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Ministry of Finance
Department of Expenditure
Plan Finance-II Division

New Delhi, dated January 6, 2014

Office Memorandum

Subject: Guidelines for Flexi-Funds within Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs).

Objectives

The introduction of a flexi-fund component within the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) has been made to achieve the following objectives:-

- (i) To provide flexibility to States to meet local needs and requirements within the overall objective of each programme or scheme;
- (ii) To pilot innovations and improve efficiency within the overall objective of the scheme and its expected outcomes;
- (iii) To undertake mitigation/restoration activities in case of natural calamities in the sector covered by the CSS.

Budgetary Allocation

2. Central Ministries concerned shall keep at least 10% of their Plan budget for each CSS as flexi-funds, except for Schemes which emanate from a legislation (e.g. MGNREGA), or, schemes where the whole or a substantial proportion of the budgetary allocation is flexible (e.g. RKVY)

Allocation of State Share

3. After approval of the Plan Budget, Central Ministries shall communicate tentative allocations for each CSS to States including the allocation of flexi-funds by the end of May of every financial year. In the CSS that are demand-driven or project-driven and it is not feasible to make allocations to States, tentative allocations for a quarter/half-year/year shall invariably be communicated to states by the end of May of every financial year. Allocation to the States shall be based on transparent and equitable criteria. Central Ministries shall make allocations for 10% of flexi-funds for the CSS amongst States in the same proportion as tentative State allocations in the 90% portion of the CSS.

4. Flexi-funds will be a part of the CSS and the name of the concerned CSS will precede the word 'flexi-funds', in the communication to States. There will be no separate budget and account head for this purpose.

5. As flexi-funds are a part of the concerned CSS, the same State share (including beneficiary contribution, if any) would be applicable for the flexi-fund component as well. However, States may provide additional share (including beneficiary contribution, if any) over and above the required State share for the flexi-funds component of the allocation for the CSS.

Use of flexi-funds

6. States may use the flexi-funds for the CSS to meet the objectives mentioned above in accordance with the broad objectives of the main Scheme. The flexi-funds may also be utilized for mitigation/restoration activities in the event of natural calamities in accordance with the broad objectives of the CSS. However, the specific guidelines of the CSS, applicable for 90% of the CSS allocation, will not be essential for the Flexi-funds component of the CSS, except for State share requirements.

7. The flexi-funds of a CSS in a particular sector, however, shall not be diverted to fund activities/schemes in other sectors. For example, if a particular CSS relates to elementary education, the flexi-funds for that scheme can only be used for elementary education and not for agriculture or any other sector. But it would be permissible to converge flexi-funds of different schemes to improve efficiency and effectiveness of outcomes.

8. The purpose of providing flexi-funds is to enable States to undertake new innovative schemes in the particular area covered by the CSS. Flexi-funds shall not be used to substitute State's own non-Plan or Plan schemes/expenditure. It shall also not be used for construction/repairs of offices/residences for Government officials, general publicity, purchase of vehicles/furniture for offices, distribution of consumer durables/non-durables, incentives/rewards for staff and other unproductive expenditure.

9. Schemes taken up with Flexi-funds shall invariably carry the name of concerned CSS.

10. The State-level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) may sanction projects under the flexi-funds component. States will not be required to send the project to Ministries for approval under the flexi-funds window as the SLSC will have a representative of the concerned Ministry and Planning Commission.

States wishing to use flexi funds as part of the normal 90% component are free to do so.

Release of Flexi-funds

11. Release of flexi-funds for each CSS may be made on a prorata basis along with the normal releases under CSS. In other words, no separate system for release or for utilization certificates for flexi-funds would be required.

12. Flexi-funds within each CSS will be subject to the same audit requirements as the main CSS including the audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (CAG).

Monitoring & Evaluation

13. Web-based requirements for reporting the use of flexi-funds may be designed by adding modules to the existing MIS. Outcomes (medium term) and outputs (short term) need to be part of the MIS along with pictures/images and good practices to ensure greater transparency and cross-learning across States. For this purpose, web portal for sharing best practices is proposed to be created in Planning Commission.

14. Evaluation of flexi-funds may be done through the existing evaluation processes including those by Ministries, Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) and Independent Evaluation Organisation (IEO), Planning Commission and by independent third parties. Terms and conditions for evaluation may be designed in such a manner that outcomes of the Scheme as a whole as well as flexi-funds are well identified/measured.

15. These guidelines will be applicable from the financial year 2014-15.

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To,

1. Secretaries,
All the Departments/Ministries
Government of India.
2. Chief Secretaries,
All States/Union Territories.