

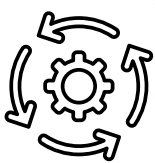
Monthly Updates- April 2026

Grassroots Level Institutions Strengthening and Transformation (GIST)

Overview

GIST aims to strengthen local communities by empowering grassroots institutions like Gram Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, and other Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), fostering self-reliance and inclusive development. It promotes environmental sustainability through community-led protection of common resources and integrates ecological concerns into village development. The initiative also supports SDG localization by aligning local efforts with national targets and aids in implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to secure forest-based livelihoods. Additionally, it empowers tribal communities in PESA areas to enhance representation, preserve traditional cultures, and manage natural resources sustainably.

Project Goal



To empower over 40 Gram Panchayats and 200+ Women Self-Help Groups by enabling collaboration between local governance bodies and community organizations for joint planning and collective action, with a focus on driving climate resilience and promoting sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Component Wise Approach



Component 1: Gram Panchayat CBO Convergence

This component focuses on fostering collaboration between Gram Panchayats and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to enhance local governance and community development. It empowers SHGs in decision-making, aligns initiatives for livelihood generation, and ensures inclusive grassroots outcomes through coordinated efforts.



Component 2: Localization of SDGs

Promote community-led SDG localisation by building capacities of Gram Panchayats in collaboration with SHGs and CBOs. Engage higher education institutions through Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and Focused Block Initiatives. Foster village-level partnerships to drive sustainable and inclusive development.



Component 3: Identifying, Protecting, and Regenerating Commons

This component seeks to ensure the sustainable use of village commons—critical for rural livelihoods—by improving legal frameworks, mobilizing SHGs and MGNREGA for land protection, and promoting equitable access, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience.



Component 4: Operationalising PESA Act

GIST supports the effective implementation of PESA in tribal regions like Odisha and Jharkhand. The goal is to empower tribal communities, ensure their representation in governance, and promote sustainable natural resource management while preserving traditional rights and cultures.



Component 5: Enhancing Implementation of Forest Right Acts

This aims to strengthen the implementation of FRA by improving claim filing processes, empowering communities to secure individual and collective forest rights, and supporting state efforts through trained resource persons and robust institutional support mechanisms.

Progress this Month

GP-SHG Convergence

Jharkhand:

- Status report on SHG-PRI convergence (VPRP pilot) completed, capturing field insights and recommendations; drafting of VPRP guidelines is underway based on these findings.

Odisha:

- Draft guidelines for VPRP-GPDP integration and pilot report (covering processes, methodologies, and learnings) are under preparation/refinement.
- SHG orientation materials are being strengthened into a detailed training module, alongside preparation of the project Gantt chart.

Karnataka:

- VPRP guidelines finalized with a participatory approach; consolidated report on pilot learnings and process documentation is in progress (preliminary draft completed).

Tamil Nadu:

- VPRP study report and training module development are underway (including PPT content for Day 1–3 sessions), with translation support initiated for the VP-SHG module.
- Pilot rollout planning completed with 35 LSDG villages identified for PRI-CBO convergence post-MCC, and detailed Gantt charts prepared for all phases.

Localising SDGs

Tamil Nadu:

- Draft LSDG guideline prepared and shared for feedback; translation of GPDP guidelines into Tamil initiated.
- Stakeholder consultations completed, and 370 Village Panchayats across 37 districts identified for scale-up.
- Consolidated report on pilot learnings and Panchayat demands is under preparation.

FRA

Odisha:

- Project Gantt chart developed covering NTFP Study and FRA Land Use Microstudy.
- NTFP field report submitted, with policy note, process guidelines, and business model under development.
- FRA Land Use Microstudy completed, with policy recommendations being finalized based on field findings.

Commons

Jharkhand:

- Preliminary pilot report and draft governance guidelines for commons prepared, covering mapping, institutional gaps, and strategies for community-led governance.

PESA

Jharkhand:

- PESA PMU roadmap completed and presented for approval; engagement initiated with Azim Premji University and recruitment of fellows underway to operationalize the PMU.

Key Learnings



GP-SHG Convergence:

- Effective implementation **requires legally backed, context-specific guidelines** along with detailed training and sustained stakeholder engagement.

Localising SDGs:

- Variations across Gram Panchayats **highlight the need for flexible, context-driven planning** rather than uniform approaches.

FRA:

- Multiple tailored **outputs improve usability, while careful planning** is essential for managing parallel workstreams efficiently.

Commons:

- Convergence with schemes like MGNREGA and sustained institutional support are critical to **translate plans into on-ground outcomes**.

PESA:

- A clear implementation roadmap is key to **structuring the PMU and prioritizing actionable** steps for operationalization.

Way Forward

P-SHG Convergence:

- Finalize VPRP guidelines, reports, and training modules across states, followed by writeshops, field visits, and pilot rollouts to strengthen GP-SHG integration.

Localising SDGs:

- Finalize LSDG guidelines, complete translations, and develop implementation frameworks and pilot learning reports to enable scale-up.

FRA:

- Complete and submit all study outputs (policy note, guidelines, business model), incorporate feedback, and finalize through consultative processes.

Commons:

- Integrate commons restoration into MGNREGA planning and refine governance guidelines to enable on-ground implementation.

PESA:

- Obtain PMU approvals and initiate priority actions such as capacity building, boundary notification, and dispute resolution.

