

RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS UNDER RMSA: GUIDELINES

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Innovations under RMSA

A. Background

1. Innovation has played—and continues to play—an important role in the development of the education system in India. At the elementary level, the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) had encouraged several innovative approaches, both in the formal and alternative sectors. In turn, much of the innovation that took place as part of the DPEP informed and strengthened the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) program, which encompassed these into the larger umbrella program.
2. Unlike SSA, at the secondary level, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has not had the benefit of learning from the experience of earlier State-level or Centrally-Sponsored Schemes of large national character like SSA, that have promoted innovation—the trying out of new ideas to enhance the access, equity, quality and management of secondary education, especially in the deprived parts of the country and in areas with large underprivileged populations.
3. Under the current RMSA Framework, States are able to develop innovative ideas in all their activities. Nothing in these Guidelines should detract from that – indeed it is hoped that these Guidelines provide States with additional ways of conceiving of innovations within the existing Framework. However, such innovation is only possible at present within the norms defining each expenditure category (e.g., teacher training, school up gradation, etc. It is felt that there should also be the option for States to be creative without the constraint of norms and for non-State agencies to be involved in designing new ideas.
4. The Government of India has therefore decided to make available some funding for innovative activities within the RMSA Framework which would be allocated according to the criteria and procedures laid out in these Guidelines.
5. The Innovation component is designed in a way that would promote genuine innovation simultaneously within the implementation framework of the RMSA. Overtime, successful innovations having significant impact on the ground and

with potential for up-scaling in wider geographies and informing larger target groups would be adapted and scaled up under the RMSA framework and possibly institutionalized.

6. This component would also supplement holistic implementation of RMSA. It will provide for those interventions that do not strictly adhere to the RMSA Framework in its current approved norms and rules for different heads yet have the potential to improve the quality of secondary education. For example, the Framework at present covers only government schools, although in some States government-aided and private schools make up the overwhelming majority of schools at the secondary level. Innovations could also help improve institutional reform, scale up deserving alternative approaches piloted by non-governmental organizations, and encourage creative ways of enhancing capacities of educational functionaries. This in turn will contribute to the overall improvement in the quality of secondary education throughout the country. This component could also support activities which help link other Centrally Sponsored Schemes in secondary education with RMSA.
7. Innovation in this context is broadly defined as an idea or an approach that aims to bring about positive change in secondary education. Innovation could include new “Out-of-the-Box” ideas and/or approaches that have yet to be tried out, as well as those already tested, but on a smaller scale and in a different context. An innovation can also help package or aggregate existing practices in a way that has not been tried before. It can take an existing idea, but implement it using new methods. Finally, innovative ideas and/or approaches that “push established boundaries” should be encouraged. At the very early stages of initiating innovations the best approach to explain exactly what is meant by innovation is by example. The MHRD would disseminate brief write ups of innovative projects already under implementation throughout India.¹ This invaluable source of

information would be expanded gradually to include write ups of winning and eligible proposals considered deserving and innovative.

B. Scope and Objective

1. Innovation is envisaged as a demand-driven initiative to support the development of secondary education in India. It will be part of the RMSA Framework for Implementation, being governed by the same mechanism as the RMSA, located in MHRD.
2. This innovations component will extend to government education agencies at the both at the national and State level as well as to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, and education societies, **but all proposals under innovation shall be part of the State RMSA Annual Plan proposal and funds shall be channelized only through the State Implementation Society for RMSA.** As with other elements of RMSA, it will support activities in secondary schools eligible for support under RMSA that aim to enhance access, equity, quality, and management at the secondary education level, in manners that are innovative and new in approach, methodology and/or implementation strategies.
3. The main rationale for the proposed component is to support initiatives that are in-line with the RMSA's goals, but are not currently approved and/or "ready" to be included in the RMSA Framework in the form of national norms. This component would support two broad types of activities: (i) ideas and approaches that may be at an early concept stage, but show promise and are feasible to implement; and (ii) successful ideas and approaches that would have been piloted on a small scale at the block or district level in the State or elsewhere in India and are now ready to be expanded, with potential for being replicated, scalability and impact. It is expected that lessons of experience from innovation activities will feed into the future design of the RMSA Framework.

C. Guiding Principles of Innovation

In addition to the broad principles of the overall RMSA Framework, support to innovations will be governed by the following guiding principles:

1. The innovation will support projects that can be **scaled up, replicated** and **sustained** over the longer term.
2. It will encourage **collaboration** at all levels.
3. It will be **result-based** with a robust M&E system.
4. It will help nurture **partnerships and** encourage the **sharing of knowledge**.

D. Eligibility

- a) **The following two** categories of applicants are eligible to submit grant proposals:

1. All **government and semi-government agencies** at the national and, State level involved in education. This will include States and Union Territories and State level government education agencies such as COBSE, NCERT, NIOS, NUEPA, CISCE, CBSE, Leadership Academies, SCERTs/ SIETs/ SIEMATs School Boards, Mahila Samkhya groups, and vocational education centres
2. **Non-governmental organizations**, registered as Society or Trust or Section 25 Company will have to apply **in partnership** with national or State level government/semi-government agencies. Eligible organizations must have a strong track record of supporting education initiatives, and be in existence for longer than 3 years.

- b) The following will apply to all applications:

1. All proposals must focus on improving **quality, access, equity and/or management** with special focus on teaching and learning, educational management, institutional reform, capacity building of educational functionaries and teachers for impacting government and government-aided schools.
2. All applicants must demonstrate that proposals were prepared through a **consultative process** with inputs from key stakeholders that could include State government representatives, district level administrators, School

Management and Development Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, community-based organizations etc.

International organizations and profit-making entities are **NOT** eligible to apply under the Innovations component.

E. Institutional and Management Arrangements

1. In keeping with the Sector wide approach adopted under RMSA, proposals for innovative activities need not necessarily be submitted separately as an 'Innovation Proposal'. They may be proposed under equity or quality components of RMSA. Since innovative activities happen across various activities and sectors, for example, ICT, Curriculum development, teacher training, teaching methodologies, classroom behaviour, inclusive education, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), child tracking, civil works, community mobilization, etc., compartmentalising the innovation component is sought to be avoided.
2. The RMSA institutional and management arrangements will be followed to implement innovations. The RMSA Project Approval Board will be the approving authority, and the Technical Support Group will provide technical support to the RMSA Bureau in MHRD for appraisal and monitoring of such proposals/projects. However, bi-annual status reports will be provided to all stakeholders in respect of each innovation being implemented under RMSA.
3. MHRD will put in place a panel of external subject experts for the purposes of reviewing and recommending proposals (referred by TSG) for funding under this component.
4. While appraising the proposal, TSG shall refer proposals to at least **two** subject experts on the panel, and the observations/recommendations of the experts shall be part of the TSG appraisal note presented to the PAB (MHRD). The TSG would ensure that full applications (including comments from State Departments of Education) are made available to each of the experts in a timely manner.

5. MHRD may also invite the concerned external subject experts to take part in the PAB deliberations on these proposals. The external experts will be paid remuneration, travel and per diem as applicable.
6. As and when needed, the MHRD may also secure part-time assistance/ support from external subject experts on identified functional areas for developing and supporting innovations in RMSA activities.
7. The subject experts empanelled for this purpose by MHRD would have expertise in the relevant areas including
 - Curriculum development
 - Evaluation systems (including CCE, Diagnostics and Remedial Education)
 - Teacher Training
 - ICT in Education
 - Science and Math education
 - Social Science Education
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Inclusive education
 - Vocational education
 - Integration of life skills/work education into secondary education
8. The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals under the Innovations component:
 - (i) ***Innovativeness***
 - (ii) ***Clarity and Quality of Project Design***
 - (iii) ***Relevance/ alignment with State Priorities***
 - (iv) ***Clarity and Quality of Results Matrix***
 - (v) ***Feasibility***
 - (vi) ***Scalability & Replicability***

(vii) ***Financial Viability and Sustainability***

F. Conflict of Interest

1. In cases where an applying entity also has representation on the External subject Experts Panel, it will not be eligible to apply for grant under the Innovations component

G. Financing Proposals

1. As with other components of the RMSA Programme, proposals under this component will be funded as part of the overall annual allocation to the national agency/State Govt. under RMSA and will be subject to a limit of 5% of the total annual allocation to the State.

2. The following expenditures will not be allowed:

- Civil works
- Repair and Maintenance of buildings
- Any payment to faculty for attending a training program
- Salaries to contract faculty and staff appointed against existing teacher vacancies

H. Components of the Application

1. An innovation proposal will contain the following
 - Project Description
 - Management Plan
 - Procurement Plan
 - Implementation Plan/Project timeline
 - Monitoring & Evaluation Plan
 - Results matrix with performance indicators
 - Indicative Budget

I. Documentation and Dissemination of Good Practices

1. RMSA Bureau will commission analytical documentation of innovations which can then be disseminated widely. A communication and dissemination strategy will be developed so as to share the lessons of experience and good practice.

The objectives of such a strategy would be to:

- Reach target beneficiaries—teachers, students and administrators—in an efficient and cost effective way
- Communicate clearly the components' guidelines and procedures, especially as they relate to proposal submission, evaluation and selection.
- Share knowledge, best practices and success stories.

