

## Project Document<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Programme Document Cover Sheet

**NOTE:** Please **do not** fill out fields marked with a red asterisk (\*)

Grant Information		Programme	
<b>FGE ID # 233</b>		<b>UN Women Outcome # 2</b>	
<b>Grant Programme Title</b>	<b>Making women's voices and votes count - An ICT-based intervention in India</b>		
<b>Thematic Area</b>	<b>Women's Political Empowerment</b>		
<b>Secondary Focus Area(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expanding and Strengthening Women's Leadership</li> <li>– Supporting Rural Women</li> <li>– Catalysing Policy Change</li> </ul>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Asia</b>	<b>Programme Country(ies)</b>	<b>India</b>
<b>Start Date</b>	<b>January 1, 2013</b>	<b>Expected duration (years)</b>	<b>Two years</b>
<b>Grant Total (USD)</b>	<b>\$ 280,000</b>	<b>Disbursed to date (USD)*</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

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<sup>1</sup> This Programme document has four sections: (1) Programme Document Cover Sheet; (2) Programme Narrative; (3) Programme Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) and Work-Plan; (4) Programme Budget Work-Plan.

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### Report Information & Signature

Date Submitted	12th Nov 2012
Checklist	Programme Document Cover Sheet Programme Narrative Programme Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) and Work-Plan Programme Budget
Signature: <i>I confirm that the information contained in this report is accurate.</i>	
 <u>Lead</u> Signature & Date - 12th Nov 2012	Name & Organization  Anita Gurumurthy <b>IT for Change</b>
 <u>Co-Lead (if applicable)</u> Signature & Date - 12th Nov 2012	Name & Organization  Preeti Soni  <b>Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan</b>

## 2. Programme Narrative

**Executive Summary:** Summarize in one page what is the pressing issue you want to address, why this programme is critical to address it, how it will be strategically implemented and by whom and what will change in women's lives as a result.

The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 in India was passed for devolution of powers to **Panchayat Raj Institutions** (PRIs), local government bodies at the village level, to strengthen local level participation in development processes. The Act provided for a one-third reservation of seats for women in the *panchayat* system<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, with four rounds of electoral cycles in many states, two million rural women have been elected to office, in local governance institutions. Considerable ground has been covered by capacity building efforts undertaken by various agencies in the Indian context, in enabling elected women representatives (EWRs) to meet the demands of their public-political roles. However, the odds are stacked heavily against women in local politics, and they remain overwhelmed by the everyday manifestations of institutional patriarchy. For the spirit and intent of the law to be realized fully, a women's political constituency needs to be anchored at the local level. But this is possible only if the huge disconnect - among elected women and their peers, and between EWRs and grassroots women's collectives engaged in struggles for gender justice - is addressed headlong. The advent of the network society seems to offer a point of social discontinuity for a new politics of gender justice. By providing the space for horizontal connection, exchange, collaboration and community building, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can help redefine capacity building through processes of ongoing, peer-supported pedagogy.

Three organisations in India - Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI) and IT for Change - seek to harness the propensities of ICTs in their local organizing efforts with EWRs and marginalized women's collectives in Karnataka and Gujarat, through the proposed project, 'Making women's voices and votes count - An ICT-based intervention in India'. The project will employ ICTs to enable horizontal networking among elected women in local *panchayats*, connect EWRs to local leaders from marginalized women's groups, support them to represent marginalized women's concerns in local governance processes and claim local media spaces to legitimise women's perspectives on governance. Mobile-based SMS and voice services will be used to build a strong, peer-to-peer networking platform to support women leaders. The project will also set up simple information systems facilitated by trained women infomediaries, ushering in a rights-based entitlements culture. The video and radio components of the project will create women-owned community media spaces for a new local discourse on gender and to support learning processes of the EWR networks. Working with local women leaders whose vision will guide the project, the three partnering organizations hope to present new insights for national policy and programme efforts on how capacity building architectures for women in politics can be re-imagined through an ICT model that is embedded in larger social processes. In this regard, the proposed initiative has an express commitment from the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women, constituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India (GOI) which has undertaken to learn from this initiative and carry lessons forward to governmental ministries and departments. The project envisions ICT ownership and use by women as a

<sup>2</sup>The *Panchayat or Panchayati Raj* system is the mechanism of decentralisation and local self governance in India that has 3 tiers. The grassroots tier is the *Gram Panchayat*, the basic unit of governance and development administration at the village level. The next tier is the block level and deals with a cluster of villages. The district unit, referred to as the *Zilla Panchayat* is the key unit for delivery of government schemes. References in this document to *panchayat* or *panchayats* pertain mainly to the village tier. Also see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchayati\\_raj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchayati_raj)

generic capability that will catalyse cumulative benefits for women and their collectives in all areas of their engagement with local governance and development.

**Programme Context:** Please add the programme context and update it if there has been any significant changes since the submission of your Grant Application (e.g. change of government, changes in legislation, natural disasters, etc.)

There has been no change with respect to the programme context. However, the reduction in total budget, as indicated by UNWOMEN, places some constraints on resource availability to implement the project as it was planned for a three year period. The partners have thus decided not to reduce activity spread nor the number of beneficiaries, but rather to shorten the duration of the programme to two years, commensurate with the budget indicated by UNWOMEN.

The Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act 1992 in India was passed for devolution of powers to *Panchayat Raj* Institutions (PRIs, local government bodies) at the village level to strengthen local level participation in development processes. The Act provided for a one-third reservation of seats for women in the *panchayat* system. Today, more than two million rural women have sat at the rural governance table across the country. New generations of women leaders, supported by progressive women's groups, are willing to address governance deficits that undermine social justice and women's rights. A tipping point in local power relations may well be imminent. Yet, structures of patriarchy and bureaucratic obstacles pose barriers to women's effective leadership. Economic liberalisation has also witnessed the rise of new interest group formations in local governance that often co-opt women. Top-down processes of 'capacity building' have imparted some 'functional literacy' to Elected Women Representatives (henceforth, EWRs) about their roles, but not really served the objective of empowering them to participate in substantive ways. NGO efforts to collectivise marginalised women through political consciousness-raising pedagogies have also met with some dead ends given limitations of resources and scale and the overwhelming growth of opportunistic micro-finance agencies. Meanwhile, increasing challenges to everyday survival prevents women from meaningfully engaging in the public sphere. The institutionalisation of gender equality agenda therefore seems inadequate against these complexities, even though, technically speaking, marginalised women are ready to engage with local governance processes. Local democracy seems to be caught in a double bind; women in local governance are not necessarily pushing for women's rights, and collectivisation efforts of progressive groups for women's constituency building has been swamped by dominant strategies that instrumentalise women. Even where organisations support EWRs, women leaders cannot come together face-to-face, they do not have easy and timely access to information, they lack the space for peer exchange and support, and do not have the historic advantage of networks that men have had.

IT for Change has demonstrated new possibilities for the empowerment of marginalised women ([www.itforchange.net/CCID-slides](http://www.itforchange.net/CCID-slides)), undertaken research in the global south ([www.gender-IS-citizenship.net](http://www.gender-IS-citizenship.net)), and has been active in global advocacy spaces. ([http://www.itforchange.net/UNESCAP\\_Recasting\\_Beijing](http://www.itforchange.net/UNESCAP_Recasting_Beijing)). Working with *dalit*<sup>3</sup> women from *Mahila Samakhyas* Karnataka<sup>4</sup> for many years now, IT for Change has enabled their collectives to appropriate digital technologies to challenge local power structures. Two ideas have been

<sup>3</sup> Refers to social groups in India who are lowest in the caste hierarchy. Being a *dalit* woman means the double burden of caste and gender.

<sup>4</sup> *Mahila Samakhyas* is a pan-Indian initiative of the Government of India, under the Department of Education, to build women's collectives for education and empowerment. The initiative was born from civil society advocacy in the 80s and is implemented through autonomous state level units. *Mahila Samakhyas* was set up in Karnataka state over 20 years ago and has mobilised thousands of women from marginalised social groups in the state. Women's collectives or *sanghas* of *Mahila Samakhyas* have led inspiring struggles for women's rights.

core to these initiatives; 1) a convergent approach (using telecentres, FM radio broadcasts and locally created videos) to maximise the transformative potential of technologies; and 2) women's ownership of technology, to ensure that the ICT mediated processes create a sense of collective identity and power for *dalit* women in the local context. Women's collectives have gained legitimacy vis-a-vis local authorities to seek information and entitlements, and ask questions. Women now participate actively in the *gram sabha*<sup>5</sup> and successfully persuade the community to engage with gender issues.

KMVS has worked for over two decades in the state of Gujarat on women's empowerment. It has nurtured strong women's collectives with 12,000 members from 165 villages, in Kutch district. KMVS set up the *Panchayat* Knowledge Cell to work on issues affecting women in governance and development. Today this cell is a state and national level resource agency in the field of gender and governance. KMVS has initiated six collectives of EWRs, which have more than 700 members. In the past decade, the collectives have covered around 350 *panchayats* and ensured regular *gram sabhas*, equal participation of women in the *gram sabhas* and access to entitlements for 8,000 families. The EWRs have actively taken up issues, lobbying for the ousting of corrupt officials and for *panchayats* to pass progressive resolutions to ensure improved health and education systems in the villages.

ANANDI has been mobilising and organising women from Muslim, *dalit* and tribal communities for nearly 2 decades. It runs Community Resource Centres for Gender Justice (*Lok Adhikar Kendras*) in partnership with its women's collectives, combining information access with social audits, public hearings, alternate dispute resolution mechanisms and the Right to Information Act, as tools for gender responsive governance. EWRs have been enabled to come together as a registered body, the *Mahila Swaraj Manch*, in Shihor block (sub-district administrative unit in the government), and they meet once a month at the block development office to discuss strategies for promoting women's rights. Local government officers now work in coordination with the EWR forum, supporting its Resource Centre where marginalised groups are provided information on issues like livelihood, housing and food security. The Centre handles 500 cases every year (out of which 80% are women, including single women). The *Manch* has been instrumental in activating the *panchayat* sub-committees responsible to oversee effective implementation of health and education programmes.

IT for Change is keen at this stage to explore how emerging technological opportunities such as mobile-based networking and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be used for better outcomes in political empowerment of women through different in situ pilots (beyond its own field area in Karnataka) that build on local trajectories of grassroots organising, avoiding a techno-centric, top-down approach. Both ANANDI and KMVS bring complementary competencies in their sustained local mobilisation efforts in Gujarat. They are keen to explore how ICTs can catapult their grassroots organising work to the next level. The project will therefore enable a timely collaboration that holds potentially useful insights for national policy and programme interventions.

#### **Programme Justification and Goal:** Please describe:

(a) Please clearly state your programme goal

(b) The Secondary Focus Area (see cover page) in women's political or economic empowerment you aim to address and why you consider this issue(s) critical for gender

<sup>5</sup> The electorate of the *panchayat*, envisioned to be the watch dog of local governance, which must be convened at least twice a year, especially to enlist beneficiaries for government schemes

equality in your local or national context?

(c) What will your programme do to specifically address this issue(s)?

(d) How will the proposed programme impact on power relationships?

(a) Please clearly state your programme goal

The project, 'Making women's voices and votes count - An ICT-based intervention in India', seeks to build strong constituencies of women in local politics in 3 districts in India. Leveraging ICTs for catalyzing the substantive participation of elected women in local governance institutions, the project will create mechanisms for elected women to networking strategically and build links with local women's collectives to create a threshold effect for gender-responsive governance.

(b) The Secondary Focus Area in women's political or economic empowerment you aim to address and why you consider this issue(s) critical for gender equality in your local or national context?

Unless spaces of overlap and engagement between women in formal and informal local politics are encouraged, constructed, and capacitated, real political empowerment of rural women – in a manner that enables them to engage with, and articulate their perspective of, development and society – is not possible. Legislation is one step in affirming the potential of this connection. What is needed additionally is support in the form of social process innovations that can tackle the isolation women leaders experience and connect them with local women's groups. A breakthrough strategy in this direction would require a) the building of a critical mass of EWRs who can stay connected to each other and to the concerns of marginalized women in the local context, b) a vibrant local democratic fabric where local women's organizations are able to engage with the governance deficit and push women's rights as a political issue and c) an organic connection between EWRs and women in the community, supported by feminist perspective-building on governance. What this proposal posits is that the tipping point can be obtained if ICTs are brought as an equalizer to support women leaders through a clear focus on all these three areas. Political empowerment of women through ICTs is an idea that has drawn much attention. However, beyond spontaneous revolutions and online community-building that have transformed the terrain of action for gender justice, the nuts and bolts of directing systematic intervention is not clearly understood. This project therefore proposes a systemic approach to create locally embedded ICT ecologies that blend the offline and online, to build a women's constituency for gender-just local governance.

(c) What will your programme do to specifically address this issue(s)?

The project proposes to use ICTs to catalyze a critical mass of women in local governance. It will construct a horizontal platform for peer-based support, and help develop a discourse of governance and politics that is informed by women's rights perspectives. Since ICTs can potentially bring voice and visibility to grassroots women's groups to define themselves as a political force, engage with information strategically, and develop the legitimacy to dialogue and negotiate with local actors, the project will use ICTs appropriately towards the following objectives:

1. Network building among women in local *panchayats*. This will entail creation of a support group focusing on a horizontal, peer to peer pedagogy that can offer a completely new point of departure for capacity building of women in local governance. Specifically, it will explore the



use of SMS-based networking, and community radio and video to complement face to face meetings and as a space for dialogue.

2. Creating new information and communication capabilities of EWRs and women's collectives. Through information centres, the project will explore how data bases, GIS tools, voice-based SMSes etc. can be used for women's access to entitlements and voice in local governance.

3. Creating local media and techno-social processes that not only meet informational needs of EWRs and women's collectives but also allow gender debates to be taken to the community at large.

4. Actively engaging with policy processes and capacity building institutions at national and state levels to share insights from the project on how ICTs can be deployed for structural change towards women's empowerment.

(d) How will the proposed programme impact on power relationships?

While the Arab revolution in the recent past has captured the imagination of global civil society about the potential of ICTs for democracy, deeper questions about how technology can provide an architecture for the participation of the marginalised in the processes of governance and for politicising women's interests remain, and require testing out through model building. As women's struggles for livelihoods and a life of dignity intensify, the opportunity costs for political engagement have become very high. Women's non-participation in the public arena in and of itself reinforces traditional power structures. It is therefore important to create the conditions for making public engagement less challenging and more rewarding for women.

Control over information and knowledge is the pivot on which patriarchal power has perpetrated its public-political control, combining this of course with the threat of force and violence. The proposed project – through the use of ICTs – will cause a disruption in this traditional landscape, positioning women as key interlocutors in the local governance context. IT for Change has explored the potential of ICTs for bringing the marginalised to the centre stage of local democracy and here we have some insights on how women can negotiate traditional power relations. Through the information centres that women run, they have gained considerable authority in their roles as intermediaries / political interlocutors linking the community with governance institutions. The radio programmes meant for their collectives, which women co-design, are popular with diverse audiences and have legitimised the political discourse of gender and women's rights in the local public sphere. The community dialogues that videos have generated have been innovative tools to challenge patriarchal ideologies and norms. KMVS and ANANDI have reached out to EWRs, providing moral and resource support, instilling confidence in them and collectivising them. They have also sought to explore how an information centre approach can support people's struggle for access to basic public information and entitlements. The proposed project will allow for synergies between the work of IT for Change and of KMVS and ANANDI.

When ICT enabled information and communication resources and processes privilege women, especially marginalised women, their associational power also begins to transform. The flux created by the proposed project must hence be harnessed by building women's capacities to lead the way, through a dialogue on understanding and addressing local patriarchies, development and techno-social processes, while providing support from the 'outside'. Gender-just governance is predicated upon this kind of hand-holding and institutionalisation of support so that traditional power equations can be challenged.

**Programme Results:** What are the 3-4 key results you hope to achieve in this programme?

What are the strategies you will use to achieve this? Please use these expected results to complete the Results Chain and PMF in Section 3.

Please detail the intervention and implementation strategy and specific interventions for each result.

**1. Women leaders (women holding office in local governance institutions as well as women in local collectives) build networks horizontally and become a force to reckon with in local governance.**

The project will specifically address the limits of traditional top-down capacity building models for EWRs, in India. It proposes a paradigmatic shift towards a peer-to-peer system of capacity building. By building on the work of KMVS, ANANDI and IT for Change, the proposed project will seek to negotiate the challenges of isolation and distance between EWRs and lack of safe space for them to connect with one another and with marginalised women and their CBOs, through technology. The first set of strategies will aim to build linkages between EWRs. A platform to network, discuss and articulate how governance can be made to work for women, and a space to seek and get information about the *panchayat*, and about schemes and functions of government departments that marginalised women in their constituencies can access, will be created. Physical, face to face meetings as well as technological means for deliberation and information exchange will be employed. Capacity building - with respect to accountable governance and women's citizenship as well as in the use of mobile phones, help-line, and local data bases generated by the project's information centre - will be central to the effort.

Another set of strategies will concern the linking up of women leaders from local collectives with their EWRs. This also will involve physical platforms like a women-only *gram sabha*, and also ICT-mediated means like voice / text SMS, video conferencing etc. Women leaders in local collectives will also take part in capacity building effort to articulate an agenda for accountable governance that upholds women's rights. Here, they will be familiarised with the use of local data bases and the information centre for seeking entitlements and to lobby the *panchayat* for accountable governance. The third set of strategies will be to engage local male elite. Adequate tact will be exercised to ensure that the introduction of technology is seen as acceptable and also by and large useful for the entire community. Working with husbands who may regulate access to the mobile phone, male community leaders who are politically connected, with local officials who are likely to throw a spanner in the works if they perceive a threat to the status quo, and with male elected representatives in the *panchayat*, would be important to pre-empt resistance and enlist their involvement in project activities. The digital medium eminently supports non-text based learning and action, a fact that the project will harness to equip illiterate women in their leadership. Women leaders who are literate and the infomediaries will provide text-based informational capacities to the overall effort. Production of content will be undertaken by the project team in consultation with women leaders.

**2. New informational processes and practices disrupt traditional power structures to create new pathways for women to access entitlements and for EWRs to feel greater confidence not only in executing their duties as representatives of their electorate but also as women's rights champions.**

Information empowerment will be an important objective for the project, with a set of strategies anchored around information centres. Based on the past work of the partnering NGOs, the project will enable EWRs and marginalised women from the project area, with support from young women infomediaries to build institutional linkages. The project will maximise the deployment of ICTs, which are general purpose technologies (like electricity), by



using a convergent approach, where claims will be channelled for a variety of entitlements based on government programmes and schemes, using data generated locally on who is eligible for what. The focus will be on basic rights that also dovetail with central and state government policy interventions. The project will work towards both individual and collective entitlements of women from marginalised groups, covering the right to information, right to health, right to work /livelihoods, right to housing and to ancestral land (especially in the areas where the project will work with tribal groups). It will use the provisions under the Right to Information Act, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, *Indira Awas Yojana* housing scheme, and the Public Distribution System. The centre will also help local youth access information on local work opportunities, and support community extension workers use the centre's data base for their work. Local household data will be collected and entitlements access streamlined through this. The infomediary will be more than just a 'centre operator'. She will actively build relationships with the marginalised groups in the community, send sms alerts to women in the community, visit local officials to get updates, submit applications for schemes and facilitate events that promote a culture of democracy – like info-fairs and social audits – with mentoring from women leaders. Attempts will be made to use GIS to visualise local data to trigger gender based debate with respect to basic indicators of development.

A second strategy will concern the production of radio and video content by the project team in consultation with the project beneficiaries. Radio broadcasts and narrow casts will feature women leaders, bring in local experts in *panchayat* related policies, undertake specific campaigns and make announcements about public events. Inexpensive and quick-turn around videos will be used for the learning needs of EWRs and local collectives and for generating community awareness around entitlements. The initial effort needed to set up centres, create mobile-phone data bases, start the SMS-alert service, make small video docs, clips and films (for eg, on what to expect from certain schemes, or what the mandate of the *panchayat* may be wrt social justice etc.), will be a key priority for the project team, but the social architecture of this with regard to the vision and direction will be guided by the women leaders. The leadership and ownership of information centre activities is expected to create a new legitimacy for women's collectives and EWRs to push for institutional accountability.

### **3. Women-owned information and media spaces enables agenda-setting by women leaders and a new public discourse on gender that challenges patriarchal discourse, and brings greater legitimacy for marginalised women's public participation.**

The idea that media can be local has been obliterated by the highly homogenising mainstream media, which, even if it features marginalised voices, tends to romanticise or commoditise local cultures. Gender debates in the mainstream also follow entertainment value, focussing on hyper-sensationalism that silences perspectives on social justice and equity. The project will attempt to encourage a local media culture that enables the use of radio and video as pedagogic as well as discursive tools. Women's collectives and EWRs will be continually consulted and will lead the ideational processes for generating content; the discussions and deliberation following the broadcast/ narrowcast; and the action based on new learning. Through these processes, the project expects to galvanise communicative power for women, whereby the concerns and visions of marginalised women are part of the ongoing agenda setting in local governance. Innovative processes to engage the wider community around a dialogue on gender justice through community screenings and creative radio scripting that addresses masculinities through non-threatening formats will be introduced. Campaigns that pertain to entitlements or challenge violence against women or demystify the role of the *gram*

*sabha* and encourage women's participation in the local public sphere, will be undertaken through local media efforts. These set of strategies will make it possible for bringing to the public domain issues that are distinctly local, in a manner that articulates the standpoint of the most marginalised women. They will generate positive spirals between agenda setting, debate, claims-making and women's active citizenship.

#### **4. A new policy and programmatic model that can realise the full intent of decentralisation policies with regard to gender equality, and can be used at state and national levels to build women's political constituencies locally.**

Over the past two decades, women's participation in local governance in India has received considerable policy support and programmatic attention. Projects supported by the UN, the World Bank and national level agencies, have designed and implemented training and capacity building modules. These have been instrumental in hand-holding women, especially from marginalised social groups and also illiterate women, whose participation in the everyday activities of the *panchayats* can otherwise be heavily constrained by local patriarchies and power equations. NGOs have also done pioneering work in this regard and have networked women in local governance, especially from marginalised groups, through painstaking work in gender sensitization and gender justice. Thanks to all these efforts, some women have contested second terms, and more recently, in the states where the proposed project will be implemented, younger women have taken on the challenge of local politics. But the big question that remains a gap in the capacity building, is about continuing resource support which is not one-off, and which can, in addition to informational and conceptual inputs, also offer gender-sensitive emotional support in a political climate that is highly alienating for elected women. By using the proclivities of digital technologies for networking and collaboration as well as reach and publicity, the proposed project will embark on a model that leverages existing capacity building approaches, offering a second generation alternative to the limits of distance and scale. By adopting adult-learning pedagogies, it will use peer support and horizontal exchange as a primary modality in the cognitive and affective aspects of capacity building. The project will consult older generation initiatives and current and past women representatives who have had capacity building support from NGOs and other agencies. (In this regard, the project will connect in the early stages, in Karnataka, with Singamma Srinivasan Foundation for their work on gender budgeting with *panchayats* and Abdul Nazir Saab State Institute of Rural Development that has been supported by UNIFEM and other agencies for training EWRs.)

An important goal and strategy of the project will be to demonstrate how ICTs can support governance reform, and how they can address the imperatives for women's empowerment in governance agenda. Typically, like in most developing countries, first generation e-governance efforts have ended up reinforcing a technocratic view of governance through ICTs. Both in Gujarat and Karnataka, the roadblocks in e-governance efforts of the state government have been in the failure of acceptance and engagement at the community level. Because of a techno-managerial orientation, there is an apathy among rural populations in taking to technology. Further, the operators of e-service centres tend to be private entrepreneurs who are not familiar with a citizen oriented, public service ethos. This project will present a different model, especially about village kiosks, to state governments, which will show how e-governance can serve the cause of greater democratisation of information, and bring voice and visibility to the marginalised in everyday functions of governance. The project will also engage senior officials in the Rural Development department and the Knowledge Commission at state and national levels, sharing evidence from the initiative for policy and programmatic directions. It will draw from the explicit support of the National Mission on the Empowerment of

Women of the Ministry of Women and Child Development - GOI, and strategically use the Mission for advocacy and policy change.

### **Site-specific snap-shots of the strategy**

#### **a. KMVS' project site, Gujarat**

In Mundra and Nakhtrana blocks where KMVS will work with EWRs and local women, the intervention will focus on women who are in the age group 25-50, (*Panchayat* representatives being the key group along with women members of the KMVS collectives who are farmers, fisher folk, artisans and wage labourers). The work of the information centres (which will be run by the EWRs collective, using animators) will address information needs of communities, specifically women, around government schemes. Four information centres would cover a population of 50 to 60 villages. The project will also sensitise Block Development Officials, responsible for implementation of programmes at the *panchayat* level, to gender-responsive governance. Women members from CBOs supported by KMVS will co-create content for a radio series, which will be broadcast through community radio stations, and disseminated through narrow casting and cable casting. The total outreach of the radio programme would be a population of around 10,000. The project will train young people in video content production in simple formats. Collectives will use videos for their own discussions as a learning/ training tool, and for community screenings. A voice-based SMS platform will cover at least 700 women from *panchayats*. The interactive SMS tool would also enable the EWRs to ask questions, receive answers to the questions as well as respond to queries and listen to FAQs (This modality will be adopted in other sites as well). The infomediaries in this site as well as the others, will be key to the project's credibility and sustainability at the local level and will be trained and mentored for assuming a leadership role.

#### **b. ANANDI's project site, Gujarat**

Through the proposed project, ANANDI will work in Shihor block of Bhavnagar district in 50 of the total 78 villages of the block. The project area would be divided in 5 clusters with 8-10 villages per cluster. *Mahila Swaraj Manch* – a collective of 135 elected women representatives – will run the information centre at Shihor block, with two cluster level information centres. Two hundred women leaders and about 400 members of the sub-committees of the *Panchayat* (Social Justice committee, the Vigilance Committee for Public Distribution System, Village Health, Sanitation Committee and School Management Committee), and 1500 women from marginalised groups in the clusters will directly benefit from the sms, audio and video based platforms of the proposed project. The block level centre will be located in the office of the Block Development Officer and will provide support on issues of local governance, social security and support to survivors of domestic and social violence. Given that access to technology among the EWRs is largely with their men, men would be trained to share and support the work of EWRs. Democratising the *gram sabha*, which is otherwise captured by upper caste feudal leaders so that a collective decision making process for gender responsive development planning can be initiated, would be a key strategy. The cluster and block level information centres would support those whose entitlements are not realised because of lack of information, social and physical inaccessibility and extensive corruption in the bureaucracy. Narrow-casting of audio content will take place when the sub-committees, mentioned above, convene or during community mobilisation.

#### **c. IT for Change - Centre for Community Informatics and Development (CCID), Karnataka**

The current partnership with *Mahila Samakhya Karnataka's* collectives of *dalit* women in Hunsur block will be carried forward. Through an information centre owned by local women's

collectives, CCID will reach 10 nodal and 50 outreach villages, covering all the collectives in this area. A 100 EWRs in the block and about 800 to 1000 women from the collectives will be enabled to access information and entitlements through the information centre. The project will train infomediaries (young girls from the local community) to participate in the public domain, as enablers of a new information culture. The centre will run a help line, create and maintain data bases, and the infomediary will reach out to villages in her cluster to encourage information access and interface with local authorities to handle applications processing. Using the local open university's radio spectrum, the project will broadcast radio programmes in weekly cycles. Content will be based on ongoing inputs from the women leaders. Efforts to build collective listening processes through the project area and setting up feedback loops through mobiles, would be a priority. Collective viewing of videos will be encouraged, and processes to institutionalize it through the info centre, set up. GIS based data visualisation will be piloted for supporting campaigns. The centres will explicitly focus on marginalised populations to enable them to access entitlements.

**Beneficiaries:** Describe who will benefit from these activities. Which groups of women are expected to directly and indirectly benefit? **How will you reach both groups?** Are there others who will also directly and indirectly benefit from the programme? How will you meaningfully involve direct beneficiaries in implementing the programme? What strategies will you put in place to reach the most marginalized groups of women? Please fill in the table below to estimate the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries you will reach.

Direct Beneficiaries Those directly benefiting from programme activities (i.e. migrant workers, women from specific ethnic or racial groups, young women, policymakers)	Characteristics (enter X)			# expected to be reached	
	Rural	Urban	Youth (<25)	Women	Men
<b>a. Mundra and Nakhtrana blocks<sup>6</sup> through KMVS, Gujarat</b> - 1200 EWRs and 8000 women from local collectives, covering 4 core plus 60 outreach villages. - 250 Block level officials - 6 young women who will be infomediaries at 2 block and 4 village centres	9450		6	9206	250
<b>b. Shihor Block through ANANDI, Gujarat</b> - 200 women EWRs and 1500 women and 400 men from the <i>panchayat</i> sub-committees and local communities. - 6 young women who will be infomediaries at one block and 5 village/cluster centres	2100		6	1706	400
<b>c. Hunsur Block through IT for Change, Karnataka</b>	850		11	861	

<sup>6</sup>See Footnote 2 for a description of what constitutes the block level in the Indian governance system.

- 100 EWRs and 750 women from collectives of the <i>Mahila Samakhya</i> programme of Govt of India, especially those playing key roles in the community, covering 10 core and 50 outreach villages					
- 11 young women who will be infomediaries at one block and 10 village/cluster centres					
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12400</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11773</b>	<b>650</b>	

### Indirect Beneficiaries

Those who benefit as a result of improvements made to the direct beneficiaries (i.e. migrant workers, women from specific ethnic or racial groups, young women, policymakers)

	Characteristics (enter X)			# expected to be reached	
	Rural	Urban	Youth (<25)	Women	Men
a. KMVS - 200 info centre beneficiaries each for 80 outreach villages, radio listeners, women on the SMS platform, local officials	16000		Incl 3000	10000	6000
b. Anandi - <i>Panchayat</i> members, 200 info centre beneficiaries each for 50 outreach villages, women on the SMS platform, rural youth.	10000		Incl 1000	7000	3000
c. IT for Change - 200 info centre beneficiaries each for 50 outreach villages, including youth and marginalised populations, active radio/video audience and women on the SMS platform	10000		Incl 1000	7000	3000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>36000</b>		<b>5000</b>	<b>24000</b>	<b>12000</b>

The Programme Results section above includes details on the beneficiaries along with the strategies. On the involvement of direct beneficiaries in the project, the approach adopted by the 3 partners has been to work in partnership with marginalised women and their collectives in a manner that respects their autonomy, ensuring their ownership of development processes through constant dialogue on the priorities, possibilities, risks, strategies etc. The information centre's core activities, its governance and accountability mechanisms, and the mentoring of the animators, will be done by the women leaders who are the direct beneficiaries. They will also shape the priorities on the radio and video content as well as the GIS-based campaigns. Women leaders and infomediaries will continuously interface with the indirect beneficiaries in the information centre and outreach villages. The latter group will comprise the wider community accessing the information centre and the local media efforts of the proposed project. They will not only participate in community-based deliberations on gender, but also



reach local institutions and apply for entitlements through the information centres. With respect to the needs of women from marginalised groups, the project proposes to take on the very question of local governance and democracy from their standpoint. All 3 partnering organisations will work with women leaders and grassroots collectives from remote villages, and dalit and tribal communities, building their capacities and involving them centrally in the project intervention (details in the Programme Results section).

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** How will you know if you have made a change with your programme? How are you going to demonstrate that change? What data you need to collect to track changes and how will you collect it, specifically outline the data for the baseline?

The key dimensions of change that the project seeks to impact are: 1. Women leaders' active public-political participation 2. Access of women, especially marginalised women, to entitlements and 3. Strategic networking among EWRs as well as between EWRs and women's groups for foregrounding women's concerns in local governance. The partners will brainstorm the overall theory of change in their initial face to face meeting and develop the indicators that can be used for ongoing monitoring. Broadly, the change sought to be made will be measured through the following impact indicators (also described in the FGE Results Chain – PMF and Work Plan):

Indicators		Data Source
1	Extent, nature and quality / content of participation of EWRs, who the project will work closely with, in <i>gram sabha</i> , <i>panchayat</i> resolutions and sub-committees	-Interviews at project sites for baseline and endline assessments -FGDs and key informant interviews with project beneficiaries and key stakeholders from <i>panchayats</i> , public offices and the wider community -Process documentation records of <i>gram sabha</i> , <i>panchayat</i> committee meetings
2	Extent, nature and quality of engagement of women leaders from local collectives with <i>gram sabha</i> , <i>panchayats</i> , schemes and departments	-Interviews and FGDs at the project sites with women leaders for baseline and endline assessments -PRA techniques to explore relationship mapping with governance structures
3	Extent, nature and quality of women leaders' participation in informal political spaces in the community and in local media	-Interviews and FGDs at the project sites with women leaders -Endline analysis of process documentation maintained by the project on radio broadcasts, video screenings, and campaigns
4	Shift in credibility / perception about women leaders different social groups.	- Baseline and endline interviews with women leaders - Rapid endline survey among local elite and other key stakeholders
5	Extent of awareness among women leaders about different entitlements, processes of obtaining them	- Baseline and endline interviews - Endline analysis of process documentation of project
6	Number of applications from the village community to different schemes and programmes	- Registers and logs maintained at the information centre - Baseline and endline sample survey in core villages

		of the project
7	Number of claims received by the village community to different schemes and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registers and logs maintained at the information centre</li> <li>- Baseline and endline sample survey in core villages of the project</li> </ul>
8	Proportion of marginalised women who have sought and received entitlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registers and logs maintained at the information centre</li> <li>- Baseline and endline sample survey in core villages of the project</li> </ul>
9	Shift in perception about accessibility and transparency of the entitlement facilitation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline sample survey in core villages of the project</li> <li>- Endline interviews with infomediaries</li> <li>- Rapid endline survey among local elite and other key stakeholders</li> </ul>
10	Extent, nature and content of interactions among EWRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with EWRs</li> <li>- Endline FGDs with EWRs</li> <li>- Tracking system for SMS and voice based network</li> <li>- Mobile numbers' database</li> <li>- Process documentation of project narratives</li> </ul>
11	Extent, nature and content of interactions between EWRs and women leaders of local collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with EWRs and leaders of collectives</li> <li>- Endline FGDs with EWRs and leaders of local collectives</li> <li>- Tracking system for SMS and voice based network</li> <li>- Mobile numbers' database</li> <li>- Process documentation of project narratives</li> </ul>
12	Specific socio-political outcomes of interactions among EWRs and between EWRs & collectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with infomediaries, EWRs and leaders of collectives</li> <li>- Process documentation of project narratives</li> </ul>
13	Women's concerns taken up by EWRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with EWRs and leaders of collectives</li> <li>- Process documentation records of <i>gram sabha</i>, <i>panchayat</i> sub-committee meetings</li> </ul>
14	Women's concerns taken up by <i>Panchayats</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with women leaders, incl on the gender index</li> <li>- Endline interviews with infomediaries, <i>panchayat</i> members, local elite and other key stakeholders, including on the gender index</li> </ul>
15	Informal and formal shifts in local governance mechanisms and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline and endline interviews with EWRs and leaders of collectives</li> <li>- Endline interviews with infomediaries, <i>panchayat</i> members, local elite and other key stakeholders</li> <li>- Process documentation records of <i>gram sabha</i>, <i>panchayat</i> sub-committee meetings</li> </ul>
16	Interest from external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop/ conference invitations to project</li> </ul>

stakeholders in the model offered by the project	partners from policy and academic spaces - Communication from the National Mission on the Empowerment of Women and other government departments with project partners and advisors
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Additionally, the process indicators of the project will comprise the following:

	Process Indicators	Data Source
1.	Increase in awareness of women leaders about local governance and gender; in the case of EWRs, also the role of the <i>panchayats</i> and duties of elected representatives.	-Baseline and endline FGDs with EWRs and women -Process documentation of capacity building workshops and feedback received.
2	New community and institutional spaces for gender sensitivity in local governance	-Baseline and endline interviews with EWRs and leaders of collectives -Process documentation of frequency and content of public events like info fairs, social audits, and campaigns spearheaded by EWRs and women leaders -Endline interviews with infomediaries, <i>panchayat</i> members, local elite
3.	Increase in radio listenership	-Baseline and endline sample survey in core project villages -Process documentation of collective listening and analysis of content of post-broad cast discussions; -Register for feedback calls after broadcasts
4	Nature and quality of info-centre's role in informational reach, exchange and claims	-Info centre register / spread sheets showing data on schemes and programmes; -Report card system to track beneficiary profile (visits, applications, entitlements received vis-a-vis right to health, work, information, etc); -Process documentation of infomediary's outreach, empowerment journeys, interactions bet women leaders & infomediary, instances and purpose of info centre data use in the <i>gram sabha</i> by women leaders, and by public authorities
5	Creation of women-only local public spaces	-Process documentation of the number and content of women-only <i>gram sabhas</i> , meetings of EWRs, community deliberations on gender supported by GIS data, community screenings and discussions based on videos
6	Shift in gender related practices	-Process documentation of narratives capturing attitude of men in the family, community, <i>panchayat</i> and departments and narratives around the gender index
7	Intra-household shifts in power	-Process documentation of narratives emerging

		from the field, including of women who purchase a mobile phone for their own personal use; who feature in radio content, video content and speak in public events of the project.
8	Video based learning and action	-Process documentation of films viewed by women's groups and content of post-screening discussions

The project teams will put in place documentation systems, and monthly meetings of the implementation teams in all the 3 sites. Key leaders – EWRs and women from the local collectives – will meet once in 2 months for a review. A mid-term narrative report will be generated to reflect upon the process of change and take stock of new meanings around informational power, local media ownership, local gender discourse and women's political networking. A project advisory group of about 6 to 7 eminent people in the field – academics, NGO leaders, members from international agencies like UNDP, bureaucrats – will be set up at the start of the project and at 6 monthly intervals, the progress and narrative reports will be shared with this group. Partners will meet face to face once in about 6 to 8 months. At the end of year one, a plan for qualitative research across the sites will be developed. By 18 months of project completion, an impact evaluation process will be initiated.

In addition, the Lead partner of the programme will ensure that all narrative and financial reports requested by the Fund for Gender Equality are provided in a timely and high quality manner as required.

**Risk Mitigation Strategy:** What might stop you doing these activities? What are the risks of doing these activities and how will you address them? Please fill out the table below including the mitigation strategies to reduce the risks you identified.

Risk	Potential impact on your Programme	Mitigation Strategy
Technology uptake may be sub-optimal	This will reduce the pace of goal achievement	1.Champions from among beneficiaries should be mentored as exemplars who show the way. 2. The digital strategy will need to be offered in a simple and meaningful way, with care not to burden beneficiaries with excessive applications-testing. 3. Concrete benefits through entitlements can create incentives to explore other vistas in the intangible zones of empowerment.4. Success stories of the emerging network process will need to be disseminated in the local area.
Techno-social design may need more time than anticipated	This will reduce the pace of goal achievement	1. There is no option but to go through a trial and error strategy when technology is socially incubated. The project is trying

		out technological options that are less explored, although much hyped (like GIS), for their potential in very complex social situations. Existing networks of the partnering organizations will be used to tackle roadblocks in tech solutions. Local buy-in and dialogues at the village level with different interest groups will be important. 2. Capacity building will need to be followed up with hand-holding processes.
Women may not have a phone for their independent unmonitored use	They would have to route all their queries through male members of the family	1.The Block or District level officials in the <i>Panchayati Raj</i> dept can be approached to facilitate access to the phone facility for EWRs. 2. Men in the households will need to be handled sensitively to convince them about the project intent.
Political sensitivities owing to the structural nature of change being attempted	Participation of intended beneficiaries may get compromised; strategies may not take off meaningfully	The project will need to use a combination of rights based awareness raising, tactical posturing with local elite and building incentive structures for <i>panchayats</i> and husbands to cooperate.
Illiteracy among women	This can slow down the project progress	The project will need to build techno-social innovations that can address this key barrier.
Content generation may evoke suspicion of officials	This may pose barriers to capacity building of beneficiaries	Creating non threatening content initially, broadcasts can be incentives to attract more officials, resource pool of the project may be useful to <i>panchayats</i> and can be shared with them.

**Sustainability Strategy:** How will you make these results, capacities and systems continue to last beyond the programme?

This proposal comes with an explicit commitment from the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women (NMEW), of the Ministry of Women and Child Development GOI, to engage actively with this initiative and carry lessons forward formally to governmental ministries and departments (please note that: a letter with this commitment from the NMEW was shared in the first round, with UNWOMEN). At KMVS, ANANDI and IT for Change, the relationships with women's networks has been long standing. Although we are optimistic about our intervention with EWRs who currently hold office, the political process of networking women and negotiating change with those who have bought into the idea of a women's local constituency will need to be undertaken beyond the life of this project, a task that all 3 partnering organizations are committed to. In terms of financial sustainability, in the longer



term, the information centers can be run either by the women's collectives or the collectives of women EWRs. In KMVS, the plan is to hand over the information centre to the EWR's platform, which can charge a small fee to visitors. Also, *Panchayats* can utilize the centre for generating their documents - certificates, revenue records, meeting minutes. Already, in ANANDI, the block office in Shihor has provided the space for the block level centres; additional cluster level centres envisaged through this project would be set up in government premises - a *panchayat* building, school or a sub-centre of the health department. Flexibility will be exercised to allow the project to take stock of and visualise appropriate institutional mechanisms for the future. Institutionalization will also require stronger advocacy with the concerned ministries, a task we hope the NMEW will also help us with.

**Partnership:** Who will be your partners in this programme? Please detail the nature of the partnership and its purpose? What strategies will you use to foster each partnership?

All the three partners in the programme would be main implementing partners. The partnership would be based on shared learning and collaboration. The partners will work with the collectives and autonomous groups /platforms of EWRs and women leaders that they have been supporting for many years. These organizations will be the key partners that lend direction and energies to the project. Their experience would contribute a great deal in developing the content, the data bases and the implementation architecture for techno-social process design. Other elected members in the local *panchayats* at the village and block levels, who are supportive of the project, will be key allies. The local *panchayats* and their officials, government departments at the block and district level, vital for the information and communication strategies, will be cultivated for longer term support, and relationship building exercises undertaken with them for enabling infomediaries to channel entitlements to beneficiaries. The collaborating organizations are also actively involved in many local, national and global networks as well as governmental committees (the Right to Food Campaign, Right to Health Campaign, Right to Information Campaign, National Committees pertaining to Right to Information and E-governance). The proposed project will seek to influence the mandate of these networks. It will also seek to engage the Ministry of *Panchayati Raj*, UN Women and other UN organizations on using ICTs for innovative capacity building programmes for women in local governance. The e-governance department is a significant stakeholder, and here the task will be to advocate forcefully how techno-centric models will need to be replaced with citizenship centred models in local ICT initiatives. The National Mission for the Empowerment of Women has also formally expressed interest in considering this project as one of its pilots. The wider community of scholar-activists in the women's movements and other movements in India will be important to engage.

**Programme Management:** What kind of staffing arrangements will you put in place to deliver this programme, please specify positions (including the programme coordinator)? What are the coordination and management arrangements to ensure that Lead & Co-Lead (if applicable) and all relevant partners jointly implement and monitor activities? Please include specific roles and responsibilities of each partner and joint activities.

The project structure will build upon the unique contexts of the implementing partners. At the overall management level, and for primary interface with UNWOMEN, the project proposes to have one Overall Programme coordinator and a research associate (both located at the lead agency for coordination and the overall documentation, monitoring, evaluation and research). At the 3 project sites, the structure will more or less be as follows, with slight variations.

	Staff	Job title
1	Programme coordinator	Programme management
2	Project coordinator	Overall in charge of the field implementation
3	Community coordinators	Responsible for activities at specific clusters / blocks and overseeing infomediaries, animators, capacity building
4	Animators / infomediaries	Responsible for activities at village level, including mobile based support and outreach activities
5	Documentation incharge	Responsible for generating and supporting field documentation at all 3 sites
6	Radio/ video associate (may also be one of the community coordinators)	Will be trained in and support media content production
7	Financial management and administration	Dovetailed with existing arrangements in the 3 organisations

Note that details of project implementation and monitoring have already been provided in the section on Monitoring and Evaluation. In terms of coordination, some protocols like monthly virtual meetings and 6-monthly narrative reports will be used in addition to e-mail based forums. An initial workshop will help build these protocols. Face to face review meetings to take stock will be held twice or thrice during the life of the project. The project presupposes a high degree of exchange, cross-learning and collaboration among the partners.

**Communications and Knowledge Management:** What kind of communications and knowledge materials will you develop during your programme, for which audience and how will you disseminate them?

The following communications and knowledge management strategies will be adopted:

1. A website with interactive possibilities for sharing ongoing activities and information as well as blogs with external audiences in English will be set up.
2. The project will produce radio and video content, data bases, sms content, GIS based data visualizations for beneficiaries that can also be used by other NGOs and by *panchayats*. A good archiving system for the commons of the project will be created for future use and wider dissemination, especially since the project wants to propose a model.
3. The project will also generate routine documentation, field based reports, narratives and research that will be uploaded in the website and shared with stakeholders. At the end of the project, a publication that will synthesize the key strategies and outcomes will be brought out for possible replication or scale up.
4. Policy briefs directed at state and central departments of IT, rural development and *Panchayati Raj* and for the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI, will be written at the end of the project and disseminated widely.

**Sections 3 and 4: Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) & Work-Plan & Programme Budget Work Plan: Please see excel attachment.**