

## CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT GRAM PANCHAYATS

### A. Introduction and Purpose of the Assessment

1. The proposed West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project, financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), aims to provide safe, sustainable, and inclusive drinking water services—as per the standards of the Government of India—to about 1.65 million people in selected parts of the arsenic, fluoride, and salinity affected areas of Bankura, North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur of West Bengal (project districts).<sup>1</sup>

2. The project preparatory team conducted a detailed assessment and mapping to understand and capture the key characteristics of the local *Panchayati Raj* governments (PRIs)—in particular, the *gram panchayats* to be supported under the project.<sup>2</sup> This note presents the approach, the methodology of the assessment carried out, results obtained, and broad conclusions.

3. Operational and financial sustainability at *gram panchayat* level is the key to the overall success of the project. Thus, this assessment reviews some of the critical operational indicators, such as prior experience of managing piped water supply, workforce availability, and financial governance indicators such as budget utilization and own-source revenue generation. The mapping and assessment also analyzed project *gram panchayats*' capabilities based on their socio-demographic, gender, institutional, and financial resources and contexts, and ranked them, overall, as high, moderate, and low, so that an estimate of their overall capacity to sustain the interventions under the project can be made and capacity building activities tailored accordingly during the project implementation.

4. Therefore, the main purpose of the assessment was to provide baseline data so the project consultants and the nongovernment organizations (NGOs) under the project can tailor their capacity building activities for the project *gram panchayats* to ensure a sustainable water delivery service. This note will also assist the executing agency, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) of the Government of West Bengal (GOWB), to write the terms of reference for the project consultants, particularly the project NGOs engaged to support the *gram panchayats* and assist the NGOs to continue the mapping and assessment during the initial project period.

### B. Approach and Methodology

5. The assessment was based largely on secondary data available from the Census 2011 and government data from the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation of the Government of India, *Panchayats* and Rural Development Department of GoWB, and PHED available in the public domain.<sup>3</sup> Some qualitative data was obtained through field visits and consultations with *gram panchayats*. In particular, detailed discussions with three-*gram panchayats* in North 24 Parganas District also helped in defining and selecting the indicators.

6. The four sets of key indicators—demographic, gender, institutional, and infrastructure availability—guided by the data availability, were used to capture the local contexts and

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<sup>1</sup> One block in neighbouring South 24 Parganas district is also included in the project's North 24 Parganas drinking water scheme.

<sup>2</sup> *Gram panchayat* is the village-level (first tier) of the local administrative body of the Government of West Bengal.

<sup>3</sup> Government of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner. 2011. Census of India. <http://censusindia.gov.in/>; Government of West Bengal, Public Health Engineering Department. [www.wbphed.gov.in](http://www.wbphed.gov.in); Government of West Bengal, *Panchayats* & Rural Development Department. *Gram Panchayat Management System*. [www.wbprdgms.gov.in](http://www.wbprdgms.gov.in); Government of India, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. [www.mdws.gov.in](http://www.mdws.gov.in).

capabilities of the *gram panchayats*. The indicators under each of the above categories were chosen based on their influences on *gram panchayat* governance and capabilities and are set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Indicators for Capacity Assessment**

Indicators	Sub-Indicator	Relevance
Demographic	Habitations per <i>gram panchayat</i>	The spread of the <i>gram panchayat</i> in terms of the number of habitations it covers indicates institutional complexities and coordination and collaboration efforts required at the <i>gram panchayat</i> level for managing services. More habitations require more outreach efforts.
	Population size	This indicator shows the size of the beneficiary population that the <i>gram panchayat</i> serves. More population requires more outreach efforts
	SC/ST Population and literacy levels	Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population are more vulnerable than the general population. Literacy levels and differences in literacy between different sections of the population are key indicators of socio-economic development. Low affordability, low awareness levels, and possibly low participation in decision-making processes are some of the characteristics of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other vulnerable sections of the population
Gender	Female literacy	This indicator indicates literacy levels among women.
	Gender ratio	It is the ratio of the number of females to 1,000 males in a population
	Work participation rate	It indicates the number of eligible women who participate in work among the total population and includes main and marginal workers.
Institutional	Own-revenue generation	This indicator indicates the ability of <i>gram panchayat</i> to mobilize resources locally. This ability can be defined as the willingness to raise revenues to improve services, setting up mechanisms for levying and collecting tax, and awareness and monitoring by <i>gram panchayat</i> to convince the population about taxes in relation to the provision of services. It is also an indicator of the progressive nature of the <i>gram panchayat</i> to move towards independent local self-government.
	Budget utilization	The indicator shows the capacity of the <i>gram panchayat</i> to plan and manage finances
	Workforce availability	This indicator shows the human resources available within the <i>gram panchayats</i> for carrying out program activities
	ISGPP <i>Gram Panchayat</i> or Non-ISGPP <i>Gram Panchayat</i>	This indicator shows the exposure of <i>gram panchayats</i> to externally funded programs involving participatory processes at the <i>gram panchayat</i> level thereby raising the capabilities of the <i>gram panchayat</i> to acquire new tools and techniques, and the community awareness and mobilization approaches to engage the population effectively on programs
Infrastructure	Piped water supply coverage	This indicator shows the availability of piped water infrastructure at the <i>gram panchayat</i> level. It also indicates <i>gram panchayats'</i> exposure to managing piped water supply schemes

ISGPP = Institutional Strengthening of *Gram Panchayats* Project (Project funded by the World Bank and implemented through Panchayats and Rural Development Department, West Bengal); SC = scheduled caste; ST = scheduled tribe.

Source: Government of West Bengal, Panchayats & Rural Development Department. [www.wbprd.gov.in](http://www.wbprd.gov.in).

### C. Scoring Methodology

7. The four key sets of indicators have been assigned weights based on their impact on governance/capabilities of the *gram panchayats*. Weights for sub-indicators under the key indicators have been assigned equally to simplify calculations and eliminate subjectivity, but still maintain the overall group weight for each of the indicator groups. Table 2 describes the weights assigned for key and sub-indicators. Scores in the range of 1–3 are assigned to sub-indicators based on their reported values. A score is then calculated for each indicator and for a set of indicators, which eventually gives a total score for the *gram panchayat*. A higher score indicates higher capabilities requiring less capacity building support and vice versa.

8. A capability score was calculated for the *gram panchayats* using the indicators shown in Table 2. The detailed assessments of *gram panchayats* are presented in Annexure 1 for the project schemes in Bankura, North 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur and South 24 Parganas.

**Table 2: Indicators Matrix and Project Gram Panchayat Assessment Score**

Overall Weights for Four sets of Indicators		Score	Weight		
Demographic		20	20%		
Gender		20	20%		
Institutional & Financial		30	30%		
W/S Infrastructure		30	30%		
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>		

  

Indicators	Score	Assigned Score	Sub Weight	Group Weight	Final Score
<b>Demographic Indicators</b>					
D1 Habitations per GP	1–3	3	25%		5
D2 Population Size	1–3	3	25%		5
D3 SC/ST Population	1–3	3	25%		5
D4 Literacy	1–3	3	25%		5
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Gender Indicators</b>					
G1 Female Literacy	1–3	3	33%		7
G2 Gender Ratio (F/M)	1–3	3	33%		7
G3 Female Work Participation Rate	1–3	3	33%		7
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Institutional Indicators</b>					
I1 Per Capita Own Revenue (₹ /capita)	1–3	3	20%		6
I2 % Untied Budget Utilised	1–3	3	20%		6
I3 % Total Budget Utilised	1–3	3	20%		6
I4 Workforce Availability (% Positions Filled)	1–3	3	20%		6
I5 ISGPP GP or not	1–3	3	20%		6
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30</b>

<b>Infrastructure Indicators</b>					
W1	Habitations with Piped WS	1–3	3	100%	30
<b>Total</b>				<b>100%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					<b>100</b>

F = female, GP = *Gram Panchayat*, ISGPP = Institutional Strengthening for Gram Panchayats Project, M = male, ₹ = Indian rupees, SC = scheduled caste, ST = scheduled tribe, WS = water supply.

9. Table 3 presents a summary of scores for *gram panchayats* in the project districts while Table 4 presents the information in detail.

**Table 3: Summary Scores for *Gram Panchayats* in Project Districts**

<b><i>Gram Panchayats</i> Category</b>	<b>No. of <i>Gram Panchayats</i></b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Bankura</b>	<b>Purba Medinipur</b>	<b>North 24 and South 24 Parganas</b>	
Low Capability	10	0	11	21
Moderate Capability	19	16	7	42
High Capability	2	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>66</b>

Note: Score < 50: Low Capability; Score 50–75: Moderate Capability; Score >75: High Capability.

10. Resource generation (financial indicator), workforce availability (institutional indicator) and exposure to piped water supply system (infrastructure indicator) are the three key indicators that reflect the operational and financial capability of the *gram panchayat* and are key to driving the score up or down. A lower score means the *gram panchayat* is performing poorly in these indicators and requires relatively significant capacity building in these areas. The scoring also helped to group the project *gram panchayats* with similar capacity building needs.

Table 4: Summary of Scores for Project Gram Panchayats

Sr. No.	District/ Block	Gram Panchayats (GPs)	Indicators & Assigned Scores													Final Score	Remarks	
			Demographic				Gender			Institutional				Infra				
			Project Hab/ GP	Population	SC/ST Pop/In	Literacy	Female Literacy	Sex Ratio	Female Work Participation	Per Capita OR	% Utilised Budget Used	% Total Budget Used	% Positions Filled	ISGPP or Not	Habs with Piped W/S			
													Score - 50-75 : Moderate Capability Score >75 : High Capability					
<b>Bankura</b>																		
1	Gangajalhati	Banasuria	3	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	60	Moderate Capability	Average
2		Barshal	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	3	3	1	57	Moderate Capability	
3		Bhaktabundh	3	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	66	Moderate Capability	
4		Gangajalhati	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	53	Moderate Capability	Highest
5		Gobindadham	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	78	High Capability	
6		Kapista	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	47	Low Capability	
7		Lachhmanpur	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	69	Moderate Capability	Lowest
8		Lalitabani	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	69	Moderate Capability	
9		Nityanandapur	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	48	Low Capability	
10		Pirabani	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	45	Low Capability	Lowest
11	Indpur	Bheduasole	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	48	Low Capability	
12		Brahmandiha	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	3	3	1	72	Moderate Capability	
13		Brajarajpur	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	3	1	1	45	Low Capability	Lowest
14		Gourbajar	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	51	Moderate Capability	
15		Hatagram	2	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	50	Moderate Capability	
16		Indpur	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	57	Moderate Capability	Average
17		Raghnathpur	3	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	48	Low Capability	
18																		
19	Mejhia	Ardhagram	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	3	3	1	49	Low Capability	Lowest
20		Banjora	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	3	1	1	49	Low Capability	
21		Kustore	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	1	48	Low Capability	
22		Mejhia	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	68	Moderate Capability	Lowest
23		Ramchandrapur	3	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	48	Low Capability	
24	Taldangra	Amdangra	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	55	Moderate Capability	
25		Falbibarda	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	54	Moderate Capability	Lowest
26		Fulmoti	2	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	51	Moderate Capability	
27		Harmasra	2	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	1	53	Moderate Capability	
28		Khalgram	2	3	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	1	52	Moderate Capability	Lowest
29		Panchmura	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	66	Moderate Capability	
30		Saltora	3	3	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	1	1	54	Moderate Capability	
31		Satmouli	2	3	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	59	Moderate Capability	Average
32		Taldangra	3	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	3	75	High Capability	
<b>East Medinipur</b>																		
1	Nandigram-I	Daudpur	3	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	74	Moderate Capability	Lowest
2		Gokulnagar	3	2	1	3	3	1	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	56	Moderate Capability	
3		Haripur	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	60	Moderate Capability	
4		Kalicharanpur	3	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	53	Moderate Capability	Highest
5		Kendimari Jalpai	3	2	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	55	Moderate Capability	
6		Mahammadpur	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	58	Moderate Capability	
7		Nandigram	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	65	Moderate Capability	Highest
8		Samsabad	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	58	Moderate Capability	
9		Sonachura	3	3	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	3	1	3	78	High Capability	
10		Vekutia	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	1	57	Moderate Capability	
11	Nandigram-II	Amdabad-I	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	66	Moderate Capability	Average
12		Amdabad-II	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	61	Moderate Capability	
13		Birulia	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	58	Moderate Capability	
14		Boyal-I	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	69	Moderate Capability	Lowest
15		Boyal-II	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	59	Moderate Capability	
16		Khodambani-I	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	65	Moderate Capability	
17		Khodambani-II	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	3	2	3	1	1	65	Moderate Capability	
<b>North 24 Paragana</b>																		
1	Haroa	Borjuri	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	42	Low Capability	Average
2		Gopalpur-I	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	44	Low Capability	
3		Gopalpur-II	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	50	Moderate Capability	
4		Haroa	3	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	3	68	Moderate Capability	Highest
5		Khasbalanda	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	3	67	Moderate Capability	
6		Kulti	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	44	Low Capability	
7		Salipur	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	42	Low Capability	Lowest
8		Sonapukursankarpur	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	42	Low Capability	
<b>South 24 Paragana</b>																		
9	Bhangar II	Bamanghata	3	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	49	Low Capability	Lowest
10		Beonta-I	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	50	Moderate Capability	
11		Beonta-II	3	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	45	Low Capability	
12		Bhogabanpur	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	55	Moderate Capability	Lowest
13		Bhogali-I	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	46	Low Capability	
14		Bhogali-II	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	52	Moderate Capability	
15		Chaltaberia	3	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	3	67	Moderate Capability	Lowest
16		Polerhat-I	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	44	Low Capability	
17		Polerhat-II	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	41	Low Capability	
18		Shanpukur	2	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	44	Low Capability	

GP = Gram Panchayat, ISGPP = Institutional Strengthening for Gram Panchayats Project, Infra = Infrastructure, OR = Own Revenue (Generated), SC = scheduled caste, ST = scheduled tribe, WS = water supply.

## D. Conclusions

11. The assessment was done largely utilizing secondary data and some primary data collected by the project preparatory consultants. The mapping and assessment analyzed project *gram panchayats*' capabilities based on their socio-demographic, gender, institutional, and financial resources and contexts, and ranked them, overall, as high, moderate, and low. Such a ranking helps project stakeholders, especially the project management unit and project consultants tasked with building their capacities, to give an estimate of their overall capacity to sustain the interventions under the project, so that capacity building activities can be tailored accordingly during the project implementation.

12. The assessment helps to gain insights into the resources and functioning of the *gram panchayats* and their strengths and weaknesses. The assessment also provides baseline data so that project consultants and NGOs can tailor their capacity building requirements during the project period to ensure sustainable service delivery. It will assist PHED in writing the terms of reference for the project consultants, particularly the project NGOs to be engaged to support the *gram panchayats*, and will assist the NGOs to continue the capacity mapping and assessment of the *gram panchayats* during the initial project period. The project management unit and project consultants, including the NGOs, whose task is to provide capacity building for the project *gram panchayats*, will be able to use these indicators to understand the impact of their initiatives better and thus help them in tailoring capacity building appropriately for the *gram panchayats* during project implementation.