

**Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)**

Subject: ODF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

1. Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) has focused on achievement of open defecation Free (ODF) villages. Government of India defined ODF vide Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation's letter No.S-11011/3/2015-SBM dated 9th June, 2015, as follows, to convey uniform parameters of ODF. Subsequently, Government of India issued, vide this office letter dated 3rd September, 2015 (**Annexure I**), indicative guidelines for ODF verification to facilitate the States in developing mechanisms for ODF verification.

"ODF is the termination of faecal-oral transmission, defined by:

- 1) *no visible faeces found in the environment/village; and*
- 2) *every household as well as public/community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces*

(Tip: Safe technology option means no contamination of surface soil, ground water or surface water; excreta inaccessible to flies and animals; and freedom from odour and unsightly condition)"

2. Many villages across India are now declaring themselves as ODF. The States are also verifying the same as per their respective mechanisms. The achievement of ODF involves to a great extent work of behaviour change, sustenance of which requires concerted efforts by the community. In the past, there have been slippages from Nirmal status in the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) awarded villages. Therefore, it is important to draw lessons regarding those slippages and work out activities that minimize that risk.
3. A key factor is close engagement with such villages for a period of time after it becomes ODF. Many districts and States have evolved certain parameters to maintain sustainability of ODF. Based on such good practices, guidelines for ODF sustainability are being framed to guide the States and districts in sustaining the ODF status. These guidelines are only indicative and the States are free to adopt other measures, as deemed suitable to them, to sustain ODF.
4. The activities required for ODF sustainability are clubbed under the following key headings.

Process of ODF achievement including community engagement

5. The first and foremost requirement for sustainability is that the community has been actively engaged in the planning and achievement of ODF as active partners. This includes involvement of the entire community, especially women and children, PRIs and key opinion makers. It is also important that ODF has been achieved through a focus on collective behavior change aspect and demand generation, and not in a supply-driven mode. In other

words, the village should have addressed all issues pertaining to stoppage of open defecation and taken it as their responsibility to maintain that status. The self-declaration of ODF village should be based on a confirmation by the Nigrani Samiti of the village that nobody is going for open defecation (to be gauged during early morning and evening community vigilance).

Rigorous ODF verification

6. The second important ingredient of ODF sustainability is that the process of ODF verification, as mentioned in the guidelines dated 3rd September, 2015 (**Annexure I**), is duly followed while verifying the ODF status. First and foremost thing is to ensure that declaration of ODF is made only after the Nigrani Samiti of village confirms that nobody is defecating in the open. If the declaration is not done on a strong basis, its sustainability is doubtful from the very beginning. The ODF verification must capture the essential parameters of ODF, i.e. there should be no visible faeces in the village/surroundings and all household and public institutions should be using safe technology options. At least two verifications may be carried out for ODF – the first one within three months and the second one after six months of first verification. The verification mechanism adopted by each District in States must be uniform and as per the protocol issued by the State. States are advised to include, if not already done, surprise checks during dawn/duskin their verification protocol. The credibility and independence of the manpower deployed for verification is crucial, as also their orientation and training. For accountability, the ODF protocol of the State may also clearly define the administrative level at which the village is declared/verified as ODF.
7. Besides the ODF verification, States may also put in place mechanisms for qualitative evaluation of ODF processes in different districts to draw up lessons for cross-sharing and learning.

Continual engagement with ODF villages

8. **It is important that the district administration/SBM(G) implementation machinery engages with ODF villages for at least nine months after ODF declaration (3 months till first verification, and another 6 months thereafter till the second verification).** During these nine months, the following types of activities may be undertaken/coordinated in the ODF village:
 - ODF Plus activities: Water, cleanliness of water sources and public water bodies, decentralized solid and liquid waste management, 3Rs (Reduce, Recycle and Reuse), drains, maintenance of school and anganwadi toilets, hand-washing and personal hygiene, hand-washing in school before Mid-Day-Meal, awareness and training on pit emptying and faecal sludge management etc. These activities can be undertaken as part of Swachh Bharat through SBM(G) or in convergence with other schemes. Instructions have been issued on the conduct of Gram Sabhas to deliberate on the Index of Village Swachhta. These Gram Sabhas may deliberate in depth on the activities that may be taken up in the village in this regard.
 - Social Developmental activities such as anti-liquor, anti-dowry, anti-gambling, universal education, anti-child marriage, benefits to disabled, skill building activities, tree plantation

- Prioritization of other development schemes in ODF villages: (for example-water supply schemes, internal roads, watershed, housing etc.). The Government of India has already taken a decision to prioritize all Centrally Sponsored Schemes in ODF villages. Similarly, the State Government can take policy decision regarding prioritizing State Government's schemes in ODF villages.
- Social Audit and discussion of ODF sustainability in Gram Sabhas.

Reorienting role of motivators/Swachhagrahis

9. In order to carry out the above mentioned activities, the role of motivators/Swachhagrahis' maybe appropriately reoriented. An incentive mechanism for motivators may also be brought out to enable them to carry out these activities. Similarly, the role of district/Block/cluster coordinators may be reworked in tune with the activities required for sustainability.

Processes to support sustainability

10. The district administration/Gram Panchayat can consider undertaking certain processes that have been found to support sustainability. These include:
 - On achievement of ODF, usually a 'Walk of Pride' is organized by the village. This may be made a regular feature to be carried out on a monthly basis for around nine months.
 - ODF celebrations should be integrated during celebration of various festivals to promote it as a socio-cultural achievement.
 - Villages may consider yearly celebration of ODF achievement day.
 - Gram Panchayat may pass resolution regarding dos and don'ts for ODF sustainability. This may include imposition of fines on defaulters (open defecators), and/or mechanisms for engagement, or community and peer pressure to stop them from defecating in the open.
 - The issue of ODF sustainability should be included on the agenda of all Gram Sabha meetings
 - The village also has to ensure that any new houses that come up construct their own toilets. Also, a provision should have been made for visitors/migrants to the village through a community toilet or any other means.
 - The villages should identify vulnerable people or those people who are likely to revert to open defecation and continue engagement with them to prevent so.
 - Adequate arrangements should be made to tackle the sanitation needs during congregations, fairs etc.
 - The erstwhile places of open defecation may be developed for planting trees, including trees considered as sacred, so as to dissuade people from defecating there.
 - A taskforce comprising officials, motivators and natural leaders may be set-up at block/district levels. The taskforce may meet periodically and keep an eye on activities being undertaken for sustainability. Media may also be engaged to keep a watch on ODF sustainability.

- The State may also examine its incentive structure for construction of toilets and if required, reorient it in such a way that promotes sustainability. Some States consider postponement of incentive payment for a few months to confirm usage.

Continual role of Nigrani committees, Natural leaders

11. Nigrani committees/Natural leaders/Panchayat representatives who have played critical role in making the village ODF need to continue morning and evening follow-up for at least nine months after ODF declaration. They should also be actively involved in triggering other villages. The District Administration should hold regular meetings with them, involve them in various development activities. The District administration should also use social media such as WhatsApp extensively to cross share good practices in different villages.

Engagement with Schools and Anganwadis

12. The Education Department and Woman and Child Development Departments should be involved closely in the sustainability phase. In the village, maintenance of school and aganwadi toilets should be regularly discussed in the meetings of Village Education Committee and Parent Teacher Association. There should be regular discussions in school by teachers with children on sustaining ODF activities. The school sanitation club activities should be continued.

Recognizing and awarding sustained performance

13. The State/districts should continue to felicitate publically Swachhata Champions. The States may also institute award schemes for villages that sustain ODF status. From the GoI side, the World Bank Support Project will provide incentives to States on the basis of results of independent verification.

Financing of Sustainability

14. The World Bank Project will provide incentive grants to States on the basis of inter-alia sustainability of ODF. ODF achievement and sustainability has also been incorporated as a parameter of States performance to determine allocation of SBM(G) funds to States.
