

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation  
Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)

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Subject: ODF SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

1. Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) has focused on achievement of open defecation Free (ODF) villages. Government of India defined ODF vide Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation's letter No.S-11011/3/2015-SBM dated 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015, as follows, to convey uniform parameters of ODF. Subsequently, Government of India issued, vide this office letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015 (**Annexure I**), indicative guidelines for ODF verification to facilitate the States in developing mechanisms for ODF verification.

*"ODF is the termination of faecal-oral transmission, defined by:*

- 1) *no visible faeces found in the environment/village; and*
- 2) *every household as well as public/community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces*  
*(Tip: Safe technology option means no contamination of surface soil, ground water or surface water; excreta inaccessible to flies and animals; and freedom from odour and unsightly condition)"*

2. Many villages across India are now declaring themselves as ODF. The States are also verifying the same as per their respective mechanisms. The achievement of ODF involves to a great extent work of behaviour change, sustenance of which requires concerted efforts by the community. In the past, there have been slippages from Nirmal status in the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) awarded villages. Therefore, it is important to draw lessons regarding those slippages and work out activities that minimize that risk.
3. A key factor is close engagement with such villages for a period of time after it becomes ODF. Many districts and States have evolved certain parameters to maintain sustainability of ODF. Based on such good practices, guidelines for ODF sustainability are being framed to guide the States and districts in sustaining the ODF status. These guidelines are only indicative and the States are free to adopt other measures, as deemed suitable to them, to sustain ODF.
4. The activities required for ODF sustainability are clubbed under the following key headings.

Process of ODF achievement including community engagement

5. The first and foremost requirement for sustainability is that the community has been actively engaged in the planning and achievement of ODF as active partners. This includes involvement of the entire community, especially women and children, PRIs and key opinion makers. It is also important that ODF has been achieved through a focus on collective

behavior change aspect and demand generation, and not in a supply-driven mode. In other words, the village should have addressed all issues pertaining to stoppage of open defecation and taken it as their responsibility to maintain that status. The self-declaration of ODF village should be based on a confirmation by the Nigrani Samiti of the village that nobody is going for open defecation (to be gauged during early morning and evening community vigilance).

#### Rigorous ODF verification

6. The second important ingredient of ODF sustainability is that the process of ODF verification, as mentioned in the guidelines dated 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015 (**Annexure I**), is duly followed while verifying the ODF status. First and foremost thing is to ensure that declaration of ODF is made only after the Nigrani Samiti of village confirms that nobody is defecating in the open. If the declaration is not done on a strong basis, its sustainability is doubtful from the very beginning. The ODF verification must capture the essential parameters of ODF, i.e. there should be no visible faeces in the village/surroundings and all household and public institutions should be using safe technology options. At least two verifications may be carried out for ODF – the first one within three months and the second one after six months of first verification. The verification mechanism adopted by each District in States must be uniform and as per the protocol issued by the State. States are advised to include, if not already done, surprise checks during dawn/dusk in their verification protocol. The credibility and independence of the manpower deployed for verification is crucial, as also their orientation and training. For accountability, the ODF protocol of the State may also clearly define the administrative level at which the village is declared/verified as ODF.
7. Besides the ODF verification, States may also put in place mechanisms for qualitative evaluation of ODF processes in different districts to draw up lessons for cross-sharing and learning.

#### Continual engagement with ODF villages

8. **It is important that the district administration/SBM(G) implementation machinery engages with ODF villages for at least nine months after ODF declaration (3 months till first verification, and another 6 months thereafter till the second verification).** During these nine months, the following types of activities may be undertaken/coordinated in the ODF village:
  - ODF Plus activities: Water, cleanliness of water sources and public water bodies, decentralized solid and liquid waste management, 3Rs (Reduce, Recycle and Reuse), drains, maintenance of school and anganwadi toilets, hand-washing and personal hygiene, hand-washing in school before Mid-Day-Meal, awareness and training on pit emptying and faecal sludge management etc. These activities can be undertaken as part of Swachh Bharat through SBM(G) or in convergence with other schemes. Instructions have been issued on the conduct of Gram Sabhas to deliberate on the Index of Village Swachhta. These Gram Sabhas may deliberate in depth on the activities that may be taken up in the village in this regard.

- Social Developmental activities such as anti-liquor, anti-dowry, anti-gambling, universal education, anti-child marriage, benefits to disabled, skill building activities, tree plantation
- Prioritization of other development schemes in ODF villages: (for example-water supply schemes, internal roads, watershed, housing etc.). The Government of India has already taken a decision to prioritize all Centrally Sponsored Schemes in ODF villages. Similarly, the State Government can take policy decision regarding prioritizing State Government's schemes in ODF villages.
- Social Audit and discussion of ODF sustainability in Gram Sabhas.

#### Reorienting role of motivators/Swachhagrahis

9. In order to carry out the above mentioned activities, the role of motivators/Swachhagrahis' may be appropriately reoriented. An incentive mechanism for motivators may also be brought out to enable them to carry out these activities. Similarly, the role of district/Block/cluster coordinators may be reworked in tune with the activities required for sustainability.

#### Processes to support sustainability

10. The district administration/Gram Panchayat can consider undertaking certain processes that have been found to support sustainability. These include:
  - On achievement of ODF, usually a 'Walk of Pride' is organized by the village. This may be made a regular feature to be carried out on a monthly basis for around nine months.
  - ODF celebrations should be integrated during celebration of various festivals to promote it as a socio-cultural achievement.
  - Villages may consider yearly celebration of ODF achievement day.
  - Gram Panchayat may pass resolution regarding dos and don'ts for ODF sustainability. This may include imposition of fines on defaulters (open defecators), and/or mechanisms for engagement, or community and peer pressure to stop them from defecating in the open.
  - The issue of ODF sustainability should be included on the agenda of all Gram Sabha meetings
  - The village also has to ensure that any new houses that come up construct their own toilets. Also, a provision should have been made for visitors/migrants to the village through a community toilet or any other means.
  - The villages should identify vulnerable people or those people who are likely to revert to open defecation and continue engagement with them to prevent so.
  - Adequate arrangements should be made to tackle the sanitation needs during congregations, fairs etc.
  - The erstwhile places of open defecation may be developed for planting trees, including trees considered as sacred, so as to dissuade people from defecating there.
  - A taskforce comprising officials, motivators and natural leaders may be set-up at block/district levels. The taskforce may meet periodically and keep an eye on activities being

undertaken for sustainability. Media may also be engaged to keep a watch on ODF sustainability.

- The State may also examine its incentive structure for construction of toilets and if required, reorient it in such a way that promotes sustainability. Some States consider postponement of incentive payment for a few months to confirm usage.

#### Continual role of Nigrani committees, Natural leaders

11. Nigrani committees/Natural leaders/Panchayat representatives who have played critical role in making the village ODF need to continue morning and evening follow-up for at least nine months after ODF declaration. They should also be actively involved in triggering other villages. The District Administration should hold regular meetings with them, involve them in various development activities. The District administration should also use social media such as WhatsApp extensively to cross share good practices in different villages.

#### Engagement with Schools and Anganwadis

12. The Education Department and Woman and Child Development Departments should be involved closely in the sustainability phase. In the village, maintenance of school and anganwadi toilets should be regularly discussed in the meetings of Village Education Committee and Parent Teacher Association. There should be regular discussions in school by teachers with children on sustaining ODF activities. The school sanitation club activities should be continued.

#### Recognizing and awarding sustained performance

13. The State/districts should continue to felicitate publically Swachhata Champions. The States may also institute award schemes for villages that sustain ODF status. From the Gol side, the World Bank Support Project will provide incentives to States on the basis of results of independent verification.

#### Financing of Sustainability

14. The World Bank Project will provide incentive grants to States on the basis of inter-alia sustainability of ODF. ODF achievement and sustainability has also been incorporated as a parameter of States performance to determine allocation of SBM(G) funds to States.

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S-11011/3/2015-SBM  
Government of India  
Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation  
Swachh Bharat Mission (G)

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4th Floor, Paryavaran Bhavan  
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi- 110 003  
Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

To,

The Principal Secretary / Secretary in charge Rural Sanitation  
All States/UTs

Subject: Definition of Open Defecation Free

Sir / Madam,

You are aware that the most important objective of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) is achievement and sustainability of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. Para 4.1 of the SBM-G guidelines states that, "Implementation of SBM(G) is proposed . . .with the goal of creating Open Defecation Free (ODF) Gram Panchayats (GPs)". The focus is on creation of complete ODF villages, rather than only on construction of individual toilets. This entails triggering the entire village into changing their behavior rather than dealing individually with beneficiaries. It has also been brought out that "collective action" by the village in making itself ODF yields faster results than an attempt to target individual households. But more importantly, there is scientific data to show that reduction in diarrhoea and improved health parameters result only when the village (entire community) becomes completely ODF i.e. 100% of villagers use toilet 100% of the times.

2. It has however, been observed that there is no uniform definition of ODF across the country. ODF that is the main outcome of the Mission, must be defined uniformly and precisely, so that there is a clear focused effort in achieving the same. Lack of a uniform definition may lead to each State (and even sub-State levels) having their own understanding of ODF, thereby leading to differential focus in reaching the common goal of ODF for country as a whole. Lack of a uniform definition also leads to lack of monitoring. There is a consequential lack of clarity on how many villages/GPs have become ODF; out of them how many have slipped back and how many are still sustained.

3. After examining the matter in detail and after holding detailed discussions with various stakeholders, it has now been decided to define ODF as follows:

"ODF is the termination of faecal-oral transmission, defined by

a) no visible faeces found in the environment/village; and

- 2 -

b) every household as well as public/community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces.

(Tip: Safe technology option means no contamination of surface soil, ground water or surface water; excreta inaccessible to flies or animals; no handling of fresh excreta; and freedom from odour and unsightly condition)"

4. It is requested that the above definition may be brought to the notice of all concerned. The ODF status will be decided, henceforth, on the basis of above definition.

Yours faithfully,



(Saraswati Prasad)  
Joint Secretary (SBM-G)

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1. State Coordinator, SBM (G) all States/UTs
2. Technical Director (NIC) for uploading on website
3. Hindi Section, MODWS – for providing Hindi version

Copy also to: PPS to Secretary, MDWS/ PS to DS (SBM)/ PA to DA(BS)/PA to JD(Stat)/Guard file

No.S-11011/3/2015-SBM  
Government of India  
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation  
Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Division

12<sup>th</sup> Floor Paryavaran Bhawan,  
C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road,  
New Delhi-110 003  
Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015

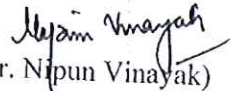
**Subject: Guidelines for ODF Verification**

Sir/Madam,

The SBM (G) focuses on achievement of complete Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages. This was reiterated by the Secretary, Government of India to all the States vide her D.O. letter No.2/2/S(DWS)/2015 dated 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2015, requesting the States to make ODF as the basis for planning as well as monitoring in sanitation. Subsequently, in order to have uniform parameters for ODF, Government of India issued the definition of ODF and conveyed the same to States vide Joint Secretary (SBM-G)'s letter of even number dated 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015.

2. After the launch of SBM-G, there are continuous reports about villages becoming ODF from across the States. It is now important that the States put in place a mechanism to verify these ODF claims.
3. In order to facilitate this, Government of India has framed guidelines for ODF verification. These are given in Annexure 1, para 6. The States may use these guidelines for ODF verification.
4. The guidelines also provide a check-list for a GP/village to be declared ODF (Annexure 2). This check-list is based on the ODF definition issued by the Government of India.
5. It is hoped that the guidelines will prove useful to the States in verifying the ODF status of GPs/villages.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Dr. Nipun Vinayak)  
Director

Encl: As above

To

Principal Secretary/Secretary-in-charge, Rural Sanitation  
All States/UTs

Copy to:

State Coordinator, SBM (G) – All States/UTs

Copy also to: PPS to Secretary, DWS/PS to JS (SBM-G)

Technical Director, NIC – for uploading on Ministry's website

**Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)**  
**Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation**

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**Annexure 1**

**Guidelines for ODF Verification**

(These guidelines are indicative and meant for guidance of States to evolve their own mechanism for ODF verification, based on the ODF definition issued by Government of India vide Joint Secretary's DO letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015)

Sanitation is a State subject. After the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission, work of sanitation has accelerated in all the States. At the same time, in order to ensure quality of outcomes, two things have been emphasised. One, focus on behaviour change, and two, focus on making villages completely open defecation free (ODF) for health benefits to accrue (while continuing to respond to demand for individual toilets).

2. Many GPs and villages have now begun to become ODF. In 2015-16, the States have planned to make 42828 GPs ODF, as per their AIPs. On MIS, a module has been initiated to capture GPs where 100% toilet access has been achieved. This number, as on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2015 is 12,216. Across the country, from different States, information is being received regularly about different villages/GPs declaring themselves ODF.

3. In order to ensure that the term ODF conveys the same meaning across India, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation defined 'Open defecation free' (ODF) and communicated the same to all States/UTs, vide Joint Secretary's DO letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. The definition is as follows:

**"ODF is the termination of faecal-oral transmission, defined by**  
**a) no visible faeces found in the environment/village; and**  
**b) every household as well as public/community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces**



(Tip: Safe technology option means no contamination of surface soil, ground water or surface water; excreta inaccessible to flies or animals; no handling of fresh excreta; and freedom from odour and unsightly condition)”

4. It is now required, that mechanism should be evolved for verification of ODF. This mechanism can be best evolved by the States themselves for the following reasons:

- Sanitation is a State subject, and States are the key entities in implementation of the programme
- The term ODF has been defined Nationally and the indicators for the same finalised. It only remains now to have a credible process to verify those indicators. This can be left to the States, so that they can choose a process best suited to them.
- This will ensure greater ownership of outcomes and processes by the States
- This will also ensure greater accountability of the States, and therefore, greater focus on the quality of work
- It is logistically/administratively easier for States to take up their own verification work.
- Some States are coming up with schemes for incentivising good performance. Therefore, they can have their own process of measuring results.
- This will allow different models/innovations to come up.

5. The role of the Centre will then be to

- cross share processes adopted by different States
- evolve a mechanism to cross check a small percentage of GPs/villages declared ODF by the States and further facilitate and guide the States where there is large difference in evaluation of Centre/State

#### Guidelines for ODF Verification

6. Some broad guidelines are being provided to the States, for evolving their verification process. These guidelines are only indicative for guidance to the States and are as follows:

- a) The process of ODF verification will start with a Gram Sabha resolution of self-declaration of achievement of ODF status. The resolution may be for the entire Gram Panchayat or even a village/habitation.
- b) Since ODF is not a one-time process, at least two verifications may be carried out. The first verification may be carried out within three months of the declaration to verify the ODF status. Thereafter, in order to ensure sustainability of ODF, one more verification may be carried out after around six months of first verification.
- c) The unit of verification may be a Gram Panchayat or even a village/habitation
- d) The indicators for verification will be as per the definition of ODF given by the Government of India. The States are free to verify any more indicators, should they so desire.
- e) The State will get verified every GP/village, that self declares itself as ODF
- f) The State may choose through whom to verify - it can be through own teams or through third party. If own teams are used, there will be cross verification of villages/blocks/districts. Even in these teams, it will be useful to have non-governmental independent reputed people, including journalists. If third party is resorted to, there will be clear ToRs and standards. It may be better to have voluntary teams.
- g) The block officials, community may be involved during the process of actual verification.
- h) The State can design their own proforma for evaluation. However, the indicators defined in the definition of ODF must be captured in the survey. Typically, both village and household level questionnaires may be designed. A Model check list, with suggested questions and options for evaluation has been prepared and **annexed** (Annexure 2) for reference. The States may use this format or evolve their own survey format. However, the indicators defined in the definition of ODF must be captured in the survey.
- i) The verifying teams will have to be appropriately trained to understand ODF definition, including safe disposal of excreta.

Checklist for a GP/Village to be declared ODF

The answers to the HH survey Questions 1,2,3,4 should be necessarily Yes (✓) for a village to be ODF; In addition, the answers to the Village survey Questions 8,9,10,11,12 should also be necessarily Yes (✓) for a village to be ODF

## a) Household Survey

Parameters	Yes (✓)/ No (X)
1) Access to toilet facility	
2) 100% usage	
3) Fly-Proofing of toilet	
4) Safe septage disposal	
5) Hand-washing before meals	
6) Hand-washing with soap after defecation	
7) Availability of soap and water in or near the toilet	

## b) Village Survey

Parameters	Yes (✓)/ No (X)
8) No visible faeces found in the environment/village	
9) Proper usage of School toilet	
10) Safe confinement of excreta in school toilet	
11) Proper usage of Anganwadi toilet	
12) Safe confinement of excreta in anganwadi toilet	

**Key for parameters mentioned in checklists above**

**Household Survey:**

Q. No.	Parameters	Suggested Question	Answers	Yes (✓)/ No (X)
1	Access to Toilet facility	Access of the HH members to a toilet facility	i. Own toilet in premises	✓
			ii. Own toilet outside premises	✓
			iii. Shared toilet in premises	✓
			iv. Shared toilet outside premises	✓
			v. Community toilet	✓
			vi. Public Toilet	✓
			vii. No toilet	X
2	100% usage	Does any member defecate in the open some times*	i. Yes	X
			ii. No	✓
3	Fly-proofing (Physical Observation)	Is the toilet fly-proof	i. The toilet has a water seal	✓
			ii. The toilet has a cover of some kind	✓
			iii. The toilet does not have any such arrangement	X
4	Safe Septage disposal (Physical Observation)	How is the excreta in the toilet disposed	i. Toilet discharges waste directly into open pit, open drain, nallahs, pond or river	X
			ii. Toilet is connected to a closed drain which empties into open area, pond, nallahs, river etc. <b>without</b> treatment	X
			iii. Toilet is connected to a closed drain which empties into open area, pond, nallahs, river etc. <b>after</b> treatment	✓
			iv. Toilet is connected to septic tanks and the overflow pipe of septic tank empties <b>directly</b> into drain, pond, nallahs or river	X
			v. Toilet is connected to septic tanks and have overflow pipes that empty into separate <b>soak pits</b>	✓
			vi. Toilet is connected to an enclosed twin pit twin pit	✓
			vii. Toilet has a type of sub structure different from those mentioned above but is safe	✓
5	Hand-washing before meals	Do all members wash their hands before meals	i. Yes	✓
			ii. No	X
6	Hand-washing with soap after defecation	Do all members wash their hands with soap after defecation	i. Yes	✓
			ii. No	X
7	Availability of soap and water in or near the toilet	Physical observation	i. Soap and water available in or near the toilet	✓
			ii. Soap and water not available in or near the toilet	X

\* In case of an infant, the question will be, how is the infant faeces disposed ?

i. Thrown into the paths, street or open area outside the household premises	X
ii. Thrown into the toilet	✓

### Village Survey

Q. No.	Parameters	Suggested Question	Answers	Score
8	Zero incidence of Open Defecation	Physical Observation	i. No sign of open defecation or smell in or around the village	✓
			ii. Open defecation visible at some places in or around village and prevalence of foul smell at some places in or around the village	X
			iii. Open defecation is rampant, visible at various places in and around the village with foul smell prevalent at various places in the village	X
9,11	Proper Usage of School /Anganwadi Toilets	Physical Observation	i. The toilet appears to be abandoned/unused	X
			ii. The toilet appears to be poorly maintained with excreta visible in the toilet, inside or nearby, no water availability; and appears to be seldom used	X
			iii. The toilet appears to be well kept, in regular use, with water inside or nearby	✓
10,12	Safe-confinement of excreta in School/ Anganwadi Toilets	Physical Observation	i. Toilet discharges waste directly into open pit, open drain, nallahs, pond or river	X
			ii. Toilet is connected to a closed drain which empties into open area, pond, nallahs, river etc. <b>without</b> treatment	X
			iii. Toilet is connected to a closed drain which empties into open area, pond, nallahs, river etc. <b>after</b> treatment	✓
			iv. Toilet is connected to septic tanks and the overflow pipe of septic tank empties <b>directly</b> into drain, pond, nallahs or river	X
			v. Toilet is connected to septic tanks and have overflow pipes that empty into separate soak pits	✓
			vi. Toilet is connected to an enclosed twin pit twin pit	✓
			vii. Toilet has a type of sub structure different from those mentioned above but is safe	✓