rural Development” (SIRD). As earlier mentioned Jharkhand is using BRGF for comprehensive district planning. Mainly the training support focused on four broad topics:-

- State of Art of Planning in Jharkhand
- Overview on Mainstreaming Environment in District Planning Process
- Resource Mapping and Financial Budget
- Stock-taking and Data Management

The final agenda for the training programme was shared with the Principal Secretary and Director of SIRD. Based on the need of the state, following topics were also included and discussed:-

- Gender Sub Plan; Tribal Sub Plan & SC Sub Plan
- Concept of Village parliament

The target audiences were approximately 25-30 people and the participants were the District officers; Mukhaya's of villages; Ward Member of Wards; representatives from other local institutions. During initial discussion, it came out that there is lack of understanding of comprehensive district planning

National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP)

process, calculation of resource envelope, rural-urban integration and environment integration. The training was in participatory format. Opening remarks were given by Principal Secretary of Panchayati Raj; Director Panchayati Raj and Director of SIRD and it continued by giving an overview of NRCDDP and its functions and objective.

Snapshots of Training Support in Jharkhand with SIRD



3.5.2 Uttar Pradesh

A training support was organized in Lucknow on 3rd December 2012, in alliance with the "Training Department" of "State Planning Institute", State Planning Commission, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh. More than half of the districts in Uttar Pradesh are under BRGF plan. During the consultation, the important issues which rose was the "Integration of Environment in to District Planning" and lack of training facilities to the government officials on "Resource Mapping and Financial Budgeting". At the state level, there are lot of resources related to GIS and spatial planning but it was not used by the district planning officials. So, a need was felt to orient the DPO and other officers involved in planning process on "Data and Data Management" and use of Spatial Data & Information in to district planning process. The agenda of one day training programme mainly focused on:-

- Resources Mapping and Budget Envelope
- Stock Taking and Data Management
- Integrating Environment and Climate Change in District Planning Process

National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP)

The target participants were the district officials. Approximately 30 district planning officers and district officers attended the training programme. Under the Integration of Environment in to District Planning Process; Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment was also included. With the help of case studies, the officials were explained how in a participatory manner they can prepare a successful guidelines for mainstreaming environment and climate change in to district planning process.

Snaps of Training Support in Uttar Pradesh with State Planning Institute



3.5.3 Bihar

In Bihar, State Planning Commission has identified five convergence District that is Nalanda, Gaya, Purnea, Supaul and Bhagalpur to initiate Entitlement based integrated District Planning. This year onwards State Planning Commission widen up Entitlement based integrated District Planning process in all 38 Districts. In order to ensure inter regional and social equity, Bihar has started entitlement based approach in planning and implementation of schemes. Though they have started with the new concept called “Entitlement based Planning” but no district officials involved in the planning are trained on this.

So based on the demand coming from the state, NRCDDP facilitated a one day training support on “Implementation of the Entitlement based Planning”. The target participants were all the officers of line department and district officials and officers who are involved in district planning process. Principal Secretary of Planning Department, Bihar took a special interest in it and he also attended the meeting.

3.5.4 Chhattisgarh

In Chhattisgarh, State Planning Commission has identified five convergence District that is Sarguja, Jashpur, Korba, Mahasamund and Kanker to initiate Decentralized District Planning under the UN-JPC Programme. In the current planning process the Spatial or GIS based planning is completely missing in Chhattisgarh. In order to ensure the planning process more transparent and robust the state planning commission and the planners at district level are more interested on use of spatial planning tool or GIS based application in the preparation of district plan but no district or state level officials involved in the planning are trained on this. So based on the demand coming from the State and District, NRCDDP facilitated a one day training support on “Application of GIS based planning” in the Korba district. The target participants were district line department officials and officers who are involved in district planning process. District Magistrate of Korba district, took a special interest in it and he also attended the meeting.

3.5.5 Madhya Pradesh

Issues Related to Capacities

The experience informs that there are several plans in the district which are:

- Decentralized district plan for district sector schemes
- BRGF Plan in BRGF districts
- SSA Plan
- MNREGS plan
- District Plan of Agriculture Department
- District Plan of Horticulture
- NRHM plan
- Plan by all the line departments for State Sector Schemes

The experience of last three years inform that the process of decentralized district plan has been able to have some influence over above mentioned schemes but complete convergence have not been possible due to several reasons such as:

- Different planning cycle followed for different sectors such as SSA plans are prepared much before, NRHM plans are not part of district plan because allocation for health is non-plan segment,
- Allocation under flagship schemes follow a different pattern on the basis of guidelines issued by central government ministries
- Difference in the timing of discussion on each plan

It was discussed that unless the issues of timing are settled the state and district can adopt a different strategy to address the issue. This strategy is as follows:

- The actual planning for decentralized district plan begins in the month of July. So take all the plans prepared before July.
- Develop a common format for planning for different sectors that addresses the core issues of different
- Get an agreement with all the departments to follow the same format
- Provide space to line departments to facilitate their sectoral planning on the time suited to them
- Take the sectoral habitation plan during the actual process of planning for ratification of the plans
- Follow the same pattern followed in last three years after plans are ratified from the rural and urban habitation

Follow-up

It has been agreed that a detailed methodology for addressing the issues of implementation will be developed. NRCDDP will provide support to develop this methodology and share with the State government..

3.5.6 Rajasthan

Issues Related to Capacities

It was discussed that unless the issues of timing are settled the state and district can adopt a different strategy to address the issue. This strategy is as follows:

- Use the opportunity given to state through BRGF

- Develop a common format for planning for different sectors that addresses the core issues of different
- Get an agreement with all the departments to follow the same format
- Provide space to line departments to facilitate their sectoral planning on the time suited to them
- Take the sectoral habitation plan during the actual process of planning for ratification for BRGF plans
- Use the pattern of MP which can be done within existing policy framework

Follow-up

It has been agreed that a detailed methodology for addressing the issues of implementation will be developed. NRCDDP will facilitate an exposure visit to MP from 17-18th December 2012. A detailed follow-up strategy will be developed during MP visit of the Team.

3.5.7 Odisha

Technical support on “Integrating Environment and Climate change adaptation in to decentralized planning” is being done based on the research conducted in Sundergarh.

3.6 Knowledge Sharing Workshop

NRCDDP will organize a one day National Workshop on 20th December in New Delhi. The participants would include officials from state government & district government, CSOs, experts UN agencies etc. The objective of the workshop would be to share the knowledge and experiences on decentralized district planning. The workshop would focus on the following:

- Knowledge repository on decentralized district planning and establishing a network of institutions for its strengthening
- Data management in the district planning – role of tools and methodologies
- Documentation of best practices for up-scaling
- Capacity building – issues and way forward

4 Conclusion

There were various good practices and issues which cannot be overlooked, came up during the 1st year of the NRCDDP. According to the observation of NRCDDP, there are issues which need to be considered and addressed in order to strengthen the decentralized district planning:

- There is no co-relation between the budget allocated and the population of that area.
- There is no integration of plans prepared by ULB's in district plans.
- We say it is inclusion planning, but there is always inadequate participation on SC, ST and women's in Gram Sabha plan preparation.
- Budget allocated for the next year is not at all based on performance of district, randomly some percentage of funds are increased for the next year and given.
- In the manual it is mentioned that there should be devolution of 3F's to the panchayats, but in reality it is far away from it.
- If the planning process could have been in participatory manner then it would have been "Bottom-Top planning process" but this is not the case. It is more of "Top-Bottom Planning Process".
- Lack of skilled human resources at all level can be considered as biggest constrain.
- Though we have some best practices at small scale and we need to scale it up but a common problem which comes as a hurdle while scaling it up is that we don't have any document of the exiting best practices. It reflects poor documentation of best practices.
- As mentioned above also, there huge gap and disaggregation of data at all three levels.
- One problem which always the district level official faces is there is always get less time to prepare budget envelope.
- Though District Planning and Monitoring Unit (DPMU) are established but they are not pro-active.
- "Panchayat System" is always taken as "Implementing and Developing Unit" rather than "Planning and Administrative Unit".
- Untied funds should be increased.
- By following the manual, state should devolve the 3F's – Funds, Functions and Functionaries.
- Capacity building of government, through institution is very important and steps should be taken to scale up the best practices.

Planning in India, with lakhs of villages, continued to be largely centralized till 1992 when constitutional provisions were made for district and village level decision making - 73rd and 74th amendments - though much philosophical thinking had gone, from the very beginning of the planning era, in making planning decisions for, and by, the common man in villages and towns, a reality. "The last 10 years have been more about hurdles than achievements. But the few successes reveal the tremendous possibilities", says George Mathew of the Institute of Social Sciences in Delhi (Times News Network - November 11, 2002). Convergence at higher level is as important as at lower levels. And importantly integration of elected and selected members is required, and can be achieved by behavioral change. Our system is very much over structure and underpowered. Decentralization is happening more in terms of political powers.

A rational choice between the two modes of planning - the decentralized and centralized is obvious. Forces of decentralized planning have to be encouraged, vigorously pursued and sustained to enable it to strike deep roots in the planning process.

5 Annexure

Annexure 1 - Web Analytic of NRCDDP Knowledge Repository Website

Monthly Statistics for November 2012

Total Hits	18637
Total Files	10737
Total Pages	2516
Total Visits	632
Total KBytes	773746
Total Unique Sites	538
Total Unique URLs	277
Total Unique Referrers	195
Total Unique User Agents	254

Monthly Statistics for October 2012

Total Hits	21248
Total Files	6527
Total Pages	3652
Total Visits	157
Total KBytes	414295
Total Unique Sites	75
Total Unique URLs	242
Total Unique Referrers	132
Total Unique User Agents	49

Annexure 2 - Picture of Capacity Building

