



# GUIDANCE NOTE ON ENGAGEMENT OF SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR O&M OF FSSM PLANTS





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## Introduction

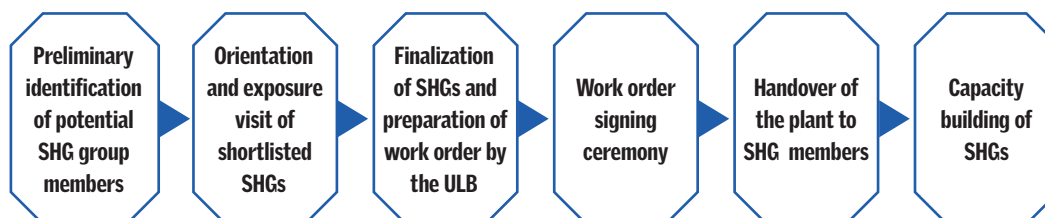
The AMRUT Mitra initiative—a collaboration between AMRUT and DAY-NULM—was launched in March 2024 across India to empower self-help groups (SHGs) financially and socially by involving them in water management projects. Under this initiative, the Government of Uttar Pradesh implemented 87 projects, with an investment of Rs 794.71 lakh, engaging 804 women. Of these 87 projects, four were related to the operation and maintenance (O&M) of faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTPs), while the remaining focused on testing drinking water quality. The four cities—Sitapur, Khurja, Raebareli, and Jaunpur—allocated Rs 34 lakh for engaging 16 SHG women, with four women per city. Engaging SHGs in these four cities was a valuable first-hand experience for all the stakeholders involved. Certain gaps were identified (refer to *Annexure A*) during the pilot engagement, highlighting further scope of engagement of SHGs in the O&M of FSTPs and co-treatment plants in Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, CSE has developed this guidance note to streamline the process of engaging SHGs in other potential areas.

## Aim

The document aims to support the Urban Development Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh in engaging SHG women for O&M of FSTP and co-treatment plants, drawing from the experience of the four pilot cities to ensure a streamlined and fast-tracked process.

## Recommendations for streamlining selection and onboarding of SHG member for O&M of FSSM plants

Based on the experience of onboarding SHG members in four cities, CSE proposes a six-step process outlining the roles and responsibilities of concerned stakeholders.

**Figure 1: Steps for onboarding SHG members****Table 1: Detailed steps for onboarding SHG members**

Steps	Activity	Responsibility	Location	Timeline
1.	<p><b>Identification of potential SHG members</b>  <b>Objective:</b> To identify and select self-help groups (SHGs) that meet the specified criteria (refer to Annexure B) for effective engagement in the operation and maintenance of FSTP and co-treatment plants.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> A list of selected SHGs from all active groups in the city that meet the given criteria, ensuring they are well-equipped and prepared for their roles in FSTPs and co-treatment plants.</p>	DUDA in collaboration with ULB and NGO	DUDA office	2 weeks
2.	<p><b>Orientation and exposure visit of shortlisted SHGs</b>  <b>Objective:</b> To provide SHG members with a comprehensive understanding of the treatment plant's operations, the scope of their work, and to assess the feasibility of their engagement based on the plant's location and work requirements.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> Based on the orientation and exposure visit, SHG members will gain a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities, relevance of the treatment plant, as well as the feasibility of their commute. This will allow DUDA and ULB to shortlist and finalize the members for onboarding based on their responses and suitability.</p>	DUDA and ULB	FSTP/ co-treatment plant	2 weeks
3.	<p><b>Finalization of SHG members and preparation of work order by the ULB</b>  <b>Objective:</b> To finalize the selected SHG members and prepare a work order that outlines their roles, responsibilities, and terms of engagement for FSTPs and co-treatment plants. Each work order will be issued to an individual member.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> A well-prepared work order with all necessary details of the finalized SHG members, ensuring clarity on their roles and responsibilities, facilitating smooth onboarding and engagement in the FSTPs and co-treatment plants.</p>	ULB and DUDA	ULB office	1 week

Steps	Activity	Responsibility	Location	Timeline
4.	<p><b>Work order signing ceremony</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To formally finalize the engagement of SHG members through an official signing event, ensuring transparency and mutual agreement on terms and conditions outlined in the work order.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> A formalized and transparent agreement between DUDA, ULB and the SHG members, with each party signing and receiving their copy of the work order, ensuring a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.</p>	ULB and DUDA, SHG members	ULB office	1 week
5.	<p><b>Handover of the plant to SHG members</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To ensure a smooth and well-documented handover process, providing SHG members with clear information, including details of the modules addressed to the supervisor, nodal contacts for reference, working hours, and the commencement date of work for effective plant management.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> A formally documented handover, with SHG members receiving all necessary information and equipment, ensuring they are well-prepared for their roles in managing the treatment plant.</p>	ULB and DUDA	FSTP/ co-treatment plant	1 week
6.	<p><b>Capacity building of SHGs</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To equip SHG members with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective operation and maintenance of the treatment plant. The training would cover in-depth details of the technology-specific treatment processes for FSTPs and co-treatment plants.</p> <p><b>Result:</b> SHG members will gain a thorough understanding of module-specific O&amp;M processes for the treatment plant. This training will be reinforced periodically—every six months or as required—to ensure sustained efficiency in plant operations.</p>	Technical partner organization/ ULB	Plant/other training hall in the city or state	1–3 days

## Annexure A

### Recommendations for engagement of SHG members based on identified gaps

CSE actively participated during the onboarding process of SHG members in March 2024. During this phase, CSE engaged in multiple interactions with SHG members, providing them with necessary training and inputs. Insights gathered from these visits have culminated in the following observations:

Components related to engagement of SHGs	Gaps and recommendations
Eligibility check of SHGs	<p><b>Gap:</b> According to AMRUT Mitra guidelines, at least one member of the SHG should have completed 8th grade and possess digital literacy. However, this criterion has not been adhered to in all cities. In one city, all the women engaged are below the 8th-grade education level.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> For the role of supervisor in the O&amp;M of FSTPs, the candidate must have completed at least 12th grade. For other positions, candidates should have a minimum education level of 8th grade and the ability to read and write in Hindi.</p>
Work order period of engagement with renewal details	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work orders do not mention the total period of engagement for SHG members or the conditions for work order renewal.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> It is imperative that work order mentions the total period of engagement along with the conditions of renewal of the work order.</p>
Number of leaves	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work order does not provide information on national and state holidays. This has led to unintended salary deductions as employees are unaware of the designated holidays.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> A clause on national and state holidays should be included in the work order for better clarity on availing the holidays and total number of working days in a year.</p>
Expected salaries of SHGs	<p><b>Gap:</b> The daily allowance for supervisors is Rs 450, while for other members, it is Rs 360. However, in some cities, the work orders incorrectly state Rs 360 for all group members.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The work order must clearly specify the daily allowance for supervisors and AMRUT Mitra members as Rs 450 and Rs 360, respectively, as per the AMRUT Mitra initiative. In case the daily allowance is revised in future, the revised amount should be reflected in the work order.</p> <p>If ULB intends to engage SHGs in future using its own fund, it may opt for a monthly honorarium instead of a daily allowance. This will help in reducing incidences of payment delays.</p>
Scope of work with designations of each SHG member engaged	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work orders do not specify separate roles and responsibilities for supervisors and AMRUT Mitra members.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Roles and responsibilities along with designations of SHG members should be mentioned in the scope of work. Suggestively, designations of women SHG members should be specified, including a supervisor, two sanitation workers and a gardener, ensuring clarity in responsibilities. Additionally, the work order must add a clause on performance checks as per AMRUT Mitra guidelines.</p>

Components related to engagement of SHGs	Gaps and recommendations
Name and designation of the women engaged and capacity of the treatment plant	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work orders do not specify the names and designations of the women engaged in relation to the name and capacity of the treatment plant.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The work order should mention the treatment plant's capacity along with the names and designations of the women engaged in its operation and maintenance.</p>
Working hours of SHG	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work orders do not mention the number of working hours, including start and end times for the day.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> The work order should clearly define the daily working hours, including start and end times.</p>
Training and capacity building	<p><b>Gap:</b> The current work orders do not include any information regarding technical training related to operation and maintenance.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> A clause on training should be included in the work order to ensure that all engaged women members attend O&amp;M-related training. Attendance should be considered as an indicator for performance evaluation.</p>
Lack of operation and maintenance guide	<p><b>Gap:</b> Currently, there is no standard operating procedure (SOP) provided to the SHGs for operation and maintenance of the FSTPs. They rely on handouts and training sessions.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> SHGs should be provided with a standard operating procedure (SOP) to perform daily operations and maintenance.</p>

## Annexure B

### Criteria for selection of SHG

SHGs can be invited based on the minimum selection criteria outlined below. For further screening and selection of suitable members, criteria for further screening could be applied.

#### Minimum selection criteria:

As per AMRUT Mitra guidelines, SHG must also fulfill the following requirements:

- i. At least one member of the SHG should have completed 8th grade and be digitally literate.
- ii. The SHG must be already registered under the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) and adhere to the Panchsutra or the five cardinal principles—regular meetings, regular savings, internal lending, regular repayment and book-keeping.
- iii. All SHG members must have an active bank account.
- iv. Members must not have any criminal or anti-social track record.
- v. Preference will be given to SHGs operating in wards near the treatment plant location.

**Criteria for further screening:**

1. SHG members should be well-established for more than two years, associated with the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA), with a proven track record in community activities.
2. All SHG members must have at least an 8th-grade education, while supervisors must have completed 12th grade. It is preferable for all members to be able to read, write, and speak Hindi.
3. Preference will be given to SHGs with prior experience in sanitation-related activities.







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