



LIVING LANDSCAPES

**GRASSROOTS LEVEL INSTITUTIONS
STRENGTHENING AND TRANSFORMATION
FOR CLIMATE ACTION (GIST)**

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CRISP and Living Landscapes will work to enable policy, practice and financial flows towards effective, decentralized and inclusive governance at the grassroots level, especially in Natural Resource Management (NRM) and gender equity. Policies and programs that empower Gram Panchayats and local institutions in areas like SHG-gram panchayat linkage for better area-based planning for different village-level development plans will be strengthened by unlocking barriers for Civil Society and Government Collaborations to create a non-linear impact on the ecosystem

Grassroots Level Institutions Strengthening and Transformation for Climate Action (GIST), is an initiative implemented by the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) and Padraka Foundation, a.k.a. Living Landscapes (Common Ground). The project will be implemented in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

GIST proposes to work in collaboration with the state government to effectively implement policies on sustainability, climate resilience and rural development, better aligned with ground realities to achieve desired outcomes. Both CRISP and Living Landscapes will leverage its collective expertise in collaboration with diverse stakeholders (including the ones at grassroots) to drive ecologically sound, socially equitable and economically rewarding practices for communities across the above-mentioned states. This document is a generic Action Plan at the national level. Each state will have separate action plans developed during the course of the project in consultation with respective stakeholders inputs and needs of the states.

Objectives of the initiative are:

- 1. Empowering Local Communities through Grassroots Institutions:** Strengthening local communities by enhancing the capacity and role of institutions such as Gram Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, and other community-based organizations (CBOs) like School Management Committees, libraries, and clubs, to foster self-reliance and inclusive development.
- 2. Protecting Common Resources with Community Engagement:** Promoting environmental sustainability by actively involving communities in the protection and

stewardship of common resources, embedding ecological considerations into village-level development initiatives.

- 3. Advancing SDG Indicators:** Enhancing progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level by aligning development efforts with the SDGs targets and supporting states in successful localisation of SDGs at the grassroots-level.
- 4. Facilitating FRA Implementation Locally:** Actively supporting the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to secure forest-based livelihoods and rights.
- 5. Enhancing PESA Implementation :** Empower tribal communities in PESA areas in order to enhance tribal representation in decision-making, safeguard traditional cultures, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources.

Approach of the initiative are:

- 1. Promote policy coherence and convergence** across different policy domains by tweaking existing policies informed by field testing, surveys, best practices and stakeholder engagement. Focussed domains would include policies around Natural resource management, climate resilient actions, water and biodiversity conservation and inclusive rural development. The project will recommend and advocate multi-stakeholder processes to improve joint planning across departments and local community-led governance mechanisms (including, NREGA, PESA, FRA, GPDP, SDGs, VPRP, aspirational districts, among others).
- 2. Integrating Grassroots Institutions with a Focus on GPDP-VPRP:** Aligning grassroots-level organizations to effectively implement Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) and Village Prosperity Resilience Plans (VPRP), ensuring coordinated efforts toward comprehensive local development.
- 3. Tailoring and translating policy actions into context-based practices** by empowering government functionaries and communities by bridging capacity gaps and building responsive governance mechanisms through required circulars, guidelines, training modules, cross learning for policy makers and realignment of directives with ground realities.
- 4. Maximizing funding flows** for community, nature, climate and biodiversity by identifying and innovating to pool various government resources such as CAMPA, DMF, etc and bridge the gap with private (CSR, ESG), philanthropic funds and other financial instruments

5. Leveraging technology and shaping market incentives to address policy priorities:

The project will promote market norms and practices that operate **within ecological thresholds** to foster sustainable practices. It will also integrate technology and digital ecosystems that offer rigour and scalability ensuring data-driven decisions, resource mapping and planning.

6. Facilitating Writeshops to create spaces for cross-learning and innovation across states where policy-makers and state functionaries can learn from one another alongside driving a collaborative action that strengthens policy-practice interface.

Project focus areas:

- a) Strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions – Community Based Organisations (CBO) collaboration
- b) Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)
- c) Enhancing Implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA)
- d) Planning for identifying, protecting, and regenerating Commons
- e) Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- f) Any other areas that offer opportunities to strengthen community based governance of natural resources and coordinated action between SHGs, PRIs, CSO and governments.

1. Action Plan on Strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Community-Based Organisations Collaboration

Strengthening PRI-CBOs convergence involves fostering collaboration between CBOs including Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Gram Panchayats (GPs) to enhance local governance and community development. This partnership can empower SHGs and other CBOs to participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that the needs of women and marginalized groups are addressed. By aligning CBO initiatives with PRI programs, such as resource management and livelihood generation, the community's socio-economic development can be more effectively supported. Additionally, this convergence can improve the implementation of government schemes, leading to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes at the grassroots level. This will be done with the following steps:

A. Study of existing convergence platforms/mechanisms and frameworks (1 month):

- a) Consultation with the relevant State Government officials.
- b) Studying the existing guidelines (if any) in each of the four states for convergence between community-based organisations (CBOs), mainly Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and the Gram Panchayats
- c) Study of best fit practices in other States
- d) Consultation with the field-level NGOs, and the current status of pilots across different states.

This study will involve an assessment of stakeholder experiences from the respective states, understanding why some initiatives have not scaled up, identifying significant challenges, and evaluating the accessibility to relevant data, SHG governance mechanisms, and functional possibilities. It will also examine best fit practices in area-based planning and revenue models.

- ## B. Field Study (1 month):
- Field visits will be conducted in selected Gram Panchayats, in consultation with the respective government authorities and prominent local Civil society organisations and active CBOs such as SHGs and federations, Village Development Committees, Eco-Development Committees among others to assess the ground realities. These visits will be crucial for gaining first-hand insight into current practices, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening -Gram Panchayat- CBO

collaboration. This study will provide insights into the field-level realities and will shed light on issues that would become part of the proposed legal framework.

- C. Draft Action Plan Indicating Specific Areas of SHG-Gram Panchayat collaboration (1 month):** This step involves formulating a detailed action plan guided by the findings of the field study and existing best practices focussing on multi-stakeholder processes, resource mapping and planning to strengthen PRI –CBO collaboration. within respective states. Towards SHG-GP collaboration, the plan will focus on incorporating the **Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP)** prepared by SHGs and other identified requirements - in the **Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)** prepared by the Gram Panchayats.
- D. Writeshop with Key Stakeholders on Strengthening the SHG-Gram Panchayat collaboration(1 month):** A writeshop will be conducted in the respective states, involving all key stakeholders, and led by Mr S.M. Vijayanand I.A.S (Retd). This activity will focus on identifying socio-ecological risks and planning and management of common and other natural resources, exploring the possibilities and modalities for SHG-Gram Panchayat convergence. The write-shop combines insights and experiences to form a solid foundation for future actions. The respective government should undertake this initiative, primarily the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments. The outcome of the Writeshop will be a draft Joint Government order / Guidelines on how GP-SHG coordination and collaboration could be materialised.
- E. Consultation with Government (1 month):** The draft action plan and the initial report, along with the draft Government Order will be shared with the respective Governments, and a meeting for discussion and finalisation of the same would be organised
- F. Testing proof of concept in Selected Gram Panchayats (4 months):** Implement the collaboration strategies in the selected Gram Panchayats, with the exact number to be decided later, based on discussions with the respective government. This testing phase will serve as a testbed for the identified strategies, allowing for real-world assessment and necessary adjustments. Additionally, where successful partnership learnings are available, GIST will directly support the respective governments in implementing strategies with a well-established understanding and proven success. The CRISP team will implement this with Living Landscapes and other Common Ground partners working in the field.
- G. Workshops for Implementation and Skill Enhancement (1 month):** Work with the State Govts to organize workshops, to provide implementation guidance and skill

enhancement to SHG members and Gram Panchayat representatives. This will ensure that both parties can collaborate and manage their joint initiatives effectively. These workshops will be undertaken by the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and Regional Institute of Rural Development (RIRD), with support from CRISP and Common Ground partners.

- H. Ongoing Support and Handholding (1 month):** Provide continuous handholding support throughout the implementation of testing phase, which could involve regular check-ins, troubleshooting sessions, and additional trainings as needed. This support will be provided mainly by CRISP, Living Landscapes , and other Common Ground partners, with support from the respective government authorities.
- I. Documentation and Scaling Up (1 month):** Document the pilot/testing implementation's learnings, challenges, and successes, which CRISP will do. Based on these insights, develop a plan for scaling up the collaboration model to other Gram Panchayats across the state. This plan will include the development of various training modules in respective local languages for training programs, which can be conducted through the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and the Regional Institute of Rural Development (RIRD).

Key Deliverables:

- A. Status Report on SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnership Strengthening (1 month):** A comprehensive report analysing existing guidelines from the Government of India and various states on PRI-CBO partnerships will be prepared. This report will assess the effectiveness of these partnerships, stakeholder experiences, and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- B. Consultation Meeting Report (1 month):** A summary report detailing the insights and outcomes of the initial consultation meeting with relevant officers and stakeholders. The report will capture the current dynamics between SHGs and Gram Panchayats and identify areas of potential collaboration.
- C. Field Visit Findings (1 month):** Reports based on field visits to selected Gram Panchayats, providing first-hand insights into practices, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening PRI-CBO collaboration. This will also include an evaluation of guideline implementation and stakeholder involvement.
- D. Draft Action Plan for SHG-Gram Panchayat collaboration (1 month):** A detailed action plan outlining specific areas of collaboration between SHGs and Gram

Panchayats based on successful partnership models. It will include recommendations for adapting and replicating these models across different states.

- E. Initial Report and Workshop Feedback (1 month):** A preliminary report based on desk research, field study findings, and the draft action plan, along with feedback gathered from workshops with stakeholders, including SHG members, Gram Panchayat representatives, and government officials.
- F. Suggested Guidelines for SHG-Gram Panchayat collaboration (1 month):** A document based on the outcomes of the writeshop detailing strategies for effective collaboration between SHGs and Gram Panchayats. It will also focus on identifying socio-ecological risks and management planning towards community resources. A Joint Government order /Guidelines on how SHG-GP coordination and cooperation will be materialised
- G. Pilot Implementation Plan (1 month):** A strategic plan for implementing collaboration initiatives in selected Gram Panchayats, including specific goals, methods, and expected outcomes. This plan will serve as a testbed for real-world adjustments.
- H. Training Workshop Materials (1 month):** Educational materials and resources developed for implementation workshops aimed at skill enhancement for SHG members and Gram Panchayat representatives, ensuring they can effectively manage joint initiatives.
- I. Ongoing Support and Handholding Strategy (1 month):** A plan outlining continuous handholding support throughout the implementation phase, including regular check-ins, troubleshooting sessions, and additional training as needed.
- J. Documentation for Scaling Up (1 month):** A comprehensive document capturing the pilot implementation phase's learnings, challenges, and successes will be prepared. This document will form the basis for scaling up the collaboration model to other Gram Panchayats and include a plan for developing training modules to be used by SIRD and RIRDs.

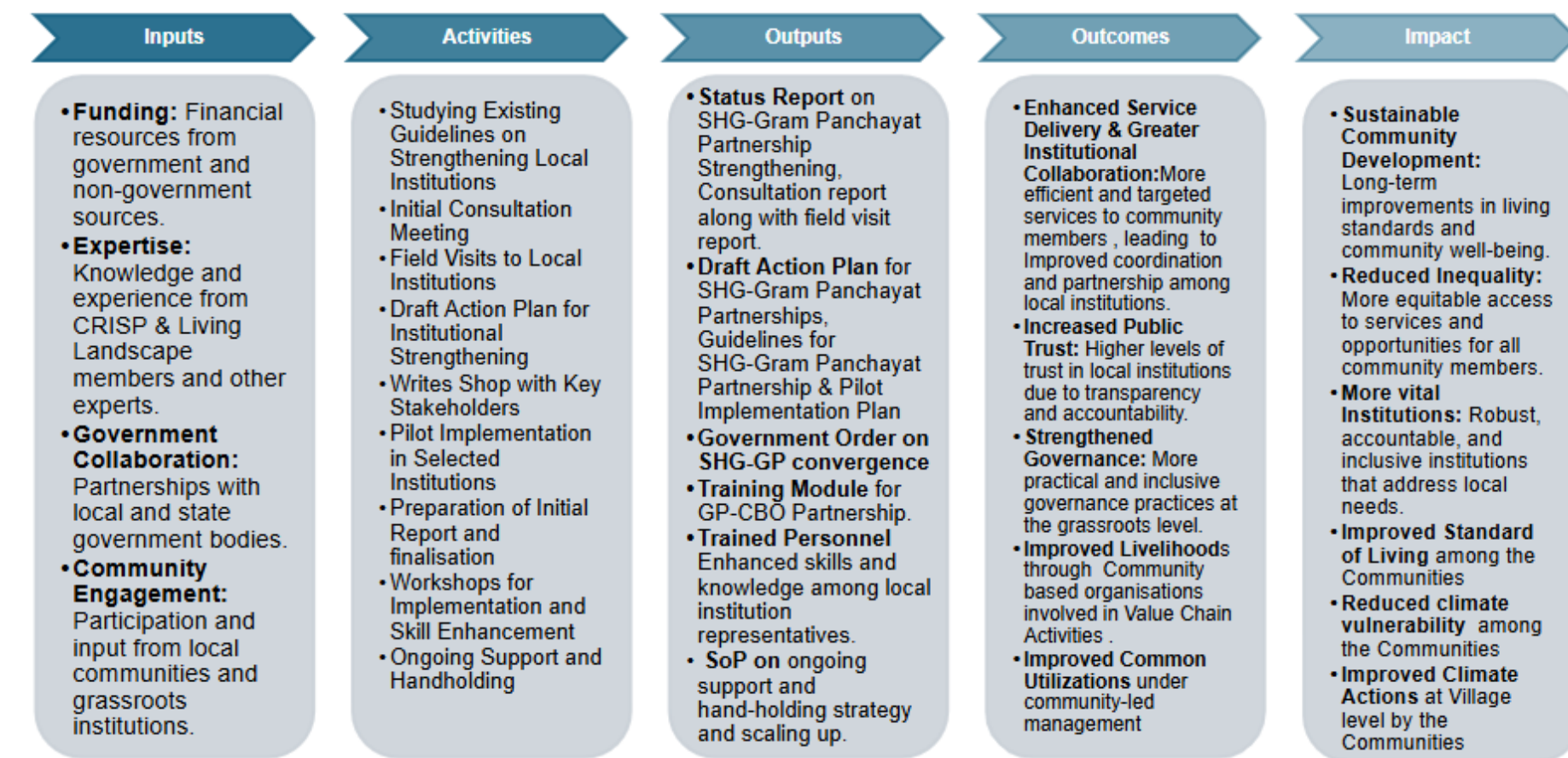
Timeline for GP-SHG Convergence

Project Name:	Strengthening SHG-Gram Panchayat Collaboration											
Key Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
I. Strengthening SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnership												
a. Study of existing convergence platforms/mechanisms and frameworks (1 month)												
b. Field Study(1 month)												
c. Draft Action Plan Indicating Specific Areas of SHG-Gram Panchayat Collaboration(1 month)												
d. Writeshop with Key Stakeholders on Strengthening the SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnership(1 month)												
e. Consultation with Government(1 month)												
f. Testing proof of concept in Selected Gram Panchayats(4 months)												
g. Workshops for Implementation and Skill Enhancement(1 month)												
h. Ongoing Support and Handholding (1 month)												
i. Documentation and scaling up(1 month)												
II. Key Deliverables												
a. Status Report on SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnership Strengthening (1 month)												
b. Consultation Meeting Report(1 month)												
c. Field Visit Findings(1 month)												
d. Draft Action Plan for SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnerships(1 month)												
e. Initial Report and Workshop Feedback(1 month)												
f. Suggested guidelines for SHG-Gram Panchayat Partnership(1 month)												
g. Pilot Implementation Plan(1 month)												
h. Training Workshop Materials(1 month)												
i. Ongoing Support and Handholding Strategy(1 month)												

*Timeline is tentative and may subject to change based on department support

Theory of Change for GP-SHG Convergence

Theory of change of GIST (Strengthening the Gram Panchayat - CBO Partnership)



2. Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)

The second key component of GIST focuses on effective operationalisation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) to empower tribal communities in Odisha and Jharkhand. This recognises the importance of PESA in order to enhance tribal representation in decision-making, safeguard traditional cultures, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources. CRISP along with Living Landscapes and Common Grounds partners will wholeheartedly implement PESA operationalising initiative but state level inputs and support will determine timely implementation of the initiative.

Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA):

PESA is a crucial legislation that supports tribal communities by ensuring their representation in decision-making bodies like Gram Sabhas and local councils. It empowers them to safeguard their traditional cultures, and self govern their lands, and resources by facilitating forest stewardship and aligning conservation goals with economic interests. PESA influences areas such as land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons, management of minor water bodies, recommending licenses or leases regarding mines and minerals, and ownership of minor forest produce (MFPs).

A. Understanding current situations including study of acts and rules (1 month):

With support from Living Landscapes (Common Ground), CRISP will lead a comprehensive desk study to analyse existing guidelines and frameworks related to implementing PESA. This study will examine documents from the Government of India, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and the respective state governments of Odisha and Jharkhand. The aim is to understand how these guidelines are being implemented and adapted at the local level, mainly focusing on the roles of State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) in providing capacity and knowledge inputs to grassroots-level functionaries. It will also analyse reports of public agencies, academic institutions and Civil Society Organisations along with articles on the subject. The study will evaluate successful models and best practices from other states by identifying significant challenges and understanding why some initiatives have not scaled up.

B. Stakeholder Consultations (2 month): With support from Living Landscapes (Common Ground), CRISP will undertake a comprehensive field study to understand the ground realities and stakeholder experiences and identify areas for effective PESA operationalisation. The field study will begin with consultative meetings involving officers, community leaders, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders. These meetings aim to understand current dynamics and gather diverse perspectives on needs and challenges related to PESA implementation.

After the consultative meetings, CRISP will conduct field visits to selected villages and Gram Panchayats. These visits are intended to gain firsthand insights into current practices, challenges, and opportunities for strengthening PESA. During the field visits, the team will look at the effectiveness of Gram Sabhas, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in managing natural resources and upholding traditional rights. By engaging directly with the communities and stakeholders, CRISP will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the local context.

C. Support State Government in finalising/improving PESA Guidelines (1 month): CRISP will support the respective state governments in finalizing and improving the implementation of the PESA guidelines for strengthening governance and empowerment of tribal areas. Effective collaboration can help ensure that PESA provisions are fully aligned with local socio-cultural contexts, securing tribal self-governance and giving local communities a greater say in managing natural resources, healthcare, and education. By refining the legal and administrative frameworks of PESA, states can address the gaps in its application, promote transparent decision-making, and provide adequate resources and training for local bodies.

D. Support State Government in Securing RGSA Funding for PESA Areas(1 month): CRISP will assist the state government in obtaining dedicated funding under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) specifically for PESA-designated regions. This support will include identifying funding requirements, aligning proposals with RGSA objectives, and ensuring compliance with funding criteria. By facilitating access to RGSA funds, state governments will be able to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions in Scheduled Areas, enabling them to deliver essential services, build capacity, and promote local governance that is inclusive of

tribal community needs and rights. This collaborative approach aims to advance self-reliant, community-driven development in PESA areas.

E. Implementation in selected Areas (2 months): Following the release of revised PESA rules by state governments, CRISP, in partnership with Living Landscapes (Common Grounds), will undertake targeted implementation efforts within selected Gram Panchayats. This phase will focus on operationalizing the new PESA guidelines, engaging local stakeholders, and building the capacity of Panchayat members and community leaders to ensure compliance with PESA mandates. This will create demonstrable models of effective PESA implementation that can be scaled across other regions.

F. Module Development & Training Community Resource Persons (2 months): Following the initial implementation phase in selected Gram Panchayats, a comprehensive module on operationalizing PESA will be developed. This module will draw on practical insights and lessons learned during the pilot implementation, providing a detailed, step-by-step guide for expanding PESA to all schedule Five areas. Designed as a foundational resource, the module will cover key processes, best practices, and strategies for community engagement, governance, and compliance with PESA provisions. This guiding document will serve as a module for training CRP and act as a tool for policymakers, state officials, and local leaders, facilitating consistent and effective scaling of PESA across diverse contexts to ensure the successful empowerment of tribal communities and robust self-governance.

G. Handholding for Scaling Up (2 months): In collaboration with Living Landscapes and Common Ground partners, CRISP will provide continuous support throughout the PESA implementation phase. This ongoing handholding will involve regular check-ins with stakeholders, conducting troubleshooting sessions to address any challenges promptly, and providing additional training to ensure effective implementation. CRISP will closely monitor the process, ensuring the strategies are effectively implemented and making timely adjustments where necessary. By working closely with the respective state governments, CRISP will help to facilitate access to support and resources required by Gram Sabhas, Panchayat representatives, and community organisations.

Key Deliverables

- A. Comprehensive Desk Study Report:** A detailed document analyzing existing guidelines, acts, and rules related to PESA from the Government of India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and the state governments of Odisha and Jharkhand.
- B. Consultation Summary Report:** Documentation of insights from consultative meetings with stakeholders, including community leaders, government officers, NGOs, and other relevant participants.
- C. Revised PESA Guidelines Proposal:** Drafted improvements and suggested refinements to the state PESA guidelines based on local needs and socio-cultural contexts.
- D. Implementation Action Plan:** Action Plan on operationalising PESA in the selected Gram Panchayats will be prepared
- E. Operationalizing PESA Module:** A comprehensive instructional module on PESA, covering processes, best practices, and community engagement strategies.
- F. Continuous Support Plan:** An ongoing support structure detailing regular check-ins, monitoring, and problem-solving sessions with stakeholders.

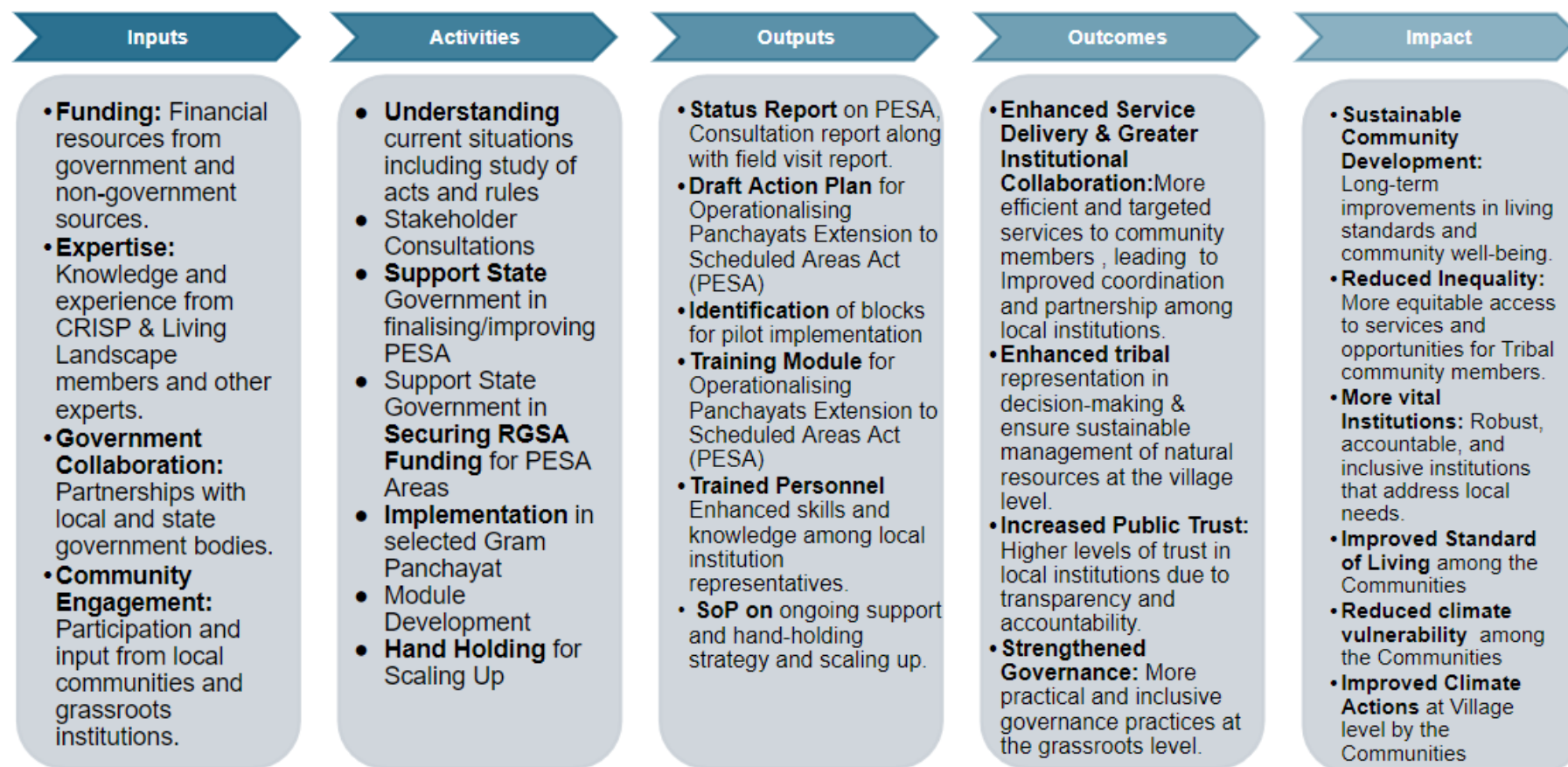
Timeline for Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)

Project Name:	Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)											
Key Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
I. Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)												
a. Understanding current situations including study of acts and rules (1 month)												
b. Stakeholder Consultations (2 month)												
c. Support State Government in finalising/improving PESA (1 month)												
d. Support State Government in Securing RGSA Funding for PESA Areas(1 month)												
e. Implementation in selected Gram Panchayat (3 months)												
f. Module Development (2 months)												
g. Handholding for Scaling Up (2 months)												
II. Key Deliverables												
a. Comprehensive Desk Study Report												
b. Consultation Summary Report												
c. Revised PESA Guidelines Proposal												
d. Implementation Action Plan												
e. Operationalizing PESA Module												
f. Documentation for Scaling Up												

*Timeline is tentative and may subject to change based on department support

Theory of Change for Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)

Theory of change of GIST (Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA))



3. Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act

Another component of GIST focuses on enhancing the quality of implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to empower tribal communities in Odisha and Jharkhand. This will focus on empowering communities to get individual and community rights over their inhabited forests areas and supporting the state governments in improving the process of FRA filing. CRISP along with Living Landscapes and Common Grounds partners will wholeheartedly work towards enhanced implementation of FRA but state level inputs and support will determine timely implementation of the initiative.

Forest Rights Act (FRA):

FRA liberates tribal communities and augments forest conservation by ensuring food security and livelihoods. It provides individual rights for self-cultivation and habitation, community rights for grazing fishing, access to water bodies in forests, habitat rights for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), access to biodiversity, community rights to intellectual property and traditional knowledge, recognition of conventional customary rights, and the right to protect, regenerate, or manage any community forest resource for sustainable use.

A. Study of the existing framework (2 months): With support from Living Landscapes (Common Ground), CRISP will lead a comprehensive desk study to analyse existing guidelines and frameworks related to implementing FRA. The study will identify key components of the existing framework, assess its effectiveness in empowering tribal communities, and highlight gaps or inconsistencies that may impact the act's on-ground application. It will also analyse reports of public agencies, academic institutions and Civil Society Organisations along with articles on the subject. Insights gained from this analysis will inform recommendations for strengthening the FRA's role in enhancing tribal rights and sustainable resource management.

B. Training Community Resource Persons (2 months): A structured training program will be conducted to equip Community Resource Persons (CRPs) with the necessary knowledge and skills for effectively supporting the filing of rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and navigating associated processes. This training will cover essential aspects such as understanding FRA provisions, rights claim filing procedures, documentation

requirements, and methods for assisting community members in preparing and submitting accurate applications. Additionally, CRPs will be trained in community engagement techniques to raise awareness of FRA rights and empower local populations to actively participate in securing their legal entitlements.

C. Draft Action Plan on Pilot Implementation (2 months): CRISP along with Living Landscapes will prepare a detailed draft action plan for the pilot implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), drawing insights from prior desk and field studies. This action plan will outline strategies for collaboration with the Tribal Department and the Panchayati Raj Department to establish joint guidelines that enhance coordination and streamline FRA processes. The plan will detail steps for effective inter-departmental cooperation and outline roles and responsibilities to ensure cohesive implementation. Additionally, the action plan will emphasize the role of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in building awareness within communities, guiding rights claim processes, and providing ongoing support to applicants. CRPs will be essential in mobilizing local participation, addressing concerns, and fostering a supportive environment for successful FRA implementation at the grassroots level.

D. Write shop with Key Stakeholders (2 months): To refine strategies and build consensus on strengthening FRA implementation, CRISP will facilitate a write shop in the respective states, involving all critical stakeholders led by Mr S.M. Vijayanand I.A.S (Retd). This write shop will focus on ecology and managing common resources, exploring possibilities and modalities for effective FRA implementation. The respective government departments will actively participate in this initiative. By combining insights and experiences from various stakeholders, the write-shop aims to form a solid foundation for future actions. CRISP's role is to facilitate the write shop, ensuring that the collective knowledge and perspectives contribute to a cohesive and actionable plan for empowering tribal communities through enhanced coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders.

E. Module Development(2 months): A comprehensive training module will be created, incorporating insights and lessons learned from the pilot implementation and the writeshop with key stakeholders. This module will serve as a practical guide, detailing the processes, best practices, and strategies identified during the pilot phase to streamline and support effective FRA implementation. It will cover key topics such as rights claim filing, community engagement techniques, documentation requirements, and troubleshooting

common challenges. The module aims to enhance understanding and provide step-by-step instructions to facilitate the wider application of FRA processes across additional areas.

Key Deliverables:

- A. Status Report on FRA implementation(2 month):** A comprehensive status report will be prepared to assess the current implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA). This report will evaluate the progress and effectiveness of FRA processes in targeted areas, examining key indicators such as the number of claims filed and recognized, challenges faced by tribal communities, and the effectiveness of local governance structures in supporting the FRA. The report will also identify gaps in implementation, highlighting areas where additional resources or training may be needed to ensure that tribal communities fully realize their rights under the FRA.
- B. Training Module for CRPs (2 month):** A specialized training module will be developed to equip Community Resource Persons (CRPs) with the necessary skills and knowledge to assist in FRA implementation. This module will cover crucial areas, including the legal provisions of the FRA, procedures for claim filing, requirements for supporting documentation, and methods for assisting community members in understanding and exercising their rights. Additionally, it will include strategies for effective community engagement and troubleshooting common issues CRPs may encounter, enabling them to provide ongoing, informed support to claimants.
- C. Pilot Plan (2 month):** A detailed plan for pilot implementation of the FRA will be developed, leveraging insights from status assessments and stakeholder consultations. This plan will outline targeted steps for initiating FRA processes in selected areas, focusing on inter-departmental collaboration between tribal and local governance bodies. The pilot plan will designate roles for Community Resource Persons (CRPs), detail coordination protocols, and provide a timeline for specific activities, such as awareness-building sessions, claim submissions, and preliminary reviews. The pilot is intended to serve as a proof of concept, establishing effective practices that can inform broader FRA implementation strategies.
- D. Module for Scaling Up (2 month):** Based on findings from the pilot, a scalable module will be developed to guide the broader application of FRA processes across additional

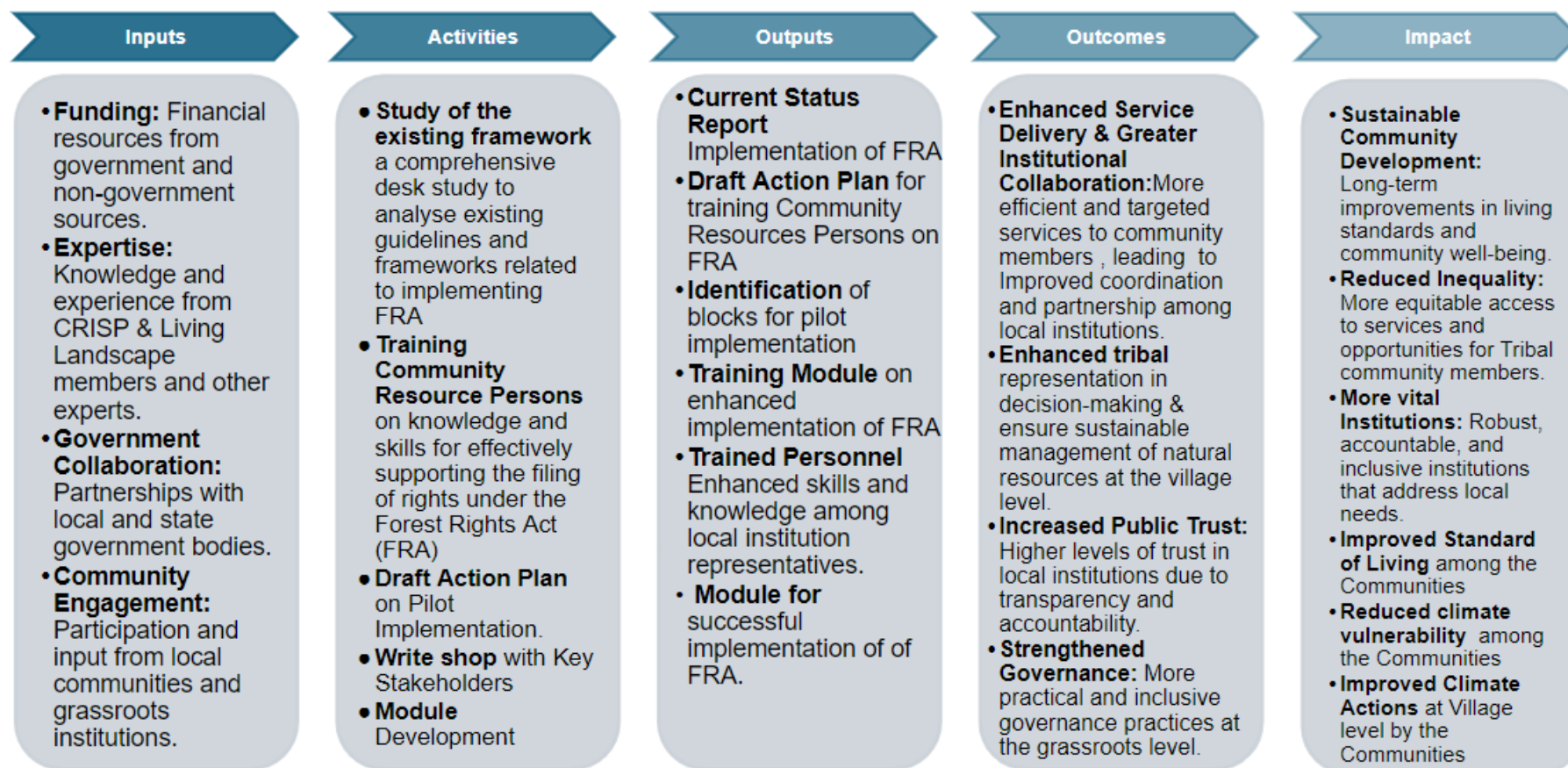
areas. This module will include comprehensive guidelines on expanding the framework, covering aspects such as large-scale training of CRPs, streamlined coordination protocols for local authorities, and resource management strategies to support a wider rollout. Designed for use by policymakers, local authorities, and community leaders, this module will provide a blueprint for effectively scaling FRA implementation, ensuring that the process remains consistent, inclusive, and aligned with the Act’s objectives for tribal rights and sustainable resource management.

Timeline for Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act

Project Name:	Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act											
Key Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
I. Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act												
a. Study of the existing framework (2 month)												
b. Training Community Resource Persons (2 month)												
c. Draft Action Plan on Pilot Implementation (2 month)												
d. Write shop with Key Stakeholders (2 months)												
e. Module Development (2 months)												
II. Key Deliverables												
a. Status Report on FRA implementation(2 month)												
b. Training Module for CRPs (2 month)												
c. Pilot Plan (2 month)												
d. Module for Scaling Up (2 month)												
*Timeline is tentative and may subject to change based on department support												

Theory of Change for Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act

Theory of change of GIST (Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act)



4. Planning for identifying, protecting, and regenerating Commons

Protecting commons at the village level is crucial for sustaining rural livelihoods and promoting environmental stewardship. Commons, such as grazing lands, forests, water bodies, and community resources, provide essential services like fodder, fuel, water, and agricultural inputs to local communities. They are often a lifeline for marginalized groups who rely on these shared resources for survival. By ensuring the protection and sustainable management of commons, villages can prevent resource depletion, reduce conflicts, and foster equitable access for all. Moreover, preserving these areas contributes to biodiversity conservation, supports climate resilience, and strengthens community cohesion, promoting long-term socio-economic well-being.

A. Review of Existing Programs and Financial Flows, and its provisions around community resources (1 month):

CRISP will undertake a comprehensive review of the existing laws and regulations governing the usage of common resources across all states. In addition, a separate, in-depth study will be conducted focusing specifically on the PESA and FRA areas, examining the provisions of schemes that support the work of commons and its implications for the management of commons. This will also include studying good practices by government and Civil Society Organisations in managing Commons.

B. Field Visits for Identification of Implementation Challenges(1 month):

CRISP will conduct field visits to understand the ground-level situation concerning the usage of common resources. These visits will also facilitate interactions with state and district-level authorities to assess the local implementation of relevant acts. The consultations will explore challenges faced in the practical implementation of PESA and FRA and evaluate the awareness and understanding of the legal framework among community members.

Key Focus Areas for Discussion:

1. Planning for landscape-level Natural Resource Management: Discussions will explore how to align the provisions of PESA and FRA for the effective management of forest and common lands.

2. Mapping the execution barriers and programmatic opportunities for conservation and management of commons: Identifying strategies to strengthen the role of Gram Sabhas in local decision-making processes.
3. Role of Institutions and landscape level actors for inclusive planning and management of conservation and restoration action: Assessing the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in supporting community-level initiatives under PESA and FRA.
4. CRISP and Living Landscapes will support the government in Developing Monitoring systems at GP, Block and District level.

Based on these field visits, CRISP will finalize a detailed field report and an action plan for pilot implementation, identifying specific areas for the testing proof of concept.

C. Testing proof of concept in Selected Gram Panchayats(4 months):

The pilot project will be executed in the selected Gram Panchayats to test the proposed models of resource management and governance.

D. Study of existing schemes and provisions, with identified mechanisms to manage and govern commons (1 month):

CRISP, in consultation with Living Landscape, will conduct a study focusing on the legal procedures related to evictions and the removal of unauthorized encroachments on forest and common lands, as outlined under PESA and FRA. This study will aim to establish clear procedures for managing encroachments while protecting community land rights. Additionally, CRISP will facilitate workshops at the Gram Panchayat level to educate stakeholders about legal procedures and protections for tribal and forest-dwelling communities.

E. Developing Planning Systems(2 months): Establishing robust and participatory planning systems is crucial and it involves creating structured frameworks that enable local institutions, such as Panchayats and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), to engage in effective planning processes. These systems should be inclusive, taking into account the needs of marginalized communities, and be grounded in ecological and social sustainability principles. The planning systems should also incorporate a data-driven approach, integrating local knowledge with expert inputs to design actionable plans for the management of natural resources, sustainable livelihoods, and the protection of Commons.

F. Focus on Execution Gaps: While planning is essential, identifying and addressing execution gaps is equally important. These gaps often arise due to limited capacity, resource constraints, or insufficient coordination among stakeholders. By focusing on closing these gaps, the project can ensure that plans are not only developed but also effectively implemented. This requires targeted interventions such as capacity-building initiatives for local actors, resource allocation strategies, and tools to streamline execution. Addressing execution gaps also involves continuous feedback loops, where challenges are identified early and corrective actions are taken promptly.

G. Role of Actors: A key to the success of the project lies in the coordination and collaboration between various institutions involved in managing Commons. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), CBOs, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and knowledge institutions all have specific roles in the process. SHGs and CBOs, being grassroots organisations, can facilitate community involvement and local governance. NGOs can bring in expertise, resources, and additional capacity for project implementation, while knowledge institutions can offer research, data, and technical assistance for evidence-based decision-making. Creating strong linkages between these institutions will ensure a holistic approach to managing natural resources and Commons, fostering synergy and reducing duplication of efforts.

H. Generating Constructive Community Action through SHGs and MGNREGA for Land Protection (1 month):

CRISP along with Living Landscapes will develop a plan of action and standard operating procedures (SoP) for engaging SHGs and utilizing funds from various schemes including MGNREGA funds to protect tribal lands and promote regeneration efforts. This initiative will focus on the restoration of ecologically fragile or degraded lands through the integration of PESA, FRA, SHGs, and MGNREGA.

- a) Leveraging Schemes for sustainable land use: MGNREGA funds will be leveraged to support land protection and ecological regeneration activities. Other schemes such as Utkarsh Gram Abhiyan, Finance Commission grants, RKVY, and Agro-forestry initiatives will be studied to explore potential convergence towards the protection of Commons. The aim is to create an umbrella mechanism that brings together these schemes with a focus on Commons and sustainable rural development hence generating employment for local communities while promoting sustainable resource management

- b) **Role of SHGs:** SHGs will play a crucial role in the implementation and monitoring of these activities, ensuring that the interests of women and vulnerable groups are represented in decision-making.
- c) **Action Plan for Regeneration:** A detailed action plan will be developed for regenerating selected areas, combining traditional knowledge and practices with scientific methods.
- d) **Identification of Blocks for Regeneration:** Specific blocks within the selected Gram Panchayats will be identified for ecological restoration, focusing on areas most in need of intervention.

I. Ongoing Support and Handholding for Commons Regeneration (1 month):

Continuous support will be provided throughout the implementation phase, including regular check-ins, troubleshooting, and additional training as needed. This support will be led by CRISP, in partnership with Living Landscapes (Common Ground) and other NGOs, alongside government collaboration. CRISP will closely monitor the process to ensure effective implementation and make timely adjustments as necessary.

J. Documentation and Scaling Up Recommendations (1 month):

In preparation for scaling up the initiative across other regions, CRISP will compile detailed documentation of insights, learnings, and standard operating procedures (SoP) to share with key stakeholders. A training module on implementation and legal procedures will also be developed for SIRDs and RIRDs to ensure smooth scaling and replication of the project.

K. Monitoring: A comprehensive monitoring system should be in place to track both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the interventions. This includes regular assessments of the project's impact on livelihoods, ecological sustainability, and institutional strengthening. Monitoring should also involve community-based mechanisms to enable local stakeholders to take ownership of the process, ensuring transparency and accountability. The state government should take the initiative to establish the same with support from CRISP and Living Landscapes.

Key Deliverables:

A. Consultation report on Convergence, Collaboration and Challenges faced by GP/PESA level stakeholders(1 month): A summary report detailing the insights and

outcomes of the initial consultation meeting with relevant officers and stakeholders. Encompassing Resource Management GP/PESA level, Empowerment of Gram Sabhas & Role of SHGs in contributing to community level initiatives and the correlation between PESA and FRA towards protecting of commons. This report will give detailed areas of convergence & collaboration and the gaps that need immediate attention from the key stakeholders.

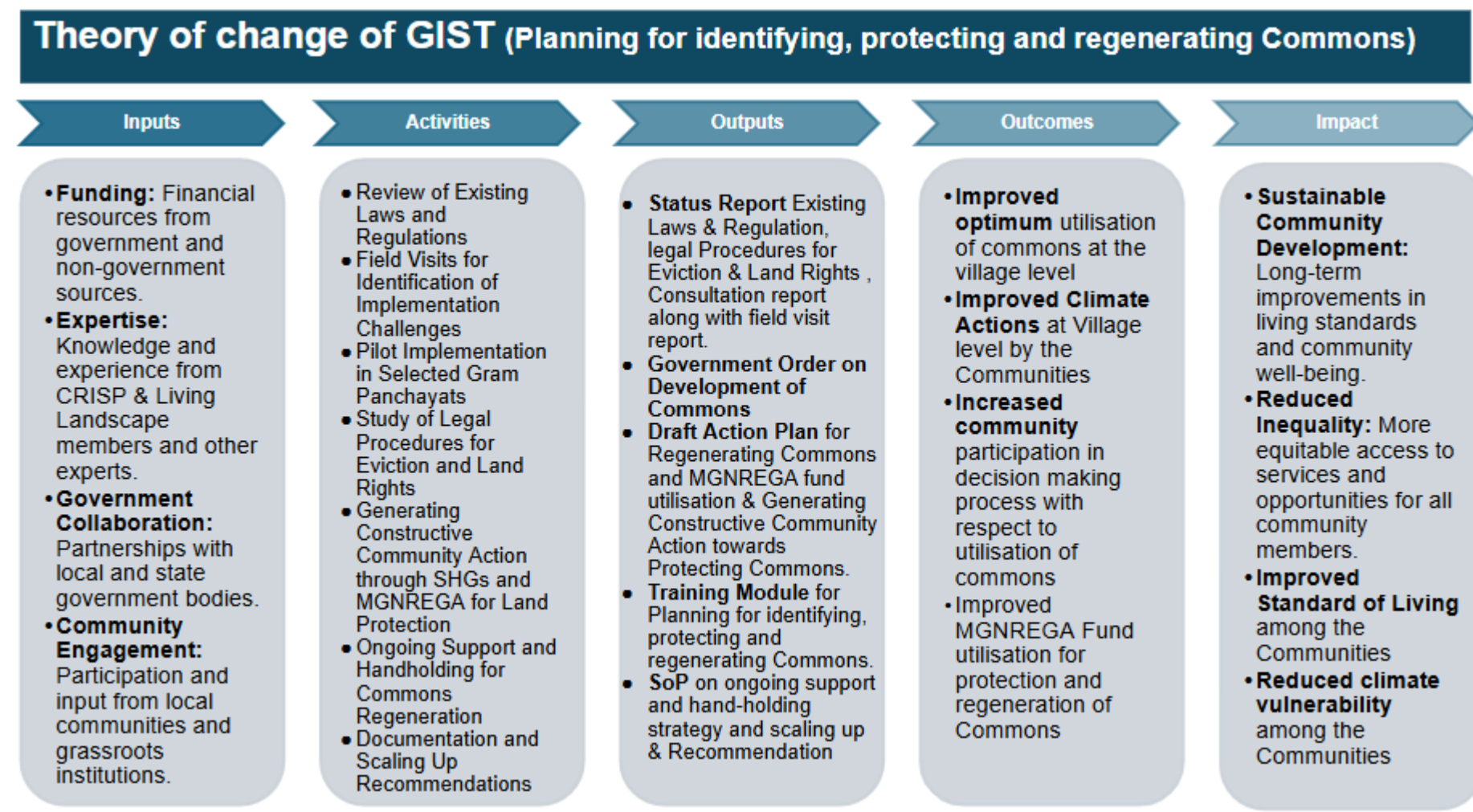
- B. Report on selected Blocks for implementation (1 month):** The report will capture the current dynamics between various regulations and identify areas for implementing the pilot after assessing the legal framework, clarity and implementation challenges.
- C. Pilot Implementation Plan (1 month):** A strategic plan for implementing collaboration initiatives in selected Gram Panchayats, including specific goals, methods, and expected outcomes. This plan will serve as a testbed for real-world adjustments.
- D. Study Summary on Legal Procedures for Eviction and Land Rights (1 month):**
A comprehensive summary of protection mechanisms provided under PESA and FRA for the communities to take constructive action against common land encroachment and community land usage rights. The summary will be prepared incorporating the feedback of community members and further it will be keeping in mind the interest of the poorest of the poor.
- E. SoP How to leverage available funds under different schemes 1 month):** To protect and promote land regeneration activities. This SoP will lay down roadmap for the utilisation of different funds such as MGNREGA Fund and the role of SHG in streamlining the activities in collaboration with GP at the grassroots level.
- F. Ongoing Support and Handholding Strategy(1month):** A plan outlining continuous handholding support throughout the implementation phase, including regular check-ins, troubleshooting sessions, and additional training as needed.
- G. Documentation for Scaling Up (1 month):** A comprehensive document capturing the pilot implementation phase's learnings, challenges, and successes. This document will form the basis for scaling up the collaboration model to other Gram Panchayats and include a plan for developing training modules to be used by SIRD and RIRDs.

Timeline for Planning for identifying, protecting and regenerating commons

Project Name:	Planning for identifying, protecting and regenerating Commons											
Key Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
I. Planning for identifying, protecting and regenerating Commons												
a. Review of Existing Laws and Regulations												
b. Field Visits for Identification of Implementation Challenges												
c. Pilot Implementation in Selected Gram Panchayats												
d. Study of Legal Procedures for Eviction and Land Rights												
e. Generating Constructive Community Action through SHGs and MGNREGA for Land Protection												
f. Ongoing Support and Handholding for Commons Regeneration												
g. Documentation and Scaling Up Recommendations												
II. Key Deliverables												
a. Consultation report on Convergence, Collaboration and Challenges faced by GP/PESA level stakeholders												
b. Report on selected Blocks for implementation												
c. Pilot Implementation Plan												
d. Study Summary on Legal Procedures for Eviction and Land Rights												
e. SoP How To Engage SHG and MGNREGA funds												
f. Ongoing Support and Handholding Strategy												
g. Documentation for Scaling Up												

*Timeline is tentative and may subject to change based on department support

Theory of Change for Planning for Identifying, Protecting and Regenerating Commons



5. Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Localising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring a community-based approach for the timely realisation of SDGs in the villages. This will be achieved by building capacities of the communities led by Gram Panchayat, working along with the SHGs and other CBOs. This would be supported by the Higher Educational Institutions that adopt villages for this purpose (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan), Focused Block Initiatives, and other institutions at the village level.

The following are the implementation steps:

- A. Studying Existing Guidelines on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (1 month):** Guidelines issued by the Government of India, respective state governments, and other States to effectively tailor the SDGs to local contexts will be studied by CRISP. Additionally, CRISP will assess how these guidelines are being implemented and adapted to local conditions in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The study will also include an assessment of the current implementation status of SDGs in the respective states by studying the existing structures for implementation to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- B. Consultative Meeting with Relevant Stakeholders (1 month):** A consultation meeting with officers, community leaders, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders will be held to understand current initiatives related to the localisation of SDGs and to gather diverse perspectives on the needs and challenges in this area.
- C. Field Visits for Ground Situation (1 month):** Field visits will be conducted in different regions following the consultative meeting to assess the on-ground situation. These visits are crucial for understanding the local context, identifying specific challenges, and evaluating the current status of SDG implementation at the grassroots level.
- D. LSDG Report with an action plan (1 month):** A draft report that combines insights from both desk research and the field study, will be prepared which outlines the findings, highlight gaps in current efforts, and propose initial recommendations for effective SDG localisation. The recommendations shall focus on fostering multi-stakeholder processes, Convergence Planning for Targeting Multiple SDGs, resource mapping and planning and unlocking different sources of financing such as public

financing, private investments, CSR and philanthropy, within respective states. Furthermore, the report will include an action plan on how CRISP will implement the localised SDG framework in selected village panchayats, addressing the identified bottlenecks and challenges.

- E. Consultation with stakeholders on the Action Plan (1 month):** Consultation will be held with all stakeholders in the respective states to review the draft report, and to gather feedback, refine strategies, build consensus on the recommendations, and refine the proposed action plan for implementation. CRISP will finalise the report based on the feedback gathered which will serve as a detailed guide for the localisation of SDGs, with actionable and context-specific strategies.
- F. Pilot Implementation in Selected Panchayats (4 months):** In collaboration with the respective state governments, CRISP will identify Gram Panchayats for the initial implementation of localised SDGs, with the exact number to be discussed and decided with each state government. This pilot phase is essential to test the strategies in a controlled environment, allowing for adjustments based on real-world experiences. Additionally, where successful partnership learnings are available, GIST will directly support the respective governments in implementing strategies with a well-established understanding and proven success. The CRISP team will implement this with Living Landscapes and Common Ground partners working in the field.
- G. Workshops for Implementation and Skill Enhancement (2 months):** CRISP and Common Ground partners shall support the State authorities to organize workshops to provide implementation guidance and skill enhancement towards the localisation of SDGs to relevant stakeholders. This will ensure that multiple stakeholders can collaborate and manage their joint initiatives effectively. These workshops will be undertaken by the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and Regional Institute of Rural Development (RIRD), with support from CRISP and **Common Ground** partners.
- H. Ongoing Support and Handholding for Localization of SDGs (2 months):** Provide continuous handholding support throughout the implementation phase of the localised SDGs, which could involve regular check-ins, troubleshooting sessions, and additional training as needed. This support will be provided mainly by CRISP, Living Landscapes and Common Ground partners, with support from the respective government departments. CRISP will closely monitor the process to ensure effective implementation and timely adjustments.

- I. Documentation and Scaling Up (1 month):** CRISP will document the learnings, challenges, and successes from the pilot implementation of localised SDGs. Based on these insights, a plan will be developed for scaling up the localisation model to other Gram Panchayats in the state. This plan will include the development of various training modules for training programs, which can be conducted through the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and the Regional Institute of Rural Development (RIRD).
- J. Implementation Workshops, Support, and Evaluation (1 month):** This entails conducting workshops focused on the implementation phase in the pilot panchayats, offering guidance and support, and facilitating knowledge sharing and problem-solving. Additionally, establishing a robust system for monitoring and evaluating these initiatives is crucial. Based on the outcomes, strategies will be fine-tuned for broader application across other panchayats. CRISP and Living Landscapes will facilitate cross-learning across the four states for stakeholders involved at various levels such as panchayats, blocks, districts and the state.

Key Deliverables:

- A. Status Report on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (1 month):** This document will present a detailed analysis of the existing guidelines from the Government of India and other state governments; the report will assess how these guidelines are being implemented and adapted to local contexts in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- B. Consultative Meeting Report (1 month):** A summary of the consultative meeting with stakeholders, highlighting key insights and perspectives on localising SDGs.
- C. Field Visit Findings (1 month):** A report on the ground situation from field visits, identifying challenges and current implementation status of SDGs at the grassroots level.
- D. Draft Report on SDG Localization (1 month):** A comprehensive draft report outlining findings, gaps, and initial recommendations for effective SDG localisation.
- E. Workshop Feedback Summary (1 month):** A compilation of feedback and suggestions from workshops reviewing the draft report.
- F. Finalised Localization Strategy (1 month):** The final report with detailed, actionable strategies for SDG localisation, refined with workshop inputs.

- G. Pilot Implementation Plan (1 month):** A strategy document detailing the approach and expected outcomes for the pilot implementation in selected Gram Panchayats and a review of models and plans for further training is included.
- H. Implementation Workshop Materials (2 months):** Resources and guidelines developed for workshops to support stakeholders during the implementation phase.
- I. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (3 months):** A framework for tracking the progress and effectiveness of the pilot initiatives, with indicators for scaling up successful practices, needs to be developed. It is suggested that the governments develop a block-level monitoring dashboard to track progress.

Timeline for Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals

Project Name:	Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals											
Key Activities	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
I. Localisation of SDGs												
a. Studying Existing Guidelines on Localisation of SDGs (1 month)												
b. Consultative meeting with relevant stakeholders(1 month)												
c. Field Visit for ground situation(1 month)												
d. Field LSDG Report with an Action Plan(1 month)												
e. Consultation with stakeholders on the Action Plan(1 month)												
f. Pilot Implementation in Selected Panchayats(4 months)												
g. Workshops for Implementation and Skill Enhancement(2 months)												
h. Ongoing Support and Handholding for Localization of SDGs(2 month)												
i. Documentation and Scaling Up(1 month)												
j. Implementation Workshops, Support, and Evaluation(1 month)												
II. Key Deliverables												
a. Status Report on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (1 month)												
b. Consultative Meeting Report(1 month)												
c. Field Visit Findings(1 month)												
d. Draft Report on SDG Localization(1 month)												
e. Workshop Feedback Summary(1 month)												
f. Finalized Localization Strategy(1 month)												
g. Pilot Implementation Plan(1 month)												
h. Implementation Workshop Materials(2 month)												
i. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework(3 month)												

*Timeline is tentative and may subject to change based on department support

Theory of Change for Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals

