

GUIDELINES

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1. India has a long history and tradition of local governance which has survived numerous social and political churnings since the Vedic and even earlier times. Panchayats in ancient India were a group of village elders, who worked as an interface between community and the State. They used to resolve local disputes and problems to uphold community's interest. 'Panch Parameswar' has in Indian psyche an extremely respectable connotation that needs to evolve today, as per the needs of the time. Mahatma Gandhi, envisioned villages as republics and advocated that true democracy should be worked from below by the people of every village and not by a few men sitting at the Centre. The paradigm of "Gramoday Se Bharat Uday" also embodies the Gandhian concept of the village being in the centre as the live nucleus and radiating positive impulses across the circles around it. Thus, Panchayats are no longer the third tier or the last point. They constitute the basis.
- 1.2. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment mandated the three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to function as units of local self-government. However, the framework for formal extension of democracy to grass root levels through Constitutional Amendment has not been sufficient to improve local governance. Understandably, it has not been able to yield desirable developmental impact in majority of the States. Low level of devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to Panchayats by the States, low level of capacity at various levels, and several other factors have worked as impediments for ensuring good governance and effective service delivery through Panchayats.
- 1.3. Panchayati Raj is considered as institutional expression of grass roots democracy and governance in India. Good governance at the Panchayat level calls for
 - More transparency in processes and procedures
 - Responsiveness of Panchayats to the needs and aspirations of the most marginalised/deprived sections of the society
 - Innovative use of technology to take Panchayats to next level of twenty first century. It includes digitisation of Panchayat processes for reaching out to the most marginalised/deprived sections of the society and improve quality of their lives and reducing digital divide.
 - Creation of space for people's participation to address social sector issues like health, sanitation, education, promoting the cause of girl child, SC/ST welfare, welfare of the persons with disabilities and the aged etc.
- 1.4. Recent years have seen a significant increase in public expenditure through Panchayats. The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) award has created an enormous opportunity

for responsive local governance at the cutting edge institutional level of the Gram Panchayats (GPs) by assuring huge fiscal transfers to GPs (Rs.2,00, 292.2 crore) during the period 2015-2020. Guidelines for preparation of integrated development plans by GPs converging FFC grants, MGNREGS and other available resources have been issued by the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj. GPs across the States have initiated the process of preparing participatory local development plans. It is crucial that these plans go beyond infrastructure, cover areas like poverty reduction, address social issues and needs of vulnerable groups and include both resource based and no cost interventions. These plans should also be in sync with attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Convergence of schemes at the Panchayat level is also critical to address deprivations at the last mile, and to achieve inclusive growth through making significant impact in sanitation, drought proofing, improving child sex ratio, financial inclusion, skill development etc.

- 1.5. However, in most States, GPs which hardly had any executive or financial powers till now and lack both human resources and capacity, would not be in a position to deliver on their Constitutional mandate. There is now a compelling need for more concerted and robust processes for reforming governance at the Panchayat level. It is possible by making it more participatory yet technology and performance driven and outcome oriented. Results based Panchayat governance calls for change of paradigm in functioning of Panchayats, tectonic shift in capacity building & training strategies, innovations in use of technology for responsive service delivery and enhanced citizens' engagement in decision making for more transparency and accountability.
- 1.6. It is in this context, the **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** is proposed. The scheme should enable the Panchayats to prepare participatory plans and efficiently utilise available resources. This will enable Panchayats to become more responsive towards citizens' needs and local citizens to become partners in local development processes. E-enablement of activities like accounting, record keeping, creation of asset directory, data base management, development of Panchayats' website for information dissemination etc. need to be expedited for making overall functioning of Panchayats more efficient and transparent. Geo spatial pace technology would be introduced for local level planning, implementation and monitoring of schemes. Focus would be on innovative use of ICT tools for delivery of services like provision of certificates, licenses, tax collection etc. SATCOM, Terrestrial communication network for distance learning and e-modules on thematic areas and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) would be used to expand coverage of training of PRI Elected Representatives (ERs). Technology would be utilised as important vehicle for increasing reach of capacity building, delivery of services, tracking development outcomes, reducing digital divide and ensuring transparency and accountability.
- 1.7. RGSA would also invest in building local leadership capacities and promoting aspirational Panchayats by enabling them to find innovative, community driven,

sustainable solutions to local problems and become '**thematic beacons**' like drought free, environment friendly, open defecation free, dowry/social evils/crime free and women & child friendly Panchayats. A mix of modern and traditional mediums would be used for IEC in campaign mode so that people become aware of and get benefits out of various government schemes. Strengthening Gram Sabhas and community participation would be at the core of the programme to ensure inclusion of the excluded and increase outreach and impact of poverty reduction, financial inclusion and social welfare programmes. However, Focus would be shifted from developing 'beneficiaries' and 'informed citizens' to 'development partners' and 'engaged citizens'. RGSA would work towards taking Panchayats forward and transforming them in to true foundation for development of the nation following the paradigm of 'Gramoday se Bharat Uday'.

2. OBJECTIVES OF RGSA

The key objectives of RGSA are:-

- 2.1. Enhance capabilities of Panchayats for good, inclusive local governance with special emphasis on participatory local planning and development, democratic decision-making and 360 degree transparency and accountability.
- 2.2. Strengthen Gram Sabhas as effective institutions with social inclusion of all citizens particularly the disadvantaged groups, generating deliberations on development and articulating needs for responsive governance.
- 2.3. Promote e-governance, Geospatial Technology and other technology driven solutions at the Panchayat level to attain administrative efficiency, improve service delivery, tracking progress and ensure accountability.
- 2.4. Support innovations in local governance through capacity building, harnessing innovative local solutions and nurturing beacons.
- 2.5. Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996
- 2.6. Enable convergence of institutions, resources and services at the level of the Panchayats to promote holistic and inclusive development.
- 2.7. Facilitate meaningful functioning of Constitutional institutions related to Panchayati Raj, namely, State Election Commission (SEC), State Finance Commission (SFC) and District Planning Committee (DPC).

- 2.8. Facilitate conduct of research particularly action research and studies on matters relevant to the functioning of Panchayats.
- 2.9. Strengthen/create institutions for capacity building at the national, state, district and block levels for capability building and enable them to achieve adequate quality standards in infrastructure, facilities, human resources and services.
- 2.10. Promote a network of institutions of excellence to support capacity building for Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- 2.11. Plan and support activities related to realization of the mandate of Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

3. COVERAGE

RGSA will extend to all States and Union Territories of the country. For the purpose of these guidelines, wherever 'Panchayats' are mentioned, these will include institutions of rural local governance in areas where Panchayats do not exist in non-Part IX areas.

4. SCHEME MODALITIES

4.1 Conditions to be met for accessing funds

The essential conditions to be fulfilled by States and Union Territories to access RGSA funds are:-

- 4.1.1 Regular conduct of elections for Panchayats under the superintendence and control of the State Election Commission.
- 4.1.2 In the non-Part IX areas, functionality of democratic institutions of local governance.
- 4.1.3 Preparation, within one year, of a detailed roadmap for institutionalisation of Gram Panchayat Development Planning processes in the State/UT including Finalisation of State Criteria for distribution of the Performance Grant under the FFC award and institution of reporting mechanisms.
- 4.1.4 Preparation of a detailed State Capacity Building Plan for PRIs.
- 4.1.5 Participation in the annual Devolution Study of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR).
- 4.1.6 The Empowered Committee may defer the timelines in respect of 4.1.3 to 4.1.5 if valid reasons are found to be given.

4.1.7 Though RGSA is a Central Sector scheme, States are expected to have a matching scheme for capability building according to defined Guidelines for an amount at least equivalent to 40% of the two-thirds of the RGSA support (in the case of North-Eastern and special category States, it should one-ninth of the RGSA support).

4.1.8 States/UTs that do not fulfil the above essential conditions would not be eligible for funds under RGSA.

4.2 Annual Plans under RGSA

4.2.1 States have to prepare detailed Annual Plans in accordance with the Guidelines and submit them to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj before end February of the previous year. The Annual Plans will have to be developed by the State following a process which may include extensive consultation with representatives of Panchayats including their officials. States may prepare a single Plan covering capacity building activities to be funded out of State's own contribution/share as well as resources sought under RGSA while presenting it to the Ministry. While the detailed proposal for central funding under RGSA would have to be prepared, the State may also indicate the budget lines and broad areas of expenditure to be incurred under the 40% contribution of the State (10% for NE States). Release of Central funds will be made on the basis of the Central components approved under State Annual Plans.

4.2.2 While appraising the Plan, the MoPR will examine the following areas:-

4.2.2.1 Action taken by the State for strengthening financial management with specific focus on SFC recommendations. This would include:

- Use of ICT based solutions/e-applications to improve delivery of basic services
- Use of ICT based solutions/e-applications to strengthen processes and ease of Panchayats office management including accounting, record keeping, financial reporting etc. to ensure transparency and accountability in functioning of Panchayats
- Strengthening financial base of Panchayats by assigning appropriate powers to collect taxes, fees, etc.
- Provision of untied funds to Panchayats and timely release of SFC and Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants.
- Strengthening systems of local budgeting, financial reporting and audit.
- Development and implementation of performance criteria for availing Performance Grants under FFC.

4.2.2.2 Action for strengthening e-governance in Panchayats to improve ease of the day to day functioning and office management of Panchayats, digitization of database & activities, and improve service delivery through e-applications. Technical support arrangements to strengthen e-enablement of Panchayats would also be reviewed.

4.2.2.3 Strengthening participatory planning and effective implementation of such plans to address deprivation of the disadvantaged sections. Action by the State to strengthen the framework for bottom-up grassroots planning converging all resources over which Gram Panchayats have command, including strengthening of the Gram Sabhas, and adoption of Geo spatial technology to support planning. This would include the nature of augmentation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Guidelines of the State and the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms for supporting GPDP. Specifically this would include review of

- Institutional mechanisms to support grass roots planning process at the state , district and sub district levels
- Use for Geo spatial and e-application based solutions in planning, tracking physical progress of plan implementation and reporting process to bring about accuracy and transparency
- Integration with Plan Plus, or State's own IT platform/application for capturing decentralized planning
- Nature of supplementary guidelines issued by the States on GPDP
- Nature and quality of state resource pool to support planning
- Modalities of convergence with ongoing centrally and state sponsored schemes and sectors
- Arrangements for technical sanction of the approved plans/projects
- Institutional arrangement for implementation of projects addressing bottlenecks
- Monitoring arrangements to review and track usage of resources and development outcomes

4.2.2.4 Action by the State to improve the nature, quality, usage pattern and impact of utilisation of the FFC basic grant to Gram Panchayats.

4.2.2.5 Action for putting in place a system of MIS and performance assessment of Panchayats including 'on watch' Panchayats.

4.2.2.6 The annual plans will provide the targets and milestones for the year, details of activities to be undertaken under each component, along with estimated budget.

4.2.3 States may if required, prepare supplementary plans for assistance on the basis of new or emerging needs that had not been accounted for in the approved Annual plan.

4.2.4 If activities planned in a particular year are not completed in that year, these may be 'carried over' in the next year's plan.

4.2.5 RGPSA will be subsumed in the new RGSA. The activities of RGPSA regarding which carry over has already been approved by the CEC as committed liability will be carried

forward in the RGSA plans. The carry forward will not include those activities under RGPSA which were delinked from Central Assistance in the wake of the FFC award viz.

- Administrative and Technical support to Gram Panchayats
- Support for construction and maintenance of Panchayat buildings
- Support for procurement of computers
- Support for infrastructure and equipment to SECs
- Support for Panchayats with low resource base

(This restriction will not be applicable to UTs, Panchayats in hilly areas and local institutions in non-Part IX areas that are not covered by the FFC award.)

4.3 National Programme Management Unit

A National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) will be set up at the National level for overall management, monitoring of RGSA and to provide professional and technical support to States/UTs and MoPR. The NPMU will have experts from relevant disciplines, and MoPR may also hire short term consultants and consulting organizations for technical support. The illustrative list of programmes and technical services to be provided by the NPMU is given below:-

- a. Overall management of RGSA
- b. Development and maintenance of MIS for tracking progress
- c. Analysis of State wise progress under RGSA and preparation of reports
- d. Support to States for preparation of capacity building plans and roadmaps on issues related to strengthening Panchayats
- e. Appraisal of State Plans under RGSA
- f. Periodic review with the States on Progress made under RGSA
- g. Periodic review with the Centre of Panchayati Raj/School of Local Governance of NIRD & PR regarding progress made under technical support to States for capacity building & training
- h. Development of performance assessment criteria for Panchayats
- i. Assessment of State reports on performance of Panchayats and identification of systemic issues
- j. Facilitate action research, studies and assessments on issues related to Panchayat strengthening
- k. Facilitation of the GPDP processes in the States
- l. Identification and dissemination of good practices
- m. Advocacy with States for amendment of laws and rules as per Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996

- n. Conduct of national workshops on various Panchayat related issues for promotion of cross-State learning
- o. zOther areas as identified from time to time

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

4.4 National level IEC activities

Access to information is critical to bridge knowledge gaps and initiate behavioural change. Dissemination of information through effective communication strategy can be instrumental in enhancing chances of development initiatives to make desirable impact. A comprehensive development communication strategy at the national level would be developed to make Panchayats more people centric and to motivate people and strengthen Gram Sabha to participate in local development and change processes so as to influence decisions that affect their lives. The strategy would include:

- Annual Conclave of PRI Elected Representatives and other key stakeholders to discuss issues of national interest and role of PRIs, knowledge-experience sharing etc.
- Intensive Campaign during National Panchayati Raj Day/week and sustained campaign in line with Gramoday-se-Bharat Uday Abhiyan
- Social media to increase outreach
- Print and electronic media
- Communication materials and audio-visual dissemination
- Traditional local mediums based on local culture and traditions
- Disseminating and show-casing innovations and good practices by Panchayats
- Other activities as may be deemed required

Focus of IEC will be on issues of national priorities for governance and delivery, especially in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and good governance by Panchayats.

Up to 1.5% of the RGSA annual allocation may be approved for national level IEC activities.

4.5 National Plan of Technical Assistance (NPTA)

- 4.5.1 National Plan of Technical Assistance may be approved every year up to 10% of the annual allocation. The components may be identified in consultation with the States in a special workshop to be held in the last quarter of every preceding year. The illustrative list of components of NPTA is given below:

4.5.1.1 Technical support to States

In order to facilitate the process for more technology driven and outcome oriented yet participatory governance at the Panchayat level through RGSA, States will require technical support. The types of technical support activities would inter alia include:

- i) E-enablement of Panchayats through use of applied technologies for local development, service delivery and good governance
- ii) Developing and operationalising governance systems including e-governance across States with State-specific features, as required
- iii) Support States for identification of thrust areas of development schemes for effective programme implementation and better development outcomes
- iv) Development of SATCOM and Terrestrial communication network for extending training coverage
- v) Designing of mobile apps for training and communication of instructions to PRIs
- vi) Designing and operationalization of open online training courses
- vii) Creation and development of resource pool at various levels to facilitate improvement in quality of training capability in States and collaboration with academic and research institutions for widening and institutionalising the national resource pool for strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions
- viii) Developing methodologies and techniques relevant for local governance with special reference to planning, implementation, monitoring, accountability, etc.
- ix) Promoting convergence across relevant sectors and schemes in partnership with the respective Ministry/Department at the national level
- x) Sectoral schemes that require action on the part of PRIs, suffer from inadequate capacity building and handholding of both elected representatives as well as grassroots functionaries of the sector. Trainings for Sectoral schemes usually focus more on technical content rather than the roles and action points for Panchayats. Emphasis would be given on convergence with other Ministries to develop capacities of trainers of Central and State sectoral programmes to bridge the gap between thematic technical content and practical implementation of those by Panchayats
- xi) Identification and sourcing and dissemination of national and international best practices in local governance, innovation in service delivery, civic engagement in local development, etc.
- xii) Developing common standards for training institutions in respect of infrastructure, facilities, and services

- xiii) Promoting national level training networks of institutions of excellence with respect to Panchayati Raj
- xiv) Handholding of SIRDs to develop into Mentor Training Institutions by accessing state of the art knowledge on competencies for capacity building
- xv) Facilitation of faculty improvement programmes for training institutions of the State and lower levels including tailor-made courses to be conducted in reputed institutions of excellence
- xvi) Developing skills qualifications framework for different categories of trainers and facilitating their certification through NIRD&PR or any other national skill development & certification institution
- xvii) Developing e-Knowledge Repository on Panchayati Raj
- xviii) Developing training modules on general themes which can later be contextualized and adapted by the States
- xix) Preparation of model manuals such as accounts manuals, works manuals, procurement manuals etc.
- xx) Developing course material for TOTs, transacting TOTs for Master trainers and overhauling existing trainers' training for improved capacitation
- xxi) Orientation of State training teams on identified issues and themes such as planning, e-enablement, techniques of capacity building, gender issues, Gram Sabha mobilization, accounts, etc.
- xxii) Facilitating cross learning across States, with particular reference to e-governance and use of technology for improved service delivery, GPDP and SDGs
- xxiii) Assessment of the administrative and technical support requirement of PRIs
- xxiv) Promotion of research and studies to improve the body of knowledge on various aspects of local governance

4.5.1.2 Support to NIRD & PR

Support will be provided to the Centre of Panchayati Raj/School of Local Governance of NIRD&PR on the basis of mutually agreed Annual Action Plan. The main purpose of the assistance is to build the capability of NIRD&PR to function as a "Hub of innovations and knowledge management & Centre of excellence in capacity building of PRIs". Centre of Panchayati Raj/School of Local Governance of NIRD&PR would

execute and oversee activities under NPTA that pertain to knowledge management and improvement in quality and outreach of training. Its functions would include:

- Strengthening capacity of States and concerned resource persons [SIRDs, State and District Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRC/DPRC), other organisations concerned] through training and professional development courses).
- Identification and development of 'Critical pool of resource persons' at various levels of PRIs and local governance
- Developing skills qualifications framework for different categories of trainers and facilitating their certification
- Horizontal networking with other national and international organizations to establish collaborations for quality training and faculty development
- Review curriculum and training materials of SIRDs and other state level training centres and suggests modifications for quality improvement
- Develop framework for training needs assessment of PRIs
- Development and conduct of e-modules and online courses
- Preparation of thematic modules for PRIs with focus on roles of PRIs in addressing those sectoral issues and periodic updating of such modules
- Support to States for Preparation of toolkits and manuals for training of PRIs
- Develop tools to assess performance of SIRDs/state training institutions /resource institutions
- Act as 'Think Tank' to ensure that Panchayati Raj and local governance effectively figure in policy discussions at various levels of policy making, e.g. by developing policy briefs, organising national/international conferences
- Develop curriculum and conduct certificate programmes on local governance/leadership development/ICT applications etc. for PRI functionaries
- Develop curriculum and design diploma/certificate programmes on decentralization, local governance etc. for professionals
- Development of e-knowledge repository , a single window for information on Panchayati Raj and local governance, related best practices, innovations and lessons learnt
- Undertake research and action research on local governance & Panchayati Raj, draw and document policy lessons from research findings and advice Ministry/states to make appropriate changes
- Policy prescription for implementing Panchayati Raj and local governance reforms
- Review and analysis of policies/schemes of Ministries/departments and providing recommendations

Activities of the School of Local Governance in NIRD&PR would primarily focus on areas described above in point “v, vi, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xix, xx and xxi under the Section 4.5.1.1. (Technical Support to States) of National Plan for Technical Assistance.

4.5.1.3 Support for innovation

Promotion of innovation by government and reputed non-government resource institutions and promote action research for incubating and developing models of good governance and results based programme delivery through Panchayats will be undertaken. 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 up subsequently.

Funds will be provided up to Rs.10 crores per annum for specific projects that take up innovative activities leading to strengthening the capability of PRIs in governance and service delivery. The incentive for innovation may also be provided as seed money (start-up costs) at the beginning of the initiative and given in phases depending on performance, and will be made available against specific project proposals. SIRDs would also be considered for taking up innovative activities and incentivised for meeting technical support costs for innovation. Suggestive areas for innovation could be as following:

- Processes and systems that streamline or impact Panchayat led governance
- Local planning and civic engagement in planning, community based monitoring and implementation
- Innovation in use of technology to deliver local solutions
- Attainment of tangible outcomes in civic services, disaster mitigation and climate resilience, livelihood promotion, SDGs
- Increasing Panchayats’ own source revenue
- Innovative methodologies of capacity building and knowledge management and communication
- Initiatives to strengthen transparency, accountability, grievance redressal etc.

Projects for innovative activities will be approved by the Empowered Committee of RGSA.

4.5.1.4 Performance Assessment and Incentivisation

An important focus of institutional development of Panchayats would be feedback on their functioning and support to processes of democratic and accountable functioning. Strengthening the States’ institutional capability for timely and accurate reporting and monitoring of the performance of the various tiers of Panchayats in the areas of planning, governance, service delivery and inclusion would be a priority.

These assessment exercises initiated by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the States will be continued and further refined.

4.5.1.5 Collaboration with Resource Institutions under the NPTA

RGSA will encourage collaboration with resource institutions and NGOs. 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, MoPR will build networks with resource institutions and academia. MoPR will play a supportive role in locating expert institutions and taking their assistance for cross-State learnings etc.

4.5.1.6 Planning and Monitoring

- Assessment of achievement of the States against listed targets will be done as part of the appraisal process for State Plans.
- MIS to capture the processes of project formulation, appraisal, and sanction on the one hand, and to capture the progress of implementation, especially in respect of capacity building for GPDP and for SDGs, on the other will be developed and used as process and progress monitoring tool.
- Analysis of data pertaining to Panchayat finances will be undertaken to assess the robustness of systems for financial management including revenue augmentation by Panchayats, and tracking the nature of flows of Panchayat resources into service delivery.

4.5.2 The National Plan of Technical Assistance will be prepared and updated on annual basis and approved by the CEC of RGSA.

4.5.3 The National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) and Centre of Panchayati Raj/School of Local Governance of NIRD&PR will provide technical and analytical support for the activities envisaged under NPTA.

5 FUNDING PATTERN AND NORMS

5.1. RGSA is a Central Sector Scheme. Funds will be released on the basis of State Plans under RGSA as 100% assistance. However States will be required to provide additional funds for capacity building equivalent to two-thirds of the RGSA assistance. The State may determine the purpose and norms for utilization of the contribution from the State within the broad area of capability development of Panchayati Raj Institutions. For the North Eastern and special Category States, the contribution of the State will be 10% of the total. There has to be a single plan of action for the State and Central components.

- 5.2. Up to 10% of RGSA fund can be utilized for National Plan for Technical Assistance and 1.5% for national level IEC activities.
- 5.3. Up to 1.5% of the RGSA annual allocation may be approved for national level IEC activities.
- 5.4. Plans of Union Territories would be fully funded. The Empowered Committee would decide on the norms to be adopted for providing funds to the UTs on an annual basis.
- 5.5. 70% of the funds available for States would be allocated on the basis of the rural population of the State, 15% on the basis of regional backwardness and 15% on the basis of good performance as reflected in the utilization certificates.
- 5.6. Up to 6% of the approved project could be spent by State/UT on management costs.
- 5.7. Up to 5% of the funds of the approved plan may be used by State/UT for IEC.
- 5.8. Unit costs/expenditure ceilings for various activities are given at **Annexure-2**. For other activities, the Empowered Committee of RGSA would be competent to approve the unit costs generally or specifically. Unit costs would be automatically enhanced every year on the basis of All India Consumer Price Index Number for Industrial Workers suitably rounded off to a higher amount. For States of the North-East and the Hilly states, up to 25% increase of unit costs would be allowed.
- 5.9. Salaries and expenditures normally funded by the States cannot be charged to RGSA.
- 5.10. For Union Territories, non-Part IX areas and Gram Panchayats of the special category States in hilly areas, funding would be available for minimum administration and technical support, for procurement of computers and for construction of Gram Panchayat offices in convergence with MGNREGS.
- 5.11. The EC of RGSA will be fully competent to decide the quantum of funds to be provided to each State/UT under supplementary plans, subject to budget availability.
- 5.12. Continuing activities already approved under RGPSA in 2015-16 may be carried forward into RGSA.

6. ACTIVITIES TO BE INCLUDED IN STATE PLANS

States are expected to prepare plans for central funding to undertake activities as per their requirements/priorities, from a menu of activities permitted in the Scheme. The nature of activities proposed under the contribution of the State and the cost norms thereof may be determined by the State.

6.1 Capacity Building and Training :

6.1.1 In order to ensure improved people centric governance, responsive service delivery by Panchayats, and attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, leadership capabilities of Elected Representatives and functional competencies of functionaries and awareness level of rural masses need to be enhanced by many folds. This would require massive overhauling of existing traditional ways of capacity building and training strategies used by the States. For providing training to such large quantities of ERs, functionaries etc. without compromising the quality, States need to consider:

- Use of technology like SATCOM connecting all the training centres, districts and blocks through Satellite Interactive Terminals (SITs) or Receive Only Terminals (ROT)s, E-modules, open online courses, use of mobile apps etc. to take training beyond class room settings and ensure universal coverage in training and provision of knowledge inputs to PRIs
- For drastic increase in resource pool of trainers for capacity building at the State, district and block level, representation of trainers from other line departments should also be ensured to cater to the need of thematic trainings
- Brining in innovative methodologies of delivering training like hands-on practical training or immersion site based /on-site training to increase knowledge retention
- Encouraging Panchayats to become aspirational, mentoring and handholding support to Panchayats for innovative initiatives and incentivisation for attainment of desired development outcomes
- Designing targeted capacity building interventions for of women ERs and ERs from disadvantaged groups like SCs and STs
- Peer learning through developing and nurturing beacon panchayats as Panchayat learning centres

6.1.2 In order to address the broad area of issues that comes under the purview of Panchayats, several new but relevant thematic issues need to be included in the Panchayats training curriculum. An illustrative list of topics to be covered in the trainings is given below:

- Basic orientation of ERs and Functionaries
- Refresher trainings of ERs and Functionaries
- Special trainings for EWRs, and ERs amongst SCs and STs
- Training for preparation of participatory Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP)
- Panchayat finances
 - Own Source Revenue Generation
 - Budgeting and Accounting
 - Record keeping
 - Certification
 - Regulatory functions
- **E governance**
 - GIS
 - E-applications-Panchayat Enterprise Suit (PES) and use by PRIs
 - Basic computer orientation including use of web
 - E enabled service delivery
 - Social media
- Panchayat Office and accountability
 - Office management
 - Grievance redressal
 - transparency and accountability mechanisms
 - Audit including social audit
 - Panchayats and community participation
 - Leadership and Public Speaking
 - the legal framework
 - Gram Sabha
- Livelihood sector trainings for SDGs (illustrative)
 - Agriculture
 - Natural Resource Management (Water recharging, drought proofing, social forestry etc.)
 - Animal Husbandry
 - Fisheries
 - Skill Development
 - Micro enterprises
 - Markets and livelihood infrastructure
- Service delivery
 - Civic amenities
 - Basic services
 - Licenses, permits etc.
- Social sector trainings for SDGs (illustrative)

- Health
 - Nutrition
 - Sanitation
 - Education
 - Gender issues and women’s empowerment
 - Child protection and development
 - Social Justice for vulnerable categories
 - Social justice for persons with disabilities
 - Social Justice for the aged
 - Welfare of SC and ST categories
 - Social Security
 - Food security
- Disaster mitigation and climate resilience
 - Outcome based sectoral trainings programmes like training for child friendly/Open defecation free/malnutrition free/polio free/school drop-out free/child marriage free/ dowry free/ crime free/ farmer friendly/energy efficient/digital Gram Panchayats may be designed by the State, as per the prioritised areas.
 - Sectoral issues that have a bearing on local development (illustrative)
 - Labour, Migration, Trafficking
 - Disaster management
 - Panchayats and poverty reduction
 - Panchayats and financial inclusion
 - Scheme based training: Convergence of various schemes at the Panchayat level would be necessary for holistic planning and delivery of services. Training on relevant schemes and roles of Panchayats in those schemes need to be transacted.

The above list is only indicative and training and capacity building would be expected to cover upcoming local priorities and programmes, enable authoritative and proactive engagement by PRIs, and address the capacity building needs of all persons associated with Panchayati Raj, from trainers and experts to ERs, functionaries and community structures.

6.1.3 The stakeholders for training

Need for good governance would be met through building capacities of all the stakeholders at all levels in PRIs, line departments, expert agencies etc. The stakeholders for training would include among others:

- elected heads and elected representatives

- officials of Panchayats including accountants and data entry operators
- frontline workers like ASHA, Anganwadi worker, ANM, etc.
- officials supporting activities of Panchayats
- members of DPC
- Standing committees
- members of Functional Committees
- management committees of institutions and programmes
- Community Resource Persons
- Participatory planning teams and working groups
- Technical support groups for e-governance
- members of support systems
- staff of SEC, SFC, DPC and Social Audit Units
- members of DPC
- Resource Persons
- persons of academic and research institutions directly involved in supporting Panchayats
- leaders and functionaries of community based organizations working in partnership with Panchayats

6.1.4 Mentoring and handholding support

One or two rounds of formal institutional training would not be sufficient to equip ERs and functionaries of Panchayats to become capacitated. ERs and functionaries would need continuous mentoring or handholding support in order to enhance their functional competencies to deliver their functions. In order to develop capabilities of Panchayats for implementation of innovative plans and activities or for developing model panchayats, institutional arrangements may be undertaken by the States to engage experienced resource persons or mentoring teams, reputed NGOs and other expert agencies of recognised integrity for providing handholding support to Panchayats. Identified agencies for handholding support could be trained and oriented by NIRD&PR.

6.1.5 Other Capacity building support

Other support for capacity building to be provided under RGSA will include

- Development and supply of training material and Open Online Courses
- Development of manuals for training including video training modules and e-modules on thematic areas
- Training needs assessments
- Impact assessment/evaluation of training
- Exposure visits both within the State and to panchayats in other States. Exposure visit to other States may be organised for well performing Panchayats in order to encourage them for their performance.

6.1.6 In non-Part IX areas (including Schedule VI areas), local institutions that take on the role of panchayats for local governance such as village councils and the autonomous district councils will also be supported for capacity building through training and exposure visits.

6.2 E-Governance

6.2.1 E-Enablement of PRIs to avail of the opportunities provided by rapidly changing technology from the internet and cloud to mobile applications and satellite communication would help modernize and increase citizen centric service delivery and governance in Panchayats. In order to promote ICT based solutions and e-Governance at the Panchayat level, RGSA will provide support to States to facilitate e-enablement of Panchayats and to build capacities of ERs and Panchayat functionaries. States can propose activities that would support/improve the following areas:

“ Computerised/e-application based accounting, record keeping, asset mapping, data base management, development of website for information dissemination and transparency and accountability

“ Use of Geo spatial technology for local level planning, implementation and monitoring of physical progress

“ The Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) applications developed by NIC under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project will form the bedrock of e-enablement of Panchayats to increase their effectiveness for governance and service delivery. Where State led initiatives for e-governance have been undertaken, these will be supported and aligned with the PES. The management and troubleshooting for the PES applications requires a dedicated technical support group at both the State and district levels, which will be supported under RGSA.

“ Development of State specific software applications for PRIs over and above the PES

“ Innovative use of ICT tools for delivery of services (certificates, licenses, tax collection etc.)

“ Management of e-knowledge repository [India Panchayat Knowledge Portal (IPKP)]- dedicated knowledge repository for Panchayats

6.2.2 Support for purchase of computers and accessories and internet connectivity (recurring expenses only) will only be extended to non-Part areas and UTs, as per indicated cost norms.

6.2.3 Data Entry Support: Additional provisioning of data entry operators at the district level with either the DPRC or the e-governance technical support groups can be supported under RGSA. This could be for specific districts so that data updation could be covered in all districts in a phased manner- over a period of 2-3 years.

6.2.4 The focus of e-enablement would be to not only consolidate and centralize data sets and information, but allow for greater transparency of transactions at local level and for disaggregated use of information for local planning, implementation and good

governance at the panchayat level. States would be expected to make all efforts to ensure appropriate CB&T for e-enablement of Panchayats to deliver on these fronts.

6.3 Information, Education, Communication (IEC)

6.3.1 States will be expected to develop a comprehensive development communication strategy to undertake IEC activities in campaign mode. The communication strategy should detail out IEC activities to be taken up at various levels (State, district, block and village). This will help in generating enabling environment for citizen centric governance at the Panchayat level and raise awareness among all stakeholders on socio-economic issues which require local action. Specifically concerted communication campaigns for GPDP, SDGs etc. will be supported.

6.3.2 IEC activities to be funded would include:

- Special Annual IEC drive in campaign mode in line with Gramoday-se-Bharat Uday Abhiyan or Panchayat week celebration across the State with participation of all the stakeholders. This campaign would generate momentum for enabling faster dissemination of key information and awareness generation. Incentives would be provided to the States that produce best outcomes through such intensive IEC campaigns.
- Showcasing good practices and innovations by Panchayats
- Use of social media, mobile apps, audio visual media, community radio
- Special programmes/features in television channels
- Cultural activities, exhibitions, mobile vans to disseminate information about Panchayats and benefits of relevant Government schemes or issues
- Communication materials including printing and publication

6.4 Support to Beacon Panchayats

One of the most meaningful experiential learnings regarding PRIs would be through peer learning and understanding of the processes of best practices. Since the policy and administrative environment of Panchayats varies widely across States and regions, the greatest scope for replication or adoption is when the best practice is closer to home. It is therefore important to nurture specific beacon Panchayats that are spread out across the State where good practices are institutionalized and which can become immersion sites for exposure and learning. These could be about general governance and service delivery, or models of excellence in specific thematic areas of panchayat governance like OSR generation, social sector interventions etc.

For this purpose, States would develop one beacon GP per block.

Handholding support for 3 to 5 years would be provided to such Beacons for becoming Immersion sites for learning by other panchayats in the block/district. Some examples of Model or thematic beacon GPs can be a Digital GP/Open defecation free GP/Child friendly GP/malnutrition free GP/school dropout free GP/dowry free GP/crime free GP/hunger free GP/ energy efficient GP, farmer friendly GP etc.

These GPs would be supported intensely for:

- GPDP based training

- Enhanced community engagement
- Digitization of activities
- Identification of SDGs and setting outcome targets
- Capability development for delivering on the SDG targets including
 - Convergence with sectoral schemes both centrally sponsored and state driven
 - Execution of costless/low cost projects pertaining to SDGs
 - Institution of effective local governance systems, including e governance solutions
 - Community based monitoring and review
 - Access to CSR interventions
- Process Documentation and material development on best practices

The mentoring institutions/SIRD and coordinating Resource Persons may also be incentivized on the basis of achievement of outcome targets.

The human resources generated out of this intense facilitation exercise are to be absorbed into the training resource pool of the State. States will organize exposure visits to the beacon panchayats as and when they evolve, along with peer interactions and consultations.

6.5 Support for Innovations

6.5.1 Innovative activities, processes, projects or action research by government and reputed non-government organizations, resource institutions to promote and strengthen PRIs may be included in State plans. Promotion of innovation for incubating and developing models of good governance and results based programme delivery through Panchayats will be undertaken under this. Financial assistance in the form of viable gap funding may be provided, if necessary, for undertaking innovative activities at the Panchayat level like:

- Innovation in use of technology to deliver local solutions
- Innovative methodologies of capacity building
- Increasing Panchayats own source revenue
- Strengthening transparency & accountability
- Enhancing impact of panchayat led governance in respect of SDGs etc.

6.5.2 These may be undertaken through government or reputed NGOs and other technical institutions with recognised integrity.

6.5.3 The Ministry may also directly support innovations on the basis of concrete proposals.

6.5.4 The decision on supporting innovations will be taken by the CEC of RGSA.

6.6 Institutional Capability for Training at State, District & Block levels

6.6.1 Standards for training institutions

- 6.6.1.1 The volume and breadth of training needs call for strong institutional capability in terms of built up infrastructure, training equipment and tools, as well as faculty, resource pools and coordination of cascading trainings and technology enabled trainings that can be transacted in volumes. The nature and extent of demand is particular to each State/UT and the requirement of institutional capability will have to be assessed on the basis of clear norms or standards. These standards have to be fixed and updated over time so that training capability is continually upgraded in accordance with the need of the time.
- 6.6.1.2 For supporting creation of infrastructure and facilities in the training institutions of the State, district and sub-district levels, Empowered Committee under RGSA would adopt norms on the basis of proper assessment by NIRD&PR and provide funding to attain the standards in a phased manner, with preference being given to the State, Regional and District levels.
- 6.6.1.3 Connectivity through STACOM: MoPR is partnering with Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to leverage SATCOM and Terrestrial communication networks to set up distance learning infrastructure in States to increase the outreach of trainings targeted at ERs and Panchayat functionaries. For this initiative, ISRO proposes to use the existing infrastructure under its EDUSAT programme and hence the bandwidth (though provided free) will be shared with concerned stakeholders. However, ISRO has assured that it will augment the bandwidth if the need arises, based on demand/usage by States.

Under this partnership, a studio will be set up at State level (preferably in the SIRD) and the interactive terminals are envisaged at District and block level, using both SATCOM and terrestrial networks. After State-specific discussions, a tri-partite agreement will be signed between MoPR, ISRO and concerned State Government w.r.t. SATCOM. MoPR will release funds to ISRO for a particular State only after the tri-partite agreement has been signed by all three parties.

The States are expected to clearly indicate in their RGSA plan how they plan to utilize the SATCOM network for capacity building, While MoPR will fund entire Capital expenditure and maintenance cost as agreed upon in the tri-partite agreement, the State Government will need to ensure optimal utilization of the infrastructure in capacity building of key stakeholders.

6.6.2 Trainer Development Programmes

Activities that can be undertaken by the States for development of trainers include:

- “ Development and operationalisation of State Resource Pool
- “ Training of trainers in their areas of expertise with Panchayati Raj perspective
- “ Networking with National/State level training institutions for developing panchayat specific technical trainings
- “ Training of trainers on development of e-modules, e-courses, use of technology in training

- “ Collaboration with other Government Departments for handholding panchayat level interventions in respect of flagship Centrally Sponsored Schemes in social and livelihood sectors
- “ Investment in development of trainer skills set-faculty/trainer improvement programmes

6.6.3 Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRCs and DPRCs)

6.6.3.1 Under RGSA, State Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRCs) may be established at State Institutes of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SIRDPRs) or any other State level institution. District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs) may be strengthened in existing institutions or new centres established, and sub district level resource centres may be established at the Block/Mandal or cluster level. The centres are expected to be focal points for conduct and coordination of training, research and analysis, documentation and communication. Priority would be for creation/upgradation of infrastructure and facilities at State and District level and, thereafter, at the Block/Tehsil level as per prescribed standards. Wherever ETCs exist, their upgradation to function as panchayat resource centres will also be supported. These centres would be responsible for developing State training networks with academic and research institutions.

6.6.3.2 SPRCs, DPRCs and other major training Institutions utilised for training of PRIs should be connected through SATCOM facilities

6.6.3.3 In order to be able to coordinate training, these centres would be provided technical human resource as per norms. Resource persons with domain expertise and Master trainers can be linked with the centres that should also serve as information and knowledge hubs on Panchayati Raj. An annual recurring grant to enable the smooth functioning of these centres would be provided, which would enable States to take people either on contract or through deputation, or to support pool of resource persons or trainers. The States may also opt for appointment of existing officials as Training Managers on additional charge at the District level on payment of special honorarium. The O&M costs for SPRCs and DPRCs will also be allowed within prescribed ceilings. These centres would also be responsible for monitoring the training and handholding support provided both by the resource teams and by empanelled Agencies.

6.6.4 Development of Mentor Institutions for Capacity Building

Peer learning and support is equally relevant for faculty development and institutional capability strengthening of training institutions. It is therefore necessary that institutes of training in Panchayati Raj/SIRDs with strong infrastructural and human resource capability are positioned to mentor and provide handholding support to other SIRDs and training institutes that are newly constituted or do not have the requisite resources. It will be the endeavour of the Scheme to convert some

of these mentor institutions/SIRDs into National Resource Organisations for Panchayati Raj related training. Action research and interventions for development of good governance models by these institutions will also be encouraged. Incentivisation to such training institutions would be provided, as per the indicated cost norms.

6.6.5 Studies and Research including Action Research

For the State to scientifically improve on the quality of capacitation of PRIs, it will need to have relevant and up to date information on various aspects of local governance. Therefore States will be supported for conduct of scoping studies and research on Panchayati Raj including

- Evaluation studies
- Studies related to administration and governance including performance measurement
- Studies on service delivery
- Studies on revenue raising
- Status studies at the local level – poverty, gender, environment, status of social groups, etc.
- Research including Action Research in areas like
 - Strengthening of Gram Sabhas and democratic local governance institutions in non-Part IX States
 - Operationalizing PESA Act
 - Developing local statistics
 - Action research for attainment of SDGs etc.

6.7 Panchayat Finances

A core function of States in local governance is the provisioning of financial resources to Panchayati Raj Institutions. This includes assignment of taxes, powers to raise revenues through taxation and other means like licenses and fees, and tied or untied fiscal transfers from the State. State Finance Commissions that are tasked with the responsibility of proposing the contours of financial devolution, are hampered by lack of information on financial resource generation and management by local governments and inability to track fund flows and requirements. This necessitates the creation of fiscal data analysis cells that can support the State Government and the State Finance Commissions in identifying and rectifying lacunae in information and analysing fiscal flows and transactions, so as to come up with concrete strategies for financial devolution and management.

Basic interventions to be undertaken by the States with funding support under the Scheme for capacitating panchayats in the management and augmentation of their finances would include:

- “ Technical and professional assistance to SFCs through creation of Fiscal data Cells to collect, collate and analyse fiscal and performance data of Panchayats and suggest corrective interventions
- “ Resource augmentation of Panchayats through capacity building, improved reporting and monitoring
- “ Operationalising Panchayat Performance Assessment Systems especially

“ Improvement of the budgeting, accounting and auditing systems of panchayats

6.8 Special Support for Gram Sabhas in PESA and NE Areas

Capability development for the PESA villages to undertake GPDP planning and implementation at the PESA village/Gram Sabha level will be supported. In PESA areas, District and Block level coordinators will be supported under the Scheme. Since the focus is on enabling the Gram Sabha to exercise the rights delegated under PESA, support for community mobilisers, Gram Sabha orientation and handholding support for conduct of Gram Sabha will also be provided under RGSA. Powers provided to Gram Sabha through provisions of PESA Act is to be ensured in all areas falling under PESA. In all areas where SHGs of Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana- NRLM are functional, priority is to be given to members of the SHGs/Voluntary Organisations in the selection of community mobiliser. State coordinators for PESA will be provided by NIRD&PR.

Similar activities may be undertaken to strengthen Gram Sabhas in NE areas where part IX does not apply, in terms of organization, attaining knowledge and assertion of rights.

6.9 Digitisation of Database of SEC

State Election Commissions would be provided financial assistance for development and updation of digital database of PRI election candidates and ERs that will feed into a national data base of the same. Proposals for this may be included in the Annual Plans of the State.

6.10 Special support for UTs, non-Part IX areas with elected local bodies at village level and GPs of special category States in hilly areas.

6.10.1 Administrative and technical Support to GPs

- Gram Panchayats/local bodies can avail of administrative and technical support to discharge their functions as per norms.
- Expenses of existing technical and administrative support mechanism in Panchayats cannot be transferred to RGSA.

6.10.2 Connectivity and Procurement of computers

- Support will be provided to GPs/local bodies without computers and internet connectivity for procuring computers and related furniture within the prescribed cost norms. One-time costs for connectivity will also be provided.

6.10.3 Construction of GP buildings

- Support may be availed for construction and repair of GP buildings as per cost norms and size of GP
- Construction may be undertaken in convergence with MGNREGS

6.11 Programme Management

To support the Panchayati Raj departments of the States, Programme Management Units at the State and District level may be set up for planning, implementation and monitoring of RGSA from within the 6% available for Programme management costs.

7. FUND FLOW

- 7.1 Funds for RGSA would be provided in two equal instalments. First instalment would be paid immediately after approval of the Annual Plan deducting unspent balance in excess of 20% of the previous year's release. The second instalment would be released after expenditure of 60% of the total available funds i.e. opening balance and funds released as first instalment.
- 7.2 Utilization Certificates will become due one year after the release of first instalment. Audited statements will become due two years after the release of the second instalment.
- 7.3 Funds for the State/UT Plans under RGSA will be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of the body designated for such purpose by the State Government through the Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS).
- 7.4 State Governments/UTs may create a separate budget head for RGSA.

8. GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHEME

8.1. For the governance of the scheme, there will be a Central Steering Committee with the following mandate:-

- Lay down policies and priorities
- Identify thrust areas
- Facilitate Inter-Ministerial coordination
- Monitor performance

8.2. The composition of the National Steering Committee is as follows:-

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Minister for Panchayati Raj | Chairperson |
| 2. Ministers of State for Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation | Members |
| 3. Ministers/Ministers of State for Education, Health, Agriculture, Social Justice and Welfare, Tribal Affairs, North East | Members |
| 4. Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog or his Representative | Member |
| 5. Minister of State for Finance (D/o Expenditure) | Member |
| 6. Ministers responsible for Panchayati Raj in the States from three well performing States as per Devolution Index including one from the North-East | Members |
| 7. Secretary Ministry of Panchayati Raj | Member |
| 8. Three eminent persons working in the field of Panchayati Raj (to be nominated by Chairperson) | Members |

9.	Three Elected heads of Panchayats from among best performing Panchayats (one from each tier) (to be nominated by the Chairperson)	Members
10.	Three Elected Women heads of Panchayat from among best performing Panchayats (one from each tier) (to be nominated by the Chairperson)	Members
11.	Director General, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)	Member
12.	Heads of two academic institutions of excellence Having expertise in Panchayati Raj	Members
13.	Two Resource Organizations active in the field of Panchayati Raj	Members
14.	Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, MoPR	Member
15.	Additional Secretary, MoPR	Member Secretary
16.	Joint Secretary, MoPR, handling RGSA	Rapporteur

8.3. In addition, there will be an Empowered Committee (EC) to approve projects. The EC may commission studies and/or depute a team of officials and experts to States to verify the status of capability development of panchayats on the ground, if deemed necessary. The composition of the Empowered Committee would be :-

1.	Secretary, MoPR	Chairperson
2.	Representative not below the level of Joint Secretary	Member
3.	Niti Aayog	Member
4.	Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation	Member
5.	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Member
6.	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Member
7.	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	Member
8.	DG, NIRD&PR	Member
9.	Two Secretaries of State Governments from the best performing States in the Devolution Index	Members
10.	Three eminent persons with experience in Panchayati Raj	Members
11.	Two academics who are experts in Panchayati Raj	Member
12.	Financial Adviser of MoPR	Member
13.	Joint Secretary in-charge of training in MoRD	Member
14.	Additional Secretary and Joint Secretaries of MoPR	Member
15.	Joint Secretary (Training), MoPR	Member Secretary

The Chairperson of Empowered Committee may invite experts as and when required.

Composition of Central Committees

1. Central Steering Committee to oversee RGSA

1. Minister for Panchayati Raj	Chairperson
2. Ministers of State for Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation	Members
3. Ministers/Ministers of State for Education, Health, Agriculture, Social Justice and Welfare, Tribal Affairs, North East	Members
4. Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog or his Representative	Member
5. State Minister for Finance (D/o Expenditure)	Member
6. 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. Three 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 (3 tiers) (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 RGSA	Rapporteur

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

2. Central Empowered Committee of RGSA

1. Secretary, MoPR	Chairperson
2. Representative of Niti Aayog	Member
3. Secretary, Expenditure, M/o Finance	Member
4. Secretary, Agriculture, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Land Resources, Education, Health, Social Justice, Tribal Affairs, DONER, Women and Child Development	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	Members

- well performing States as per the Devolution Index/Panchayat Index
(to be decided by Minister for Panchayati Raj)
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 8. Two eminent persons working in the field of Panchayati Raj (to be nominated by Minister for Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 9. Representatives from 3 NGOs (to be nominated by Minister for Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 10. Five Elected Representatives from best performing Panchayats (to be nominated by the Minister of Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 11. Five Elected Women Panchayat Representatives from best performing Panchayats (to be nominated by the Minister of Panchayati Raj) | Members |
| 12. Joint Secretary handling RGSA | 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 RGSA

S.No.	Activity	Cost Norms
1	Technical and administrative support at GP level (only for UTs and village bodies in Schedule VI areas)	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	Capacity Building and Training	
Training Programmes		
(a) Unit cost per participant per day for training of Elected Representatives and Panchayat Functionaries under RGSA		
S.No.	Category	* Cost per participant per day (in Rs.)
1	Training at State level for ERs, functionaries, Resource Persons, Master Trainers etc	1850.00
2	Training at District level for ERs, functionaries, Resource Persons, Master Trainers etc	1470.00
3	Training at Block Panchayat/Cluster level of ERs, Functionaries, Resource Persons, Trainers, etc	780.00
4	Gram Panchayat/Village Level Training (Training of Gram Sabha, etc.)	447.00
5	Handholding and mentoring support to PRIs (GPs and BPs)	Rs 30000 per GP per year for GPs up to 5000 population, Rs 40000 per GP per year for GPs with population over 5000. Rs 50000 per Block Panchayat per year
6	Handholding and mentoring support to SIRDs designated as mentor SIRDs	As per specific proposal - Up to Rs 50 lakh per year

7	Nurture, documentation and dissemination of best practice of Beacon panchayats for GPDP and SDGs	Rs 50000 per beacon panchayat per year for GPs up to 5000 population, Rs 1 lakh per beacon panchayat per year for GPs with population over 5000.
S. No.	Activity	Cost Norms
b	Computer training per head / day	@Rs.1500/-
c	Training Needs Assessment	Upto Rs. 6 lakh per year per State/UT
d	Development of Training Modules	Upto Rs. 20 lakh per year per State/UT
e	Development and printing of Training Material including film and electronic material	Upto Rs. 75 lakh 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.25 lakh per year per State/UT
<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> <p>**The CEC of RGSA may revise the ceilings once in 3 years, up to 10% above indicated unit costs for capacity building.</p>		
3	Institutional Structure	
a	Building and equipment at SPRC	On the basis of cost estimate as per standards to be fixed for State
b	Recurring cost on additional Faculty & O&M of SPRC	Upto Rs. 60 lakh per annum per SPRC
c.	Construction of building of new DPRC and provision of basic equipment.	On the basis of cost estimate as per standards to be fixed for district training infrastructure of the State
d	Up gradation of ETCs/ District Institute of Panchayati Raj	On the basis of proposals of State Government with a limit of Rs.1 Cr per institution over 5 year period.
e.	Recurring cost on additional Faculty & operations and maintenance of DPRC	Upto Rs. 25 lakh per annum per DPRC
f.	Intermediate/Block level Resource Centre	Rs.10 lakh per centre
4.	Technological Solutions for Governance	
a	Distance learning facility through SATCOM or IP based technology,	Rs.5 Cr. for studio at State level, SIT cost to be proposed by State

	V SAT	
b	Computer, UPS and Printer (only for UTs and village bodies in Schedule VI areas)	Rs.40,000/- per Panchayat
c	E governance support group	To be assessed separately for each State
d	GIS mapping initiative	On basis of specific proposal of State
5.	Special support for Panchayats in PESA areas	
a	Honorarium of 1 Gram Sabha Mobiliser in GP	Rs.3000/- 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.30,000/- 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
6.	Strengthening SECs	Rs 20 lakh per State/UT
7.	Fiscal data cell	Rs 50 lakh per State/SFC
8.	IEC activities	Up to 2% of the approved plan fund
9.	Innovative activities	Case to case : On the basis of State proposal
10.	National Plan of Technical assistance (up to 10 % of allocation)	
a	Assistance to NIRD&PR for school of local governance/ centre for Panchayati Raj	Rs 5 Cr annual grant
b	Innovations	5 % of allocation (no ceiling for unit project)
c	Other components as per Annual of NPTA	As decided by CEC
12.	National level IEC	(up to 1.5 % of allocation)
11.	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 RGSA are as follows:

1. 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, e-modules and other forms of material;
 - Training of Master Trainers;
 - Face-to-face training courses for ERs and Panchayat functionaries;
 - Satellite based training through SATCOM for ERs and functionaries
 - Exposure visits;
 - Open online courses
 - 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.
 - Training evaluation
 - Action research on PRIs
 - (c) It is envisaged that on an average, each ER and Panchayat functionary would be trained for five days in a 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).
2. 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.
- RGSA will fund faculty, infrastructure including facilities for distance learning through satellite and recurring costs in DPRCs.

d. *Block level satellite resource centres.*

- Decentralized and cost effective training of ERs and Panchayat functionaries is possible through the distance learning mode.
- RGSA 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 RGSA norms may also be provided to such partner institutions for various CB&T activities.

States may propose institutional arrangements to connect SPRC, DPRCs and all major State training institutions through SATCOM network.

3. 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. Digitization of activities like accounting, record keeping, asset mapping, service delivery, use of GIS in planning etc. will be supported. 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. (For non-Part IX areas and NE States)
- (c) Capital and operational expenditure necessary for development of software applications, maintenance, server costs, data centre 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 GoI schemes like MGNREGS will be supported to bring the assets created thereunder in the Panchayat asset register.

4. Development of Beacon Panchayats, mentoring & handholding of Panchayats and support for innovations

Identification and nurturing of beacon Panchayats (1 GP per Block) across the State to become immersion sites for exposure and learning will be supported. Handholding and mentoring support to Panchayats through resources person/reputed institutions/NGOs and support for innovations will also be supported.

5. **Information, Education, Communication (IEC)**

Support will be provided to undertake IEC activities in campaign mode. IEC activities to be taken up at various levels (State, district, block and village). IEC activities to be funded would include:

- Special Annual IEC drive in campaign mode in line with Gramoday-se-Bharat Uday Abhiyan or Panchayat week celebration across the State
- Showcasing good practices and innovations by Panchayats
- Use of social media, mobile apps, audio visual media, community radio
- Special programmes/features in television channels
- Cultural activities, exhibitions, mobile vans to disseminate information about Panchayats and benefits of relevant Government schemes or issues
- Communication materials including printing and publication

6. Panchayat Finance

- “ Support will be provided for technical and professional assistance to SFCs in the form of creation of State Fiscal data Cells to collect, collate and analyse fiscal and performance data of Panchayats and suggest corrective interventions
- “ Improvement of the budgeting, accounting and auditing systems of panchayats
- “ Resource augmentation of Panchayats through capacity building, improved reporting and monitoring

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. Special support for UTs, non-Part IX areas with elected local bodies at village level and GPs of special category States in hilly areas

- a. Each State is expected to visualize the administrative and technical support needed at each tier and subsequently frame an appropriate policy framework
- b. Support may be availed for construction and repair of GP buildings as per cost norms and size of GP Construction may be undertaken in convergence with MGNREGS. While the maximum funds to be provided under RGSA would be as per Annex-3, States may supplement these with their own funds or funds from other scheme for larger or better building.
- c. States will be expected to focus on eco-friendly designs for such buildings, and ensure that disaster management norms are followed.
- d. Cost for land for building may not be funded from RGSA.
- e. 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.
- f. Expenses of existing administrative and technical support mechanism in Panchayats cannot be transferred to RGSA.
- g. Support will be provided to GPs/local bodies without computers and internet connectivity for procuring computers and related furniture within the prescribed cost norms. One-time costs for connectivity will also be provided.

9. 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 RGSA 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 RGSA.
 - 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.

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

A National Programme Management Unit (NPMU) will be set up at the National level for overall management, monitoring of RGSA and to provide professional and technical support to States/UTs and MoPR. The illustrative list of programmes and technical services to be provided by the NPMU is given below:-

- a. Overall management of RGSA
- b. Development and maintenance of MIS for tracking progress
- c. Analysis of State wise progress under RGSA and preparation of reports
- d. Support to States for preparation of capacity building plans and roadmaps on issues related to strengthening Panchayats
- e. Appraisal of State Plans under RGSA
- f. Periodic review with the States on Progress made under RGSA
- g. Periodic review with the Centre of Panchayati Raj/School of Local Governance of NIRD & PR on progress made under technical support to States for capacity building & training
- h. Development of performance assessment criteria for Panchayats
- i. Assessment of State reports on performance of panchayats and identification of systems issues
- j. Facilitate action research, studies and assessments on issues related to Panchayat strengthening
- k. Facilitation of the GPDP processes in the States
- l. Identification and dissemination of good practices
- m. Advocacy for amendment of laws and rules as per PESA.
- n. Conduct of national workshops on various Panchayat related issues for promotion of cross-State learning
- o. Other areas as identified from time to time

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