

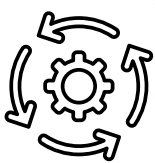
Monthly Updates- May 2026

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

Karnataka

- The VPRP guidelines, incorporating a participatory approach across stages of preparation, were finalised. Operational modalities for implementation of the VPRP guidelines were developed.
- The VPRP pilot report documenting the process, key learnings, and implementation was prepared.

Jharkhand

- A consolidated pilot study report on VPRP–GPDP integration for Anandpur Panchayat was prepared.
- A comprehensive guideline for VPRP preparation and its integration with GPDP was developed.
- Mentor feedback is being incorporated to refine both documents for improved clarity and implementation relevance.

Odisha

- A consolidated pilot study report on VPRP–GPDP integration was prepared, along with a comprehensive guideline for VPRP preparation and integration with GPDP.
- An action plan for VPRP preparation and integration was developed, including a Gantt chart and stakeholder-wise roles and responsibilities.
- A training module for VPRP preparation is under development, covering participatory planning, Gram Sabha facilitation, convergence with GPDP, stakeholder roles, and planning tools.

Tamil Nadu

- The VP–SHG Module (Chapters 1–14) was completed and converted into PPT format for Phase 1 sessions; Tamil translation inputs were incorporated and submitted to TNSRLM for review.
- The VPRP Study Report was submitted, and review comments are being incorporated.
- Discussions were held with ADRD–CBO on VP–SHG partnership and VPRP pilot, including scaling plans, recruitment of resource persons, and support for implementation districts.
- Work is ongoing on LSDG-related support, including guideline finalisation, Tamil translation, scaling of 370 VPs, and development of training content on governance and PAI use.

FRA

Odisha

- Draft report, policy brief, and business models were submitted and finalised after incorporating mentor feedback.
- SHG capacity-building section drafting is in progress and stakeholder consultations were conducted with district ITDA officers.

Commons

Jharkhand

- A consolidated pilot study report and guideline on protection of commons and its integration with GPDP were prepared for Anandpur Panchayat.
- Mentor feedback is being incorporated to strengthen clarity and usability of both documents.

PESA

Jharkhand

- The executive order for establishment of the PESA PMU was received, and key operational documents including the action plan, CBT framework, evaluation matrix, and dashboard framework were prepared.
- Two PESA Associates were onboarded to support implementation, with joining expected in early June. All documents are being refined based on mentor feedback for submission and approval.

Key Learnings



GP-SHG Convergence:

Effective translation of field-level **learnings into policy requires strong analytical and documentation processes throughout pilot studies**. Simplified and context-specific participatory planning approaches, supported by robust process documentation, are essential for improving implementation quality and enabling scale-up.

Localising SDGs:

There is a significant awareness gap at the community level regarding LSDG concepts, indicating the need for stronger efforts to build understanding and ownership. While **participatory planning guidelines are strong, effective implementation requires clear operational modalities and structured capacity-building mechanisms for stakeholders**.

FRA:

Further work is required to develop robust **NTP modelling frameworks and comprehensive impact assessment methodologies to support effective implementation** and outcome measurement.

Way Forward

P-SHG Convergence: Scale up SHG-GP convergence across districts through government adoption of guidelines and continued facilitation of capacity-building through training modules and tools.

Localising SDGs: Strengthen community-level capacity-building and finalize state-level guidelines and village selection to support effective LSDG implementation and convergence with GPDP.

FRA: Develop a scalable micro-pilot by refining the action plan and strengthening stakeholder engagement through field consultations and writeshops.

Commons: Support state-level adoption of commons integration guidelines and strengthen convergence with Gram Panchayat planning and district-level implementation processes.

PESA: Operationalize the PMU, finalize implementation frameworks, and initiate phased rollout through stakeholder onboarding, capacity building, and alignment with departmental priorities.

Photos

