

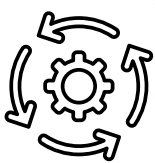
Monthly Updates- July 2026

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

- Conducted a two-day **SHG-PRI Convergence Writeshop (13–14 July)**, bringing together government officials, elected representatives, community institutions, and civil society to refine the state's convergence framework.
- Released the **Status Report on VPRP in Jharkhand** and finalized the draft SHG-PRI Convergence Guidelines after incorporating stakeholder and mentor feedback.

Odisha

- Undertook a field visit to Keonjhar to identify implementation gaps and inform the VPRP-GPDP Convergence Training Module.
- Revised the **VPRP-GPDP Convergence Guidelines** and completed the draft Training Module, incorporating feedback from OLM officials and mentors.

Karnataka

- Conducted field visits to **VPRP pilot Gram Panchayats to assess the realization of VPRP demands** over the past three years.
- Prepared the first draft of the VPRP Capacity Building Module and participated in the Jharkhand SHG-PRI Convergence Writeshop to facilitate discussions on policy and systems.

Tamil Nadu

- Provided technical support to **TNSRLM for the end-to-end recruitment of State and District Resource Persons** under the PRI-CBO Convergence initiative.
- Supported implementation planning by participating in the **State Level Coordination Committee meeting** and developing training materials for the 66 Village Panchayat pilot under G.O. 235.

Localizing SDGs (LSDG)

Tamil Nadu

- Completed the **Localising SDGs (LSDG) training module** covering nine themes, with dedicated chapters on VPDP preparation and the Resource Envelope. The module is under mentor review, while the LSDG guidelines are under review by the Commissioner of RD&PR.

FRA

Odisha

- Completed and submitted a report on land-use patterns and advocacy notes following fieldwork in Lanjigarh, Kalahandi.
- Developed and submitted the **NTFP Micro-Pilot Plan for jackfruit in Rayagada after consultations** with Dongaria Kondh women and state officials.
- Incorporated review feedback and held a consultation with the Catalyst Team and Living Landscape to refine the jackfruit micro-pilot.

PESA

Jharkhand

- The **State Action Plan on PESA** was approved by the department. Discussions were held with the State PESA Coordinator on the roadmap for capacity building and a four-day workshop.
- The team also participated in a **four-day State Resource Team workshop on GPDP strengthening, focusing on planning, convergence, and progress monitoring** across district, block, and Gram Panchayat levels.

Key Learnings



- **GP-SHG Convergence:** Multi-stakeholder consultations and contextualised capacity building are essential for strengthening SHG-PRI convergence and promoting community-led planning and implementation.
- **Localising SDGs:** Effective localisation of SDGs requires clear operational guidelines and structured capacity-building mechanisms for all stakeholders involved in planning and implementation.
- **Forest Rights Act (FRA):** Commodity-specific planning and multi-stakeholder review processes are critical for designing practical and sustainable NTFP-based livelihood interventions.
- **PESA:** Early stakeholder engagement, iterative consultation, and continuous refinement of implementation tools are key to developing effective PESA capacity-building and implementation frameworks.

Way Forward

GP-SHG Convergence: Finalise and submit the state-specific convergence guidelines for departmental review, strengthen training modules with practical resources, and support capacity building and rollout across partner states.

Localising SDGs: Finalise the LSDG Guideline and module, secure the ISBN for the training module, and facilitate its adoption by SIRD.

Forest Rights Act (FRA): Revise the Jackfruit NTFP Micro-Pilot Plan based on stakeholder feedback, obtain final approval, and prepare for pilot implementation.

PESA: Conduct capacity-building programmes for CSO partners, undertake a Training Needs Assessment to inform future trainings, and prepare the quarterly implementation plan with the department.

Photos

