Total Sanitation Campaign

Monitoring Systems for Incentive Programs:

Learning from Large-scale
Rural Sanitation Initiatives
in India

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Global Scaling Up Rural Sanitation is a WSP project focused on learning how to combine the approaches of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), behavior change communications, and social marketing of sanitation to generate sanitation demand and strengthen the supply of sanitation products and services at scale, leading to improved health for people in rural areas. It is a large-scale effort to meet the basic sanitation needs of the rural poor who do not currently have access to safe and hygienic sanitation. The project is being implemented by local and national governments with technical support from WSP. For more information, please visit www.wsp.org/scalingupsanitation.

This guidance note is one in a series of knowledge products designed to showcase project findings, assessments, and lessons learned in the Global Scaling Up Rural Sanitation project. This paper is conceived as a work in progress to encourage the exchange of ideas about development issues. For more information please email the authors at wsp@worldbank.org or visit www.wsp.org.

Acronyms

GoI	Government of India
GP	Gram Panchayat
NGP	Nirmal Gram Puruskar
ODF	Open-defecation free
SGBGSA	Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachata Abhiyan
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign

wsp
water and
sanitation program

I. Introduction

KEY POINTS
- Sanitation is a public good and, therefore, a community-wide achievement of sanitation outcomes is essential for public health benefits.
- Incentives to local governments, against achievement of milestones or on a competition basis, are effective to drive sustainable collective sanitation outcomes.
- A transparent and objective monitoring of achievements is the cornerstone of a successful incentive program.

Over the last few years, the concept of open-defecation free (ODF) communities has emerged as one of the building blocks toward achieving total sanitation. The term 'access' is widely used to capture increase in sanitation usage. However, a clean environment is a public good. Hence, there was a need to achieve total sanitation at the community level to realize public health benefits. This has led policy makers and practitioners to adopt strategies that achieve community-wide total sanitation status, which includes the community becoming ODF, and adopting safe hygiene and environmental sanitation practices.

The acceptance of the concept of ODF underlines two significant shifts in the approach to rural sanitation. First, it moves away from 'counting toilets constructed' to 'counting the number of communities that have become ODF'. Second, this signals a shift from individual household toilet construction to community-level behavior change to end open defecation as the objective of a sanitation program.

In India, the concept of ODF communities, as an objective, has been a part of the guidelines of the national rural sanitation program, the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), since 1999. However, a major thrust was received with the introduction of national-level reward programs such as the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) and state-level reward programs by a few states such as Maharashtra (Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachata Abhiyan [SGBGSA]) and Tamil Nadu (Clean Village Campaign).

The NGP is a one-time reward exclusively focused on motivating rural sanitation achievement. It is given to a local government once it has achieved ODF status and addressed environmental sanitation in all the areas under its jurisdiction. The NGP guidelines have adopted a comprehensive definition of ODF status. This is understood as the complete elimination of open defecation within the jurisdiction of a Gram Panchayat (GP, village-level local self-government), which implies that all members of a GP have access to and are using a safe sanitation facility, all schools and preschools have safe and functional toilets, and there is no open defecation by the floating or visitor population.

The state-level sanitation incentive programs are annual competitions in which the GPs compete against each other to be recognized as the 'best' on various development parameters, including sanitation, at different administrative levels – block, district, division and, ultimately, state. The basis for selecting the best and cleanest GP is a scoring scheme that gives weight to different parameters, designed to incentivize, and exceed, achievement of milestones such as ODF. Following the experience of the NGP and the sanitation reward programs introduced by selected states in scaling up the rural sanitation program, many other Indian states have introduced incentive programs to motivate and reward achievements in rural sanitation by local governments, including ODF status.

Effective monitoring is the backbone of a successful incentive program. This ensures that only those local governments that actually deserve the award are recognized, maintaining the integrity and prestige of the awards program as a whole. This guidance note describes two such monitoring systems operational in India for verification of ODF status of a local government. The first is the verification system for the national award or NGP model, and the second is the state sanitation award model. This note explains the process followed (preverification, during verification and post-verification), results achieved, and lessons learnt.

II. Verification System for National Award for Achieving ODF Status

KEY POINTS
- A multi-stage, multi-stakeholder verification process which is based on objective criteria ensures transparency and credibility of the verification system.
- A well-planned process which includes orientation of verification teams and planned for scale using decentralized systems can lead to an effective and long running incentive program.
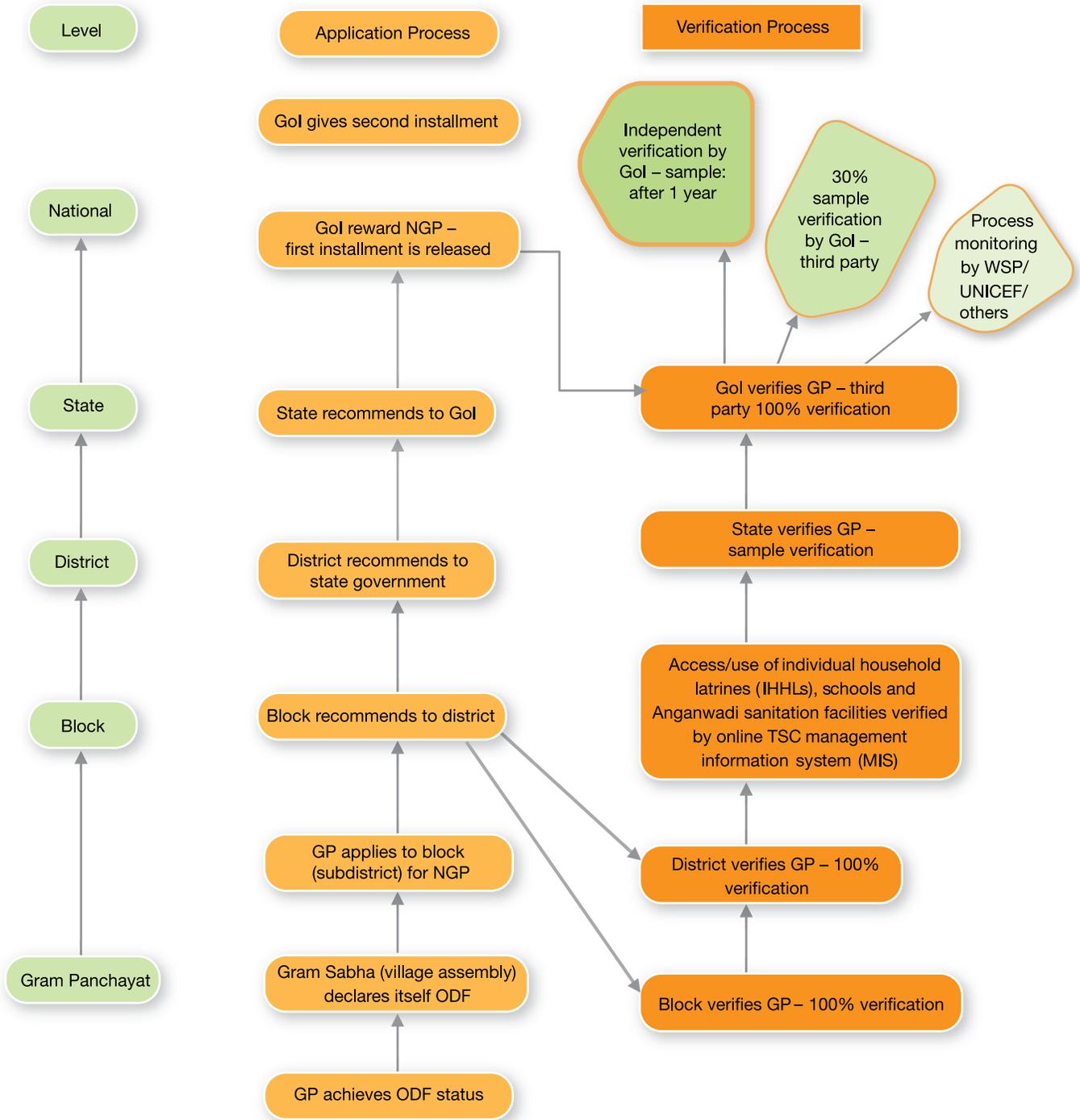
The NGP or Clean Village Prize is an annual award. It is given to those local governments that achieve 100 percent ODF status and ensure total sanitation (including solid and liquid waste management) in all the villages under their jurisdiction. The amount of financial incentive varies from Rs. 50,000 (approximately US$1,000) to Rs. 500,000 (approximately US$10,000) depending on the population size. The award generates tremendous interest and enthusiasm among local governments. This is because not only is it a fiscal incentive but also a community honor, since it is given in person by the President of India or senior dignitaries such as Chief Ministers or Governors of states, at public award ceremonies held at the national or state capitals. The awards ceremony is usually a grand function that is extensively covered by national and state-level media and, therefore, brings tremendous prestige to the winners. The verification process adopted (Figure 1) for the NGP program includes the following steps:

Preverification

- A GP that wishes to apply for the NGP must first achieve and declare itself an ODF GP at a meeting of the Gram Sabha (village assembly). This includes a resolution in the Gram Sabha to ban open defecation within the area of the GP, along with community monitoring of this ban and penalties for violators;
- The local government then formally sends its application to the block-level (subdistrict) authorities;
- The block-level authorities review the application, undertake preliminary verification, and submit to the district/state-level review and verification;
- Followed by block/district review, the respective NGP applications are entered in the online NGP

FIGURE 1: SCHEMATIC FLOW OF VERIFICATION PROCESS FOR NATIONAL AWARD GP LEVEL

Level

Application Process

Verification Process

GoI gives second installment

National

Independent verification by GoI – sample: after 1 year

GoI reward NGP – first installment is released

30% sample verification by GoI – third party

Process monitoring by WSP/ UNICEF/ others

State

State recommends to GoI

GoI verifies GP – third party 100% verification

District

District recommends to state government

State verifies GP – sample verification

Block

Block recommends to district

Access/use of individual household latrines (IHHLs), schools and Anganwadi sanitation facilities verified by online TSC management information system (MIS)

GP applies to block (subdistrict) for NGP

District verifies GP – 100% verification

Gram Panchayat

Gram Sabha (village assembly) declares itself ODF

Block verifies GP – 100% verification

GP achieves ODF status

monitoring system[1] of the Government of India (GoI), which runs various inbuilt cross-checks. On the basis of this, the GP is selected for external verification; and

- An independent third party agency is appointed to verify the status of the applicant GPs. These are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) or research organizations that have been working in the field of sanitation or rural development for at least three years. To facilitate impartiality in the verification process, an agency undertakes the verification of NGP applicants in a state other than the one in which it is based.

During Verification

- The appointed agency conducts the verification of all applicant villages, based on agreed Terms of Reference. The process includes verification of access to and usage of safe sanitation facilities for a sample of households selected on random basis, usage of safe and functional sanitation facilities at all institutions (schools, pre-schools, local government office, and so on), and the presence of sanitary conditions in the GP. The prescribed sampling procedure depends on the level and population of a GP that is being verified. For example, the minimum number of respondents to be interviewed is 50 if a GP population is less than 5,000, and 100 if a GP's population is over 5,000. At least half of the respondents should be women, each from a different household. The guidelines specify that the sample should represent all constituent villages of a GP and have a proportionate number of Above and Below Poverty Line families;

- If the applicant is a block (subdistrict level) or district, then it is first verified that all GPs were actually recipients of the NGP award during previous years and the current year; 30 percent of GPs are then selected on a random sampling basis, ensuring different population criteria are met. The identified GPs are surveyed as per the procedure outlined above for verification of village-level GPs;

- Appropriate triangulation and supervision are mandated to be undertaken to ensure the quality of data. Data collection techniques include structured observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with adults and children, key administrative functionaries at village levels such as GP leaders, Anganwadi (pre-school) Nurses and Midwives (ANMs), and so on. Photographic evidence of open defecation, institutional toilets, environmental sanitation, and so on, is encouraged. Adequate supervision of data collection with multiple levels of cross-checking is directed to ensure data consistency;

- Concurrent monitoring of the verification process is undertaken by international agencies such as the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)/UNICEF, to ensure that the process is transparent, fair, and consistent with the letter and spirit of the NGP guidelines;

- The agency submits a report that consists of its findings regarding the ODF and total sanitation status of the applicant GP that it has verified to an NGP State Level Scrutiny Committee (SLSC) headed by the State Secretary in charge of sanitation. The SLSC reviews the report submitted by the verification agency and sends its recommendations to the national government. The SLSC may counter the findings of the agency by providing specific reasons for each point of departure;

- The national government, on its part, is supposed to undertake another round of verification of 30 percent of the recommended applications through teams constituted by members from other states (typically consisting of state/district coordinators of sanitation programs, heads of NGP-winning GPs from previous years, and so on). A 10 percent or more variation in the results of this verification in a state can result in a 100 percent reverification of all the recommended applicant GPs; and

- The final step is that the NGP National Level Scrutiny Committee headed by the Joint Secretary, Department of Drinking Water Supply (DDWS), verifies the report and approves the recommendation.

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[1] http://nirmalgrampuraskar.nic.in

Post-verification

- The recommended winners at block, district, and state levels are awarded by the President of India while the winners at the GP level are awarded by senior dignitaries such as Chief Ministers or Governors of states, at public award ceremonies held at the national or state capitals. During this award ceremony, winners receive their first installment of the award; and

- The second installment is given upon sustainability of ODF status after six months by the respective state governments, after a mandatory random verification. If a GP fails to sustain its NGP status, not only can the second installment of the cash prize be forfeited but the NGP status can also be withdrawn.

Verification System for State Award for Achieving and Sustaining ODF Status

Unlike the NGP, which is a one-time award, state awards are typically designed as annual competitions, such that a local government that wins the award in one year must sustain its status to be eligible to compete again in the following year. So far, several state governments have introduced state-level awards for achieving and exceeding ODF status in constituent local governments. The details of these state-level reward programs are shown in Table 1. The basis for selecting the cleanest Panchayat is a scoring scheme that gives weight to different parameters of total sanitation. This is designed so as to incentivize GPs to not only sustain but also improve on their ODF status. For example, as can be seen from the scoring pattern for the Himachal

Pradesh reward program – Maharishi Valmiki Sampoorn Swachata Puraskar (MVSSP) – the scoring scheme gives weight to solid waste management, community participation, and institutional arrangements, as these were identified as areas of improvement in the sanitation program (Table 2).

The verification is undertaken through a peer review process involving a multisectoral team comprising representatives from the government, media, NGOs, previous winners, and so on. This multisectoral representation is undertaken to facilitate objectivity in the verification process. In addition, assessments in one block/district/ division are undertaken by members from another block/district/division, avoiding reciprocal assessment arrangements.

TABLE 1: STATE-LEVEL SANITATION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

State	Name of Award	Year of Launch
Maharashtra	Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachata Yojna	2001
Himachal Pradesh	Maharishi Valmiki Sampoorn Swachata Puraskar	2005
Andhra Pradesh	Shubhram	2007
Madhya Pradesh	Ujwal Puraskar	2008
Karnataka	Nirmalaya	2009
Sikkim	Clean Village Award	2009
Haryana	State Reward for Rural Sanitation	2009

TABLE 2: SCORING PATTERN FOR HIMACHAL PRADESH RURAL SANITATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Indicator	Maximum Score
Personal hygiene	15
School and Anganwadi sanitation	15
Quality of life	15
Solid waste management	20
Liquid waste management	15
Community participation and institutional arrangements	20
Total	**100**

Source: Government of Himachal Pradesh (2009). Himachal Pradesh: Maharishi Valmiki Sampoorn Swachata Puraskar (State Sanitation Rewards Program), http://hprural. nic.in/MVSSP_2009_Guidelines.pdf. Accessed on May 25, 2010.

Under the program, the first level of assessment is undertaken at the block level (subdistrict) and the best/cleanest GP is selected. The block-level winning GP goes on to participate in the district-level competition competing against GPs from other blocks; district-level winners go on to participate in the division-level competition (a division is an administrative unit comprising a few districts), and finally division-level winners participate in the state-level competition. The verification process is described below and in Figure 2.

Preverification
- A GP that wishes to participate in the state-level sanitation reward program must declare itself ODF;

- Next, the GP files an application at the block development office for block awards; and

- Verification committees are set up at four levels – block, district, division, and state – and oriented on how to apply the assessment criteria as well as the attitudes and codes of conduct to be followed during the assessment process.
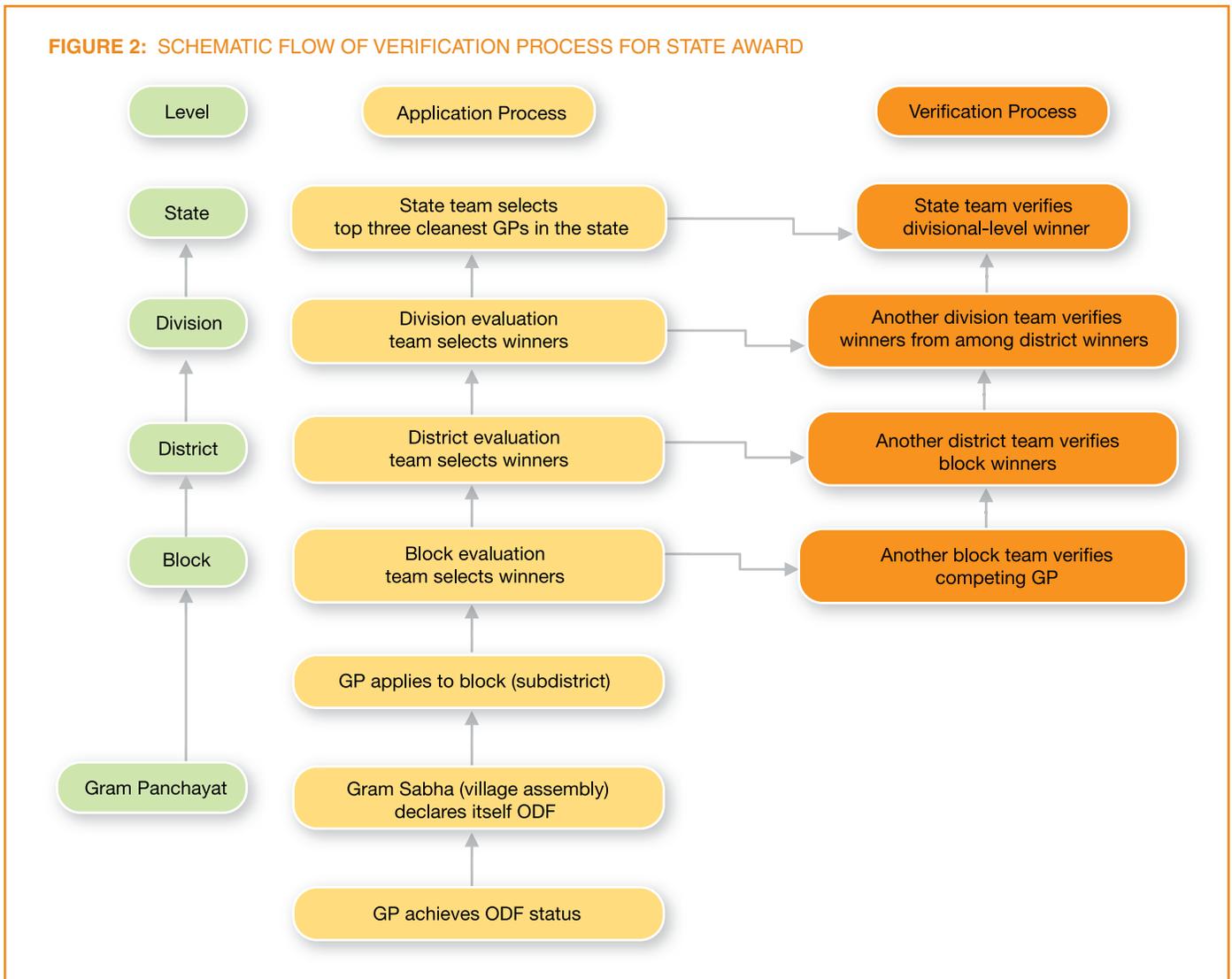
During Verification
- The concerned Block Development Officer scrutinizes the applications received and refers the applications to the District Rural Development Agency;

- The District Development Agency/District Council refers the matter to the Block Committee that is supposed to undertake the assessment. To reduce bias, assessment in one block/district/division is undertaken by members from another block/district/division, but avoiding reciprocal assessment arrangements;

FIGURE 2: SCHEMATIC FLOW OF VERIFICATION PROCESS FOR STATE AWARD

Level	Application Process	Verification Process
State	State team selects top three cleanest GPs in the state	State team verifies divisional-level winner
Division	Division evaluation team selects winners	Another division team verifies winners from among district winners
District	District evaluation team selects winners	Another district team verifies block winners
Block	Block evaluation team selects winners	Another block team verifies competing GP
	GP applies to block (subdistrict)	
Gram Panchayat	Gram Sabha (village assembly) declares itself ODF	
	GP achieves ODF status	

- Assessment committees at different levels typically have an odd number of members to facilitate decision-making by voting. Each assessment committee usually includes members in equal proportion from different disciplinary backgrounds such as rural development, health, education, engineering, and so on, and has at least one or two women members. To facilitate transparency in the assessment, provision has been made in some state reward programs to include representatives from the press and NGOs in committees at different levels. State- and divisional-level assessment committees typically have representation from different districts;

- During the verification, different states have issued guidance notes to members of the assessment team regarding the sample size. The sampling framework, along with the overall process of verification adopted in the case of MVSSP in Himachal Pradesh, is described in Box 1.

Post-Verification

- The local government must sustain ODF/total sanitation status to be eligible to compete at the higher level in the following year.

Results

There has been an exponential increase in the number of applicants for the NGP with each successive year, which naturally poses a challenge for the verification process. To date, approximately 55,785 local government institutions have applied and sought verification of their ODF and environmental sanitation status; and approximately 22,745 applications have been successful, an average success rate of 41 percent. The year-on-year success rate of NGP applicants is shown in Figure 3, pointing to the increasing robustness of the verification system.

The success of the NGP in scaling up the TSC is evident from Figure 4, which depicts the growth in national sanitation coverage against major milestones.

A similar scaling up in terms of applicants is seen in the case of the state sanitation reward programs. The Sant Gadge Baba Gram Swachata Yojna (SGBGSY) award in Maharashtra has been running for the past nine years (Figure 5). This has had a positive impact on upscaling the rural sanitation coverage in the state (73 percent) and the competitive basis of the

program motivates local governments to sustain outcomes to be eligible to compete every year.

Similarly, in Himachal Pradesh, when the competition to select the cleanest GP was launched in 2006, only one district participated. The success of the program is confirmed by the nearly 1,500 applications from GPs received in 2009 for 66 prizes (Figure 6).
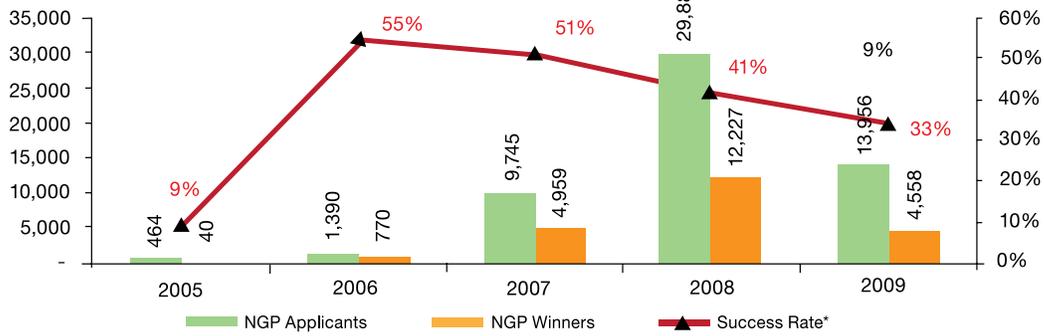

BOX 1: VERIFICATION PROCESS ADOPTED BY MAHARISHI VALMIKI SAMPOORN SWACHATA PURASKAR

In Himachal Pradesh, assessment team members are nominated by respective blocks and districts, and these details are forwarded to the state-level nodal agency. Before going for verification, the entire team is supposed to participate in an orientation session. This orientation covers not only technical parameters on which the assessment is based but also the attitudes and codes of conduct to be followed. Guidelines on how to score different criteria, what observations to make, and how to interview different community members are shared with the team.

Upon reaching an applicant GP, assessment team members take an 'Oath of Impartiality' in the presence of the assembled GP members and also sign the 'Record of Attendance.' The oath states that members will not accept gifts or favors from the community and, if these are offered, then the GP may be disqualified. Then, the assessment team forms teams of one, two or three members each, to undertake a transect walk so that all wards, schools, and preschools in an applicant GP are visited. During a transect walk in any ward, efforts are made to visit every 10th household selected on a random basis. To prevent bias, the team is encouraged not to be influenced by preformulated lists and undertake its own sampling on a random basis. Once a household is selected, the assessment team member is supposed to cover all points that are to be judged to understand the overall response to sanitation and hygiene. The team is supposed to interview a diverse group of community members in order that women, children, the elderly, and GP functionaries are represented. The assessment team members award marks on each marking criteria, discussing, wherever needed, with the other team members. In case of disagreement, efforts should be made to resolve the issue by going over observations and findings. If a disagreement persists, the mathematical average of team members' marks can be used.

Source: Excerpted from Government of Himachal Pradesh (2008). Maharishi Valmiki Sampoorn Swachata Puraskar: Guidelines for Verification Teams. Shimla: Rural Development Department.
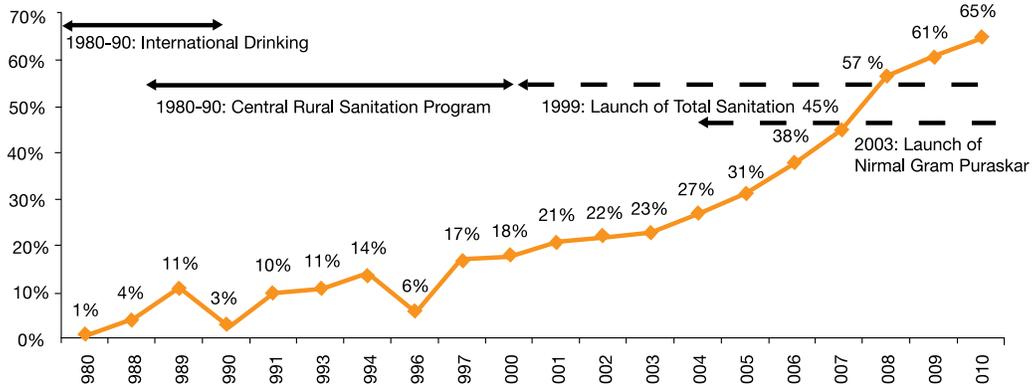
FIGURE 3: NGP APPLICANTS, WINNERS, AND SUCCESS RATE* (2005-09)

* Success rate refers to the ratio of NGP winners to NGP applicants multiplied by100.
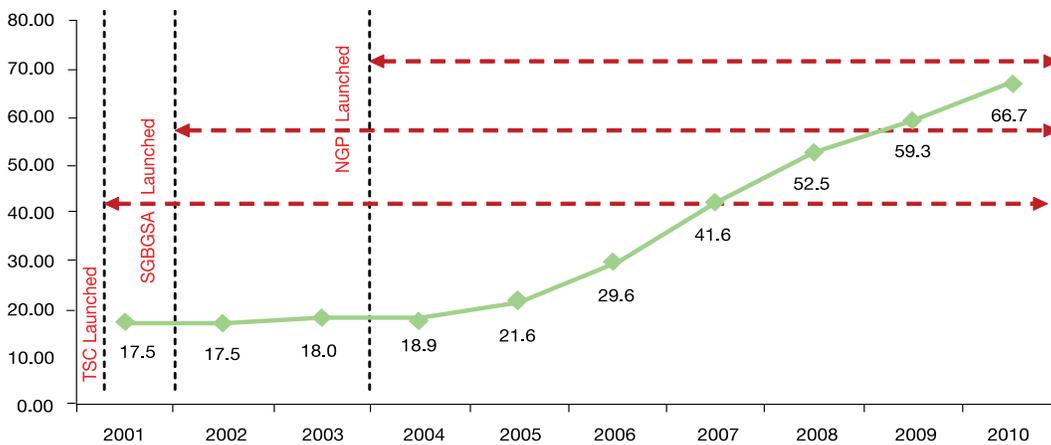Source: Government of India, Department of Drinking Water Supply, http://nirmalgrampuraskar.nic.in. Accessed on March 28, 2010.

FIGURE 4: RURAL SANITATION COVERAGE IN INDIA

Source: Government of India, Department of Drinking Water Supply, http://ddws.nic.in. Accessed on March 20, 2010.

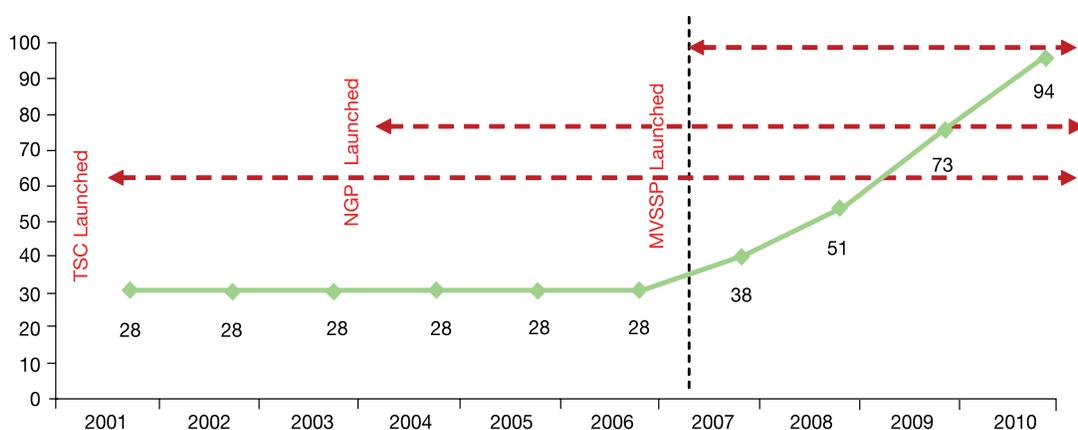**FIGURE 5:** RURAL SANITATION COVERAGE IN MAHARASHTRA

Source: Government of India, Department of Drinking Water Supply, http://ddws.nic.in. Accessed on July 15, 2010.

Lessons Learned

As mentioned at the outset, a robust verification system is a prerequisite for an effective incentive program to motivate achievement of ODF status by local governments. The experience gained from the verification system instituted for the national and state reward programs in India has some important lessons, not just for the Indian context but also in terms of replication potential. These include:

- **Planning for Scale:** Both national and state-level incentive programs made humble beginnings but momentum picked up really quickly, typically from the second or third year of operation. An important lesson from this experience is the need to plan for scale. The number of applications for the NGP, for example, increased from less than 500 to nearly 10,000 by the third year of the program. In the case of state reward programs, in Himachal Pradesh, for example, the number of districts participating increased from just one in the first year to all 12 districts of the state by the third year. To organize the verification process in a transparent and accountable manner, it is important to anticipate this scaling up and plan accordingly. Some of the steps that can be taken include ensuring that there are adequate resources available to facilitate and provide oversight of the verification process at national/state-level. A ring-fenced budget and dedicated personnel skilled in monitoring and evaluation as well as communication and administration are necessary to ensure that the verification system proceeds smoothly and according to the timeline;

- **Orientation of Verification Teams:** The verification process should be of a quality that inspires confidence among participants. It should adopt transparent and objective rules and conditions, and teams must be capacitated to undertake quality verification. It is essential that verification teams receive orientation. This can include a mix of discussion sessions to ensure conceptual clarity and field practice on how to fill up the verification forms. A well developed verification instrument along with a guidance note is a prerequisite to ensure quality in the verification process. In addition to the technical parameters, training must also cover the behavior and attitude of verification team members during the verification;

- **Decentralized Management:** Experience suggests that there is an inverse relationship between scaling up and quality. As communities achieving ODF status scale up, the verification and incentive system would need to be decentralized to ensure that quality is maintained. In both the NGP and the state reward programs, there was a push to decentralize the various steps in the process by placing greater onus on the appropriate lower administrative levels, to ensure sufficient time and effort is spent on the process;

FIGURE 6: RURAL SANITATION COVERAGE IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Source: Government of India, Department of Drinking Water Supply, http://ddws.nic.in. Accessed on July 15, 2010.

- **Multi-tier Verification Process:** One of the lessons learnt from the large-scale incentive programs at the national and state levels in India is that a multilevel verification process and the presence of multistakeholder teams help to facilitate objectivity of the verification process and adherence to the basic principles. In both the NGP and state reward programs, there were multiple levels of verification, with multiple teams at each level (NGP) or multistakeholder teams (state reward programs), which helps to curb bias. Peer monitoring, for example, the use of heads of GPs of past winning villages being used for verification of new ODF villages, also adds to the rigor of the verification process. The recent developments in ODF verification have also included the random reverification of incentivized GPs (post-award scenario) through on-site visits and structured impact assessments to facilitate sustainability of inputs and investments of engaged stakeholders. Several agencies are supporting the government in impact assessment of award programs at both national and state levels to help improve incentive policies and programs, including the verification process.

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