

Guidelines:

Contents of the District Project –

- The main objectives of the scheme are to address the problems of low agricultural productivity, unemployment and to fill critical gaps in physical and social infrastructure. Therefore, the District Administration/Panchayati Raj Institutions would have to first identify the obstacles constraining growth of the district as well as the strengths of the district in terms of natural resources and existing institutional support. The additionality is to be used to serve local needs which would make a dent on the poverty of the district in a time bound manner. The most important aspect is to ensure people's participation and the involvement of PRIs, NGOs and Self-Help Groups at every stage including plan formulation, implementation and monitoring. Innovative programmes and alternate ways of implementing schemes to ensure transparency, efficient delivery and accountability would be paramount importance.
- Under this component, a District Plan is to be prepared for each identified backward district showing the flow of funds from all sources namely, State Plan, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Central Schemes, Externally Aided Projects, etc. as well as the specific schemes for the additionality under the RSVY. The schemes are to be used as an additionality. The State Governments should therefore first use all available resources and funds under the RSVY are to be used to fill critical gaps, which stand in the way of rapid development. The cost-benefit analysis of all schemes should be carried out carefully and very high cost schemes should be avoided. Livelihood support schemes should concentrate on training and skill development. Employment generation schemes such as Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana/Shahari Swarozgar Yojana/Programmes of Khadi & Village Industries Commission/Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, etc. should be taken

full advantage of before using funds from the RSVY for Self-Employment Schemes. Stress may also be laid on social infrastructure such as health and education. The RSVY component of the District plan could also include schemes for drought proofing (soil conservation, afforestation, social forestry, wasteland development, minor irrigation); agriculture, horticulture (including marketing support), etc. and economic infrastructure (roads and power). This list is illustrative but not comprehensive. In land and water management, the use of machines may be encouraged as often the poor quality of assets is due to the lack of compaction. The District may also choose to use upto 15% of the funds on maintenance of assets in the health, education and veterinary sectors.

- The additionality should not be used for acquisition of land for any project, security related schemes, administrative buildings and such other projects. No new posts are to be created for this programme. Establishment costs/staff cost cannot be funded under this scheme. Similarly, subsidy linked schemes should be kept at the same level as that provided in the case of similar Central Government schemes.
- All schemes are to be completed within the prescribed three-year time frame. However, in case of certain schemes such as watershed schemes, which cannot be completed within this period, the projects would have to be completed with State Plan funds in a given time frame. The schemes may be patterned on existing Central/State schemes and the existing norms followed. Adequate justification should be given for the use of alternate norms.
- Certain on-going schemes could be completed with RSVY funds if this amount can serve as a critical input for completion of the scheme within one to two years. The State Steering Committee should satisfy itself that funds are not coming from any other source and the concerned scheme is of crucial importance to the District.

- NGOs, PRIs and Self-Help Groups should be involved in aspects such as awareness and capacity building, training, etc. and about two per cent of the funds could be utilized for such schemes.
- The District Plan should contain a separate chapter, which shows the time and cost scheduling of each project quarter-wise. **No cost overrun will be permitted.**
- An institution should be identified which will undertake regular monitoring of the schemes in the District. This could be a local university, college, management institution or any other technical institute. In the first six months or so this Institute needs to undertake benchmark surveys thereafter regular monitoring of the schemes till its lifetime. The benchmark surveys would include aspects such as number of sanctioned posts in the District and position of vacancies, changing requirement of staff in various sectors, socio-economic background of the District, physiography and natural wealth of the District, status of social and physical infrastructure, etc. This Institute could be paid an annual fee of say Rs.4-6 lakh per annum for their services.

Mandatory Administrative Measures –

- States which get benefits under the Backward Districts Initiative will have to agree to undertake the following **Mandatory Administrative Measures** :
 - Stability of tenure of at least two years for the Chief Administrator, the Deputy Commissioners of the concerned districts and the Heads of the line departments.
 - Complete transparency in the selection, formulation and implementation of the projects.
 - Proactive involvement of PRIs and NGOs.

Release of funds –

- Funds under the Development and Reform Facility (DRF) will be given by the Government of India to the State Governments on

100% grant basis in suitable instalments linked with the satisfactory progress of the District Plan.

- The State Government will release the funds received under the programme to a separate head created for the purpose under the District Rural Agency within 15 days of the receipt of the said funds. Failure to do so will lead to forfeit of subsequent instalments and the funds released earlier will be treated as a loan.

Delivery Mechanism –

- There is a **High Level Committee** at the Government of India (GOI) level chaired by Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission with Finance Minister, Minister of State for Planning, Chief Minister, Government of Bihar, Chief Minister, Government of Orissa and Secretary, Planning Commission as Members. This Committee will approve policies regarding initiatives of the Development and Reform Facility, set the reform agenda for the State Governments and periodically conduct a review of the progress of the DRF activities.
- There is an **Empowered Committee** at the GOI level chaired by Secretary, Planning Commission which will approve the District Plans, monitor and review the programme, have evaluations and mid-term appraisals conducted and attend the all other matters relating to the operation of the DRF.
- Each State has to set up a **State Level Steering Committee** chaired by the Chief Secretary which will get detailed annual plans prepared and recommend to the Planning Commission for its concurrence and release of funds. The Committee would also deal with issues of coordination, etc. at the State level.

Monitoring and Evaluation –

- A strict monitoring schedule should be a part of the implementation process itself. The schemes should be monitored by the State Level Steering Committee/NGOs and quarterly progress reports

submitted to Planning Commission for review by the Empowered Committee and the High Level Committee.

The State Governments should also maintain a website for each district which should be updated on a weekly basis showing the physical and financial progress of schemes. The State Government may also provide relevant visual recordings (photographs/videos) to show the position before the projects are undertaken and after completion of the projects.