

GUIDELINES FOR TRANSFER OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES TO PRIs - (Complete Schemes)

BACKGROUND

Society can govern itself effectively only when every responsible individual plays his role in the management of its affairs. The more an individual participates in the administration and management of public services, the greater is the democratic character of that society. Such a mode of association provides its members maximum opportunity for community participation leading to effective service delivery.

The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution of India came into force in 1993 and inter alia ensured conferment of powers and responsibilities to public representative institutions for local self-governance. The State of Himachal Pradesh, through HP Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 (Act No. 4 of 1994) Section 11(I) and schedule-I attached thereto has defined the functions of the Gram Panchayats. As per the annexure, construction, repair and maintenance of wells, ponds, tanks and supply of water for domestic use is a function to be performed by the Panchayats in their area of jurisdiction.

Although during the last 55 years about Rs. 2200 Crore have been invested for the creation of infrastructure for Rural Drinking Water Supply network in the State.

Despite such huge investments the level of service delivery is far from satisfactory, besides O&M expenses are mounting every year.

PRESENT ROLE OF THE IPH DEPARTMENT

The IPH Department is responsible for operation and maintenance of Water Supply Schemes in the State, which include 6402 gravity schemes, 1496 lift schemes and 91 tube-wells. Currently a large numbers of workers are deployed on O&M of Rural Water Supply Schemes. However, complaints are often received, particularly during periods of scarcity, about the inequitable distribution of water, non-availability in some areas and disruption in supply due to damage of the conveyance network not being attended to timely. It is felt that this situation arises mainly due to lack of community involvement in any aspect of supply of drinking water,

especially since the departmental staff may not have the necessary degree of commitment towards ensuring regular and proper supply as would members of the community that benefits from the scheme.

The cost to the department incurred as expenditure on O&M of the schemes is unsustainably high. In 2005-06 a sum of Rs. 102.26 Crore was spent on the wage component on maintenance of Rural Water Supply Schemes. While the need for maintenance work comes up only occasionally, the task of operation of the distribution system has to be done twice a day and is limited only to opening and closing of valves in the distribution network alongwith periodic chlorination of the Sector Storage Tanks (SSTs). The time taken for the distribution task is on an average not more than 2-3 hours in a day. Also the simple maintenance can be carried out by local persons.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES

In an engineering sense, operation refers to hourly and daily operations of the components of a system such as plant, machinery, equipment, control valves etc. which is done by an operator or his assistant. This is routine work. The term maintenance is defined as the act of keeping the plant, equipment, structures and other related facilities in optimum working order. Maintenance includes preventive maintenance or corrective maintenance, mechanical adjustment, repairs and planned maintenance.

STRATEGY FOR OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

For strengthening the three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions in the country, the Government of India has advised that operation & maintenance activities of drinking water supply schemes be carried out through PRIs. 15 % of AWRSP funds are required to be used for operation & maintenance activities through PRIs who will be delegated the responsibility of supply of drinking water in the rural areas. Apart from this a substantial allocation is there under the 12th Finance Commission award for the operation & maintenance of Rural Water Supply Schemes. The transfer of operation & maintenance of Rural Water Supply Schemes PRIs has therefore been under the consideration of Govt. for quite some time. It has been realized that exhaustive, practical and clear

cut guidelines are required to be given to the field functionaries of I&PH Department as well as the PRIs to ensure clarity of roles and functions in the management of the schemes actually transferred to the PRIs. The guidelines for the transfer of operation of systems below sector storage tank have been issued and implementation has also started.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDING OVER OF SCHEMES TO PRIs FOR OPERATION & MAINTENANCE:

The entire scheme from diversion (Head work) or intake to each and every hydrant post shall be transferred to concerned Gram Panchayats, which meet the prescribed criteria delineated below, for complete operation & maintenance. The schemes, which do not fulfill the criteria to some extent, should be rectified so as to bring them to the standards to fit the criteria. The Executive Engineer after identification of such schemes shall request the concerned Pradhan of the Panchayat for taking over the O&M of the scheme indicating complete technical details, different components and their magnitude including merits of the scheme. A meeting with the Gram Panchayat Pradhan and all members of panchayat, Zila Parishad, Block Development Committee should be convened which should also be attended by the E.E, A.E & concerned J.Es and an opinion of transfer should be formed. These guidelines are applicable to those schemes, the area of service of which falls within single Panchayat only. Guidelines for the transfer of multi Panchayats schemes shall be issued separately after adjudging the fitness and outcome of these guidelines and experience gained out of it. The Schemes to be transferred must fulfill the following criteria:-

SELECTION OF SCHEME FOR TRANSFERRING TO GP.

1. The area of service should fall within the same Gram Panchayat; the source, Water Treatment Plan (WTP) and gravity main can however be outside the jurisdiction of Panchayat.
2. The entire scheme should be in a satisfactory working condition without any history of frequent break downs & crisis that require intensive technical supervision and manipulation.

3. The scheme should have proper head works viz diversion weir or properly protected spring source.
4. The Water Treatment Plants (WTPs) wherever existing should be of adequate capacity and in satisfactory working condition.
5. The storage tanks should be of proper required capacity, non leaking and in satisfactory condition
6. The piping system including distribution should be in a healthy functional condition and there should be no leakage in the system. All the hydrants provided in the system should be working satisfactorily and must discharge the required quantity of water.
7. The pumping machinery and its accessories should be in good health and working condition.
8. Initially handover of only simple gravity flow based schemes should be considered and lift schemes should be considered only where confidence level regarding the capacity of Gram Panchayats to run the schemes is quite high.

JOINT WALK THROUGH BY IPH OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRI

1. Before handing over the systems a walk through including the members of the Gram Panchayat, user group and officials of IPH Department should be made. The proceedings of the walk through, including the comments of all the participants be recorded and this record shall be maintained in the office of A.E. and E.E./Gram Panchayat.
2. An inventory of all the components indicating their state of working should be made and jointly signed by the representative of the Gram Panchayat and the department and a copy of the same

should be handed over to the Gram Panchayat and one copy should be retained in the office of the A.E. as well as E.E.

TRANSFER OF ASSETS:

1. A key plan and details of the scheme indicating the functional health of each component should be prepared. The details of each component such as the type of head work, the size and length of each pipe line, type, make and capacity of pumping machinery and its allied accessories, type, size and location of control valves, capacity & location of WTPs and storage tanks and number & location of hydrant posts private as well as public, which should be jointly signed by the PRIs representative and the IPH department officers and should be kept in the records of Gram Panchayat as well as in the department.
2. The manpower already deployed by the department on the operation & maintenance of the schemes shall be placed at the disposal of the Gram Panchayat (G.P), if the Gram Panchayat opts for the deployment of departmental workers. Otherwise the Gram Panchayat (G.P) shall be at liberty to employ their own workers as per the necessity. The number of workers skilled as well as unskilled may be decided mutually by the Assistant Engineer of I&PH Department and the Pradhan of the Gram Panchayat.
3. The electric connection of Pump Houses and other installations shall be transferred on the name of the G.P.

SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT:

a) FINANCIAL:

The financial assistance shall be provided by the I&PH Department to the G.P. on quarterly basis to facilitate the G.P to meet the O&M expenditure including energy costs.

The assessment of the requirement of the funds shall be done by the G.P with the help of Assistant Engineer I&PH and a quarterly consolidated demand shall be submitted. The release of financial assistance to G.P shall be made with the recommendations of I&PH Department till the G.Ps are able to meet O&M expenses due to accruals on account of the following:-

- a) A lump sum one time grant of 10% of the capital cost of the scheme on present cost index shall be released to the G.P. for depositing into the account of the scheme to meet recurring expenditure on the same (likely release from the Govt of India in the 11th Plan period).
- (b) Rs. 750/- as already recommended for operation of the scheme below SST would continue to be given as per guidelines issued in this regard.
- (c) The Panchayat shall be at liberty to fix water tariff which cannot be less than the tariff fixed by the Govt. from time to time. The realization of water charges shall be done by G.P. & the entire amount on account of this shall be retained by the G.P, which shall be used for development works in the Panchayat.
- (d) The G.P shall be authorized to impose any penalty or compensation on miscreants; the amount so collected shall be retained by the Gram Panchayats and utilized as above.

b) TECHNICAL:

The role of the I&PH Department as facilitator in all type of activities, like financial and technical management, operation

& maintenance shall continue un-interrupted and unlimited. However, the following main activities are especially specified:

- i. Time to time training, awareness or capacity building of the members of the PRIs or the persons deployed on the transferred schemes shall be provided by the department. At the outset three month training will be given to persons deployed for O & M of the scheme by IPH department.
- ii. All technical reports, estimates, designs, drawings etc. shall be prepared by the department as and when any such work is proposed by the G.P. and the department is requested to do so.
- iii. All technical supervisions and time to time guidance on the construction and O&M activities shall be provided by the department.
- iv. The technical support in the management of crises shall be provided by the department.
- v. The evaluation studies if proposed at any time by the Govt. shall be duly supported by the department.
- vi. The department shall provide necessary assistance and guidance to maintain the records of the scheme and its operation and maintenance.
- vii. The department shall make available the copies of Acts, rules, regulations and latest amendments and instructions to the G.P.
- viii. No change addition, alteration or modification in the system in any form can be done by the G.P without the approval of competent authority from the I&PH Department.
- ix. The department shall prepare a statement of all private connections and the same shall be handed over to the G.P
- x. A maintenance team will be constituted at every section headquarter out of the existing staff of the staff withdrawn from the schemes after handing over to

PRIs. Maintenance team will function under the guidance and control of concerned J.E. and will look after the major/special repairs of the schemes transferred to PRIs

SELECTION OF THE PERSONS FOR O&M

In those cases where the department shall not be in a position to transfer the manpower to PRIs or it is mutually decided not to transfer manpower to PRIs alongwith the scheme, the following criteria shall be adopted for the employment of persons by the G.P.

1. The Panchayat would be free to appoint any person belonging to IRDP/BPL families having good health and sound mind for operating and maintaining the scheme.
2. Only such skilled workers shall be employed who possess the notified educational and technical qualification for each such category.
3. If the technical person from IRDP/BPL families is not available other person can be employed. The person employed should not be a close relative of Pradhan/Up-Pradhan, which means not his/her spouse and children.
4. The wages can be settled with the A.E depending upon the volume of work but not exceeding the amount fixed by the Govt. for such employments (on contract basis).
5. The person selected should preferably belong to the same Panchayat, who should be dedicated and not likely to move out for other pursuits of life in near future.
6. The number of persons and their technical skills shall be decided in consultation with the A.E who shall approve the numbers and the wages payable to them, which shall not exceed as fixed by the Govt. from time to time for contractual and part time workers.
7. The Gram Panchayat shall be free to remove persons employed by it if their performance is not found satisfactory.

Duties of the persons appointed for O & M of the Scheme

1. The complete task of operation and maintenance of the scheme will be done by the appointed persons including operation of treatment plant, regulating the flow, opening & closing of valves in distribution system daily with required chlorination of the sector storage tanks to be carried out periodically as required.
2. To check for the status of scouring and then proper close out of wash out valves
3. To check for leakage through pipes and report the same to IPH department
4. To check for the status of manhole cover over the storage tank and chamber covers.
5. To inspect for any possibilities of pollution of the distribution system and storage tanks.
6. To intimate the requirement of bleaching powder and other chemicals to IPH department well in advance.
7. To clean and disinfect all the storage tanks periodically preferably once in a quarter.
8. To check for any misuse/pilferage of drinking water by any person and also bring it to the notice of VWSC/GP
9. The appointed persons will be required to report on any major disruption of the distribution network to the VWSC/GP and IPH department so that the supply of drinking water can be restored at the earliest.

MONITORING BY THE DEPARTMENT

- i. The engineers of the I&PH department shall inspect the scheme regularly as per norms and issue necessary observations and guidelines.
- ii. Periodical meeting by the departmental officers with the G.P. shall be conducted to resolve any difficulties and the observations of the inspecting engineers shall be attended to. Such meetings should be at-least one in each quarter.
- iii. The department shall maintain records of all events and changes in the schemes and shall carry out regular evaluation of the policy of transfer of schemes.

MONITORING AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE G.P

- i. Panchayat shall maintain a register of complaints and the action taken on them alongwith outcome.
- ii. The Panchayat will maintain a record of break-downs indicating the time and duration of break down on the specified format.
- iii. The Village water & Sanitation Committee (VWSC) shall be formed by the G.P. to oversee the working of staff, which shall report the irregularities, if any to the G.P. for taking action against the defaulters.
- iv. The Panchayat shall maintain a record of misuse of water by individual or user group and shall take suitable action at their level.
- v. The Panchayat shall maintain all records like attendance registers of the workers, their wage bills, payment and all other transactions of any type in the operation and maintenance of scheme.
- vi. For maintaining the records, the GP can use one of the educated person deployed for the work on the scheme with some additional remuneration.
- vii. A site order register of the scheme shall be opened and maintained by the Panchayat in which remarks of the inspecting officer shall be recorded.
- viii. The procurement of all materials, fittings etc shall be done by the G.P and its fixing or replacement shall be done by the workers employed by the G.P.
- ix. All chemicals shall be procured by the G.P through the IPH Department (on payment) and their application shall be done by the worker employed on the scheme.
- x. The payment to all skilled as well as unskilled workers shall be made by the G.P. by using funds generated

- by the G.P or grants given by the Govt.
- xi. The payment of energy bills shall be made by the G.P.
 - xii. All routine repairs shall be done by the G.P while special repairs/ replacement shall be done by the maintenance team of IPH department unless otherwise allowed by the A.E. The special repair means any major disruption in the scheme, major damage to pipelines, storage tanks, treatment plants, intake and source of water due to any event, natural or man made.
 - xiii. G.P shall ensure a proper quality of water in the system and its regular monitoring shall be done.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENTAL OFFICER WHILE HANDING OVER THE SCHEMES TO PRIs.

- i. A complete inventory of the scheme including a key plan shall be prepared by the department and ensure that every component is functional as per guidelines.
- ii. Executive Engineer of the Division shall have a meeting with the members of the Zila Parishad and BDC members of the area and Pradhan and members of the Gram Panchayat to explain the guidelines in detail to them. DPO shall also be requested to join the meeting.
- iii. Gram Panchayat shall be requested to take over the scheme and the modalities shall be explained to the G.P.
- iv. Gram Panchayat may be asked to pass a resolution regarding the above proposal.
- v. Discussions may be held to identify number of persons to be deployed on a scheme by the Gram Panchayat and the wage to be paid to each person keeping in view the extent of the task.

- vi. The persons selected by the G.P are to be trained by IPH Department for three months and G.P. informed when they complete their training and are ready for work.
- vii. MOU to be signed between IPH Department and Gram Panchayat and handing over work to commence thereafter.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

This is to confirm the Agreement between the Gram Panchayat _____
Block _____, District _____ and Department of
Irrigation and Public Health, HP Government.

Scope of Work

Under this Agreement all parties agree to undertake the work in accordance with the Agreement as per description of activities agreed upon as exhibited in Annexure-I to the Agreement. The description of activities form an integral part of this Agreement and hence are binding on the parties.

Pradhan
Gram Panchayat
.....

(Executive Engineer)
IPH Department
.....

Description of Activities (Annexure I)

Gram Panchayat

1. The Gram Panchayat shall be responsible for operation and maintenance of the water supply scheme.
2. The Gram Panchayat shall be responsible of appointment of persons and their wages in consultation & approval of concerned Assistant Engineer of IPH Department. The G.P can remove the persons selected if their work is not found satisfactory.
3. The Panchayat shall maintain all records like attendance registers of the workers, their salary bills, payment and all other transactions of any type in the operation and maintenance of scheme.
4. The Gram Panchayat will not make any change, addition, alteration or modification in the system in any form without the approval of competent authority of I&PH deptt.
5. The Gram Panchayat will not sanction any public stand post and private connection without the approval of the Assistant Engineer, IPH Department.
6. The Gram Panchayat will ensure the equitable distribution of water to the users
7. Panchayat shall maintain a register of complaints and the action taken on them alongwith outcome.
8. The Panchayat will maintain a record of break downs indicating the time and duration of break down on the specified format.
9. A monitoring committee of the user group shall be formed by the G.P. to oversee the working of staff, which shall report the irregularities to the G.P. for taking action against the defaulters.

10. The Panchayat shall maintain record of misuse of water by an individual or user group and shall take suitable action at their level.
11. G.P shall maintain records of quality monitoring of water.
12. The guidelines for transfer of operation and maintenance of Rural Water Supply Schemes to PRIs issued by the H.P Govt. shall be a part of the MoU.

IPH Department

1. The IPH Department will arrange for training of the staff employed by the G.P.
2. The engineers of I&PH departmental shall inspect the scheme regularly as per norms and issue necessary observations and guidelines.
3. Periodical meeting by the departmental officers with the G.P. shall be conducted to sort-out the issues and the observations of the inspecting engineers. Such meetings should be at-least one in each quarter.
4. The department shall maintain records of all events and changes in the schemes and shall carry out regular evaluation of the policy of transfer of schemes.
5. IPH Department will prepare a statement of private water connections and handover the statement of the G.P.
6. The I&PH Deptt. Shall maintain the record of grants, reimbursements and any other financial assistance provided to the Gram Panchayat & get it audited as per the standard procedure of the Department.
7. The guidelines for transfer of operation and maintenance of complete schemes and transfer of operation below SST of Rural Water Supply Schemes to PRIs issued by the H.P Govt. shall be a part and parcel of the MoU.

The Selected Persons

1. The complete task of operation and maintenance of the scheme will be done by the appointed persons including treatment plant, regulating the flow, opening & closing of valves in distribution system daily with required chlorination of the sector storage tanks to be carried out periodically as required
2. To check for the status of scouring and then proper close out of wash out valves
3. To check for leakage through pipes and report the same to IPH department
4. To check for the status of manhole cover over the storage tank and chamber covers.
5. To inspect for any possibilities of pollution of the distribution system and storage tanks.
6. To intimate the requirement of bleaching powder and other chemicals to IPH department well in advance.
7. To clean and disinfect all the storage tanks periodically preferably once in a quarter.

8. To check for any misuse/pilferage of drinking water by any person and also bring it to the notice of VWSC/GP
9. The appointed persons will be required to report on any major disruption of the distribution network to the VWSC/GP and IPH department so that the supply of drinking water can be restored at the earliest.

In the event of any breach of this agreement / MOU, the decision of the Executive Engineer will be binding on both the parties.

Pradhan
Gram Panchayat

(Executive Engineer)
IPH Department