

# Chapter IV

## Monitoring and Evaluation





## Chapter 4

# Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of monitoring has a major impact on the extent to which effectiveness, efficiency and data integrity objectives are achieved in a project environment.

### 4.1 DBT Governance framework

As already discussed in Chapter 1, the State DBT Cell is responsible for implementing and monitoring DBT. It shall consist of an Advisory Council and a Steering Committee and coordinate all efforts related to DBT for bringing onboard and implementing schemes.

#### 4.1.1 *Advisory Council Meetings not held*

The Advisory Council was formed (2016) under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to Government. Audit observed that the Advisory Council had not conducted any meetings since 2016 till date. Consequently, effective implementation of DBT in the State could not be ensured.

#### 4.1.2 *Inadequacies in monitoring of onboarded schemes*

With the introduction of the DBT as the disbursal mechanism in the State, the Government prohibited transfer of benefits other than through DBT. Accordingly, the benefits under the schemes onboarded to DBT shall invariably be routed through Core DBT Portal of the State. Audit observed that there was no mechanism to monitor whether the user departments were routing the transactions only through the Core DBT. Instances of transactions being carried outside of Core DBT despite having onboarded onto the portal have been pointed out in paragraphs 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.2.1. Routing transactions outside of Core DBT contravenes the Government directions and resulted in bypassing the mandatory NPCI and de-duplication checks and is fraught with the risk of ineligible beneficiaries getting the benefits. The DBT Cell accepted that no mechanism exists to check such instances.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that DBT portal handles only beneficiary payments and other payments needs to be done directly in K2 by DDOs. Therefore, it is very difficult to electronically control such activities. However, directions have been issued by Finance Department making DDOs responsible for such lapses.

#### 4.1.3 *Inadequate monitoring by DBT Cell*

The effectiveness of the implementation of a scheme is gauged in terms of the outcomes, which could be compared against the target fixed for the project. The Operations Group of the DBT Cell was required to identify schemes/departments that fall under the purview of DBT, set goals and

deadlines for onboarding of schemes and monitor the progress of each department. Though 239 schemes were identified for onboarding, Audit observed that no goals and deadlines were prescribed by the DBT Cell for onboarding them onto the Core DBT portal. Consequently, there was no monitoring over the user department progress in this regard.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that Government had fixed the targets for onboarding the schemes. The fact remains that only 35 *per cent* of the identified schemes were onboarded as of April 2021 despite a lapse of nearly two years from the deadline set by Government indicating the absence of monitoring by the DBT Cell.

#### 4.1.4 *Beneficiary Grievance Redressal system*

As per the DBT Bharat guidelines, there is a need for a strong grievance redressal system which can enable incorporating the feedback of the beneficiaries, their experience with DBT and their grievances into the system. This sort of a two-way feedback loop through a process of continuous learning and improvement shall strengthen the DBT framework. Further, Standard Operating Procedure of DBT Bharat states that DBT cell will constitute a dedicated body to deal with complaints and grievances of beneficiaries in a fair and timely manner.

Audit observed that that a centralised public grievance handling mechanism was not established to aid the beneficiaries in addressing their grievances. Currently the beneficiaries personally communicate their grievances in the department implementing specific DBT Schemes. Further, a beneficiary may be eligible for receipt of more than one benefit but actually not receiving the benefits and the reasons attributed may be the same across the schemes for which he/she is eligible to. This complicates the grievance redressal as the beneficiaries have to register their complaints with all the departments for the same reasons. Considering the issues in the various layers of the benefit transfer processes, it is imperative to have a centralised beneficiary grievance mechanism through which the beneficiaries could seek resolution for their grievances. This also assumes significance in view of the large number of failed/pending/rejected transactions and credit to incorrect accounts as discussed earlier.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that the facility for intimating the beneficiaries of updated payment status through Mobile App is already available. While the Mobile App would be handy for the beneficiaries to know the payment status, there was no mechanism to register complaints/grievances.

## 4.2 Evaluation of DBT

The DBT scheme was launched for ensuring a simple and user-friendly Government to People (G2P) interface and delivery of entitlements directly to eligible individuals and households in a fair, transparent, efficient and a reliable manner. It intended to facilitate a paradigm shift in the process of delivering entitlements to all those who are legitimate beneficiaries through accurate identification and targeting of the intended beneficiaries, re-

engineering government processes for simpler flow of information and funds, promotion of financial inclusion and setting up of digital platforms that are accessible, scalable and reliable, providing user-friendly interfaces between the Government and the beneficiaries.

Audit observed that the State Government was yet to carry out an evaluation or impact assessment of this paradigm shift on the intended objectives such as timely delivery of services, proper identification of the legitimate beneficiaries *etc.*

The State Government stated (January 2022) that it would take up the evaluation and impact assessment through a third party.

### 4.3 Milk incentive scheme

#### 4.3.1 Absence of DBT Cell/Committee

The State Protocol document on DBT suggested constitution of a DBT Cell / Committee to ensure that DBT framework is adopted in implementation of schemes. The AH&VS department had not established the DBT Cell which resulted in gaps in implementation of the scheme. Audit also noticed that the requisite skills to be possessed by staff presently dealing with DBT related activities within the department (particularly at the societies and camp level) were not assessed to address any shortcomings and trainings conducted to overcome such shortcomings.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that formation of DBT Cell/Committee would be considered.

#### 4.3.2 Inadequate monitoring mechanism

As discussed earlier, there were numerous instances of DBT transactions getting failed, rejected, pending or credited to an incorrect account. These transactions need timely corrective action and hence it was imperative to have a suitably structured incident reporting system to identify the errors and to capture the incidents for analysis and report to the competent authorities for rectification or correction. The results of monitoring activities should be periodically reported to the management for important decision making and corrective measures, if required.

Audit observed that no such incident reporting system exists in the department. Further the department had not fixed any timelines for carrying out the rectifications in respect of failed/rejected/pending transactions which resulted in either belated delivery of services or non-delivery of services.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that mechanism exists to monitor failed records and the payment status. It further stated that timelines would be put in place and directions would be issued to complete the process within the timelines. The reply is not acceptable as audit observed that no failed payment could be re-initiated during audit period. Moreover, delays in preparation of payment files, delays in DDO approval in Core DBT and K2, rejected cases at K2 level, failure of the payment files at Core DBT Portal indicate shortcomings in monitoring mechanism.

### 4.3.3 Performance Indicators not specified

Since DBT scheme is beneficiary centric, measurable objectives and outcome from the results of DBT under the schemes were to be determined, targets fixed accordingly, assess the outcomes against the targets and act for any deviation. The Performance Indicators *vis-a-vis* its achievements in terms of the project objectives indicates overall project realisation.

The department had neither developed nor adopted any performance indicators for monitoring the various activities of the scheme nor did it conduct any evaluation of the scheme during the implementation stage.

The Government stated (January 2022) that the department was monitoring the scheme at various levels but has formally not set any performance indicators. It further stated that directions for setting the performance indicator and monitoring the achievements under the scheme would be issued.

### 4.3.4 Scheme evaluation not undertaken

Evaluation is the quality assurance mechanism that involve an assessment of a planned, ongoing, or completed programme to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Though the Milk Incentive Scheme was implemented since September 2008 and onboarded on to the DBT portal from April 2019, the department had not carried out any evaluation of the implementation of the scheme post onboarding to Core DBT to ascertain the effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of the services.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that department of AH&VS is planning to get the entire Milk Incentive Scheme evaluated by Karnataka Evaluation Authority.

### 4.3.5 Absence of dedicated grievance redressal mechanism

An effective grievance redressal mechanism would ensure equitable and fair distribution of the scheme benefits, mitigates the hardship of beneficiaries by providing them access to information and prompts the department to initiate appropriate corrective and preventive measures.

Audit observed that a dedicated grievance redressal mechanism within the department both to address the grievances and to obtain feedback from the beneficiaries was absent. As a result, the department could not assess the impact of post DBT transfers for better appreciation and criticality of implementation of DBT.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that a helpline was established recently through which beneficiary grievances are being addressed. However, the evidence of such claim was not furnished.

## 4.4 Schemes of Agriculture Department

### 4.4.1 Data migration under NFSM and Raithasiri schemes

The Department of Agriculture processed the scheme benefits under the above schemes through KSRAC till 2019-20 and switched over to K-KISAN portal from the year 2020-21. However, the data available with KSRAC was not migrated to K-KISAN portal. This resulted in absence of legacy/previous years data with the department. Audit observed that login access to the data in KSRAC was disabled for the users of the department and hence the department could not access their own data. Further the absence of legacy data hampers the decision making both at the sanctioning level and the root level and effective monitoring of implementation of the schemes.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that the software structure, storage pattern of data would be studied and plotted to K-KISAN portal for the purpose of the maintaining the legacy data.

### 4.4.2 Absence of MOU with the technological partner

An MOU forms the basis for monitoring and controlling the partner against technical and other requirements detailing the roles and responsibilities between the organisation and the service providers, the requirements of the department and monitoring the development against the agreement. MOU is required for the effective implementation of a scheme.

Audit observed that the Agriculture Department had not executed any MOU with the technological partner. Consequently, audit could not ensure the security responsibilities.

The State Government stated (December 2021) that MOU would be executed between NIC and the department.

### 4.4.3 Inadequate monitoring mechanism

The Agriculture Department had not fixed any timelines for carrying out the rectifications in respect of failed/rejected/pending transactions. It did not have a dedicated grievance redressal mechanism to address beneficiary grievances and had not conducted any post evaluation of the schemes to ascertain the improvements and effectiveness in implementation of the scheme. Further, Audit observed that the department does not have IT policies, procedures and monitoring for processing the transactions which is also evident from the reply of the Government (December 2021) that a large transactions were failed or rejected due to technical issues.

The State Government stated (December 2021/January 2022) that timely delivery of benefits was in accordance with budget availability, PM-KISAN help desk was set from February 2019, evaluation of the schemes was entrusted to Karnataka Evaluation Authority and agreed to implement IT strategy and policy in future. The reply is silent on the timelines for rectification in cases of failed, rejected and pending transactions and grievance mechanism in place for the other schemes.

