

Executive Summary

The Ganga is the National River of India. For thousands of years, the River Ganga along with her tributaries has provided material, spiritual and cultural sustenance to millions of people living in the Ganga river basin. The river has been facing threats due to population pressures, extensive and unplanned urbanization, industrialization, expansion of agriculture, destruction of forests, abstraction of water for irrigation and industry, lack of proper investment in water quality infrastructure and governance problems.

Government of India has taken various initiatives since the mid 1980's to address the issues affecting the River Ganga and its tributaries. Government approved (May 2015) the Integrated Ganga Conservation Mission namely, *Namami Gange* as an umbrella programme with the aim of integrating previous and currently ongoing initiatives by enhancing efficiency, extracting synergies and supplementing them with more comprehensive and better coordinated interventions.

We undertook a Performance Audit of the Rejuvenation of River Ganga (*Namami Gange*) to assess the adequacy of estimation, availability and utilisation of funds, planning and implementation of various schemes/projects, adequacy of human resources and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

We sampled 87 projects (73 ongoing, 13 completed and one abandoned project) for audit scrutiny which constituted sanctioned cost of ₹ 7,992.34 crore. Of the 87 projects selected for audit, 50 projects were sanctioned after 01 April 2014. The 87 projects also included all the 11 institutional projects, five afforestation and one biodiversity project.

Financial Management

Only eight to 63 *per cent* of the funds were utilised during 2014-15 to 2016-17, as compared to Revised Estimate. Funds amounting to ₹ 2,133.76 crore, ₹ 422.13 crore and ₹ 59.28 crore were lying unutilised with National Mission for Clean Ganga, various State Programme Management Groups and Executing Agencies/ Central Public Sector Undertakings respectively as on 31 March 2017.

(Paragraphs 2.2.1 & 2.2.5)

There were delays in submission of Utilisation Certificates in respect of all State Programme Management Groups.

(Paragraph 2.2.6)

State Programme Management Groups of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal did not conduct their internal audit as per prescribed frequency (quarterly) during 2014-17. Internal audit was not conducted at all in respect of State Programme Management Groups of Bihar and Uttarakhand.

(Paragraph 2.4)

A corpus of ₹ 198.14 crore (as of 31 March 2017) was available in the Clean Ganga Fund. However, National Mission for Clean Ganga could not utilize any amount out of the Clean Ganga Fund and the entire amount was lying in banks due to non-finalization of action plan.

(Paragraph 2.6.1)

Planning

National Mission for Clean Ganga could not finalise the long-term action plans even after more than six and half years of signing of agreement with the consortium of Indian Institutes of Technology. As a result, National Mission for Clean Ganga does not have a river basin management plan even after a lapse of more than eight years of National Ganga River Basin Authority notification.

(Paragraph 3.3)

Out of 154 Detailed Project Reports pertaining to 2014-15 to 2016-17, only 71 Detailed Project Reports were approved. Of these 71 Detailed Project Reports, 70 were approved after delays ranging from 26 to 1,140 days. Out of remaining 83 Detailed Project Reports, 54 were pending at National Mission of Clean Ganga level for a period ranging from 120 to 780 days.

(Paragraph 3.4)

River Conservation Zones were not identified in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, till May 2017. In Uttarakhand the identification was under progress.

(Paragraph 3.8)

Pollution Abatement and Ghat Development

As per the target dates, award for the work of all the Sewage Treatment Plants was to be completed by September 2016. National Mission for Clean Ganga is yet to finalise and approve Detailed Project Reports for projects totalling 1,397 MLD capacity as of August 2017.

(Paragraph 4.2.1)

Out of 46 Sewage Treatment Plants, Interception & Diversion projects and Canal works costing ₹ 5,111.36 crore, there were delays in 26 projects costing ₹ 2,710.14 crore due to delay in execution of projects, non-availability of land, slow progress of work by contractors and under-utilisation of Sewage Treatment Plants. Projects relating to Ghats and Crematoria works suffered from non-obtaining of requisite clearances.

(Paragraphs 4.4 & 4.5)

Rural Sanitation

Against the total funds of ₹ 951.11 crore released by National Mission for Clean Ganga and State Governments for activities relating to construction of Individual Household Latrines, Information, Education and Communication and Solid Liquid Waste Management, the five States namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal could utilise a sum of ₹ 490.15 crore only.

(Paragraph 5.3)

Except Uttarakhand, the other four States namely Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal could not achieve the target of construction of 100 *per cent* Individual Household Latrines as of 31 March 2017.

(Paragraph 5.4)

Solid Liquid Waste Management activities were not taken up in any of the identified districts of the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. In Uttarakhand work relating to Solid Liquid Waste Management in two out of 132 Gram Panchayats were completed and were in progress in 11 Gram Panchayats as of March 2017.

(Paragraph 5.6)

There were discrepancies in the data reported under Management Information System and basic records maintained by Gram Panchayats in 12 test-checked districts of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.

(Paragraph 5.7.2)

Conservation of Flora & Fauna and Maintenance of Ecological Flow

In Bihar and Jharkhand, no interventions for Agriculture and Urban Landscape were undertaken in the identified districts/divisions. In Bihar, conservation and support activities were also not undertaken. In Uttarakhand, shortfall under natural landscape, agricultural landscape, urban landscape and conservation interventions were noticed.

(Paragraph 6.3.2)

National Mission for Clean Ganga did not identify places of discontinuity of water flow due to engineered diversion or storage and did not initiate any remedial action thereof, as required under the notification of October 2016.

(Paragraph 6.5)

Human Resource Management

There was overall shortage of manpower, ranging from 44 to 65 *per cent* during 2014-15 to 2016-17 in National Mission for Clean Ganga. In SPMGs, the overall shortage ranged between 20 to 89 *per cent*. National Mission for Clean Ganga did not initiate any proposal for strengthening the human resources of State Programme Management Groups.

(Paragraph 7.2)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring Bodies/Committees such as Governing Body, High Level Task Force, Empowered Task Force and Governing Council did not meet as per required frequency.

(Paragraph 9.2)

The mandate of establishment of 'Ganga Monitoring Centre' was still under conceptualization and planning phase at NMCG as of July 2017.

(Paragraph 9.4)

Implementation of Bhuvan Ganga Web-portal to enable planning, execution and monitoring of investment projects as well as providing platform for central repository of all data through GIS mapping, was slow.

(Paragraph 9.5)

National Mission for Clean Ganga did not develop any mechanism to take appropriate remedial action on the information shared by the public on the Bhuvan Ganga App.

(Paragraph 9.6)

Against an amount of ₹ 198.48 crore sanctioned to Central Pollution Control Board for three projects on monitoring and evaluation, expenditure of ₹ 14.77 crore (7.44 *per cent*) only was incurred as of March 2017.

(Paragraph 9.7)

Against 5,016 compliance verifications required to be conducted by Central Pollution Control Board in respect of 988 Grossly Polluting Industries, only 3,163 compliance verifications were conducted during 2011-17. Against the 120 mandatory adequacy assessments required to be conducted in respect of five identified Common Effluent Treatment Plants, only 17 were carried out as of August 2017. Against the mandatory 560 inspections to be carried out for performance evaluation of 67 Sewage Treatment Plants, only 177 were carried out as of August 2017.

(Paragraph 9.7.1)

Central Pollution Control Board could deploy only 36 Automatic Water Quality Monitoring Systems as against 113 sites identified along the River Ganga for continuous receipt of water quality monitoring on real-time basis.

(Paragraph 9.7.3)

In six cities¹ of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, Dissolved Oxygen declined from 2012-13 levels. Biochemical Oxygen Demand was higher than the prescribed limit in the three towns (Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi) of Uttar Pradesh. During 2016-17, Total Coliform levels in all the cities of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal was very high; ranging between six² to 334³ times higher than the prescribed levels. Specific parameters for water quality monitoring of the river Ganga have not been prescribed by National Mission for Clean Ganga.

(Paragraph 9.8)

¹ Kanpur, Varanasi (downstream), Patna, Munger, Gayespur and Budge Budge

² Patna

³ Gayespur

Recommendations

We recommend that

- i. NMCG may prepare Annual Action Plan, align Budget Estimates based on Annual Action Plan and take appropriate action to regularly review actual expenditure vis-à-vis budget allocation.
- ii. NMCG may ensure preparation and timely submission of UCs/ consolidated Financial Statements by SPMGs, for regular monitoring of the expenditure.
- iii. NMCG may ensure Internal Audit of all the SPMGs as per the prescribed frequency.
- iv. MoWR, RD&GR may release subsequent grants to NMCG, after taking into account the unspent balances available with NMCG/ SPMG/ EAs etc. at the end of the financial year.
- v. NMCG may formulate the action plan for augmentation and utilization of Clean Ganga Fund.
- vi. NMCG may finalize Ganga River Basin Management Plan for implementation of long-term intervention on Ganga Rejuvenation on priority and implement it in a time bound manner.
- vii. NMCG may ensure appraisal of DPRs as envisaged in NGRBA framework in time bound manner.
- viii. NMCG may identify and declare River Conservation Zones on priority, in order to conserve the River Ganga from encroachment and construction activities.
- ix. NMCG may address the capacity gaps of sewerages pertaining to all towns and villages comprehensively and plan sewage systems, STPs, Interception and Diversion works accordingly in a time bound manner.
- x. NMCG/ SPMGs may synchronize Interception and Diversion Projects with setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants and their operationalization for ensuring that no untreated sewage flows into the River Ganga.
- xi. NMCG, SPMGs in consultation with the State Government authorities and Executing Agencies may make tripartite agreements for making land available before awarding the contracts.
- xii. NMCG, in consultation with MoDW&S, may ensure the optimum utilisation of available funds with the State Governments.
- xiii. NMCG, in consultation with MoDW&S, may ensure more realistic planning, data integrity and strict monitoring for achievement targets.

- xiv. NMCG and MoDW&S may ensure the reliability of the data reported under MIS by cross checking with monthly physical/ financial reports submitted by all Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Project Districts.
- xv. NMCG may identify threats and implement programmes/schemes to maintain the Ganga river ecology and conserve flora and fauna in sustainable and time bound manner.
- xvi. NMCG may on priority address the concerns of *Aviral Dhara* by identifying the discontinuity of flow of the River Ganga water due to engineering diversion or storage so as to determine and maintain the ecological flow.
- xvii. NMCG may frame recruitment rules for filling-up the vacancies and increase the sanctioned strength for effectively implementing the projects both at NMCG and SPMG levels.
- xviii. NMCG may have regular meetings for monitoring of Ganga Rejuvenation Programmes, make recommendations and actionable points and follow up scrupulously.
- xix. NMCG may make all efforts to expedite the work already assigned to CPCB on monitoring of pollution, inventorization of crucial parameters of pollution, surveillance on the River Ganga and strengthening of regulators.
- xx. NMCG may expedite the setting up of Ganga Monitoring Centres as envisaged in River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order (2016).
- xxi. NMCG may use geo-spatial data of National Remote Sensing Centre for better monitoring.

