

**Process Document of Project:  
Towards Making DPCs More  
Effective for  
Administering and Planning  
Creation of Participatory  
Indicators**

*For*

**Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)**

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# 1 Introduction

Indicators to measure decentralized planning process being observed at GP, Municipality, Block, ZP were developed over a period of time. The development of indicators took place in three phases. The indicators were developed and field-tested across 3 sites repeatedly to verify the authenticity and applicability.

## 2 Objectives of project

- To create a draft set of indicators to measure progress of DPCs through a collaborative process working at various levels, with NGO Partners, elected bodies and other stakeholders.
- To include process, output and outcome indicators for all levels: Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats, Zilla Panchayats, and Municipalities.
- To create both state specific and cross cutting indicators, for existing initiatives jointly funded by Asia Foundation and SDTT, in collaboration with PRIA, Development Alternatives, and Debate.
- For the purpose of this initial phase it was seen as too early to create outcome indicators so the focus has been on process and output indicators only.

## 3 The Methodology for Development of Indicators

Best Practices Foundation has developed these indicators for three separate Asia Foundation and SDTT initiatives all engaging with the DPC, however each following its own process. The indicators developed are of two kinds:

- *Process indicators*, trace impact of the interventions of various stakeholders at different stages. For instance, since capacity building is a key activity planned across the sites, especially with the Gram Panchayats and government officials. Indicators were developed to assess changes in attitudes of elected officials towards the planning process (eg: if they see the importance of holding Gram sabhas or if they change plans from a standard increase of 10% to a thematic plan or changing the content of the plan), trainees' understanding of the planning process, their roles in planning, gaps in the planning process as well as ways in which elected officials use the training provided by partner NGOs.
- *Output or Impact indicators*, which are again determined jointly with partner NGOs, to assess results and determine the quality of the plans and their impact vis-à-vis reflection of local needs. Some examples of this could include the GP plans having at least 75% of Gram Sabha recommendations built in, the block plans having at least 75% of GP recommendations built in and ZP plan has at least 75% BP and 50% of GP recommendations built in.

While some indicators may be common across these three initiatives, process indicators have varied depending on the different strategies used by the NGOs while impact indicators, also tend to vary

depending on issues addressed (environmental vs other issues). However some common impact indicators can be agreed upon which helps establish links between local needs and the actual plans across all three sites. The review meetings were used as opportunities to share and standardize indicators across sites, so as to arrive at common indicators and measures that are comparable as mutually decided upon by all project partners.

The methodology to develop indicators is both participatory and inclusive. It also ties into the planned processes for interchange and learning developed by the SDTT and Asia Foundation. This methodology has followed four broad phases:

1. Phase one: initial dialogues to develop preliminary indicators
2. Phase two: Field testing of process and impact indicators and measures
3. Phase three: Capacity-building of partners to use indicators
4. Phase four: Finalization of indicators and development of process document and final report

### **Phase One: Initial Dialogues to Develop Preliminary Indicators**

This phase was preparatory in the sense that it engaged with the NGOs to review their documents, look at their initial indicators, and dialogue with them to understand their measures, the baseline data they intend to gather, and other sources of information that they can use. Based on this dialogue a preliminary set of indicators were created and presented to all partners at the interim review meeting held in Feb 09. This phase of the program for initial dialogues was completed between January –April 2009.

The method of developing preliminary indicators was based on the processes outlined in the Manual for Integrated District Planning (2008). According to the Planning Commission Guidelines the DPCs need to undertake numerous processes for effective functioning. These include preparation of sets of documents such as stock taking of information, presentation of data in visual and spatial form, visioning and perspective planning exercise and identification of lead sectors, and sharing them with appropriate stakeholders. Further setting up of planning teams, preparation of technical documents such as the budget envelope, financial resource mapping, micro planning for sample GPs and municipalities and consolidation of rural and urban plans all need to be structured properly for timely implementation. During the initial dialogues it was found that several of these Guideline based common processes were inbuilt in the programs for all three organizations, as well as site-specific unique processes. These helped identify both type of indicators (common and site specific) at the GP, JP, ZP and Municipality level. For instance, as a site-specific process, PRIA had inbuilt in its program the process of **sharing of SWOT Analysis Report** where the output would be sensitisation of DPC members and line department officials on capacity building needs for planning. The indicator to examine this output at the ZP level would be capacity building needs identified. Similarly in the case of DA, an important site-specific process was the **establishment of Participatory Working Group and Participatory Advisory Group (PWG/PAG)**, and its output was having a functional PWG and PAG. Towards this process, site specific indicators were separately identified and developed. For Debate one site-specific process is a **sectoral situation document** that includes making the current expenditures transparent which in turn empowers the elected officials to better negotiate with line departments. Here the indicators would include better utilization of resources.

<b>Time Line of Project on Participatory Indicators (Jan 2009 to December 2009)</b>												
	1-09	2-09	3-09	4-09	5-09	6-09	7-09	8-09	9-09	10-09	11-09	12-09
<b>Phase 1: Initial dialogues &amp; Document Review (Jan onwards)</b>												
Initial partners dialogues												
Preparation of preliminary indicators with NGOs												
Document review												
Share preliminary indicators at interim review meeting												
Submission of final report												
<b>Phase 2: Joint Planning and Site visits for development and preliminary testing (May – August)</b>												
Preparatory visits for Meeting												
Joint Planning Meeting												
Development of preliminary Participatory Indicators												
Identify measures of indicators												
Initial testing of indicators & measures												
Review findings from preliminary indicators at sites after testing												
Identify sources of baseline data												
Write up of report for circulation at mid term review												
<b>Phase 3: Capacity-building of partners and Handholding on Site (September – November)</b>												
Sharing of test findings at mid-term review meeting												
Decision on final indicators partners/BPF will test												
Testing final indicators by partners/BPF on site												
Handholding of partners for final indicators on site												
Write up of report for circulation for final review meeting												
<b>Phase 4: Finalization of indicators and Reporting (December)</b>												
Circulation of Draft Report and findings at Final review meeting												
Refinement of indicators												
Process Document												
Draft Report on Indicators & Measures												
Circulation of Draft Final Report at Roundtable												
Finalize recommendations at Roundtable												
Final report submitted												

These initial dialogues with all three organizations both facilitated an understanding of the common and site specific processes to develop preliminary indicators as well as helped build ownership over the importance and significance of having indicators. This led to the request for a meeting in June specifically on indicators. BPF is planning a second set of dialogues specifically in preparation for this review meeting to arrive at a common set of matrices to be simply vetted at the review meeting.

Findings of the phase 1 include:

- a) A set of indicators developed based on common processes as determined by the guidelines (See the final report submitted)
- b) A set of indicators for each organization including site specific indicators was developed.
- c) A preliminary measurement template was developed (including unit of measure, the source of information, the method of collecting this information, who will collect this and at what intervals) with illustrations
- d) Organizations ownership over the indicator process was built and was reflected in their request for a common meeting on indicators

While BPF had focused largely on process indicators deeming it a little early to create output indicators, the group felt that output or impact indicators were equally important but would need to be jointly developed.

## **Methodology, Phase Two: Planning Meetings and Preliminary Field Testing Of Indicators and Development of Measures**

The methodology to be followed is categorized at three levels:

*1. Lead a collective dialogue for the identification of indicators.* Best Practices Foundation has developed process and output/impact indicators with individual meetings to each organization. One set of dialogues took place in early February, while a second set of dialogues was held in mid-May 2009. This was followed by a second review meeting in mid-June where the indicators arrived at will be agreed upon by all partners. Together with the partners, BPF has led sessions where common processes and indicators were finalized. During the sessions, partners identified the audience, the most important process and outputs/impact indicators and had come to a common understanding on the system of measurement (indicators, measures, frequency of measurement, and so on).

A second preparatory visit for the review meeting in June 2009, was conducted in May to all the three partner organizations where partners developed preliminary impact indicators such as the increase in access to resources of local bodies, in addition to revisiting their previously identified process indicators. However it was planned to further expand on these impact indicators in the June review meeting with all partners whose timing for measurement were determined in the meeting as well. It was acknowledged that it may be useful to actually observe these identified impact indicators only in the coming year, therefore requiring another phase, which could be undertaken at a later date. However the baseline data would have to be collected during this phase itself. These impact indicators are based on a) Increased access to resources available to the local bodies that had been planned and accepted by the DPC, b) Evidence of increased control of resources that is available, such as better utilisation of money already coming in or ability to change pattern of expenditure according to local needs, c) Networking and sharing of information on resources with local bodies, line departments, planning commission and other stakeholders, and finally d) Negotiations at various levels and with the DPC to be able to get their priorities approved as submitted in their plans. These were discussed in detail at the

review meeting in June 2009 (hosted by Asia Foundation) where the findings of this phase were reported.

2. *Implementation of a system of measurement of indicators:* Indicators developed through initial dialogues were tested on the ground in collaboration with grassroots stakeholders such as self help groups, community based organizations, elected representatives of rural and urban bodies, government or elected representatives at block and district levels, line department agencies, and with the NGO Partners in three sites. One pilot visit with the entire research team (of six to seven researchers) had ensured that the remaining two visits which contain smaller teams use consistent research methods. The pilot visit had examined specific aspects of the planning process in the field at length (approximately 8 days) after which a joint analysis by the team over two days helped to finalize a set of instruments and the methodology. This was followed by two other site visits. Wherever possible, existing sources of data were identified and used as baselines for these indicators. During these site visits, BPF had assisted partners to institute a system of measurement developed along with a series of stakeholders identified jointly with partners. During the first visit, baseline information for the indicators was collected and the indicators themselves were tested to see how practical and measurable they were.

3. *Sharing Findings on Indicators:* At meetings organized by Asia Foundation, BPF has used these opportunities to share findings on the indicators and for organizations to collectively assess which indicators are useful and which are not. These meetings have helped the team arrive at a refined set of indicators for a larger audience and to hold reflection sessions.

4. *Reflections sessions:* A final methodology that was used were the reflection sessions which were held collectively with all partners as well as individually with staff of each NGO partner on the ground. During these sessions, BPF helped partners reflect on each process, one by one:

- a) To outline what activities took place
- b) To assess what went wrong and what went right in each process
- c) To surface lessons learned during each process.
- d) To explain why some sites did better than others on certain indicators (eg: Bihar may not perform well compared to MP in transparency of resource envelop especially w.r.t. the line department budgets)

The reflection sessions on the above mentioned processes helped partners conduct a comparative analysis of strengths and weaknesses of these processes and analyze:

- a) The effectiveness of each process across states
- b) The capacity of the DPC and the local bodies to implement each process
- c) The methods used by each organization to implement common and unique processes and the strengths and weaknesses of these methods

### **Methodology Phase Three: Capacity-Building of Partners to Use Indicators**

At review meetings, sessions on the indicators, measures, and findings were held with partner NGOs and all other stakeholders present to finalize, prioritize (based on their relative importance) and standardize these indicators and a system of measurement. For the final measurement and testing of indicators a second visit was planned to all three sites (8 days per site) where in-depth discussions would be held with all stakeholders. This helped inform the team as to which indicators are measurable, practical, simple and useful. Alongside, different measures of these indicators were developed and tested for their practicality, where possible. To accomplish this, a team of 6-7 junior and senior

researchers had visited the sites and work closely with the partners, and all stakeholders to develop, test, and implement a system for measurement of participatory indicators.

Some output/impact indicators (eg: such as impact of implementation of plans, increased access to resources, subsidiarity and integrated planning) could only be measured at a later stage and were seen as too early for the phase. In this case, the testing of the indicators were planned for a subsequent period after the current project time frame. For communities and local bodies to see the significance of the planning process they would need to see impact such as improved service delivery or increased access to local resources. For indicators seen as unimportant by partners but important by SDTT and AF, BPF assessed whether it could or could not measure these indicators independently during the site visits and accordingly do so. Impact indicators to measure these changes can be developed (eg: better utilisation of money already coming in, or ability to change pattern of expenditure according to local needs) but actual impact may only be visible at a later date (when plans have been passed and are now being implemented). Also while some indicators are extremely important, and partner NGOs may attempt to achieve integration in this year, it may be too ambitious to expect this to be achieved in the very first attempt. Thus indicators may have to be bifurcated into different phases.

#### **Phase Four: Finalization of Indicators, Development of Process Document and Final Report on Indicators**

At the round table meetings planned, partner NGOs and BPF have shared the findings that have emerged from testing the process and output/impact indicators. At this meeting, reflection on these findings, refinement of indicators and a discussion on which indicators should be recommended to governments in the form of policy briefs or in any other communication channel were mutually decided upon. During this phase, the final report on the indicators, and their measures and findings were completed along with a process document on the creation of these indicators.

Throughout these phases, BPF has used the opportunities provided by the review meetings, to meet the national bureaucrats, NGO partners, academics and planning commission members working on issues related to the DPC and district planning. BPF has also looked for opportunities such as those provided by the UN Solutions Exchange community to interact with practitioners and policy makers, to help inform the project about the latest developments and literature in the form of taskforce reports or shadow reports or policy documents available at the national level. These meetings have also provided opportunities for BPF to dialogue with policy and decision makers on the indicators and to get suggestions on other kinds of indicators that might be useful for policy and decision-making.

## **4 Main findings from the Three Phases**

The main findings from the first three phases have been presented below.

### **4.1 Phase -1: Preparatory phase (January-April 2009)**

During the *initial preparatory phase*, the team researched each of the partner proposals, guidelines from the Planning Commission of India and State Acts. This helped in identifying common and unique processes (site-specific), ascertaining preliminary indicators for each of the organizations, and comparing the processes of each organization against those outlined by the Planning Commission, in the ‘Manual for Integrated District Planning, 2008’.

The BPF team along with key personnel of the partner organization conducted two visits: the first visit to meet the staff of the three partner organizations to see if they were interested in developing and measuring indicators and the second visit to understand the field. In the first visit BPF staff found that the organizations were interested in the indicators and discussed with the BPF team their own indicators from their proposals which they would be using to measure change.

In the second set of visits, BPF visited the village, block or municipality to observe and understand how elected GP, JP, or ZP members are able to understand and/or implement the process of bottom-up planning. During these field visits BPF found that some TSIs had actually created district plans without even visiting the districts. It was then decided that indicators developed should not be like a checklist. For eg. Is there a vision document? Is there a five year plan? As it was found that some TSIs could show these documents despite not going through a rigorous planning process on the ground. Instead it was decided to create indicators that would show whether or not a planning process had been initiated and evolved from the village to the block right up to the district level. With this in mind, all the processes outlined in Planning Commission guidelines were reviewed against the processes outlined in the partner proposals and the common processes were highlighted. For these common processes, common indicators were created. Since each partner proposal also had some unique components BPF also highlighted these and created separate site specific indicators for these components.

#### **4.1.1 Preliminary Comparison of the States:**

The analysis was done using primary and secondary sources of data such as proposals documents, personal interviews with organization staff members, interviews with Government officials, other local government staff and elected officials at various levels. All these inputs gave insights into the functioning of the DPCs in these two states.

From preliminary examination of the status of DPC in Bihar seems to be in a nascent stage. The elected representatives are not in consonance with the bureaucracy. The DPC is not in position to start the planning process as information on various issues including the resource envelope is not being shared by the line departments. The DPC members are not clear on their role in the planning process and mainly see it as limited to endorsing plans from GPs, Blocks and Municipalities. The perception of the DPC is that even endorsed plans are not implemented by the bureaucracy. There is no State monitoring system in place for DPCs. In Bihar out of 38 districts, 37 are BRGF districts and funds have been allocated to several Technical Support Institutions (TSI) to facilitate planning in these districts. The state monitors the work of TSIs, which is required to give information on DPCs to the state planning officer<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> PRIA, Status and Functioning of District Planning Committees in India, December 2007

In MP, the DPC is functional since 1999. Information on resource envelope is relatively clear. Guidelines have been issued by DPC for planning from the GP level upwards and for consolidation of plans at every stage. The DPCs approve the plans of GPs, Blocks and Municipalities before funds are released. However, the rigour and quality of the planning process in all tiers are very much in question. There is no State monitoring system in place for DPCs in this state too.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Common Processes of Three Sites and a Comparison of their Planning Processes**

According to the Planning Commission Guidelines several common processes need to be undertaken by the DPCs for appropriate functioning. These include preparation of several sets of documents such as stock taking of information, present the data in visual and spatial form, visioning and perspective planning exercise and identification of lead sectors, and sharing them with appropriate stakeholders. Further setting up of planning teams, preparation of technical documents such as the budget envelope, financial resource mapping, micro planning for sample GPs and municipalities and consolidation of rural and urban plans all need to be structured. This table showing comparison across three sites is given in Appendix 3a

#### **4.1.3 Developing Indicators from Common Processes:**

The table below shows the preliminary indicators created from all the common processes for all the three organizations. In subsequent meetings a rigorous and collective examination of each of these processes and possible indicators will be undertaken to arrive at final indicators.

Preliminary indicators from all these common processes and their outputs were created and examined for all the three organizations. These began with stock taking of information and the indicators were separately identified for GPs, JPs, ZPs and the Municipality. As is visible in the table earlier, all the organizations plan to do a stock taking exercise but slightly differently suited to their larger goals. PRIA has prepared a SWOT report that gives information on the present status, in visual and spatial form, and will share this with different stakeholders. DA has been very clear from the start that their stock taking will be based on the SoE report which will be shared via a workshop. In the case of Debate, the emphasis is on preparing a sectoral paper which will also be shared with the panchayats and municipalities.

The next important step is the visioning and perspective planning exercise which is done by all these organizations but with somewhat different emphases. As a TSI, PRIA has in the past conducted Comprehensive Development Plans where they also conducted the visioning exercise while DA has done the visioning through sharing of the SoE report. Earlier work by Debate has clearly influenced their present planning of this vision exercise, where they found that a visual demonstration of the gaps between the sectoral situation paper and sectoral targets, as mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), immediately influence all stakeholders to identify sectors in their perspective planning. These indicators are mentioned separately in the tables of each of the organizations (see Appendix 4, 5, and 6) as the approach to the particular process differs for each of these organizations.

A significant common process for all the organizations was the knowledge of budget envelope that required the establishment of planning teams for financial resource mapping. A common indicator identified here is that the resource envelope is known by all tiers and by line departments.

From the field it was observed that presently elected members were not aware of the budget envelope and the financial resources available under each scheme. The line department functionaries however

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<sup>2</sup> Debate, Decentralised District Planning Through Local Bodies: Existing Systems and Capacities, 2008

had some indication but were often unwilling to share this. All the organizations plan to have some form of capacity building exercises for PRIs and municipalities built into their programs. So an indicator showing capacity building tools planned, developed and adopted would signify the clarity and functionality of the process.

The next important process was of developing micro plans that includes participatory rural planning and participatory urban planning. For each of these processes the organizations had outlined activities that involve a facilitation process of setting up of facilitation groups. For PRIA it meant setting up of local support groups at different levels for technical support to the planning at local level. For Debate it was training for standing committees while for DA it was the setting up of PAG (Advisory) and PWG (Working). DA's mode of setting up of support groups is elaborated in the next section.

The consolidation of plans (implying GP plans in the Block level and those of the Block to the Zilla Panchayat level), and integration of rural and urban plans are the next two important processes that need clear indicators. This included collecting evidence of GP plans being reflected in the Block level and similarly the Block plans being reflected at the ZP level. For integration, the indicator was the evidence of issues raised that require rural urban collaboration.

Monitoring that involves social audit and concurrent monitoring of process, output, expenditures and outcomes of planning are again integral to the planning process according to the guidelines. However not all organizations have complied to that, only DA had the PWG carrying out the monitoring process. Finally the process of facilitation of district plans had several indicators to be examined on the ground. For instance, at the GP level these included:

- a) Plans reflect non infrastructural intervention.
- b) For BRGF Districts plans reflect critical gaps
- c) Plans reflect several sectors including disaster management
- d) Approval and Endorsement of plans at all levels through appropriate processes including Gram Sabha
- e) Evidence of exploring any issue by local bodies that require rural urban collaboration.

Elected members of the villages and municipalities were quite articulate on the resistance shown by government officials towards any new information or schemes announced by the government. More transparency from the government and capacity building on technical issues for all elected members were repeatedly voiced in these meetings.

#### **4.1.4 Site- Specific Processes and Indicators**

PRIA has the official status of a TSI from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to work in 24 districts. It was therefore in a position to use its insights and emphasize processes that were most critical. One such process unique to PRIA is that of demonstration of Micro Planning for select GPs/ Municipalities which in turn serves as a model for other Gram Panchayat Members and municipalities to create their own micro plans. For this process the indicator would be the ability to do micro-planning by GPs and municipality members. The table showing details of site specific indicators for PRIA is given in Appendix 4.

DA is following a completely different process from the others. It is based on a grounded plan containing environmental and livelihood components which is restricted to Orchha municipality and its

four surrounding GPs. This is not a district wide initiative but being sector and site specific lends better to urban-rural collaboration. Consequently unique processes identified in this initiative include:

- a) Sensitization of environmental processes
- b) Setting up of PWG/PAG
- c) Collaboration between Orcha (urban) and 4 neighbouring GPs (rural)

To be able to focus on these processes DA has introduced an important site-specific process of establishment of Participatory Working Group (PWG) and Participatory Advisory Group (PAG). These will be created at different levels where the PAG would be from the district level while the PWG would be from the block level, and be actively functional while the planning activities are being undertaken. Towards this process, the indicators were separately identified for GPs, JPs, ZPs and the Municipality. The table showing details of site specific indicators for DA is given in Appendix 5. At the GP level the indicators will translate into actions such as:

- a) PWG/PAG meet regularly
- b) Consistent and Regular participation in PWG/PAG meetings
- c) Agenda items observed and critical decisions taken by PWG
- d) Suggestions provided by PWG/PAG accepted by local bodies.

Debate has worked extensively in different locations of Madhya Pradesh on District Planning. In their experience one of the important processes was the quality of sharing of Sectoral Situation Paper which in turn would result in the District Vision Document in visual and spatial form. Towards this end, the indicators were separately identified for GPs, JPs, ZPs and the Municipality. So the indicator is that Vision Document is based on Sectoral Situation Paper. Debate has in its earlier work been able to collate and present effectively data at block level in simple visual form. These methodologies they intend to use in the present work too which will help stakeholders plan their vision document efficiently. The table showing details of site specific indicators for Debate is given in Appendix 6. Two important unique indicators identified were:

- a) PRIs and Standing Committee monitor implementation processes
- b) Gram Sabha audits implementation of plans

These are only some of the site specific processes mentioned – full details are given in Appendices 4, 5, and 6. The emphasis here is to understand that each organization differs in its aims and accordingly their processes and their indicators need to be adapted for clarity of results.

## **4.2 Phase -2 (May 2009- January 2010): Development and Piloting of Indicators**

During **phase 2**, in May 2009, individual visits were made to each partner to review the common and specific processes, review and finalize indicators for each process, prioritize the most important indicators, discuss impact indicators, and to decide on the audience.

For PRIA, the primary emphasis was on capacity building for financial mapping that will help in developing micro plans, amongst other issues. DA is following a separate process from the others and their work is based on environmental and livelihood components encompassing three unique processes. These include sensitization of environmental processes, setting up of participatory working groups/advisory groups (PWG/PAG) and a collaborative process between Orccha (urban) and four neighboring GPs (rural areas). So for DA the role of BPF would clearly be the development of indicators for all these processes which in turn will bring about a better understanding of the functioning of the DPC. For Debate, who has already been working extensively in this field on District Planning for some time now, their experience of dissemination of the District Vision Document in visual and spatial form has been most effective. Hence independent development of indicators to check the strength of these processes was seen as most relevant by them. Finally, all the three organizations requested for more time to examine these indicators carefully to be able to actually administer and monitor them properly. Hence it is important for this work to proceed into the next phase at the earliest to be able to capture the nuances from the field while the planning processes, as laid down by the Planning Commission is underway.

During a **review meeting held in June 2009** with all partners, the team presented probable indicators for each process - stock taking, capacity building, financial resource mapping, formation of planning teams, micro-planning, participatory rural planning, participatory urban planning, integration of plans, urban rural integration and concurrent monitoring. These processes and the corresponding indicators were compared across the three sites at the GP, block and ZP level.

In the second phase, the BPF team discussed the indicators with all the three partners jointly in the Asia Foundation hosted team review meetings and individually refined the indicators in tune with the processes the partners were following on the ground.

After this, the team went back to first pilot the indicators. The first piloting was done in Orccha to understand if the indicators were acceptable and usable on the ground. During the pilot in Orccha it was found that most of planning related processes were not in place and instead environmental processes were the main focus. Therefore this was followed by a second pilot in Madhubani. After the indicator testing discussions were held with governance experts (November 14<sup>th</sup>) on findings and further refining of the indicators.

Later a more elaborate piloting was done in Madhubani in January 2010. The team measured the indicators by working with key field personnel of the partner organizations to meet officials and functionaries at GP, Municipality, Block, ZP, DPC. In Madhubani a new citizen satisfaction tool was also developed to measure the citizen satisfaction but not tested. (see Table-1)

#### **4.2.1 Discussions and Suggestions on Process and Impact Indicators**

While BPF made its presentation on the processes and the indicators that were arrived at, through one on one consultation with each partner and the field visits, audience provided feedback (See Appendix 1):

#### 4.2.1.1 Process Indicators

- 1) Stock taking process: BPF explained that the existence of a vision document will serve more as a checklist rather than a true process indicator. Such documents can be made even without going through a participatory on-the-ground process. The indicator instead will see if the actual process has taken place. Hence, a good indicator for the stocktaking document is to see if a template for such stock taking has been created, used and endorsed by the local governments instead of just looking for an existing stocktaking document. This would be similar for other processes too, like the perspective plan. Furthermore dis-aggregation of the process of stock taking beyond just the district level down to block and local bodies needs to be checked.
- 2) Capacity Building: According to the suggestions given, the indicator for capacity building was to have Capacity Building Tools that will include – a) Process: - how to plan; b) Templates – formats of plan; c) Guidelines for planning; and to this was added d) Participatory Rural Appraisal (*PRA*) *tools at GP and ward level*.
- 3) Financial mapping: The organizations should assist local authorities to demystify the financial resources and calculate resource entitlement for each scheme. Partners would then inform BPF on simple questions such as: if the plans are actually need based or resource based. The partner organizations would also explain how they are demystifying the financial resource envelope, and if not, what were the hurdles faced.
- 4) Formation of planning teams and demonstration of micro plans: There was discussion on composition of planning teams (based on standing committees or another structure as recommended by planning commission guidelines or state orders). These teams and local authorities need technical assistance. PRIA already has planning teams in place that follow the composition of the planning commission guidelines. It was recommended that BPF send out questions for this process asking for types of input, supports for the planning teams, if and where the partner organisations found the technical experts for the teams.
- 5) Participatory Rural Planning: Simple formats can be used at ward level to ensure participation. Discussions centred on how to balance infrastructure and social issues. The partners recommended that the indicators should see if plans reflect *cross sectoral issues* along with the Gram Sabha resolution and resource entitlement that were already mentioned in the presentation.
- 6) Facilitating rural-urban integration: Partners raised questions over the space between rural and urban habitats. Suggestions were: to see if common institutional sharing has gone up as a result of planning; to look at cross border livelihoods issues; to work with NABARD on their primary lending plans (PLP); start negotiations between both rural and urban on higher education, health and markets. It would be important to note if plans from lower levels are discussed in DPC meetings.
- 7) Concurrent Monitoring: Debate added one indicator of ensuring monthly and quarterly meeting of GP takes place. Other recommendations were to monitor the response of GPs in the meetings. The GP can present updates of decisions taken in earlier meetings with financial status. Quarterly meetings can also have a specific agenda. The register has to be maintained and agenda has to be written and circulated. PRIA would only monitor in 2<sup>nd</sup> phase after September 09 and see if resources are being transferred to tiers, if meeting are taking place, if plans have been approved and implemented. According to them the clarity and rewiring of roles and responsibilities will really empower the standing committees.

### 4.2.1.2 Impact Indicators

An action point for BPF was to put together impact indicators, measures and circulate it for comments from the partners. Impact indicators mentioned in this presentation need to be identified clearly. Some of the impact indicators needed in the planning process included:

- Access to [more] resources
- Increased Control of Resources by Elected Representatives
- Sharing of information on resources between stakeholders: GPs, Blocks, Line Departments, Gram Sabhas, and DPCs (networking)

The discussions around these issues were primarily focussed on participation by the community that would reflect if it was a community driven process or not. Issues around mapping of current resources, financial expenditure, implementation, and those of service delivery also needed to be recorded as indicators that will show incentives for future plan. Further, these were supplemented by impact indicators that were necessary for implementation at each level.

Impact indicators on implementation included:

- Improvement in service delivery in communities
- Citizen satisfaction with local government
- Evidence of rural-urban solutions initiated
- Indicator on Community Engagement

These indicators were further discussed and responses from the partners included:

- Communities are the ultimate focus for the impact in terms of better access to resources or improved service delivery.
- Inclusion of voices of marginalized groups in village and district plans
- Ability to bargain with higher levels of government
- Greater understanding of regional and district level linkages through these processes
- Building dialogue on district planning - put pressure on district officials via senior state officials for sharing information, implementation; to enable district officials to use project information/findings to advocate with state government for more resources
- Process indicators that are able to measure rewiring of roles, responsibilities, and attitudes of elected representatives at different levels. These could include issues such as;
  - Ability to plan not just a 10% increase to the earlier budget, but also to show adequate balance between social and infrastructure funding reflecting increased variety of resources, and a balance of activities between line departments;
  - Participation by different sections of the community;
  - Ability to create a vision document from status reports;
  - Clarity on resources available such as ability to calculate entitlement for each scheme presently available to the district.
- A set of indicators designed around mapping of current resources, financial expenditure, implementation, and service delivery should be created.
- It is easier to have a community driven process if the communities are involved, not just the institutions.
- Create excel sheet with each line department represented by a column with corresponding resources for each partner to fill in.

- Limit the impact indicators to observe impact on DPC and not include larger quality of life indicators.

### 4.3 Phase -3: Testing of Process Indicators (February 2010- June 2010)

*In the third phase* field testing was done in all three sites: Raisen, Madhubani and Orccha. During the field testing, key personnel from partner organizations were always with the BPF team to ensure that indicators are understood and refined (*when necessary*) on the field itself depending upon the requirements and local conditions. After the Raisen field testing reflection took place with team members and governance experts (Dr Ashok Sircar, Dr. Manab Sen, Tarun Debnath and Bijon Kundu). During the reflection session it was realised that even these detailed indicators were still a check list and the team would be required to create clusters of questions as well as determine means of verification for each indicator to determine the answer to any one indicator. The indicators were further refined this time by including a cluster of questions under one question to ensure authenticity and veracity.

After additional clusters of questions were included, the same indicators were again tested in April in Orccha. It was realized during the testing that the means of verification for every indicator needs to be scrutinized.

#### 4.3.1 Issues

1. After the second phase of indicator testing in Raisen it was realised that sampling was an issue. The indicators were tested at the same time in presence of president, secretary and members. Due to this, responses that emerged were a combined response where the knowledge of the secretary was higher than that of the GP members and therefore should be interviewed separately.
2. Sometimes functionaries provided politically correct answers (*as they are government functionaries*). These answers included saying the Gram sabhas were held and showing the minutes but when cross checking took place with the community, especially in control sites it was found that Gram Sabhas were in fact not held but minutes were sent to houses for signatures.
3. It was also realised that field personnel also took the indicator testing as an evaluation of their individual work on the ground which could potentially have resulted in manipulation of the indicator findings
4. The means of verification for indicators should be taken during the interview or key personnel should be told to inform interviewees to arrange for minutes of meeting, GS resolutions etc. prior to the interview. This is difficult to arrange in advance for an external team but for a TSI this should be part of the routine process of monitoring.
5. The choice of control sites was difficult especially in Raisen where Debate had trained across all GPs at the block level which resulted in controls looking not very different from the project sites. The option would have been to test controls in another district but Debate did not have contacts in these districts and it would have been difficult to get authentic information in areas with no organizational presence.

#### **4.4 Phase -4: Testing of Process and Impact Indicators (October 2010-December 2010)**

This phase is yet to be completed and planned for later in the year when the plans are being implemented.