

## **Rural Decentralization and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction**

Estimated start time	-	March 1, 2004
Estimated end date	-	December 31, 2007
MOU signed between the GOR and UNDP	-	December, 2004
Executing agency	-	Planning Commission
Implementing agents	-	Government agencies and civil society

The project strongly emphasizes the need for a conscious and vigorous initiative for strengthening of the PRI's. The overall objective of the project is to provide support and create an enabling environment for the decentralization at the state level and to strengthen endowment of the local Government with sufficient autonomy and resources to respond to the local needs. The project aims to support an empowerment strategy that creates space for the people to effectively participate in the decision making process.

The project covers the poorest districts receiving the RSVY support (backward districts initiatives of the planning commission) that assists in filling critical gaps that may remain in the plans drawn up by the Gram Sabha and the Panchayats. The project at the same time supports the convergent planning of resources in order to provide an adequate, fiscal regime for the local institutions. The project also acts as a platform for convergence of other UNDP programmes such as capacity building of the elected women representatives of the district, Governance Programmes and other sectoral programmes.

The project broadly concentrates on four components:

- Strengthening decentralization of decision-making and pro-poor development planning.
- Improving the fiscal domain of the PRIs for local level development through resource convergence and local resource mobilization.
- Enhancing the oversight function of the PRIs (especially gram sabhas) to strengthen transparency and accountability in local governance.
- Supporting enhanced devolution and autonomy of PRIs through facilitating policy-making for decentralization.

In Rajasthan the project covers Dungarpur and Banswara Districts.

Contribution of UNDP is Rs. 2.40 crores in total towards this project, which will be divided equally in these 2 districts i.e 1.20 crores for each district.

## **Role of the Zila Parishads**

In order to assist the planning process, capacity building support will be provided to panchayats at various levels to enable them to make an assessment of resources (natural, financial and institutional) to strengthen their information base, help them determine priorities, build their capacities to plan, develop a framework to ensure fiscal discipline and financial accountability and implement and monitor development activities.

Training camps will be organized for the resource persons and PRI representatives for community mobilization.

## **Finance**

The implementing agencies in Dungarpur and Banswara are the Zila Parishads of these two districts along with NGO PEDO.

Against Rs. 1.20 crores for each district the status of the funds released is as under:-

➤ Zila Parishad, Dungarpur	=	Rs. 26.00 lacs
➤ Zila Parishad, Banswara	=	Rs. 25.00 lacs
➤ PEDO, Dungarpur	=	Rs. 13.00 lacs
➤ PEDO, Banswara	=	Rs. 13.00 lacs

Against the budget released for the year 2005 of Rs. 26,00,000, an expenditure of Rs. 14,40,442 has been incurred by PEDO-MADA. All the utilization certificates have been provided by the implementing NGO. With respect to the Zila Parishad jointly implementing the project along with PEDO-MADA, an estimated budget of Rs. 51,00,000 was sanctioned for the year 2005 for both the districts. The district authorities are now beginning to utilize this amount and would provide the utilization certificates in due time.

## **Project progress**

### **Community Mobilization and capacity building**

Mobilisation at gram sabha and Ward Sabha Level have been carried out. Village and ward level meetings, rallies and street plays have been done for carrying out the mobilization effort. Formation of informal groups, 'chetna dals' and SHGs have also been done for community mobilization and awareness generation.

Orientation programmes on development schemes has been carried out. Training of sarpanchs, ward panchs, Block, Zila Parishad and government officials on their roles and responsibilities and 'micro planning' have also been done.

## **Micro Planning and Financial Aspects of Panchayats**

Training of PRI representatives and government officials on 'micro planning' has been done. Subsequently PRA has been carried out at the village/ward level and preparation of Micro Plans at village level has been done. The micro plans also have a budget plan and untied resources have been released to the Gram Panchayats by Zila Parishad's.

### **Achievements**

- Institutional links between user groups and PRIs, and their engagement in drafting and implementation of micro plans in 10 Gram Panchayats have been demonstrated.
- Decentralized and need based plans developed in 10 Gram Panchayats with the active involvement of 130 PRI representatives in preparing micro plans.
- Average increase of 42% attendance in gram Sabha from baseline level has been recorded, with 33% increase in the participation of women and dalits in the project block.
- Existing government and non-government resources at district level pooled and made available for block level plans in 2 backward districts under this project.
- Panchayats under the project blocks increased their revenue generation by 5%.
- 8% of marginalized community members report improvement in economic opportunities from the time of project inception.
- Accounts are effectively put forward and discussed in 8% of the panchayats during gram sabhas in the project area.
- Selection of beneficiaries for various schemes and grassroots functionaries (like anganwari workers etc.) is done in a participative manner in at least 30% of the panchayats in the project blocks.