

Alternate Implementation Mechanism A Case Study on Public Private Civil Society Partnership in Jalna

Case Authors

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Submitted by



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October 2010

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The views expressed in this report are the views of the authors¹ and not necessarily those of the organisation

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Abbreviations

AIM	Alternate Implementation Mechanism
APO	Assistant Project Officer
BDO	Block Development Officer
BPO	Block Programme Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DC	District Collector
DPC	District Programme Coordinator
DPR	detailed project report
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
GP	Gram Panchayat
GS	Gram Sabha
HR	human resources
IAS	Indian Administrative Service
ITC–RDT	Indian Tobacco Company–Rural Development Trust
LDC	Lower Division Clerk
MEGC	Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Council
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MREG	Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee
MREGA	Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MREGS	Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NREG	National Rural Employment Guarantee
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
OS	operating system
PMC	Project Management Committee
PO	Programme Officer
PPCP	Public Private Civil Society Partnership
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PRS	Panchayat Rojgar Sewak

REGS	Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
RS	Rojgar Sahayak
SIED	Sanjeevani Institute for Empowerment and Development
SOP	standard operating procedure
SREGS	State Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
TA	travel allowance
TSP	technical service provider
WOTR	Watershed Organization Trust
ZP	Zilla Parishad

Part 1

Introduction

The state of Maharashtra has been the forerunner for guaranteeing employment since 1977 through its path-breaking Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS). Subsequent to the enactment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) at the national level, the state enacted ensuring employment as an Act. It is one of the few states to affirm employment to poor through an Act. The new Act is entirely in line with NREGA. However, it goes well beyond the 100 days' work guarantee and ensures work throughout the year to those who seek it. Procedurally, money from NREGA will be drawn to pay for the 100-day work and money beyond that will be met from the state provision.

The Public Private Civil Society Partnership (PPCP) project was designed for implementing National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) activities as well as State Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (SREGS) activities on watershed approach. The project is an AIM initiative undertaken by the Zilla Parishad, District administration, Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) and Indian Tobacco Company–Rural Development Trust (ITC–RDT) in two blocks of Jalna district, Maharashtra. The PPCP arrangement in the project was designed based on the lessons from State REGS, experience of WOTR–SIED and ITC–RDT, and willingness from the multi-disciplinary Zilla Parishad (ZP) of Jalna.

1. Why Study This Case

This study tries to capture the attempt made by different project stakeholders, to address soil and water conservation measures through the works of NREGA using the services of a technically and socially competent NGO partner, Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR). State government at district level and the Jalna ZP routes the sanctions and government orders to WOTR, whereas the capacity building and administrative cost to WOTR are provided by ITC–RDT.

This case was selected as alternate implementation mechanism to understand the institutional capacities required for delivery of NREGS especially in the Bihar context while designing the pilot phase.

2. Snap Shot of the Project

The Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MREGA)², is a state Act in line with NREGA, and has had an impressive pedigree in the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) implemented by the Government of Maharashtra since 1977. The Maharashtra state programme offers work throughout the year. NREGS, on the other hand, guarantees 100 days' work. NREGS has become the rallying point for many government departments to come together in undertaking their work.

² Maharashtra is one of the five states in the country that has developed its own Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS).

Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) and Sanjeevani Institute for Empowerment and Development (SIED)³ had joined hands with a corporate agency, ITC–RDT (which had a partnership with WOTR in two other districts in natural resource management) to support planning and implementation of MREGS in two Talukas (blocks) of Jalna district, namely Bhokardan and Jafrabad. The total population of the blocks ranges between one-and-half and one lakh respectively. Bhokardan has 250 Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Jafrabad 120. Average population is about 1,000 per village. The project is focused on 50 GPs (30 at Bhokardan and 20 at Jafrabad). These are drought-prone and remotely located blocks. Most of the labourers are stated to own land in small and marginal quantities.

A tripartite agreement was signed among ITC–RDT, WOTR and the Government of Maharashtra on 15 August 2008 at Jalna. The main points in the agreement were:

- The state Government, ITC–RDT and WOTR in principle agree to implement projects under NREGA in 50 GPs of Bhokardan and Jafrabad Talukas of Jalna district, Maharashtra.
- The finalization of the project villages will be done through mutual consent among the three parties. To the extent possible, care will be taken that the project villages will be located within e-choupal coverage, and will address the concerns of all parties.
- The sanctioned projects will be implemented by the GPs as per MREGS guidelines.
- A Project Management Committee (PMC) will be constituted with six members nominated by the Jalna ZP and one member each from ITC–RDT and WOTR. The District Collector, Jalna will be the Chairperson of this committee. The PMC will be responsible for guiding the preparation of the village-wise plans in consultation with the GPs and for ensuring timely completion of works as per plans and within the budgets with the assistance of the ZP.
- The MoU will be drawn initially for one year and can be extended further with mutual written consent of all the parties.
- The state government will not be liable for the staff appointed by ITC–RDT/WOTR/community-based organisations for undertaking the works under the partnership.
- In case of disagreements or disputes among the parties, attempt shall be made to resolve those through consultations among them.
- The parties may terminate the agreement in case one party comes to the conclusion that the circumstances are such that the project cannot be

³ Sanjeevani Institute for Empowerment and Development (SIED) is a sister organization of Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) based in Aurangabad.

carried forward and that the project may be treated as closed. Termination would require a written notice of one month.

PPCP is a year-and-half old in the district. Zilla Parishad is the nodal agency and WOTR–SIED is the implementing agency. ITC–RDT are the technical service providers in the project.

The project aims at community-based natural resource management along with watershed lines by using the opportunities provided by NREGS to fund such activities. The provision of employment to needy families is also achieved.

Strategic collaboration under NREGS was proposed to provide managerial support to the overall plans of the state and union governments to ensure the following outputs:

- The partnership would ensure facilitation and capacity building of Gram Sabhas (GSs) and GPs to enable them to prepare their development plans effectively for ensuring livelihood security of households residing in watershed villages.
- The partnership would bring managerial, technical and financial efficiencies in the implementation of the GS plans.
- It would significantly improve the quality of work to be executed through NREGS.
- The collaboration would have an enduring value because of the capacity enhancement of institutions of local self-governance for planning and implementation of their development plans independently.

The project had the following two major components:

Capacity building and human resources

With the financial support from ITC–RDT, WOTR–SIED had placed a multi-disciplinary team of professionals for technical and managerial support to build capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in terms of developing their plans and implementation of works under NREGS. The focus of implementation was on strengthening the natural resource base of the area in terms of land, water and forest.

Value additions to work under NREGS

The collaboration aimed to develop the human potential to manage and maintain local resources. Activities like conservation of soil and water resources, agriculture, forestry, biogas, savings and credit, and input, supply and marketing were taken up. The project has limited resources as per the NREGS in terms of finance which can be utilized for the sustenance of the physical interventions. Therefore, the financial resources mobilized from ITC–RDT were used for value addition of the physical interventions. Rest of the NREGS activities like providing

job cards, selection of sites, etc. were done primarily by the NREGS cell headed by the Deputy Collector in consultation with ZP.

The financial support from ITC to the PPCP arrangement had clearly laid down purposes as mentioned below:

- **Facilitating institutional arrangements for planned utilization of resources**

User-based institutions and village development committees were formed for pre- and post-project management of different project interventions. Management of water harvesting structures (WHSs) was considered the most critical component of the project intervention. All direct and indirect stakeholders of the particular watershed and water harvesting structures are members of the committees and water user associations. The major responsibilities of the water users' associations and village development committees were:

- Identification of socially and technically feasible locations for construction of water harvesting and soil conservation structures.
- Planning, execution and monitoring of project activities, especially construction of structures.
- Formation of bylaws and regulations for distribution and management of water from WHSs.
- Collection of water charges from direct and indirect beneficiaries and generating funds for future repairs and maintenance of structures.
- Collective marketing of agricultural produce through existing networks of ITC's e-choupal.

- **Promotion of improved agricultural practices**

Focus of the interventions was to reduce the input costs through promotion of organic manuring and transfer of efficient technologies from the lab to the farm. Improved agriculture practices and technology was propagated through research and demonstration plots.

- **Market linkages of agricultural produce and other value-based agricultural packages**

The focus was to link farmers with the e-choupal network of ITC to ensure remunerative and competitive prices for their agricultural produce. Agriculture services such as provision of quality inputs, crop and weather insurance and information on latest agriculture practices were made available to farmers associated with the water users' association.

3. Why was AIM Chosen as Strategy?

The EGS has been implemented in Maharashtra since nearly three decades. The EGS programme had experienced operational inefficiencies and other inadequacies discrediting the state. Jalna district has been included in the

third phase of NREGA and has been in operation since a year. NREGA has put in place systems to address the inadequacies of EGS and deliver the programme benefits directly to the people. NREGS also had tightened the loose ends by putting systems in place and ownership by stakeholders.

During implementation of NREGS in the district, it was found that the two percent provision for technical service provider in terms of human resource and capacity building was found to be inadequate. Implementing both NREGS and MREGS together was a complex task at hand for the district administration. Therefore, the tripartite PPCP agreement was sought.

In the tripartite arrangement, the district collector of Jalna chaired the PPCP initiative as the nodal agency. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Parishad, who had been in agriculture department and was familiar with WOTR in its endeavour in implementing watersheds, was aware of the results of rolling out the EGS programme. Therefore, to ensure that the problems are not repeated, he wanted a sound technical agency to support in MREGS. The ZP CEO and district collector came together to work with WOTR–SIED under a partnership model.

Involvement of a sound NGO partner (WOTR–SIED) needs financial commitment. A corporate entity, ITC, having a mandate for working with civil societies, has supported two critical components of HR and capacity building. WOTR–SIED is in place as a technical support partner and the ZP is the implementing agency. In course of the working in a PPCP arrangement, helped ironing out various procedural delays and bottlenecks in the system.

Hence the project adopted the Alternate Implementation Mechanism (AIM), an alternative to the traditional way of implementation through government departments. Necessary systems were set in place and a partnership was entered into to attain project objectives.

Points to Ponder

- Focus of the Alternate Implementation Mechanism (AIM) was to enter into a partnership with different agencies to ease out the complex tasks of implementing both NREGS and MREGS together.
- Emphasis of alternate implementation arrangement is to
 - ensure that competencies of the agencies and tasks at hand are matched well
 - change the governance system to ease out bottlenecks
 - ensure capacity building and HR issues

4. Key Takeaways

This section discusses the key learnings from PPCP arrangement wherein the government as the nodal agency and WOTR–SIED as the implementing agency, had focused on entering into a tripartite partnership agreement with ITC–RDT to substantiate the objective of the NREGS programmes. The arrangement had the experience of bringing three organizations of different competencies together to complement and supplement each others' efforts.

Some of the key benefits of the case are mentioned below:

- **Civil society as partner:** The PPCP arrangement mainly focused on engaging civil society or community (for example, Gram Sabhas [GSs]) as partner in identification of the activities to be undertaken under both NREG and MREG schemes. GSs undertook the responsibility of implementing quality activities. The project focused on good governance and on fostering inclusive development to create robust, representative, accountable and empowered local institutions. The process supported inclusion of the poor and marginalised communities in terms of planned intervention through schemes. The important issue was to make GS and the village responsible for their own development and to make plans according to their own priorities and needs.
- **Set targets for wages:** The most critical factor in the programme was to set targets for wage payments and assets. The GSs, using participatory methodology, develop the shelf of work by estimating the number of activities and the person-days required for each activity. Therefore, the budget for person-days helps set targets for wages for the activities in a specific block.
- **Time requirement:** Adequate time is required to mobilise the community and make them aware of the NREGS processes. The PPCP arrangement took a lot of time in making the community understand and own the responsibilities to prepare activity plans.
- **Making the community responsible:** This activity includes shramdan as per the Wasundhara approach of the WOTR (in box), which is time tested and helps in the sustenance of project impacts. WOTR has piloted the Wasundhara strategy in 48 villages in step-by-step capacity building

Wasundhara Approach

The word Wasundhara in Sanskrit literally means 'the earth', but it implies compassion, caring, co-responsibility and harmony. WOTR works on the principles of Wasundhara. The word also implies 'WOTR is Attentive to Social Unity, Nature, Development and Harmony in Rural Areas'.

How does this take place? While compassion and caring is what prompted the setting up of WOTR, the action plan behind each project that the organisation takes up is to involve the participation of the villagers. Each watershed project, for example, is for them and by them. The betterment of their future is their responsibility. WOTR is just an agent that sparks the initiative. And harmony is achieved when several factors come together as a whole. This may include regeneration of water sources, farming, increasing livelihood opportunities, literacy, women's role in governance, securing the future of the girl child and so on.

The Wasundhara approach has been implemented in 48 villages since last three years with far-reaching impacts. It has resulted in promoting equity, gender sensitivity and sustainable development. The process continues beyond the project period.

and institutional empowerment. The Wasundhara approach helps these institutions identify their needs and developmental deficits, understand the underlying causal relationships, envision their highest achievable good, generate a community-wide consensus of what is to be done and how, affix responsibilities and actively access official and other resource agencies in order to fulfil their needs and realise their dreams and aspirations. The success of this approach can be gauged from the fact that these village institutions have been able to leverage over a crore of rupees from public sources.

- **Value for partnership:** This case had generated intensive and sustained resources to establish partnership with stakeholders and institutions. While designing the project the partners were involved in a dialogue to work out the deliverables based on their skill sets. The project had provided adequate value to the partners and their association in delivering the laid-down roles and responsibilities.
- **Adopting watershed approach:** AIM arrangement had adopted watershed approach to work on land- and water-based activities. The watershed activities like soil conservation, water harvesting, watershed development, groundwater recharge, afforestation and rural connectivity had generated large number of wages and engaged the community in various physical interventions and ensured employment opportunities. Large number of community assets were created, which generated wage employments. These activities were strategically inbuilt in shelf of work for NREG schemes.
- **Use of local and sound NGOs to set the stage on field and strengthen the community to be responsible:** The tripartite arrangement helped

Sanjeevani Institute of Empowerment and Development (SIED) is a sister organisation of WOTR. SIED was established in May 2007 with the objective of focusing on the implementation of projects in rural Maharashtra. Its preference is for the tribal and backward regions especially where the environment is degraded. The thematic areas addressed are (a) poverty reduction (b) natural resource regeneration and management (c) livelihood development and (d) community and institutional development. SIED has its head office at Aurangabad and has more than 10 cluster offices at Ahmednagar district (Ahmednagar and Sangamner), Amravati, Aurangabad, Dhule district (Pimpalner), Jalna district (Bhokardan and Jafrabad), Pune district (Shirur), Wardha district (Karanja) and Yeotmal.

identify local and sound NGOs, who were engaged in setting the stage and strengthen the community to become responsive. WOTR engaged Sanjeevani Institute of Empowerment and Development (SIED), a sister organisation of its own, to extend the project activities in the field.

- **Investment:** The project had invested in capacity building of community and human resource of the project. It had paid attention to required human resources for AIM partners, their profile and management.
- **Provision of greater autonomy to AIM partner for technical approvals:** In order to remove the bottlenecks in the project, it had provided greater autonomy to AIM partners to approve technical plans. WOTR had played

a critical role in imparting training to PRI members on the one hand and the technical consultants on the other to design the shelf of work.

- **Review roles:** The project reviewed roles every year, slated for the AIM partners and Government, to bring out a clear understanding and demarcation of roles. The PMC played a critical part in reviewing the roles and responsibilities periodically to monitor the project objectives and deliverables. The project at its inception had designed stakeholder coordination and had supplemented gaps.
- **Convergence:** AIM partners worked together to bring in convergence to provide operational infrastructure, preferably separated from government offices to isolate and establish separate identity.
- **Increased allocation for agencies under agreement:** The AIM arrangement in the project had provided cushion to the financial gaps of one per cent allocation for capacity building and human resources. The financial support by ITC–RDT to the project had improved the standard financial allocation and it also helped in attaining the project objectives.

Part 2

**Institutional
Structure and
Governance**

This section discusses the institutional arrangements, partnerships and governance charted out for the PPCP arrangement.

5. Partnership

The PPCP arrangement adopted an AIM, a deviation from the regular NREGS institutional arrangement for implementing the project. The purpose of having such alternative arrangements was mainly to enrich responsibilities of partnership, which is a key feature of the arrangement. Some key features of the agreement are:

- The state government is to act as a facilitator and partner rather than a direct implementer.

Implementation to be done through the community by WOTR-SIED, required mobilizing community at village level.

- The institutional arrangement required an independent agency, WOTR-SIED, which does not replace government functionaries in implementing NREGS works, but provides additional staff (technical and community organizers) for community mobilization; prepare implementation plans and estimates; training and development of government functionaries; ensure quality assurance, project monitoring and management as well as coordination with government.
- Use of external funding (from ITC) to cater to capacity building and human resource costs, which is not within the national or state guidelines.

The project conceived critical implementation roles for all stakeholders to improve efficient delivery of the project activities to implement NREGS.

The institutional arrangement consisted of the following.

- The Jalna ZP, as the nodal agency entrusted with the implementation of the PPCP programme, provides financial, logistic and administrative assistance and statutory regulatory clearance in implementing projects under NREGS. It ensures coordination between Block Development Officer (BDO) and Project Management Committee (PMC) and advice Gram Panchayat (GP) to assist PMC in the implementation.
- PMC as governing body oversees and supervises implementation of project.
- PMC ensures necessary approvals for implementation plans from concerned government officials as per the standard operating procedures and systems developed. PMC provides support for convergence with line departments.
- ZP releases funds as advised by PMC.
- ZP monitors progress in the field.

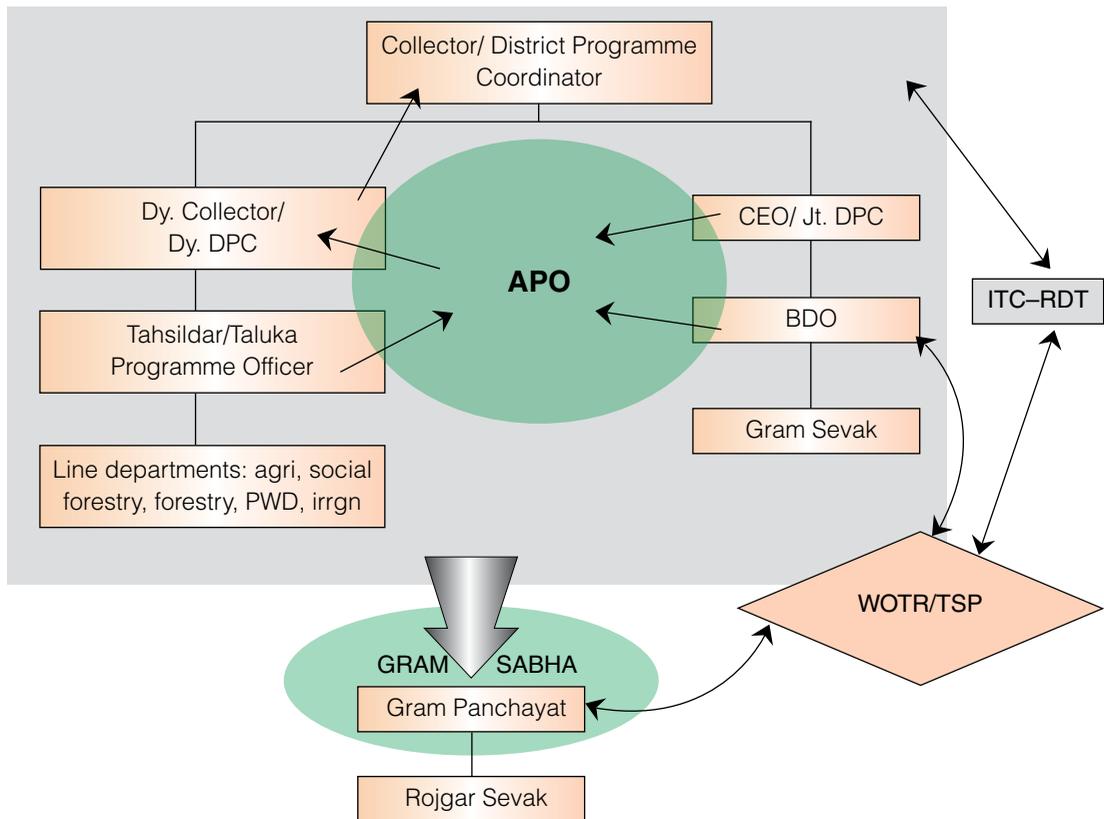
Roles and responsibilities of the project stakeholders to elicit the nature of engagements

Jalna Zilla Parishad (ZP)	Project Management Committee (PMC)	WOTR-SIED	ITC-RDT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures smooth implementation of the programme, provides financial, logistic and administrative assistance and statutory/regulatory clearance for implementing NREGS projects. Maintains government accounts as per rules and shares it with PMC for information. Ensures coordination between BDO and PMC and directs GP to assist PMC in implementation. Scrutinises and sanctions funds based on the agreed protocol and on receipt of the disbursement advice from PMC. Provides financial assistance for execution of projects directly to the GP as per the demand for employment in GP and as per the sanctioned plan by PMC. Provides remuneration for Rojgar Sevaks in GP and charges to WOTR as TSP (as per NREGA). Shares information with PMC on progress and achievements periodically. Create and disseminate publicity material and information using media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as the governing body for PPCP programme with members from Revenue department and ZP, Jalna Oversees and supervises the village DPRs and action plans. Ensures that the plans are based on NRM conservation measures. Ensures that necessary approval for plans are received from concerned government departments, prior to commencement of work. Supervises the implementation of the project and activities as per the approved plan and maintains quality standard. Advice ZP for fund release based on satisfactory progress of work schedules. Develops standard operating procedure (SOP) and ensures adoption of systems and procedures by the project. Ensures third party appraisals of financial achievements and quality compliance as per SOP. Converges various activities carried out by other line departments, such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, for the benefit of watershed community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical support to the project as Technical Resource Service (TSP) provider Sanjeevani Institute for Empowerment and Development (SIED), a sister organization of WOTR, would provide technical services. Undertakes technical surveys and prepares work, labour and budget estimates for soil and water conservation treatments that are eligible for funding under NREGS or MREGS as prescribed by ZP and identified by GS. Provides training to Rojgar Sevaks, GP members and community-based organisations of the villages. Mobilises community-based institutions and implements watershed activities as per sanctioned plan. Supervises and monitors the quality of implementation. Maintains required staff (technical and community organizers) for implementing project activities and arranges necessary technical and extension services for undertaking physical treatment of the land and for enhancing natural productivity along with other production measures in the project. Documents soil and water conservation works such as labour attendance, measurement and labour muster books in selected villages. Also prepares training aids and publicity materials of the work undertaken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that the state government funds are utilized properly as per the approved plans. Ensures maintenance of proper records and transparency in the system (attendance register, work measurement, muster, meeting registers, materials required, and so on). Shall appoint WOTR as the TSP and provide financial assistance to it for appointment of multi-disciplinary teams to support PPCP. Provides financial support to WOTR for capacity building programme for communities. Provides financial support for services of independent agencies for appraisal of financial achievements and quality of implementation of SOP for selected GPs. Provides advisory services to the project as well as to the community in enhancing agricultural income of farmers.

- WOTR provides technical support through SIED, capacity building support and mobilize community.
- ITC-RDT provides financial assistance to WOTR to appoint a multi-disciplinary team.

Figure 5.1 shows the institutional arrangement considered under PPCP. The highlights are:

- The PPCP project is governed by PMC which provides the required policy and decision making guidance.
- The PMC is constituted of the following members:
 - District Collector, Jalna – Chairperson
 - Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Jalna
 - Deputy Collector (MREGS), Jalna
 - Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Panchayat), Jalna
 - Block Development Officer, Bhokardan
 - Block Development Officer, Jafrabad
 - ITC-RDT representative
 - WOTR-SIED representative



- In Maharashtra the revenue and development cadres are separate. The revenue department is headed by the Collector, while the development department called as Zilla Parishad (ZP) is headed by the Chief Executive Officer. Normally both are from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) or equivalent from the state services.
- The revenue department looks after land, law and order. REGS falls under its portfolio of deliverables.
- The ZP has NREGA under its deliverables.
- The Assistant Project Officer (APO), ZP, is the nodal person of the project, who maintains the information flow and government orders, financial and technical sanctions, approvals between CEO, ZP, BDO, Tahsildar and Deputy Collector. Apart from the project, APO is also involved in other state government deliverables.
- PMC recognized its limitations in implementing the project and decided to partner with WOTR.
- The functional partnership schematic diagram (Figure 5.1) shows the involvement of state government departments; all working to establish a DPR and action plans for the project in two blocks. It may be understood as the partnership and convergence within the line departments of the government.
- Whereas WOTR/TSP is the technical service provider and partners with the project to deliver technical services including technical surveys and prepare labour and budget estimates for treatment measures. It also provides capacity building support to Rojgar Sevaks, GP members and community-based organizations in the project area.
- The GP implements the approved plan under the guidance of the TSP.
- Rojgar Sevaks are the key persons in the field.
- Needless to say, this division is not a watertight structure but is a convenient way to visualize the implementation structure of PPCP.

In terms of institutional structures and governance PPCP was a major departure, yet the arrangement ensured 365 days of employment, dovetailing both NREG and MREG programmes one after the other for the rural poor.

NREGA

NREGA provides guarantee of at least 100 days of wage employment to every rural household on demand. The Act aims at reducing extreme poverty through productive asset creation. Until the advent of the NREGA, limited funds would flow to the district and downwards to blocks and panchayats. The ultimate amount that reach the Panchayats after being dovetailed at each level was miniscule. NREGA changes this to a bottom up approach and it created a paradigm shift in rural development sector. With NREGA, the panchayats can get asset creation and employment generation done to their

heart's content, as this is a demand-driven programme. Community, for the first time, has the power to demand. Thus NREGA provides a strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing employment alternatives when opportunities are inadequate.

Further, NREGA prefers work areas such as land development, water conservation, renovation of traditional water bodies, drought proofing, rural connectivity, etc. The Act ensures the development of social infrastructure. The assets created will be a step forward towards growth through higher investment in rural infrastructure. The potential for labour-intensive public works in the field of community asset creation is massive. This includes areas such as watershed development, land regeneration, prevention of soil erosion, restoration of tanks, protection of forests and related activities. This is why NREGA is being regarded as crucial to the development of rural India.

Thus, apart from being a wage employment programme, it also has inbuilt component of interventions leading to sustainable development. Another important aspect of the programme is the 'empowerment' clause. It systematically incorporates provisions of empowerment of women, maintaining transparency by way of social audit, changing power equation in the society, proactive role of panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) such as GS, and involvement of common people at grassroots level.

Administrative Design and Functions

The panchayats at district, intermediate, and village levels are the principal authorities for planning and implementation under this Act. The village level panchayat prepares the grassroots planning and implements, while its consolidation, approval, monitoring and supervision are done at the block and district levels. A few activities are allocated at the district and intermediate levels too.

There are a few important officials or positions in the implementation of this programme, apart from the panchayat representatives. Figure 6 provides an

Key Features of NREGA

Who can apply: Adult members of every rural household who are willing to do manual work at the statutory minimum wage may apply to the GP for registration. Registration is valid for a period not less than five years, and is renewable.

Legality of provision: Employment is to be provided to every registered person within 15 days of receipt of the application. The application has to be for at least 14 days of continuous work. GPs are to accept valid applications and issue dated receipts to the applicants. Applicants provided with work are to be notified in writing.

Ensuring wage: Contractors and labour-displacing machines are banned. At least 60 per cent of the expenditure under any project are to be on wages.

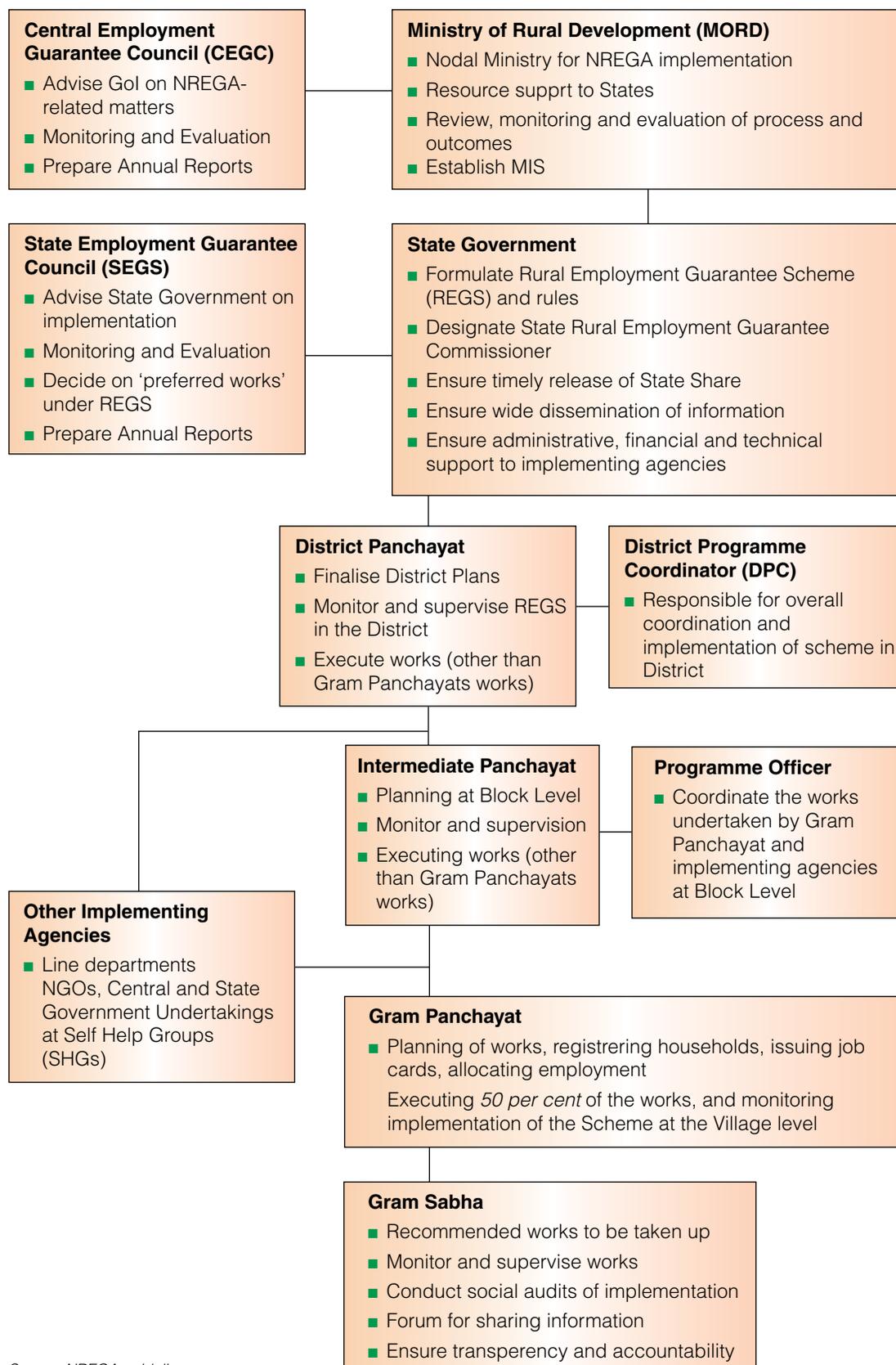
Timely payment: Wages are to be paid every week not later than a fortnight. In case of any delay in payment of wages, the labour is entitled to compensation as per the Payment of Wages Act.

Gender concern: No gender bias is permitted.

Security: Provision is made for compensation and treatment in case of injury, for on-site safe drinking water, care of small children, periods of rest and shade for the same and first-aid box.

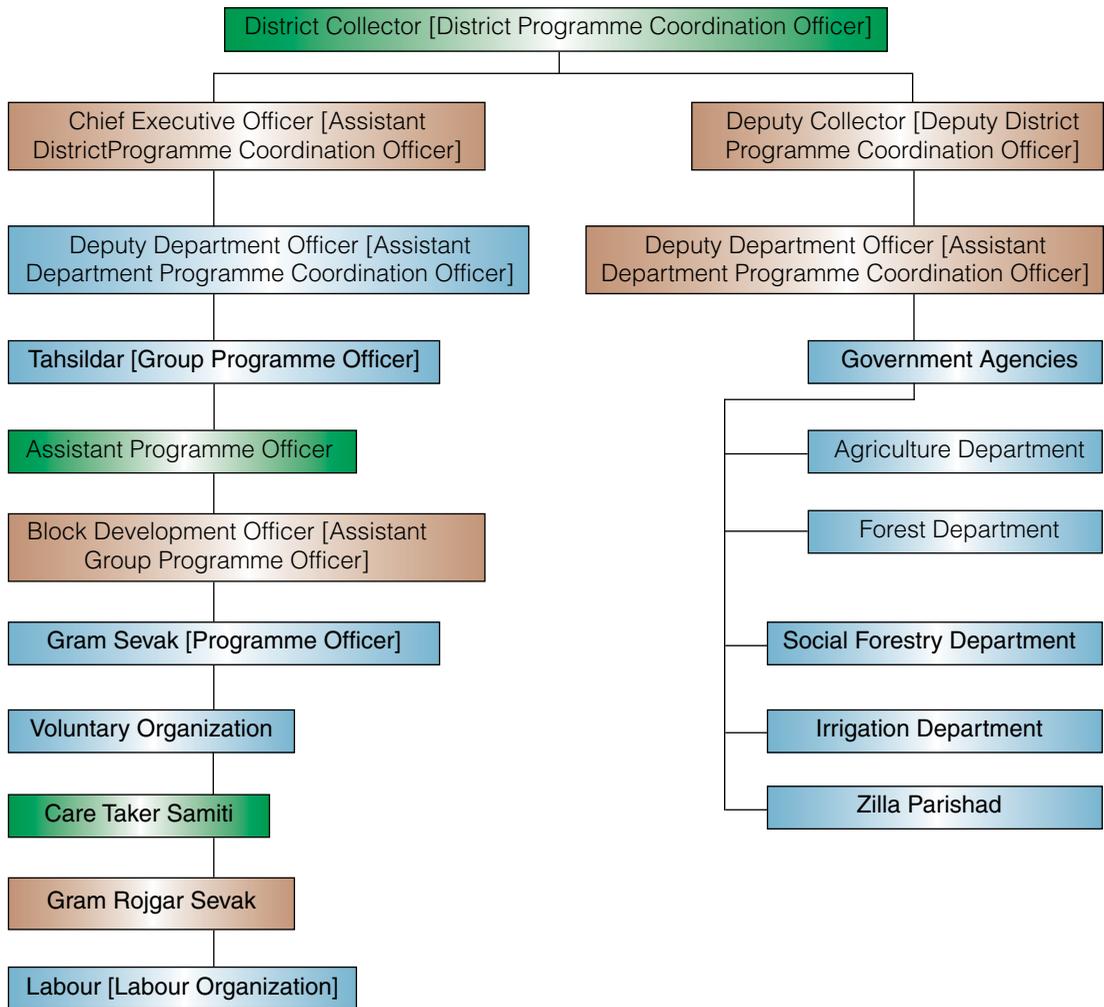
Primacy to PRI: At least 50 per cent of the projects, in terms of value, are to be implemented through the GPs, which must prepare a development plan.

Fig. 6 Organisational Structure of NREGA



Source: NREGA guidelines

Figure 7 Government Administration



overview of the organizational structure of the programme.

District Programme Coordinator (DPC): CEO of ZP, District Collector or any other official designated by the state government assists the panchayat at the district level in discharging its functions under this Act. The DPC is responsible for implementation of the scheme at district level.

Programme Officer (PO): At every panchayat at intermediate level, the state government shall appoint a person not below the rank of Block Development Officer (BDO) as PO. The PO is responsible for the planning and implementation of the programme at block level.

Junior Engineer: The junior engineer has the primary responsibility of plan and estimates and measurement of works.

Panchayat Rojgar Sewak (PRS): Responsibilities of a PRS include maintaining of muster rolls, measurement of works, ensuring work site facilities, etc.

Figure 7 shows the institutional arrangement of MREGS. On the left hand axis is the state ZP institution setup, whereas the right hand axis shows state MREG institutional setup line departments. To bring the best use of the skills and capabilities of both the axis PPCP adopted 'partnership' as a working philosophy, and by matching competence with tasks, PPCP forged partnerships with state government, WOTR-SIED, ITC-RDT at different levels, mainly for effective community mobilization processes, capacity building and adoption of watershed-based approach for planning work and labour estimates, that is shelf of work. For other tasks such as monitoring and financial management, it relied on PMC partners with proven expertise in the relevant areas. For administrative functions, the project relied on its own machinery at the district and block levels and worked through APO's office. The nature and structure of partnerships in PPCP are examined in further detail in Chapter 8.

Points to Ponder

In an AIM kind of project it is important that project leaders have a clear vision with respect to:

- forging partnerships as a way of working
- sharing responsibility
- matching competencies with tasks

6. Governance Structure

The project is governed by the high powered Project Management Committee (PMC). PMC is constituted in Jalna, with six members nominated by the state government and one member each from the Trust and WOTR. The committee is chaired by the District Collector. Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad, Jalna is the Member Secretary of the committee. Other members are Deputy Collector (MREGS) and Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Panchayat). Block Development Officers (BDOs) of Bhokardan and Jafrabad and representatives of ITC-RDT and WOTR are also members PMC.

PMC is responsible for providing required policy and decision making guidance for the PPCP project. PMC oversees and supervises the preparation of village detailed project reports (DPRs) and action plans for the selected villages. The plans are prepared in consultation with the GPs for ensuring timely completion as guided by WOTR as per the guidelines of NREGS. PMC also ensures compliance of necessary approvals from concerned government line departments prior to the commencement of work. The committee was entrusted with developing standard operating procedure and ensuring adaptation of the systems developed.

The committee meets once in three months and reviews the progress as well as the problems faced. It supervises the implementation of the approved

activities and supports those through establishing convergence of various line departments and by strictly maintaining quality standards. It facilitates project implementation and takes necessary decisions based on the plan and their achievements.

Based on the satisfactory progress and completion of work, the committee advised ZP to release funds.

7. Organisational Structure

District Level

At district level, the Collector assists the ZP in discharging its functions under the NREG and state-run MREG schemes. Similar arrangements were done for PPCP project. The DPC helps to consolidate the action plans and projects prepared by the two blocks for inclusion in the shelf of projects to be approved by the panchayat at district level. Similar guidance is provided in the state-run schemes. The office coordinates with Program Officers to ensure that the job applicants are provided employment as per the entitlements under REGS.

Further it helps in reviewing, monitoring and supervising the performance of the Program Officers and conduct periodic inspection of the works in progress. The office also offers help in obtaining necessary sanctions and administrative clearances as and when required. It also helps in preparation of the labour budget during December, for the next financial year. In this budget care is taken to work out details of anticipated demand for unskilled manual labour in the district and the plan for engagement of labourers in the works covered under the scheme and hands it over to the ZP. But in the case of PPCP project it is the PMC which supervises the village DPRs and action plans, being incorporated with the district level plan and works.

Block Level – Block Programme Officer (BPO)

BPO plays a critical role in matching the demand for employment from the labour budget vis-à-vis opportunities in the project areas. In normal circumstances BPO plays the supervision and coordination of registration of applicants for employment (job cards) and providing wage employment as per the shelf of work in the project areas.

Therefore a plan is prepared for the entire block by consolidating the project proposals prepared by the GP and the approved proposals received from PS. Based on the funds received from District Programme Coordinator, BPO releases funds to the implementing agencies. The office ensures maintaining proper accounts of the funds received, released and utilized. BPO is entrusted with monitoring project activities taken up by GP and other implementing agencies. It oversees the sanction and payment of unemployed allowance to the eligible households. It is also responsible for the prompt and fair payment

of wages to all labourers employed under the programme, conducting regular social audits and taking prompt action to the objections raised, and functions as per the direction of the DPC.

In PPCP project it was learnt that the district level offices ensured coordination between BPO and PMC and facilitated the demand and supply of the employment vis-à-vis the opportunities through proposals prepared by the GP and approved by ZP. It was also felt that there is no significant departure in terms of roles and responsibilities of the slated REGS mandates of the state government. Instead WOTR-SIED played the role of the BPO in the PPCP project.

Gram Panchayat (GP)

The NREG Act says that it is the village, intermediate and ZP which are responsible for planning and implementing the scheme. The GPs at all levels can be the implementing agencies under the Act. At least 50 per cent of works in terms of costs can be allocated to GP for implementation. GP is made responsible for identification of the projects to be taken up in the area under the scheme as per the recommendations of the Gram Sabha (GS). The projects thus identified are forwarded to Programme Officer for scrutiny and preliminary approval.

GP prepares and develops plan and maintain shelf of possible works to be taken up, as and when demand for work arises. The Panchayat Samiti approves the block level plan and forwards the same to ZP for approval. ZP finalises block-wise shelf of projects to be taken up for implementation under the scheme. The plan approved by ZP is assigned to various agencies like panchayats, line departments and NGOs.

During field visits and interaction with GP members it was found that services of individual technical experts were hired in terms of design and layout of the projects. The process mentioned earlier takes about six months to get approved and payments released. Monitoring of the projects by GP was found to be done religiously.

In case of PPCP, the GP identifies the soil and water conservation treatment measures and WOTR-SIED conducts the technical surveys, appraisals and prepares work and labour budget estimates. In two of the project blocks visited, SIED was found to be implementing the project activities.

Gram Sabha (GS)

Gram Sabha (GS) is the lowest entity in the hierarchy of REGS but it is the most important. GS plays a significant role in identification of wage labourers and is responsible for recommending developmental works in villages. GP banks on GS to decide activities and physical works to be taken up in the plan. GS is also responsible for conducting social audits of all projects within the GP.

Reflecting on the PPCP project, it was observed that GS identifies the employment opportunities in soil and water conservation and related activities of watershed-based treatment measures and recommends works in the villages to ZP. Based on the prescribed plan WOTR undertakes technical surveys and prepares work, labour and budget estimates for soil and water conservation treatments.

Organizational Setup

The Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Council (MEGC) advises the state government and monitors and evaluates the schemes. The Chief Minister is the President of the MEGC and the ministers for rural development, water conservation, agriculture and forest are members. Secretaries for MREGS, rural development, water conservation, agriculture and forest are Member Secretaries. Deputy Secretary (EGS) and other members are decided by the state government.

At the state level Principal Secretary, MREGS is the State Programme Coordinator whereas at the district level the District Collector is the District Programme Coordinator and the Chief Executive Officer is Joint District Programme Coordinator. At the block level there is a Block Programme Officer, who is selected from among the retired Tahsildars, BDOs and DPOs who have worked in rural areas. S/he is responsible to the Sub Divisional Officer (Revenue) and District Programme Coordinator.

The structure mentioned here is working parallel to the PPCP arrangement as mentioned in Chapter 5 where the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders are elicited.

8. Partnership for Implementation

In the MREG programme, no new recruitments are conducted for the programme implementation by the government. Instead, officials are deputed from other departments. It was learned that programmes at the district level was equally distributed among the erstwhile EGS department and ZP.

The Deputy CEO has been designated to anchor the programme under the CEO of ZP. He is assisted by an officer of BDO rank, a senior clerk and a junior clerk. At the office of the District Programme Management (DPM) a Deputy Collector has been designated to coordinate the line department, the entire fund flow and documentation. He is assisted by a lower division clerk (LDC), an accounts assistant and an Assistant Project Officer (APO) on contract.

At the block level the programme is anchored by the BDO who is assisted by the Agriculture Extension Officer and an LDC.

At the village level the programme is anchored by the Gram Sevak and on site, by by Rojgar Sevak. In addition, the technical service providers (individuals

In contrast to the normal programme implementation, the payment structure of the implementation organisation in case of PPCP was that a Block Coordinator heads the programmes approved by ZP. He is experienced in the development field for ten years and has been paid Rs 25,000 per month. An engineer with a B. Tech (Agriculture) was paid about Rs 15,000 per month. He is assisted by a social worker who was paid similar to an engineer. The Wasundhara Sahayak, who is the person in the field, was paid Rs 300 per day along with TA and food expenses.

and agencies) are engineers with experience of working with government in some form or the other.

It was difficult to collect the pay band for different officials with regard to the case study as such. But from the field, the information gathered was that the APO was paid Rs 5000 and Rojgar Sevaks one per cent of the works generated.

The contrast in payments (see box) brings an alternative argument for implementation of NREGS, where the selection of key individuals vis-à-vis their deliverables was the role of WOTR and ITC-RDT.

9. Partnership with Community-Based Institutions

A partnership was entered into by the project PPCP with SIED, a sister organisation of WOTR, with a set roles to be delivered. Formation of the community-based institutions was primarily the role of SIED. Strengthening the community-based institutions and their performance, capacity building programmes were delivered periodically by SIED. The details of these programmes are mentioned in section 11.1. Since the project adopted watershed approach, the mandate to promote and strengthen watershed committees, user groups and different community-based groups are brought into partnership. The relevant terms of references were not available.

Part 3

**Planning,
Implementation
and Support
Systems**

10. Planning and Implementation

A snap shot of persons in charge at the district, block and village levels vis-à-vis the functions in case of the state-run MREGS is described in the table given below, where the PPCP arrangement had also sought similar range of functions in order to maintain the systems in place without major deviations so far as the arrangement is concerned.

Level	Body	Person in charge	Functions
District	District Programme Coordinator	Collector	Finalize and approve shelf of projects, supervise and monitor projects taken up at block / taluka level, and guide work in district.
		Dy. Collector, EGS	Generate work proposals under departmental heads and ensure inclusion in shelf of work, generate district plan, coordinate, monitor line department initiatives, ensure timely recording and sanction of proposals, release of funds (Collector), monitor, supervise, inspect, conduct audit, collate information from all departments and record electronically, and release of funds.
	Zilla Parishad	CEO, Dy CEO VP	Generate plans and proposals from GramPanchayat (GP), accord technical sanctions, facilitate administrative sanctions and request fund and flow, ensure measurement and muster books entries record electronically, appoint TSP, ensure social audit, and quality check.
		Assistant Project Officer	Collect and record all muster books in computer system and inform Dy. Collector, EGS
Taluka / Block	Taluka Samiti	Taluka Programme Coordinator/ BDO	Approve plan and forward to district, supervise and monitor project at gram / block, supervise TSP, approve muster and measurement books, ensure physical and financial closure of work.
		TSP	Help preparation and submission of proposal to block, follow-ups, monitor work, record measurement book, ensure quality, mobilize people.
Village	Gram Panchayat (GP)	Gram Sevak	Identify projects, prepare development plans, maintain shelf of projects, allocate employment opportunities among applicants, make available all books for verification to gram sabha (GS), ensure social audit, mobilize people.
		Rojgar Sahayak	Record muster book, mobilize people, ensure quality of work, inform GS on progress and completion of work.

Flow of various systems

- Preparation of shelf of work
- Administrative approval
- Executing work and funds flow
- Documentation

PPCP Project Intervention.

Regular MREGS programme	Deviation adopted by PPCP
Gram Sabha (GS) prepares a possiblelist of works with the help of Gram Sevak, technical service provider or NGO.	Active participation by the community on listing of soil–water conservation works. WOTR–SIED provided training to community-based institutions, Rojgar Sevaks and GP members on soil–water conservation measures.
People in the village or hamlet is gathered by beating of drums or public announcements.	Information through community institutions.
The list of work is forwarded to Panchayat Samiti (Taluka level) for consolidation. Taluka Panchayat ratifies the works.	The implementation plan is sanctioned by GS and forwarded to ZP.
Zilla Panchayat (ZP) goes through the list. No deletion only addition is done.	
Approved list is sent to GP through Taluka.	
GP with the help of TSP/NGO prioritise the work and TSP/line department look at feasibility of activities.	PMC supports line department for convergence.
Selected work is the prepared details for preparing an estimate of cost and labour days by contracted engineer or technical agency which is further approved by the official engineer at the block level, taluka level, or concerned department.	Same as MREGS.
Estimated work is again sent to the ZP for approval through the same channel.	
Concerned officials at block level (public works, forestry, social forestry, agriculture) vets and approves for being forwarded to ZP.	PMC supports this function. NGO makes intensive follow-ups for approval which a regular GS/GP is not able to do.
The concerned departments in the ZP scrutinize the proposal for technical correctness and approve.	Same as MREGS
Set of approved proposals of GP sent to respective GPs.	Same as MREGS
Approved list is called shelf of project	Same as MREGS
Time taken for an activity to be approved is two to three months.	The time taken is about a month

- Monitoring
- Opening bank account, fund transfer across levels

Information under the above heads has been gathered from the officials at various levels in the ZP, block and GP and could bear similarity to that of the operation module of PPCP.

For preparation of shelf of work, the table above suggests the normal steps and the deviation as understood in the PPCP project intervention.

Seeking administrative approval

- All activities need administrative approval of the Collector or ZP. Without an administrative sanction funds cannot be committed or released.
- People demand for work from shelf of work through GP to Taluka, who in turn seeks approval from ZP.
- Upon approval, demand of work could be kept in shelf of work or work order.
- Muster book is issued from the Deputy Collector's office.
- The time taken for administrative approval to issue of muster book is about a month.
- In terms of PPCP project, there is no such deviations.

Executing work and fund flow

- Only persons with job cards are allowed work.
- Job card applications could be made on site too. Blank cards are kept on site for such purpose and issued when people turn up suddenly.
- GP estimates the number of person-days and allocates work to families.
- Details of work allocated are entered in the job card.
- Attendance is taken on muster book at GP. The data is entered in a rough muster book by the Rojgar Sahayak. This data is then transferred to the original muster book.
- The volume of work, its cost and work days are calculated and allocated.
- 60 per cent of estimated cost is then released from ZP to BDO account.
- BDO transfers it to the account of GP.
- Muster book along with work progress are submitted by TSP/GS/RS to block.
- Quality checks on work is done by TSP.
- A comprehensive check from estimate stage to execution is done by block officials.

- The progress of work and release of fund is also recorded in a separate asset book.
- Funds are released to GP based on the muster book. GP then releases funds to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.
- No deviation was found in the case of PPCP.

Documentation

The work entails great degree of detailed documentation and reporting at every level. A great deal of emphasis is put on the need for transparency. Each step, from seeking employment opportunity to closure of work, requires to be meticulously documented. There are over 16 different forms, formats and documents that come into play during the execution of a given work.

The muster book (MB) entry is entrusted to RS and that of daily work progress to TSP. The RS reports to GP and TSP to the block. The TSP is required to discuss feasibility of sites with GS, GP and line department. He prepares the work plan in accordance with set guidelines. He keeps the measurement book which is verified by the Deputy Engineer. This is one of the major points for delay in approvals for payment. There is a huge time gap between the submission of MB and its inspection. NGOs and TSPs make innumerable rounds to block and Taluka office to get the MB inspected.

The block has two computers. However, most of the details are noted on paper (this work is outsourced to private agencies) and entered in the NREGA software at the collectorate. No soft copies of typed entries are made. The LDC usually spends the money from his pocket as there is no provision for outsourcing.

A resource person, the Assistant Project Officer, has been hired to collect and record data received from blocks and line departments. He uploads the data onto the NREGA website using requisite passwords. The district programme officer has outsourced the work of entry of data flowing in from blocks to an agency. The agency has been given a contract for two years. The feedback from the village regarding the work, transparency, payment, and other issues are recorded on a social audit feedback system. The agency has been allocated space in the collector's office. It employs local persons for data entry. It has assembled systems with windows XP OS (operating system) of doubtful origin.

Monitoring

- The progress of the work is monitored on the basis of the following documents that flow on a regular basis to the district: Number of works requested
- Number of job cards issued

- Number of mandays generated
- Percentage of work completed

This work is monitored by the District Collector or CEO, ZP.

- By and large block-wise monitoring is done by the Deputy CEO of NREGA.
- He conducts day-to-day interactions with the block officials.
- The technical officials, in addition to the administrative and technical checks on the work, also are mandated to inspect and monitor at least 20 per cent of works undertaken.

At the BDO

- Every work is inspected and certified for its feasibility
- The work is inspected at all stages
- Financial monitoring and documentation is done
- Labour attendance is verified from the muster book
- The task is undertaken by both the block official and TSP selected for the purpose

At Gram Panchayat

- The Gram Sabha chooses its works
- All the works get notified in the Gram Sabha
- It gets to choose its Rojgar Sevak based on certain criteria
- Gram Panchayat gets funds from the BDO through cheques
- Payment to workers is transferred directly to their bank accounts.
- An asset book is created as the work progresses
- Social audit are done to keep a tab on the process
- Regular audits are done to check utilisation of funds

Procurement and Description of MoU

NREGA allows procurement of services from private institutions, individuals and civic societies for certain activities. The procurements are done as per specified guidelines in the following items of work:

- Data entry and preparation of job cards
- Data entry in the muster book
- TSP – individual, institution
- Tripartite arrangement between ZP/ ITC/WOTR

Job card and muster book updation

The job of collation and preparation of job cards has been delved to a private party. This has been done through a least-cost tender system. The party is based at Aurangabad and is also engaged in similar services for four other districts. Upon receipt of intimation from the BDO the organization arranges for a person to visit the location to take photographs of the people and to collect required information. The photographs and information are put together into a booklet at the work station and sent for official authorisation and issue.

The firm is also entrusted with the task of entering and updating all muster book entries emerging from the blocks. This is a crucial task as further release of funds depends on proper and complete muster entries. The organization is given a room with basic fixtures. The computer software is provided by NIC. The information entered is captured into the NIC server and further uploaded onto the Government of India site.

During the initial hype and drive about the scheme every individual in the village enrolled his/her name in the job requirement card. Many of the job card holders never responded to calls for labour requirement.

No person can be denied access to work simply because s/he has no job card. Therefore blank job cards are kept on site which are issued to workers. Such data is later entered in the system.

11. Support Systems in PPCP Arrangement

11.1 Capacity Building

The multidisciplinary team ensures the following:

- Preparation of village development plans using the Objective Oriented Project Planning Log Frame method for each village. The output of the village plans are consolidated in Taluka/block level perspective plan.
- Participation of the poorest sections of the community in village envisioning process through formation of community-based organisations in each village by using participative processes such as wealth ranking and PRA.
- Generation of awareness in the community as well as GPs about the objectives of MREGS through village meetings and using IEC materials.
- Setting up of local level vigilance teams for monitoring and supervision of the work executed through GS and GP.
- Preparation of technical plans for activities decided by GS for water resources, watershed, horticulture and afforestation.
- Improved operational and financial efficiencies of the programme.

HR Capacity Building

During the initiation of the programme, a master trainer from Nasik trained all the senior officers of the district. The details of the programme was prepared as a booklet and distributed. The officers in turn conducted training programmes for the block office staff and Gram Sevaks. Both the programmes were for one day each.

Within the government system no other capacity building programme was conducted. TSPs are given the standard design for works to be executed.

The Deputy CEO and CEO hold meetings every month to review the progress. The work is also reviewed by the DPM. BDOs, who need to keep a tab on the fund utilisation, conduct more frequent reviews of work as well as the finance available to them.

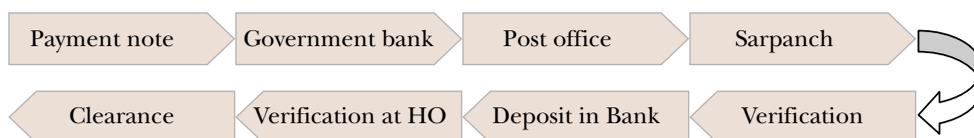
11.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

- Gram Sabha (GS) monitors all works at the village level and the employment provided to each household which is registered and requested for work. It will also monitor registration and issue of job cards and timely payment of wages.
- Gram Panchayat (GP) will monitor the works implemented by the other implementing agencies and the muster rolls maintained by them at work sites and the payments made.
- Social audit system as a mechanism of monitoring: Social audit of work, the processes, and payments are provisioned as inbuilt control and check mechanism which are carefully monitored at state and central government levels for any grievance or deviations.
- Panchayat Samiti and Block Programme Officer will monitor the registration, employment provided to each household, unemployment allowance paid, social audit, flow of funds, timeliness and correctness of payment of wages, and quality of the works.
- Block Programme Officer is responsible for sending all reports and returns to the District Collector who in turn shall send his/her reports to the state and Central governments.
- The District Collector will monitor all aspects of implementation including registration, employment, unemployment allowance, social audit, funds flow, progress and quality of works, qualitative aspects of implementation, timely and correct payment of wages and timely payment of unemployment allowance.

11.3 Financial Management Systems and Audit

Funds flow:



Based on the shelf of works, a district prepares a labour budget in December and sends a requisition to the central government.

“Chapter IV, Para 14, sub section (6) of the NREG Act says that the District Programme Coordinator shall prepare in the month of December every year a labour budget for the next financial year containing the details of anticipated demand for unskilled manual work in the district and the plan for engagement of labourers in the works covered under the Scheme. The Ministry of Rural Development will estimate the requirement of funds on the basis of projections made in the Labour Budget. Central funds will be sanctioned after examining these Labour Budgets and taking into account utilization of funds previously released”.

Funds allocation for the district is the single most important task. The flow of transmission of the labour budget is then mapped. The process includes:

- Gram Sabhas should be held on October 2 of each year for identification and recommendation of work.
- Gram Panchayat has to forward the development plan with its priorities to the Programme Officer (PO) by October 15 every year.
- The Programme Officer will ensure that the Gram Panchayat approves and consolidates all recommendations of the GS into the village shelf of projects. The process of scrutiny, re-reference to GP, if necessary, and consolidation and submission to Intermediate Panchayat will be completed by the Project Officer by November 15.
- The Intermediate Panchayat will approve the block plan within 15 days of its submission by PO. PO will submit the block plan approved by the Intermediate Panchayat to the District Programme Coordinator (DPC) by November 30.
- The DPC will submit the Block-wise shelf of projects and labour budget based on it to the ZP Panchayat by December 15.
- The ZP will approve the block-wise shelf of projects and the labour budget by December 31.
- The DPC will forward the labour budget to the state government which will in turn forward it with its recommendation to the Ministry of Rural Development by January 31.

Normally the time taken between generation of the payment note and clearance from bank is 15 to 20 days. It was, however, observed during field visits that the major bottleneck is the number of days taken to clear the payments, which was more than 35 days. The remedy suggested by the Panchayat representatives to reduce the time duration was to open either post office or regional rural bank accounts. Another reason for the delay was lack of adequate staff in the bank.

Delay in the release of funds at the village level was lack of adequate funds from MREGS, increase in demand for work and sanctioned activities in the villages.

In comparison to western Maharashtra, people here are less educated and hence with low motivation. The impact of the programme was very low. For example, in Aurangabad district, where the NREGS is now more than three years old, the programme is managed by technically qualified and motivated personnel from watershed and engineering department who handle demand generation better. Jalna is learned to be a cotton belt and offer good opportunities seasonally for cotton picking. At the time of the study the rates being paid under the NREGS was far below the cotton picking rates. However, the cotton picking was limited to a few days in a year. Jalna town has more than 100 steel rolling and re-rolling mills that offer ample work opportunities of skilled and semi-skilled nature. Therefore, one reason offered by the officials was that there was ample opportunity with better wage prospects in many areas. Contrastingly, WOTR says there is ample demand for work which needs to be rightly tapped. Strategically they operate through a shramdan entry and pick individual farm lands which urgently need land and water conservation and where the farmer is willing to travel the extra mile to ensure labour availability and quality check.

Selection of auditor for the district was through expressions of interest invited by the Collector. Messrs Prasanna and Kala Associates, Charter Accountants, hired for the programme, conducts financial audit at district and block levels. It was found that about 0.68 per cent of the total budget was spent, whereas the expenditure at the Gram Panchayat level was 0.9 per cent. (Procurement norms, point 14, page 11)

Funding Procedure

- Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Fund is administered by the Secretary, MREGS. On the basis of the estimated expenditure in the next quarter in each block, the District Collector conveys the demand to the state government. A cheque or draft is issued to the District Collector, who in turn issues cheques to implementing agencies.
- At the district level a joint account in the names of the District Collector and Deputy Collector, MREGS will be opened in a nationalized bank. The Block Programme Officer will assess the fund requirements of each

implementing agency for the muster closing in each fortnight. He informs the District Collector of the requirements for wages agency-wise for each fortnight within two days from the closing of muster. The District Collector will issue cheques directly to the agency and the agency would encash it from the sub-treasury. The Deputy Collector, MREGS signs the cheques.

- The initial installment as seed money for the revolving fund, as decided by the Central Government, Ministry of Rural Development, would be released to the districts.
- Gram Panchayats will be authorized to spend the money received by them on the sanctioned works to be executed by them. After 60 per cent of the funds has been spent, the GP applies to the Block Programme Officer (BPO) for release of additional funds. The proposal of the GP will be accompanied by a statement of work-wise expenditure together with the report of the vigilance and monitoring committee duly approved by the Gram Sabha. The BPO, after satisfying himself on the proper utilization of funds, releases the next instalment equal to the amount utilized by the GP within two weeks. The GP is responsible to carry out any rectification in the proposal as directed by the BPO.
- The BPO will send the necessary proposal to the District Collector. Out of the funds placed at his disposal, the District Collector will replenish the funds of the GP and also release funds to the other executing agencies for the works sanctioned to them for execution.

Part 4

Partnership Management

12. Partnership Management

The core of the PPCP project is partnership and trust. The institutional arrangement helped in developing trust and cementing the partnership bondage.

Initiating the Partnership

The CEO of Jalna ZP worked in the agriculture department for a few years. He was, therefore, aware about WOTR and its role in watershed development and soil and water management. He was also aware that ITC–RDT has a partnership with WOTR in capacity building on watershed projects.

The CEO was also aware of how and why the EGS suffered in Maharashtra. Therefore, to ensure that the same problems do not recur, he wanted a good technical agency to support MREGS. WOTR was zeroed in as the technical agency. However, it was not possible to provide proper support without capacity building of the community. Hence support from ITC–RDT was requested.

The key features of the partnership are:

- The partnership has been in operation for only a year and hence everybody is learning to cope with the issues.
- PMC has been established which meets informally as required.
- The government does not have to provide any cost in the partnership between WOTR and ITC–RDT.
- WOTR does the mobilization through watershed treatments, in which they have several years' experience.
- In the WOTR/ICT–RDT partnership WOTR, apart from providing mobilization support, works as the technical support partner. However they were not inclined to work at two per cent compensation as they thought it is not possible to provide substantial support in that bare minimum. Hence ITC decided to extend support for manpower costs.
- The works are mainly related to land bunding and are taken up seasonally as per the availability of labour.
- The musters or data is maintained by regular department staff and sent further to APO at block level for further action. WOTR has no role in this.
- The partnership is being extended to one more block in the same partnership mode
- Selection of village is done with mutual consent on the basis of the need of the village and leadership and community support. Each village has first to provide two days of voluntary labor to show their inclination.

- Beyond a period of 15 days. This issue has been raised a number of times in PMC meetings.
- Other processes are followed as per the NREG Act, such as developing shelf of work, getting approval in Gram Sabha, and so on.
- Still other process such as issue of job cards, social audit, transparency and so on is looked after by line department and WOTR does not intervene in these.
- WOTR has no role in musters and payments and related aspects.
- One work or site each is open at a time in the selected villages.
- Most villages had already prepared the shelf of work through Gram Sabha.

Technical Service Provider (TSP)

The task of helping the community to prepare estimates and record and document the work has been entrusted to technical service providers (TSPs). They could be both individual and/or institutions (NGOs, technical institutions, etc). They need to have the capacity to support the technical aspects of work during estimation, execution and inspection. Most of the individuals are civil engineers experienced in working with the government in various programmes including EGS. The NGO TSPs are usually small groups with one or two active members. They are mostly individuals under an organizational banner. The TSPs are selected based on expressions of interest (EOIs) and interviews. Upon selection they will be assigned to specific blocks and will contact the gram sevaks or panchayats as directed. The Gram Sabha or the Gram Panchayat has the right to reject a TSP's work in its area. Individual TSPs were observed to have formed cartels to express interest. They have even collaborated in the preparation of software to generate estimates in the required formats.

TSPs report to BDO. Constant follow-ups are required for approvals of estimates and more importantly on site inspection by the agricultural officer. The TSP is provided with 0.4 per cent of the work generated. Usually a TSP works under a supervisor on site who does all the measurement book entries and monitoring and quality checks.

Insufficient work, non-use of machinery clause, delayed payments, survival with meager funds, and so on have become a nightmare for TSPs. In case of WOTR, however, though it is treated as a TSP, their MoU is under the tripartite agreement unlike those of TSPs. Unlike the regular TSP selection, the understanding calls for organizing an advisory body to facilitate the process. The relations are based on respect and strengths of each partner. However, the MoUs with other TSPs are grossly one-sided, dictating terms of engagement and tasks.

Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) and ITC-RDT

Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR)

Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) visualized an opportunity to work with watershed and yet create an impact on water and employment using NREGS programmes. It took some time to understand the system and bring out the learnings, further bringing changes in the watershed approach to be built in with NREGS.

The programme brought in 50 villages from 15 GPs to facilitate watershed related work in the selected area, as shelf of work. The implementation of watershed activities warranted a strong social mobilization strategy for entry into villages. The community agreed to contribute through shramdan based on partnership and WOTR rolled out watershed programmes subsequently. Net planning was conducted by the community and a watershed implementation plan was prepared.

A cadre of villagers trained and experienced in working with WOTR watershed programmes volunteered to take up more villages. Similar process of net planning generates demand-based activities in new villages. This served as an exposure visit for the trained cadre of villagers.

One coordinator per block assisted by an engineer and a social worker constituted the team at block level for the PPCP programme. Wasundhara Sevak was organized to assist as volunteers in large work when site employment goes beyond 35 persons. Periodic review of progress and monitoring kept the volunteers busy and the trained cadre maintained quality control in terms of delivery. On-site work training, discussion with farmers and involving them to solve the bottlenecks helped bring ownership within the community.

The organization also provided support to sort out issues of delay in payments to the community. The process adopted was issue of demand draft to panchayats. Panchayats issued advice note to government and a 'pay to yourself' cheque was issued. This process reduced the delay in payments from 35 to 12 days. Therefore, WOTR was able to manage the partnership with the community.

Indian Tobacco Company (ITC)

As part of the partnership agreement, ITC provided funds to WOTR for the watershed programme which supported the costs for administrative and capacity building activities related to NREGS.

The partnership provided support in generating better work practices, accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of WOTR. The strategy was to use the funds to leverage water related intervention and farm

improvement measures. The partnership sought understanding at least for a minimum of five years.

Negotiations were drawn hard with definite deliverables within government procedures. The foundation of the partnership was to support those organizations which can deliver quality work on time. The support was located under the social initiative group and called 'Sunhera Kal'.

13. Impact and Challenges

More than 70 per cent of works under the PPCP programme was undertaken for soil and water conservation in the district. The programme is driven by the demand for work by the community. The flow of funds to NGOs and technical partners depends on the amount of work generated through shelf of work. Therefore, the labour estimates vis-à-vis the work generated impacted the livelihoods of the community.

The Gram Sabha (GS) had played a pivotal role in implementation of REGS. It was responsible for recommending shelf of works to be taken up under REGS and conducting social audits of the implementation. In addition, GS had supported extensively to facilitate the implementation of the schemes. In the process of delivery the GS was strengthened institutionally in terms of generating work and handling payments.

WOTR is executing watershed projects under NREGA in two blocks, namely Jafrabad and Bhokardan of Jalna district of Maharashtra. From the PPCP arrangement it became evident that the partnership between the agencies has the potential to deliver results while aiming at improvement in the productivity of land. Soil and water conservation measures were the vehicles to address larger issues in implementing NREGS in the district, while considering the potential of all the stakeholders.

In the recent decades the expanding role of government has been questioned and there has been a strong sense of belief that government would better fit as an enabler rather than a doer. Even in the context of public goods where government so far had a rationale for government intervention was questioned. The logic behind this phenomenon is that the procedural inefficiency of government has been the stumbling block in effective delivery of services.

It is in this context it was argued that there are Alternative Implementation Models/Mechanism (AIM) that would be much more effective than the government agencies. The study has captured the learning's of AIM model and the insights drawn assume importance to create effective Alternate Implementation Models for better delivery.

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