Chapter 9
e-Panchayats and GPDP

9.1 GPDP in PlanPlus

In the emerging governance pattern, there is a close relation between e-Governance and decentralization as both are integral parts of the sustained development paradigm. e-Governance is a means to achieve the goal of 'Good governance'. By harnessing Information, Communication & Technology (ICT) tools for internal as well as external operations, by better managing its resources and developing an appropriate organizational culture, the objective of good governance can be attained much more effectively. As such, the success of decentralized planning at the local levels rests its objectives such as efficiency, transparency, accountability, responsibility and participation, social equity and gender equality.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) with an aim to transform Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into symbols of good governance, transparency and efficiency, is implementing e-Panchayat programme, with a vision to empower and transform rural India. Identifying a strong need to build a "digital inclusive society" where large sections of rural population are able to benefit from new technologies; access and share information, use services freely and can participate in the planning and development process more effectively, e-Panchayat MMP engages ICT for following purposes:

- Automation of internal workflow processes of Panchayats
- Improving delivery of services to citizens
- Capacity building of Panchayat Representatives and Officials
- Social Audit
- Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency and RTI compliance of Panchayats
- Improving Governance of local self-government

In order to facilitate the process of preparation of GPDP, PlanPlus includes basic Panchayat profile data source such as from Census 2011, SECC and Mission Antyodaya. Further, data pertaining to various Central Schemes such as Fourteenth Finance Commission, MGNREGS, NRLM etc. would also be pre-populated on PlanPlus.

9.2 Panchayat Enterprise Suite

The programme includes a suite of Core Common Applications collectively called Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES), catering to various aspects of Panchayats' Functioning including planning, budgeting, implementation, accounting, monitoring, social audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licences etc. The various Applications of PES is given in Table 5.
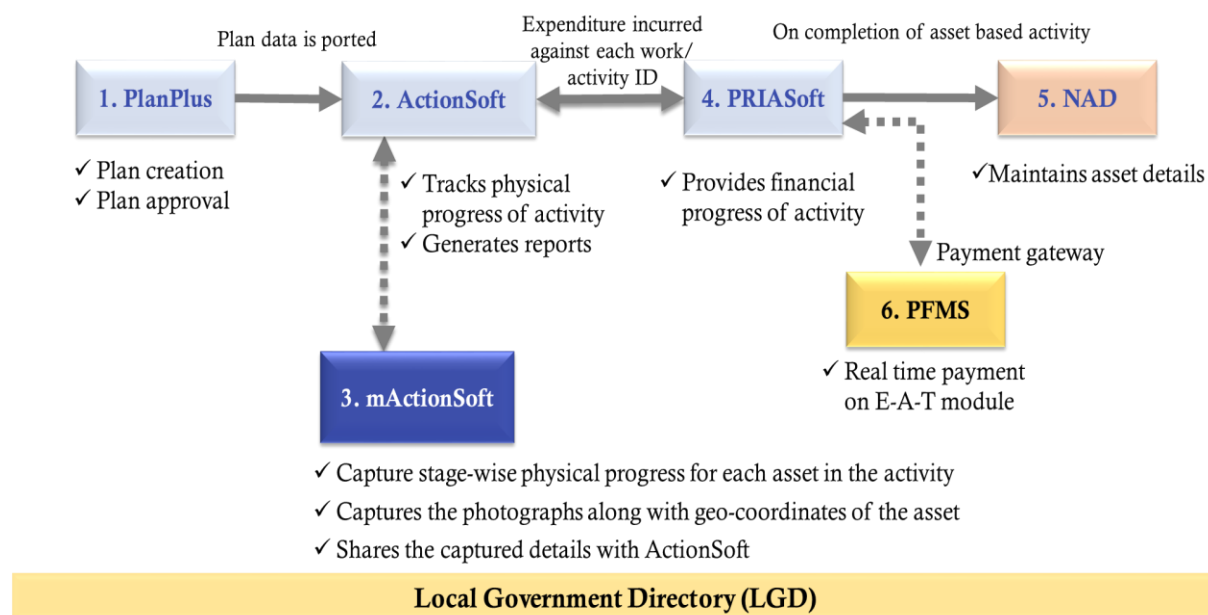
Table 6: Panchayat Enterprise Suit

Sr. No	Application	Description
(i)	PlanPlus	Facilitates strengthening of participative decentralized planning and enables preparation of participatory Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
(ii)	ActionSoft	Facilitates proper recording of the Financial and Physical progress of the works.
(iii)	PRIASoft	Captures receipt & expenditure details through voucher entries and automatically generates cash book, registers etc.
(iv)	National Asset Directory	Captures details of assets created/maintained; helps avoid duplication of works and provides for maintenance.
(v)	Local Government Directory	Captures all details of local governments and assigns unique code to all administrative Panchayat units.
(vi)	National Panchayat Portal	Dynamic Web site for each Panchayat (i.e. ZPs, BPs & GPs) to share information in public domain.
(vii)	Area Profiler	Captures geographic, demographic, infrastructural, socio-economic and natural resources profile of a village/panchayats and details of Elected Representatives & Panchayat Functionaries, Election details etc.
(viii)	ServicePlus	A dynamic metadata-based service delivery portal to help in providing electronic delivery of services.
(ix)	Training Management Portal	Portal to address training needs of stakeholders including citizens, their feedback, training materials etc.

Sr. No	Application	Description
(x)	Social Audit	To understand, measure and verify work under different schemes done by the Panchayat and further to improve social performance of respective Panchayats.

9.3 e-Financial Management System (e-FMS)

With the substantial amount of funds (Rs 200292 Crores) under the Fourteenth Finance Commission being given to the 2.48 lakhs Gram Panchayats (GPs); Government of India is in the process of putting a robust system for effective monitoring of public expenditure by means of a holistic system capturing the entire gamut of activities right from the stage of planning to monitor the various stages of work, recording the expenditure incurred for the works to providing a complete details of the asset created. For this purpose, MoPR is putting in place an Electronic Financial Management System (e-FMS) comprising of PlanPlus, ActionSoft, PRIASoft and National Asset Directory (NAD) with Local Government Directory (LGD) forming the base for such a robust system along with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS). The architecture is showcased schematically in the Diagram 5.

Diagram 5: Architecture of Electronic Fund Management System

9.3.1 PlanPlus

PlanPlus application has been developed to demystify and simplify the decentralized planning process and to facilitate convergence of resources and people's participation in the planning cycle. The application provides an empirical grounding to GPDP through rigorous compilation and analysis of data, including the baseline which needs to be institutionalised as a part of the planning system. The application would generate micro-level database for local level planning i.e. data for use by all for planning, monitoring and evaluation. The software is web-based, compatible for local language adaptation and captures the entire planning workflow starting from identification of needs and up to the plan approval processes. It is generic and can capture the plans prepared by the GPs, as well as the line departments & Urban Local Bodies. The Software enables convergence of the related schemes and programmes, brings about total transparency in the plan preparation and approval processes, and facilitates online monitoring.

PlanPlus application supports Need Based Planning rather than Scheme-based planning. It captures different types of activities (Public Works, Beneficiary Oriented Programme & Costless Activities). It facilitates convergence of funds from central, state sponsored schemes and other resources to address the needs of the people. The key features of the software are as follows:

- **Capturing of Priority list** – Enables citizens and Plan Units to submit their requirements and aspirations to the appropriate planning unit. Each planning unit (RLBs/ULBs/LD) may go through the citizens' suggestions and may identify activities to fulfill the same.
- **Shelf of Activities** - Enables planning units to maintain the shelf of activities. The shelf of activities includes the list of activities that the planning unit proposes to take up in a plan year.
- **Resource Envelope**- Facilitates the recording of budgetary allocation of funds from various Central and State government schemes and other resources such as own resources, Fourteenth Finance Commission grants, SFC grants, Corporate Social Responsibility and Beneficiary Contribution etc.
- **Financial Convergence** - Enables intelligent convergence of funds from different sources of funds for an activity, thereby ensuring that the available funds are utilized to the maximum possible extent and at the same time important activities are not abandoned for lack of funds
- **Sectarian Convergence** – Enables sectarian integration by stimulating the planner to think in terms of end-to-end projects rather than in terms of isolated islands of activities

- **Workflow** - Helps in capturing the State Specific Workflows for each type of planning unit, which is used to automatically to route the Plan through the approval process. Any change in the plan approval process is also carried out seamlessly
- **Plan Generation** – Generates various views of the Plan including Sectarian and Scheme Plans
- **Uploading GPDP on PlanPlus** – GPDP can be uploaded on PlanPlus and kept in public view for ensuring transparency.

Further, as a part of People's Plan Campaign, PlanPlus has been restructured in order to provide the GPs with a holistic over view of the various available indicators with respect to the following:

- **Basic parameters:** total population, male population, female population, total household, total number of SHGs etc.
- **Key infrastructure parameters:** households engaged exclusive in farm activities, availability of banks, availability of ATM, road connectivity (all weather road, internal CC), availability of schools.
- **Health, Nutrition & Sanitation:** Community waste disposal system, ODF village, availability of Anganwadi centre, no. of children immunized, no. of children categorized as non-stunted etc.
- **Women Empowerment:** no. of households mobilized into SHGs, No. of households mobilized into Producer Groups (PGs) etc.
- **Financial inclusion:** No. of SHGs accessed bank loans

These parameters would provide a detailed understanding/analysis of the areas which requires interventions. Accordingly, the GPs can devise a development plan which shall address the gaps identified. These gaps/areas of improvement areas may be categorized as Critical areas, Medium priority areas and Low priority areas; which shall aid the GPs to prioritize the list of activities to be done. The information shall be similar to the score card of Mission Antyodaya Survey 2017 and 2018 (Annexure-XXII).

9.3.2 ActionSoft

Further, GPDP is meant to meet the aspirations of the local community, but in order to ensure optimum utilization of resources instead of focusing only on planning, the need is to look into planning, monitoring and implementation of Plans in a holistic manner. In this reference, ActionSoft (http://reportingonline.gov.in/) is an application, which is already available under e-Panchayat programme and could be engaged for tracking/ reporting of physical and financial progress of the activities/ works included in the Action Plan(s) of

the Panchayats. This would ensure optimum utilization of resources available to the Panchayats.

Furthermore, mActionSoft, a mobile application has been developed for capturing stage-wise progress of on-going asset based activities at the field level. The mobile application is available on the GooglePlay Store and supplements ActionSoft and captures photograph along with the geographical coordinates of each asset.

9.3.3 PRIASoft

The need for adoption of a sound Accounting and Audit System in Local Bodies, particularly in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), has been constantly emphasized by successive Central Finance Commissions (CFCs), to ensure transparency & accountability. This will greatly enhance the credibility of Panchayats leading to greater devolution of Functions & Funds to PRIs. A sound financial management system in the PRIs is a long felt need for fostering increased accountability at PRIs. Furthermore, as indicated by successive Finance Commissions, a mechanism is also urgently needed for aggregating data relating to Panchayat Finances for improved decision making at various levels of government. The adoption of sound accounting management systems for PRIs would help the States to track fund-flow and assessing the total flow of funds in the system and accordingly decide on the periodic releases.

PRIASoft (www.accountingonline.gov.in) a web-based application to facilitate better financial management of the PRIs, by putting PRI accounts in public domain. PRIASoft has been one of the most used Applications under PES. PRIASoft aims to keep track of all the in-flow (Receipts) and out- flow (Expenditure) of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Application facilitates better financial management of PRIs by bringing about transparency and accountability in the maintenance of accounts thereby leading to better credibility and ultimately strengthening of PRIs. It is a centralized Accounting Software intended for use by ZPs, BPs and GPs.

9.3.4 National Asset Directory (NAD)

National Asset Directory (NAD) is one of the software applications envisaged as part of e-Panchayat MMP. NAD aims to keep stock of all the assets created, controlled and maintained by the RLB/ULB/Line Department in the country and assign a code to each asset for its unique identification leading to effective utilization of the Assets. NAD software application will be primarily used by the officials of RLBs (Village Panchayat, Block Panchayat, and District Panchayat), ULBs (Municipalities, Town Areas etc.), State

PR Departments, and Other Line Departments of State, MoPR and other Central Line Ministries/Departments.

Key features of NAD Application are as follows:

- Generates a unique Asset ID for identification of Assets created/ maintained/ controlled by RLB/ ULB/ Line Department.
- Keeps track of asset details including Asset name, Asset description, category & sub category of asset, source of funds etc.
- Captures asset upgradation and asset maintenance details.
- Captures asset earning details.
- Captures asset transfer and asset disposal details.
- NAD generates reports on Complete List of Assets, Asset Maintenance Details, Upgradation Details, Earning Details, Disposal Details and Transfer Details.

9.3.5 Local Government Directory

Forming the backbone of this entire architecture is the Local Government Directory (LGD). The objective of LGD is to assign unique code to each administrative entity and maintain up-to-date list of revenue entities (districts/ sub-districts or revenue circles/ villages), Local Government Bodies (Panchayats, Municipalities and traditional bodies) and their wards, organizational structure of Central, State and Local Governments, reporting hierarchy within the government organizations.

Some of the salient features of LGD are as follows:

- Customizable Local Government/Panchayat Setup
- Give Unique Codes to each administrative entities
- Facilitates the user to generate/ upload the Government Orders/Notifications
- Maintenance of local government bodies and its mapping with constituting land region entities e.g. villages mapping with Gram Panchayat and Blocks
- Maintains Versioning of the entities (any change in the attributes may be recorded)

With the increased emphasis on Digital India Programme and Direct Benefit Transfer by the government, more and more Government schemes/programmes and processes are coming under the ambit of e-Governance. Further, it was mandated by the Cabinet Secretariat for all the Ministries/State Departments to conform to the LGD unique codes thereby providing ease of operability between various schemes of different Ministries. This hindrance of interoperability and standardization of location codes may be resolved by using LGD codes in other schemes/ e-Governance application. Local Government

Directory application (http://lgdirectory.gov.in) acts as the standard location code directory across all databases/applications of Ministries/Departments and States/UTs and used as the single standard window to update and manage unique codes of various administrative units, urban as well as rural.

9.3.6 Public Financial Management System (PFMS)

To further strengthen the attributes of effective and efficient governance; the Ministry has also integrated PRIASoft with PFMS for bringing transparency and accountability in management of finances available to Panchayats under FFC award. PFMS would be used as a common transaction-based on-line fund management and payment system, to track the FFC fund disbursement from Government of India to various levels down below under all Plan Schemes till the last level of utilization and ultimately report utilization under these schemes at different levels of implementation on a real time basis. Therefore, States on their part have to ensure completion of the identified requisites viz. *i) Mapping/Registration of all GPs with bank details as agencies with LGD code on PFMS, ii) Provisioning of Digital Signatures (DSCs) dongles to Sarpanch & Panchayat Secretary (with Maker & Checker facilities) with login facility on PFMS, iii). Closure of year books/accounts for FY 2017-18, iv) Mapping/registration vendors/service providers in PFMS with bank details and v).*

9.4 GIS based GPDP

With the FFC laying more emphasis on providing financial stability and ensuring effective planning, preparation of participatory GPDPs gains utmost importance. It is important to bring more accountability and transparency to the process for preparing GPDP, which can be achieved by linking it with the Geographic information system (GIS).

The GPs prepare annual plan for development and large amount of resources are utilized for implementing the plan. Such plans are prepared based on available database or even on an intuitive basis, depending on local knowledge of the area. There is need to have objectivity in the planning process by acquiring relevant data and performing planning at GP level with the use of geographic data for sustainable development. It enables the user to take better decisions based on geographical data.

Using spatial planning in local self-governance can ensure openness and accountability in the functioning of GPs. With the aid of GIS and satellite imagery, a detailed visual record of the projects can be maintained, which can be accessed any time. Physical verification of the projects can be done by anybody, from anywhere and at any time. GIS can increase legitimacy and acceptability of the PRIs among its stakeholders.

At the local level, in particular, non-availability of information in a spatial manner renders the information difficult to grasp and understand, which leads to adhocism in prioritisation of schemes/ programmes, poor decision-making, slow process of making corrections during implementation and narrow participation of people in the process. The status of various works (planned, in-progress as well as completed) should be spatially displayed to the public for their information and timely feedback. In addition to this when the scheme is actually implemented, i.e. at the time of delivery, local people have no channel to get the information regarding expenditure made or quantum of assistance etc. This lack of transparency further leads to corruption and jeopardises the interests of the people and the government. In respect of spatial planning it becomes very helpful if the current status as well as proposed developments are shown in maps.

9.4.1 Benefits of GIS based planning

i. **Decision support system**: Support in developmental planning and execution of planned activities.

ii. **Viewing and Analysis of Plan**: Queries and analysis of the plan could be seen on thematic maps to show spatial features for easier visualization of the output and internalization of the same. This is especially useful in ensuring convergence of various activities and in knowing all the works that are being taken up in a certain geographic area within the GP.

iii. **Performance Analysis**: Performances of all GPs based on selected indicators across each district / block wise can be visualised on thematic maps. This will help every GP to know about the best performance on any selected indicator, which has been already achieved in the district.

iv. **Management Dashboard**: A GIS based management dashboard to provide senior management with the status of ongoing plans/schemes.

v. **Enhanced citizen engagement**: Most of the two way interaction with citizens may move to mobile channels resulting in less load on manpower intensive over-the-counter service delivery.

vi. **Utilization of Resources and Infrastructure:** Provide cost effective solution for utilization of resources and maximize the benefits.

9.4.2 GIS support in Developmental and Planning Execution of Planned Activities

GIS can enhance transparency in planning, implementation and operation. It provides 'real time' monitoring of activities implementation status.

i. Geo-tagging / geo-referencing the location from where data is being collected thereby enhancing the reliability of data when plotted on the base map to enable a "granular" analysis at the disaggregated level.
ii. Identification of suitable site for creation of new amenities.
iii. Visualization of all approved works with their attributes for the plan on the map.
iv. Visualization of spatial trends in GPDP plan implementation such as:
   - Focus area wise activities being implemented in a Panchayat.
   - Comparison between Physical progress vs. financial expenditure for activities underway in a Panchayat etc.
   - Fund utilisation trending.
v. Management of Assets and infrastructure like roads, hand Pumps etc.
vi. Decision Support system to check and monitor the activities at GP level. It can help for facilitating better and efficient planning.
   - Land holding analysis
   - Health services analysis
   - Social strata and eligibility analysis
   - Education analysis
   - Available financial amenities analysis
vii. Natural Resource management
   - Agricultural land spread
   - Wasteland
   - Watershed
   - Groundwater potential
   - Water resource management plan