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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
(2025-26)**

**EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF PLANNING**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
2026-27**

**THIRTY- FOURTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***March, 2026/ Phalguna, 1947 (Saka)***

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(2026-27)**

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 17 March, 2026*

*Laid in Rajya Sabha on 17 March, 2026*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*March, 2026/ Phalguna, 1947 (Saka)*

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## **COMPOSITION OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (2025-26)**

**Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab - Chairperson**

### **MEMBERS**

#### **LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Arun Bharti
3. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
4. Shri Rajesh Naranbhai Chudasama
5. Shri Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu
6. Shri Gaurav Gogoi
7. Shri K. Gopinath
8. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
9. Shri Kishori Lal
10. Shri Harendra Singh Malik
11. Thiru Arun Nehru
12. Shri N. K. Premachandran
13. Dr. C. M. Ramesh
14. Smt. Sandhya Ray
15. Prof. Sougata Ray
16. Shri P. V. Midhun Reddy
17. Dr. Jayanta Kumar Roy
18. Dr. K. Sudhakar
19. Shri Manish Tewari
20. Shri Balashowry Vallabhaneni
21. Shri Prabhakar Reddy Vemireddy

#### **RAJYA SABHA**

22. Shri P. Chidambaram
23. Shri Narain Dass Gupta
24. Shri Praful Patel
25. Shri Yerram Venkata Subba Reddy
26. Shri S. Selvaganabathy
27. Shri Sanjay Seth
28. Dr. Dinesh Sharma
29. Smt. Darshana Singh
30. Dr. M. Thambidurai
31. Shri Pramod Tiwari

#### **SECRETARIAT**

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Shri Gaurav Goyal          | Joint Secretary   |
| 2. Smt. Bharti Sanjeev Tuteja | Director          |
| 3. Shri Kuldeep Singh Rana    | Deputy Secretary  |
| 4. Ms. Vandana                | Committee Officer |

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, of the Standing Committee on Finance, having been authorised by the Committee, present this Thirty-Fourth Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants (2026-27)' of the Ministry of Planning.

2. The Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Planning have been examined by the Committee under Rule Section 331E(1)(a) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

3. The Committee took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Planning on 19 February, 2026. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Ministry of Planning for appearing before the Committee and furnishing the material and information which the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants (2026-27).

4. The Committee considered and adopted this Report at their Sitting held on 13 March 2026.

5. For facility of reference, the Observations / Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold at the end of the Report.

6. The Committee would also like to place on record their deep sense of appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered to them by the officials of Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

**New Delhi;**  
**13 March, 2026**  
**22 Phalgun, 1947 (Saka)**

**Bhartruhari Mahtab**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Standing Committee on Finance**

**PART - I**  
**CHAPTER I**

**NITI AAYOG - AN INTRODUCTION**

NITI Aayog i.e., the 'National Institution for Transforming India', as an apex public policy think tank of the Government of India, was constituted via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. NITI Aayog is mandated to provide institutional capacity to the Ministry of Planning. Prime Minister is the executive head of the Ministry of Planning. It is the nodal agency tasked with catalysing economic development, and fostering cooperative federalism through the involvement of State Governments in the economic policy-making process using a bottom- up approach.

1.2 Apart from designing strategic and long-term policies and programmes for the Government of India, NITI Aayog also provides relevant strategic and technical advice to the Centre, States and Union Territories (UTs). NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform for the Government of India to bring States to act together in national interest and thereby foster cooperative federalism. Following are the key objectives and features of NITI Aayog:-

- (a) To evolve a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors and strategies with the active involvement of States.
- (b) To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognising that strong States make a strong nation.
- (c) To develop mechanisms to formulate credible plans at the village level and aggregate these progressively at higher levels of government.
- (d) To ensure, in areas that are specifically referred to it, that the interests of national security are incorporated in economic strategy and policy.
- (e) To pay special attention to the sections of our society that may be at risk of not benefiting adequately from economic progress.
- (f) To design strategic and long-term policy and programme frameworks and initiatives, and monitor their progress and their efficacy. The lessons learned through monitoring and feedback will be used for making innovative improvements, including necessary mid-course corrections.

(g) To provide advice and encourage partnerships between key stakeholders and national and international like-minded think tanks, as well as educational and policy research institutions.

(h) To create a knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurial support system through a collaborative community of national and international experts, practitioners and other partners.

(i) To offer a platform for the resolution of inter-sectoral and inter-departmental issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the development agenda.

(j) To maintain a state-of-the-art resource centre, be a repository of research on good governance and best practices in sustainable and equitable development as well as help their dissemination to stake-holders.

(k) To actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and initiatives, including the identification of the needed resources so as to strengthen the probability of success and scope of delivery.

(l) To focus on technology upgradation and capacity building for implementation of programmes and initiatives.

(m) To undertake other activities as may be necessary in order to further the execution of the national development agenda, and the objectives mentioned above.

1.3 NITI Aayog is supported by an attached office, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) a flagship initiative, and an autonomous body, National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD). NITI Aayog's activities can be divided into four key areas:

1. Promoting knowledge and innovation
2. NITI for States (Cooperative and Competitive Federalism)
3. Driving transformational change
4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

1.4 The different programmes, subjects, attached offices, and autonomous bodies of NITI Aayog provide the requisite coordination and support framework needed to carry out the above mandate. The Ministry of Planning through NITI Aayog runs the following Central Sector Schemes:

- (a) Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU).
- (b) Ongoing Programmes and Schemes through Research and Study (R&S).
- (c) Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)
- (d) State Support Mission (SSM)
- (e) Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)

### **Governing Council of NITI Aayog**

1.5 The Governing Council of NITI Aayog, comprising of Chief Ministers of all the States and UTs with legislatures and LGs of other UTs, came into effect on 16 February, 2015 vide a notification issued by the Cabinet Secretariat. The Governing Council was last reconstituted vide a notification dated 19 February 2021 by the Cabinet Secretariat. The Governing Council is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national priorities and strategies, with the active involvement of States, in shaping the national development narrative. The Governing Council, which embodies the objectives of cooperative federalism, presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda. So far, ten meetings of the Governing Council have been held under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister with CMs/LGs of the States/UTs and other members of the Governing Council.

1.6 NITI Aayog also organises the National Conference of Chief Secretaries. The Fifth annual Conference was held in December 2025 on the overarching theme of "Human Capital for Viksit Bharat". The five sub-themes included (i) Early Childhood Education: Laying the Foundation; (ii) Schooling: Building Blocks; (iii) Skilling: Future Ready Workforce; (iv) Higher Education: Knowledge Economy; (v) Sports and Extracurricular: Beyond Classrooms.

### **Cooperative Federalism**

1.7 NITI Aayog under its mandate of promoting cooperative federalism provides structured support to States by driving initiatives like the Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks Programmes, while elevating the State Support Mission as a comprehensive framework. This mission fosters institutionalised partnerships with States and UTs to realise India's 2047 vision of transformation during its centennial Independence celebrations. The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog on the theme of 'Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat @2047' was held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025 where while calling *Viksit Bharat*, a collective

aspiration of every Indian, the Prime Minister, underscored that cooperative efforts by all States are essential to achieve this goal, noting that comprehensive development of every State, city, and village will accelerate progress and India would achieve the vision of a developed nation well before 2047.

### **Visioning Exercise for States @ 2047**

1.8 At the Ninth and Tenth Governing Council Meetings of NITI Aayog, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has emphasised the need for States to prepare their Vision Documents for Viksit Rajya @2047 aligning with the national vision. Keeping this in view, NITI Aayog has been actively supporting the States for the preparation of State-specific vision documents for 2047 by providing domain expertise across a wide range of socio-economic sectors. This includes support in identifying short-term, medium-term and long-term strategic priorities, as well as in preparing actionable implementation roadmaps. The initiative drives transformation across citizens' lives, the economy, and governance while promoting cooperative federalism. By building State capacities and harmonising national and State policies, it fosters a unified development framework. It also enables States to contribute more proactively to India's economic and social progress. Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Tripura have launched their Viksit Rajya@2047 Vision documents in 2025-26 and Preparation of Vision plan and implementation roadmap for other States - including Assam, Bihar, Goa, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh are currently underway and progressing at various stages. When asked about the details of the states for whom visioning exercise has been launched till date, the Ministry of Planning furnished following reply :-

“The Viksit Rajya@2047 Vision documents have been launched in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Tripura, and are currently under preparation in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Goa, Haryana, Sikkim and Uttarakhand. Each State has identified and outlined its own priorities and development pathways in their respective Vision documents, with NITI Aayog providing strategic and technical input in the overall visioning and preparation process.”

1.9 In a pointed query, the Committee enquired about NITI Aayog's efficacy and authority over policy formulation and implementation thereof in the absence of power to allocate funds to states and give binding recommendations, the Ministry of Planning furnished following reply:-

“Though NITI Aayog does not allocate funds for the State, it plays an important role in the policy formulation and implementation in the following ways:

(i) Policy Making:

In the arena of policy making, all CCEA/EFC/SFC notes on Centrally Sponsored and Central Sector Schemes are shared with NITI Aayog by various Ministries for providing policy inputs/comments. NITI Aayog is able to take a holistic view in the design of the schemes to ensure that the interests of the States/UTs are adequately addressed. Consequently, NITI Aayog plays an important role in shaping and finalising the design of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) which are implemented at the State level.

(ii) Cooperative Federalism

NITI Aayog promotes collaboration between the Union and State Governments through structured engagement and institutional support. These include periodic engagement with states through (i) Governing Council Meetings chaired by Hon’ble Prime Minister with participation of CMs and Lt Governors of States/ UTs; (ii) National Conferences of Chief Secretaries chaired by Hon’ble PM for effective policy execution; (iii) State Support Mission; and (iv) High level meetings between Vice Chairman/ Members/ CEO, NITI Aayog with top leadership of the States/ UTs.

(iii) Promoting Competition

NITI Aayog encourages healthy competition among states and districts by benchmarking performance and incentivizing improvements in governance and development outcomes. A number of indices have been brought out by NITI Aayog to assess their performance relative to peers and adopt reforms to improve outcomes across sectors such as health, education, sustainability, innovation, and fiscal management.

Thus, NITI Aayog’s initiatives in policymaking and fiscal federalism strengthens Centre–State coordination and promote informed decisions on economic and fiscal issues, guided by data-driven and research-backed insights.”

1.10 In this context, the CEO, NITI Aayog, during oral evidence responded as under:-

*“Every scheme or program of the Government that is approved, NITI sits in the EFC and NITI's comments are the most awaited comments. It is because I do not say we have a veto, but if we write a very strong negative note, the Departments are very wary of taking it to the next stage because the Expenditure Department is going to ask, how are you answering?”*

*And we do not look at it only money-wise. We also look at management structure. Is the program well structured? We also compare with old programs. NITI has a database of all schemes for decades. We compare how was it done 30 years ago or 20 years ago? Are you doing it better or worse? And our comments are quite difficult.”*

1.11 Asked about the various sectoral achievements of NITI Aayog during 2025-26. And the vision board prepared for development across sectors for five years down the line, the Ministry of Planning responded as mentioned here:-

“During 2025-26, NITI Aayog strengthened its role as a central policy think-tank and implementation facilitator driving India's developmental and strategic agenda across sectors. Under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the 10th Governing Council meeting was held in May 2025, bringing together Chief Ministers and Lt Governors to align priorities on "Viksit Bharat@2047" through enhanced cooperative federalism. In December 2025, NITI Aayog also successfully convened the 5th Conference of Chief Secretaries, focusing on deepening Centre-State collaboration on priority reforms and effective service delivery.

In pursuit of long-term development planning and aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047, NITI Aayog has been actively supporting States in preparing their state specific Vision Documents tailored to their unique strengths, development priorities and growth aspirations, while ensuring alignment with national objectives. As on date, nine States have successfully released their Vision plans, showcasing strategic frameworks for future growth and reform implementation. This collaboration reflects an evolving approach to planning that integrates state-led aspirations with broader national priorities, enabling subnational governments to drive sustainable and equitable development.

A flagship initiative, the Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme, continued to drive grassroots transformation, and on 28 January 2026, NITI Aayog launched Sampoonata Abhiyan 2.0 to saturate critical development indicators such as health, nutrition, sanitation, education, etc. in 112 districts and 513 blocks through a three-month time-bound campaign, building on the strong outcomes of its 2024 phase. In parallel, the State Support Mission (SSM) convened 18+ workshops across States to build the capacity of stakeholders.

NITI Aayog also charted and released strategic roadmaps, including decarbonisation pathways for sectors such as aluminium, cement and MSMEs, and transformative frameworks through its Frontier Tech Hub, enabling long-term technology-led growth and global competitiveness. As part of its commitment to sustainable development, India, under the stewardship of NITI Aayog, submitted its third Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting nationwide progress on SDG localization and outcomes.

On the knowledge and evidence front, the NITI Aayog has been prolific in publishing policy research: around 66 reports were published during 2025-26 so far, spanning economic, social and structural policy domains, including 11 comprehensive reports on "Scenarios towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero", released in February 2026 that provide multi-sectoral analytical pathways for achieving India's dual goals Viksit Bharat by 2047 and carbon neutrality by 2070. Indices for ranking for States including North-Eastern Region Sustainable Development Index, Fiscal Health Index, Export Preparedness Index, etc. were launched. Likewise, many other reports provide strategic inputs to be implemented by various stakeholders across different sectors over the next few years.

NITI Aayog has been supporting the initiative of city regions as growth hubs. So far, roadmap for 4 city regions have been released by NITI including Bhubaneswar-Cuttack-Puri-Paradip City Economic Region (BCPPER) growth plan, positioning it as a major

eastern India growth corridor with significant projected economic output tied to infrastructure, industrial clusters and urban agglomeration benefits.

Collectively, these engagements and outputs demonstrate NITI Aayog's expanded role in policymaking, monitoring, implementation support, and strategic foresight in consolidating India's development trajectory not just for next five years, but also towards Viksit Bharat@2047.”

1.12 The subsequent chapters in Part-I deals with the following topics:-

- a) Analysis of Demands for Grants (2026-27)
- b) Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)
- c) Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) & Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation (Setu)
- d) Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)/Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)
- e) State Support Mission (SSM)
- f) Research And Networking

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ANALYSIS OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2026-27)**

2.1 The Ministry of Planning presented their detailed Demands for Grants (2026-27) to Lok Sabha under Demand No. 77. The total allocation of Ministry of Planning for the year 2026-27 was to the tune of Rs. 1232.16 crore. The Revenue section for BE 2026-27 is Rs. 1203.38 crore and Rs. 28.78 crore is the Capital share. There is an increase of 23.76% in the Revenue Section for the year 2026-27 over BE, 2025-26, whereas in Capital Section the decrease is 14.63%. There was an increase of 20.16% in percentage terms in BE 2025-26 over BE 2024-25. The Actuals 2025-26 (upto 31.01.2026) registered a decline to the tune of Rs. 536.59 crore as against BE of Rs. 1006.06 crore.

An allocation of Rs. 235.15 crore for Non-Scheme Expenditures has been sought against previous year's BE of Rs. 204.05 crore. Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) has sought an allocation of Rs. 33.49 crore as BE 2026-27 against an earlier allocation of Rs. 23.02 crore. National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD) has sought an allocation of Rs. 11.30 crore as BE (2026-27) same as BE (2024-25) and (2025-26) of Rs. 11.30 crore respectively. Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister has sought an increased allocation of Rs.4.995 crore as BE 2026-27 against BE 2025-26 of Rs. 4.077 crore.

2.2 Under scheme section an amount of ₹ 997.01 crore has been sought in BE 2026-2027 against BE 2025-2026 of ₹ 802.01 Crore to run the following Central Sector Schemes under domain of Ministry of Planning during the financial year 2026-2027. Under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), as BE 2026-2027 an allocation of ₹ 405.00 Crore has been sought against BE 2025-2026 of ₹ 400.00 Crore. For State Support Mission an Allocation of ₹ 100.00 crore as BE 2026-2027 has been sought against BE 2025-2026 of ₹45.00 Crore. As regards Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Aspirational District Programme (ADP) a token budgetary allocation of ₹ 0.01 Crore has been sought as BE 2026-2027 similar to the previous year's BE 2025-26. However, for Research and Study scheme no enhancement in BE 2026-2027 over BE 2025-2026 has been sought and same amount of ₹ 4.00 Crore has been kept for BE 2026-2027. Further for Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) BE of ₹ 218.00 Crore has been sought for the financial year 2026-2027 against BE 2025-26 of ₹353.00 Crore. And for Aspirational Districts Programme – Phase III BE 2026-27 of ₹ 270.00 Crore has been

sought against RE 2025-26 of ₹ 220.00 Crore for the financial year 2026-2027, as this scheme was started at RE stage of the financial year 2025-2026, based on the budget outlay approved by the EFC.

2.3 Details with regard to analysis of Demands for Grants in various heads during last three years of Ministry of Planning can be seen at **Annexure I**.

2.4 The budgetary proposals for Ministry of Planning for the year 2026-27 highlighting major upward/ downward variations over the last few years is given below:-

(in crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals	% Increase/ decrease in BE from previous year
2022-23	321.42	1031.53	847.14	-69.76%
2023-24	824.39	514.19	290.81	+156.48%
2024-25	837.26	1001.02	282.61	+1.56%
2025-26	1006.06	848.24	536.59*	+20.16%
2026-27	1232.16	-	-	+22.47%

\* Expenditure till 31.01.2026

2.5 As regards the reasons for increase in the BE 2026-27 to ₹ 1232.16. as against BE 2025-26, the Ministry of Planning in a written reply stated as under:-

“The Budget Estimates vary on year-to-year basis depending upon the schemes/ programs run at respective points in time, including initiation of some new schemes (such as Aspirational Districts/ Blocks Programme and State Support Mission) and continuation of some major schemes which got the approval of the competent authority towards the end of a Financial Year.

BE allocation for FY 2026-27 has been increased to ₹ 1232.16 Crore from previous year's BE of ₹ 1006.06 Crore due to additional allocation of ₹ 270.00 Crore for Aspirational Districts Programme- Phase III and increase in budget outlay of State Support Mission Scheme to ₹100.00 Crore from ₹45.00 Crore during FY 2025-26.

Necessary steps are taken on a continuous basis to ensure that there are no major deviations. Concerned Scheme Operating Authorities are also advised from time to time to project their BE/ RE requirement on realistic manner so that the funds could be utilized upto the maximum extent to achieve the anticipated targets/ goals.”

2.6 Asked about the reasons for underutilisation to the tune of Rs. 282.61 crore as against the RE of Rs. 1001.02 for FY 2024-25 enhanced from BE of Rs. 837.26 crore, the Ministry of Planning in a written reply stated as under:-

“The underutilization of funds from the allocated amount of ₹837.26 Cr. at BE-2024-25 was due to the following:

- (a) Budget provision amounting to ₹ 424.93 Crore under Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) scheme could not be incurred in real term because of availability of huge unspent balances in Central Nodal Account (CNA) of the scheme.
- (b) Under Aspirational Blocks Programme, a new scheme was operationalised in FY 2024-25 for which ₹412.00 Crore had been provisioned at Revised Estimate under Aspirational Block Programme. However, keeping in view of the requirement under the Scheme, budget of ₹152.26 Crore was obtained in the First Batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants in the month of January, 2025 after receipt of approval of Parliament. Hence, expenditure could not be incurred as was envisaged during the said Financial Year i.e., 2024-25.
- (c) Due to late receipt of approval of Cabinet for continuation of Atal Innovation Scheme in FY 2025-26, anticipated expenditure against BE of ₹ 155.00 Crore which was reduced to ₹109.35 Crore at RE 2025-26, could not be incurred, as was envisaged.”

2.7 As regards the reasons behind decrease of RE 2025-26 to Rs 848.24 crore as against BE 2025-26 of Rs 1006.06, the Ministry submitted following response:-

“The allocation of ₹1006.06 Cr for Ministry of Planning under BE-2025-26 was reduced to ₹848.24 Cr at RE-2025-26. Due to slow pace of expenditure under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) scheme, Budget Division, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has reduced its budget provision by ₹290 Crore at RE 2025-26 stage. Similarly, Budget provision of ABP scheme was also reduced by ₹143.00 Crore at RE 2025-26, while, Budget Division has made allocation of ₹220.00 Crore to Aspirational District Programme, Phase III Scheme, at RE 2025-26.”

2.8 Revenue and Capital Sections of the allocation of Ministry of Planning for the last three years are given below:

(in crore)

Year	BE		RE		Actuals	
	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
2024-25	818.30	18.96	978.39	22.63	275.45	7.16
2025-26	972.35	33.71	826.67	21.57	522.11*	14.48*
2026-27	1203.38	28.78	-	-	-	-

\* Expenditure as on 31.01.2026.

2.9 When asked about the reasons for downward revision of the BE Revenue and Capital Section for FY 2025-26 at RE stage, the Ministry of Planning in their written submission provided as under:-

“Under Revenue Section, the allocation of BE 2025-26 of ₹972.35 Crore was reduced to ₹826.67 Cr at RE-2025-26. Due to slow pace of expenditure under AIM scheme, Budget Division has reduced its budget provision by ₹270.68 Crore at RE 2025-26 stage. Similarly, Budget provision of ABP scheme was also reduced by ₹143.00 Crore at RE 2025-26, while, Budget Division has made allocation of ₹220.00 Crore to Aspirational District Programme, Phase III Scheme, at RE 2025-26.

Under Capital Section, allocation of BE 2025-26 from ₹33.71 Crore was reduced to ₹21.57 Crore at RE 2025-26 stage due to reduction in the capital expenditure of AIM scheme. Under ‘Investment’ object head of AIM scheme, the allocation has been reduced to zero at RE 2025-26 from ₹ 17.00 Crore allocated during BE 2025-26.”

2.10 Asked further about the reasons for decrease in the Capital share in the BE 2026-27 against the previous fiscal year, though the BE as a whole registered an overall increase. The Ministry of Planning in their written reply reasoned that the Capital share of the Grant was decreased from ₹ 33.71 Crore in BE 2025-26 to ₹28.78 Crore in BE 2026-27, due to non-allocation of any amount in BE 2026-27 under ‘Investment’ object head of AIM scheme for which ₹17.00 Crore was allocated during BE 2025-26.

2.11 When the Committee wanted to know about the presently operational Schemes/Programmes of NITI Aayog and budget allocations thereto during the 2025-26 and allocations in the following fiscal year, the Ministry of Planning in their written replies submitted following details:-

“Details of each of the Schemes/Programmes presently operational under NITI Aayog are as under and allocations thereto during 2025-26 and 2026-27:-

Name of Scheme/ Programme	BE 2025-26	RE 2025-26	Cut imposed by MoF at RE stage	BE 2026-27	Increase in BE 2026-27 over RE 2025-26
Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)	380.00	109.32	290.00	390.50	281.18
State Support Mission (SSM)	44.99	38.99	6.00	98.00	59.01
Official Development Assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	0.01	0.01		0.01	

Research & Study	4.00	6.00	(+) 2.00	4.00	(-)2.00
Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)	353.00	210.00	143.00	218.00	8.00
Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) Phase III		220.00		270.00	50.00
Total	782.00	584.32		980.51	396.19

2.12 The Committee wanted to know about the Quarterly spending norms/guidelines of the Ministry of Finance and the quarterly utilization details of the budget allocated during the last three years, the Ministry of Planning submitted following reply:-

“As per guidelines issued by the Department of Economic Affairs (Budget Division), Ministries need to prepare Monthly/ Quarterly Expenditure plan. Besides, they should endeavour that no more than 33% and 15% of expenditure of Budget Estimates during a financial year is made in the last quarter and last month of the financial year, respectively. As regards NITI Aayog, the utilization of the budget allocation in each quarter during the last three years (including) 2025-26 is as under:

(₹ in crore)

QEP plan progress			
FY 2023-24	As per approved QEP	Actual Expenditure	Actuals as % of QEP
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	209.79	50.59	24.11
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	244.31	77.28	31.63
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	185.46	73.93	39.86
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	184.83	89.01	48.16
TOTAL	824.39	290.81	35.27

(₹ in crore)

QEP plan progress			
FY 2024-25	As per approved QEP	Actual Expenditure	Actuals as % of QEP
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	60	57.5	95.83
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	210	60.87	28.99
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	364	74.05	20.34
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	203.26	88.01	43.30
TOTAL	837.26	280.43	33.49

(₹ in crore)

QEP plan progress			
FY 2025-26	As per approved QEP	Actual Expenditure	Actuals as % of QEP
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	364.03	148.37	40.76
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	246	158.63	64.48

3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	251	121.81	48.53
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter*	145.03	139.17*	95.96
TOTAL	1006.06	567.98*	56.46

Note - \* Expenditure as on 13.02.2026”

2.13 As it may be seen there are deviations from the spending norm of spending not more than 33% of Budget Estimates during the last quarter of the financial year, the Committee sought to know the responsible factors behind deviations, the Ministry of Planning stated as mentioned below:-

“The key reasons for deviation are as under:-

The continuation of Atal Innovation Mission Scheme has got the approval of the Cabinet in the Month of November, 2025. The change in flow funds from Central Nodal Account (CNA) to Treasury Single Account (TSA) hybrid system also led to deviation in utilisation of funds as projected in respective QEPs.

The implementation of the State Support Mission Scheme began in FY 2023-24 . Since, SSM is a demand driven Central Sector Scheme, the allocation of funds to the States/ UTs are made on demand basis, the deviation occurred in planned and actual expenditure.

A quarterly calendar for disbursement of funds under the Research and Studies Scheme is not feasible, since payment is dependent on several factors, viz. approval of new studies, milestones achieved under on-going studies and proposals received for grants-in-aid for conducting seminars and workshops. Hence, pattern of disbursement cannot be completely controlled by NITI Aayog.”

## **ACTIVITIES PROPOSED DURING THE YEAR 2026-27**

2.14 Various activities proposed to be undertaken in the Financial Year 2026-27 in terms of the projected expenditure are as follows:

### **(A) Establishment Related Expenditure**

#### **(i) Department of Planning**

Under this, the expenditure to be incurred to meet salary and allowances and other related expenses on travel and other administrative expenditures, as well as professional services expenditures in respect to the Office of the Minister of State for Planning, are being projected.

#### **(ii) NITI Aayog**

Under this, the expenditure to be incurred to meet Salary and allowances and other related expenditures on Travel and Other Administrative Expenditures, as well as Professional Services related expenditures in respect of the Vice Chairman,

Members, CEO and other Officials of the NITI Aayog and also the Expenditure to be met in respect of various activities being carried out by various verticals/ divisions of NITI Aayog, are being projected.

(iii) Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

Under this, the expenditure to be incurred to meet salary and allowances and other related expenses on travel and other administrative expenditures, as well as professional services expenditures for the chairman and other officials of the council, are covered.

(iv) Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office(DMEO)

As the apex Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) office of the Government of India and an attached office of NITI Aayog, DMEO during 2026-27 would carry its mandated and emerging activities in Monitoring and Evaluation to strengthen evidence-based policy making both at the Centre and States, in line with the larger objective of cooperative federalism.

Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF), the Data Governance and Quality Index (DGQI), Global Indices for Reforms and Growth (GIRG), and infrastructure sector reviews aimed at institutionalizing state-of-the-art technologies and methodologies would be the primary activities for DMEO on the monitoring side. In 2026-27, DMEO will utilize its "Vision for Evaluation, Development And Monitoring (VEDAM)", platform to execute DGQI Round 9 and launch the OOMF portal, further enhancing data maturity and performance tracking.

In addition to the above, DMEO conducts independent evaluation studies of both Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). In 2025-26, DMEO, as part of its mandate to evaluate Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) completed the evaluation of 72 CSS schemes from 21 Ministries through 9 Evaluation Packages. The final evaluation reports have been submitted to the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, and the respective administrative/line Ministries/Departments.

DMEO has also taken the initiative to undertake Organization Evaluation and Technology Evaluation in 2026-27. DMEO also intends to strengthen the M&E ecosystem at the Centre and State levels through its partnerships, capacity-building activities, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders.

In 2026-27, National Conference on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (NCMEL) will also be organized with the vision of DMEO, NITI Aayog to enable high-quality monitoring and evaluation of government programs and to improve sustainable outcomes of service delivery.

(v) National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD)

NILERD is an autonomous institute under NITI Aayog, which is supported through Budgetary Grants in the form of Grants-in- Aid Salaries, Grants-in-Aid General and Grants-in-Aid for Creation of Capital Assets. During 2026-27, NILERD will undertake training programs for senior and middle levels officials of different countries

under the ITEC scheme of the Ministry of External Affairs, training programs for officials of different States/Union Territories and will undertake research and evaluation studies. NILERD has been appointed as the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) by NITI Aayog for their Central Sector Schemes viz., Atal Innovation Mission, Aspirational Districts Programme and State Support Mission. It also publishes a quarterly peer reviewed journal.

(B) Scheme-related Expenditure

(i) Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), including Self Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU)

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog is a flagship initiative of the Government of India to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. For the year 2026-27, AIM is focused to further strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem via its various continuing Programs – Atal Tinkering Lab, Atal Incubation Centre, Atal Community Innovation Centre and Atal New India Challenge. AIM will also introduce new programs to address the current gaps and improve the quality of the innovation ecosystem of the country. These include Language Inclusive Program of Innovation (LIPI) and Frontier Program to foster inclusivity; Human Capital Development Program and State Innovation Mission (SIM) to target capacity building and regional development; Deeptech Reactor and International Innovation Collaboration to build advanced technology and global footprint; Industrial Accelerator and Sectoral Innovation Launchpads to nurture scaling and industry integration.

(ii) Ongoing programs and Schemes  
Research Scheme of NITI Aayog (RSNA)

The expenditure for the RSNA is met under the Research & Study head. The RSNA is a Central Sector Scheme with a Budget Estimate (B.E) of Rs. 4 cr for the year 2026-27. The scheme's objective is to stimulate research on issues of economic/social development and need assessment, which directly affect the formulation or implementation of government policies and schemes. The Scheme is primarily utilized to meet the expenditure involved in funding research conducted by NITI Aayog in collaboration with external agencies/experts. In addition, seminar/conference/workshops, etc. organized by reputed organisations are supported under the Scheme.

(iii) The Aspirational Districts Programme and Aspirational Blocks Programme

The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP), launched in January 2018, is an initiative aimed at transforming 112 of India's relatively underdeveloped districts by focusing on 49 key indicators across five critical sectors: Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure. In the year 2026-27, the programme aims for

saturation of relevant government schemes, ensuring that all citizens in these districts benefit from the targeted interventions.

Expanding on the ADP's framework, the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was launched in January 2023, targeting 513 relatively underdeveloped blocks across the country. ABP aims to achieve comprehensive development by focusing on essential government services in Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Allied Services, Social Development and Basic Infrastructure. One of the main strategies for 2026-27 is to deploy a targeted approach through target saturation campaigns, which aim to saturate key indicators, ensuring comprehensive coverage and maximising the impact of interventions. This focused strategy not only boosts the delivery of essential services but also actively involves local communities in their development journey, paving the way for sustainable growth and better quality of life in these regions.

#### (iv) State Support Mission

The State Support Mission (SSM) is a Central Sector Scheme of NITI Aayog to deepen engagement with States and Union Territories in advancing national priorities. The Mission strengthens the State planning ecosystem through the establishment of State Institutions for Transformation (SITs) as State-level think tanks, either through new institutions or by reimagining existing Planning Departments or Boards. SSM supports SITs by facilitating set up of Programme Implementation Units, strengthening State-level data analytics and Monitoring & Evaluation systems, and supporting studies and capacity-building activities, including through engagement of Lead Knowledge Institutions (LKIs). At the national level, these efforts are complemented by initiatives such as the NITI for States Platform, the Viksit Bharat Strategy Room (VBSR), and the NITI–State Workshop Series to promote cross-learning and collaboration. Under the proposed extension of the scheme from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, existing components have been augmented and additional components have been incorporated. Support for data-driven governance through State-level planning and visioning, data visualization tools, and special innovative projects have been proposed. The following sections present the annual plan and progress/achievements of the Mission.

#### State Institution for Transformation (SIT)

Under the State Support Mission (SSM) of NITI Aayog, as on date (January 2026), a total of 32 States and Union Territories have notified/established their State Institutions for Transformation (SITs). These SITs are at various stages of operationalization which includes hiring under the Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) of SIT, setting up and strengthening M&E and data analytics unit and conducting capacity building activities such as studies/projects/workshops/ conferences, etc.

#### Lead Knowledge Institutions (LKIs):

28 Lead Knowledge Institutions have been nominated to collaborate with States/ UTs and NITI Aayog. Among these, 16 LKIs have been onboarded and supported to undertake various research studies / projects for their respective

State/ UT or NITI Aayog. It is envisaged to onboard the LKIs of the remaining States in FY 2026-27.

#### NITI-State Workshop Series & Regional workshops:

The NITI–State Workshop Series was launched under SSM to bring States and Union Territories together to deliberate on themes relevant to socio- economic development and emerging areas of national and global interest. In FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25, 20 and 35 workshops, respectively, were conducted across States on development-focused themes. In FY 2025– 26, 65 workshops have been planned. In addition, two regional workshops and one LKI Conclave have been conducted for SITs and LKIs. The initiative is proposed to be further extended through an additional 50 workshops under the NITI–State Workshop Series, along with regional and national workshops for FY 2026-27.

#### NITI for States Platform & VBSR:

In order to facilitate cross learning and evidence-based decision making through sharing of best practices, policies and data sets, a NITI for State (NFS) Knowledge Platform, comprising of a NITI for States Portal and an experience room called Viksit Bharat Strategy Room (VBSR) have been launched by NITI Aayog in March 2024 under the Mission. A set of knowledge products have been put together on NITI for States Portal for various socio-economic sectors. To ensure further adoption of the NFS portal among States/UT, the NITI Aayog team is regularly interacting with States through various forums.

#### Promotion of Data-Driven Governance:

SSM promotes data-driven governance to strengthen evidence-based planning and decision-making in States and Union Territories. Under this component, interested States/UTs will be supported in the preparation of Vision Documents, the establishment of State-level counterparts of the Viksit Bharat Strategy Room (VBSR), and the implementation of innovative projects in emerging areas, including frontier technologies based on the proposals submitted.

2.15 On being asked about the details of new initiatives including new schemes/programmes proposed to be initiated during the financial year 2026-27.

“New initiatives/ schemes/ programmes under major schemes of NITI Aayog for the year 2026-27 are given below:-

#### A. Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme

No new schemes are proposed to be initiated during FY 2026–27. The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) Phase-III and the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) are presently approved up to March 2026. For continuity of the interventions beyond the approved period, it is proposed to take up ADP 2.0, incorporating major refinements and structural improvements in the existing framework and ABP Phase-

II, with selective modifications in programme design and implementation process, subject to approval of the competent authority.

#### B. State Support Mission (SSM)

The SSM is a Central Sector scheme which is proposed to be continued beyond FY 2025-26 in alignment with 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Cycle (FY 2026-27 till FY 2030-31) subject to the approval of the scheme based on the appraisal by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). It is proposed to continue with the existing components of the scheme along with a few new components such as support to the States and UTs for promoting data-driven governance, planning and visioning, undertaking innovative projects, etc. and also to establish a mechanism to strengthen NITI Aayog's engagement with States and UTs and to facilitate effective implementation and monitoring of flagship initiatives such as the ABP, ADP, SSM and AIM.

#### C. Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)

Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) is the apex monitoring and evaluation office of the Government of India. DMEO's mandate is to actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of programs and initiatives of Government of India. In this regard, DMEO conducts evaluation of various schemes including Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). During FY 26-27, DMEO proposes to continue evaluation studies of Central Government Schemes.

#### D. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is in the process of launching 4 new programs under AIM 2.0.

##### (a) Language Inclusive Program for Innovation (LIPI)

To establish 30 LIPI Centres (15 in 2026-27) in existing incubators across ~ 20 states to provide access to design thinking, business model creation, investment, and government schemes in India's 22 scheduled languages.

##### (b) Human Capital Development Program (HCD)

To create a Competency Framework for various roles in the Incubator ecosystem. Develop curriculum and delivery system for training 5000+ ecosystem professionals to build, operate, and maintain India's growing innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

##### (c) Industrial Accelerator Program

To establish 10 Industry Accelerators in critical sectors with 25% government investment and 75% industry investment providing scale-up platforms in the industry premise for advanced start-ups.

(d) Frontier Program

To establish customized 2,500 Atal Tinkering Labs (1,000 in 2026-27), and Incubation and Start-up support templates to fit the frontier region ecosystems.”

## CHAPTER III

### DEVELOPMENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION OFFICE (DMEO)

3.1 The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), an attached office of NITI Aayog, was established in 2015 through the merger of the Central-level Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). A full-fledged central authority of DMEO was formed in 2017 following the closure of its 15 Regional Development Monitoring and Evaluation Offices (RDMEOs) across various States. DMEO's mandate is to actively monitor and evaluate the implementation of Government programs and initiatives to facilitate innovative improvements, including necessary mid-course corrections and the identification of required resources, thereby strengthening the probability of success and enhancing the scope of delivery. Its mandate also extends to providing technical advisory support to States, under NITI Aayog's broader framework of cooperative federalism.

3.2 DMEO functions are categorised into:-

- i) Monitoring,
- ii) Evaluation, and
- iii) Strategic Initiatives encompassing partnerships and capacity building in the field of Monitoring & Evaluation.

3.3 The allocation to DMEO for the last three years are given below:

(In Rs Crore)

Year	BE			RE		Actuals	
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
2024-25	19.39	.37	19.76	27.52	0.37	24.11	.27
2025-26	22.61	.41	23.02	39.96	0.28	32.10*	.12*
2026-27	33.18	.31	33.49	-	-	-	

\*upto 16.01.2026

3.4 As it is seen from the allocations to DMEO, The allocated budget for FY 2026-27 has registered an increase of 45.48% over Budget Estimates for FY 2025-26, on being queried about the upward revision, the Ministry of Planning submitted following response:-

“As per mandate, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), under the Ministry of Planning, is actively monitoring and evaluating the Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in alignment with the Finance Commission cycle. The Budget Estimate (BE) of DMEO has increased from Rs. 23.02 crore in FY 2025-26 to Rs 33.49 crore in BE 2026—27, accounted for an increase of 45.48 per cent. This is primarily due to increase in allocation for evaluation studies under professional service head and a rise in miscellaneous expenditure (salaries of govt. employees, office expenses etc) under other heads of DMEO.

The increase under Professional Service Head is mainly due to committed liabilities of ongoing evaluation studies undertaken in FY 2025-26 and successful completion of evaluations of 72 Centrally Sponsored Schemes at the request of the Department of Expenditure (DOE) for 16th Finance Commission. Additionally, new evaluation studies will also be undertaken during FY 2026--27.”

### **Output Outcome Monitoring Framework - OOMF**

3.5 The DMEO, NITI Aayog, in coordination with Ministries and Departments has developed a comprehensive Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF) for the Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with a view to bring focus on “Outcomes” in addition to the “Outputs”. OOMF has been adopted from the regular budget of 2019-2020 and actively monitors the achievement of outputs and outcomes of CS/CSS of the Government of India. This document is laid out in the Parliament alongside the Union Budget every year as an Outcome Budget for all schemes with an annual outlay of `500 Crore or more. The respective Ministry/ Department in the Parliament lays the framework for rest of the schemes along with their Detailed Demand for Grants. These key outputs and outcomes for respective schemes, along with their key indicators, are identified and finalised under the approval of the respective Secretary of the Ministry/Department.

### **Data Governance**

3.6 The rapid digitisation and evolution of emerging technologies have transformed the nature of governance worldwide. The increasing demand for transparency, accountability, and public participation has transformed the role of data in public policy throughout its life cycle. Recognising the importance of administrative data for evidence-based decision-making, the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) exercise was conducted in 2020 in self-assessment mode. In FY 2024-25, the seventh (7) round of the DGQI exercise has been conducted, encompassing over 650 schemes and 69 Ministries and Departments of the Government of India.

## **Global Indices for Reforms and Growth (GIRG)**

3.7 The Government of India has undertaken the Global Indices for Reforms and Growth (GIRG) initiative for monitoring the progress of 26 select Global Indices (GIs) via inter-ministerial coordination for driving growth and reforms in the country. These 26 GIs are published by 16 international agencies (publishing agencies) which include Multilateral Organisations, International NGOs, Private Organisations, and Universities spread across four broad themes namely economy, development, governance, and industry. DMEO has been designated as the knowledge partner and central coordinator for this exercise.

The primary objective of the GIRG initiative is to drive India's performance across important social, economic, and development parameters for improving global perception of India and its global ranking, by adopting suitable reforms, and monitoring the progress.

Under the GIRG framework, the 26 selected indices have been allocated to 17 nodal Ministries/Departments, which are entrusted with specific responsibilities to spearhead improvements. The GIRG initiative is continuously reviewed at the level of Cabinet Secretary to assess the progress made by the nodal M/Ds for 26 GIs.

## **Sector Review**

3.8 DMEO has been facilitating Sector review meetings conducted annually by the Hon'ble Prime Minister to monitor the performance of key infrastructure sectors in coordination with concerned Ministries/Departments and NITI divisions. These reviews provide a unique opportunity to present a cross-ministerial view of the performance of sectors and deep-dive into India's sectoral strengths and weaknesses compared to global peers. By identifying the bottlenecks and suggesting interventions, immediate actions are often initiated from the highest level of government to improve overall development outcomes. The latest set of Sector Review meetings were held during December 2025 - January 2026 under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

## **Evaluations**

3.9 DMEO is mandated with undertaking the evaluation of schemes of Government of India in order to enable evidence-based public policy-making. The evaluations are conducted at the request of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Ministries/ Departments and suo-moto. These evaluations are conducted through a review of existing literature and

an extensive analysis of both primary (survey) and secondary data. The findings from these evaluation studies offer valuable insights to improve the implementation of schemes and recommend measures for course corrections in attaining the goals and outcomes more effectively and efficiently. Evaluations are conducted with the aim to understand what works, why, for whom, and under what circumstances.

DMEO since its inception in 2015, has completed the evaluation of 237 government schemes. In 2025-26 till February, 12 evaluation studies of 75 Government of India schemes have been completed. The final evaluation reports, alongwith the recommendations/suggestions, are shared with the respective administrative/line ministries/Departments and also with the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

### **Capacity Building**

3.10 In line with its commitment to fostering cooperative federalism, DMEO has been actively engaging with Central and State universities to promote knowledge sharing and strengthen the culture of M&E across the country. This collaborative initiative seeks to leverage the academic network for conducting rapid field-level assessments of key beneficiary-oriented government schemes. DMEO also engages with States and UTs through orientation/training programmes for capacity building. Aligned with NITI's mandate of promoting cooperative federalism under State Support Mission (SSM) and to support the States and UTs in establishing/strengthening the M&E and data and analytics unit within the State Institution for Transformation (SIT)/ Planning Department. DMEO has also organised 15 orientation sessions and seven Two-Day training workshops with the planning departments/ SITs.

3.11 In this regard, the CEO, NITI Aayog during oral evidence, deposed the following:-

*“With regard to capacity building, while the DMEO performs a considerable amount of work, it is often felt that at the state level there is still a need for developing capacity to undertake monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, we have organised numerous workshops in various states. Last year, particularly, we organised events in Mizoram, Puducherry, Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Andhra Pradesh. A substantial number of capacity-building workshops were conducted by the DMEO. We also collaborate closely with universities, engaging them to assist both us and the States in monitoring and evaluation.”*

## CHAPTER IV

### **ATAL INNOVATION MISSION (AIM) & SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND TALENT UTILISATION (SETU)**

4.1 Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is the Government of India's flagship initiative to create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across the length and breadth of our country. Its objective is to create ecosystems across schools, higher education, corporates, industries, state governments, central ministries, and internationally for supporting innovators and entrepreneurs who speak India's 22 official languages.

4.2 The Union cabinet on 25 November, 2024 approved the continuation of AIM under the aegis of NITI Aayog with an enhanced scope of work and an allocated budget of Rs.2,750 crore for the period till 31 March, 2028. AIM 2.0 is a step towards Viksit Bharat that aims to expand, strengthen, and deepen India's already vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. AIM 2.0 is designed to strengthen India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in three ways: (a) by increasing input (i.e., ushering more innovators and entrepreneurs), (b) by improving the success rate or 'throughput' (i.e., helping more startups succeed) and (c) by improving the quality of 'output' (i.e., producing better jobs, products and services).

#### **Atal Tinkering Labs( ATLs)**

4.3 Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) is a state-of-the-art space established in a school with a goal of fostering curiosity and innovation in young minds between grades 6th to 12th across the country through 21st century tools and technologies such as the Internet of Things, 3D printing, rapid prototyping tools, robotics, miniaturised electronics, do-it-yourself kits and many more. The aim is to stimulate an innovative problem-solving mind-set among children in the ATL and nearby communities. Till date, AIM has established 10,000 ATLs in schools in 700+ districts across all States / UTs of India.

The year 2025 AIM saw global expansion of the Atal Tinkering Labs programme through the establishment of International ATLs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Global ATL model is designed to ignite curiosity and creativity among school students in the UAE, especially those studying under Indian and Kerala Board curricula.

Designed as a self-sustainable assessment and support framework, ATL Sarthi represents a major leap in strengthening the Atal Tinkering Labs ecosystem through a collaborative, cluster-based approach. ATL Sarthi enables schools and local institutions to work together in regional clusters of 20 to 30 labs—or in some cases up to 100—creating a vibrant network for mutual learning, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. By October 2025, over 2,753 ATL Sarthi clusters have been established across 21 states.

4.4 In this connection the Committee sought to know about the announcement of Hon'ble Finance Minister's in Union Budget 2025-26 regarding the establishment of 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) in government schools across country over the next five years to promote scientific thinking, creativity, and hands-on learning among students, the Ministry of Planning informed the following:-

“The Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) program – for further scale-up - is now transferred to Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE). Accordingly, 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) in government schools is to be setup by DoSEL.

Further, The EFC document regarding 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs in Govt. Schools in next 5 years has been approved in the EFC Review Meeting held on 4th July 2025 under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. The Draft Cabinet Note for the same is under process.”

#### **Atal Incubation Centre(AIC)**

4.5 Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) are business incubators established by AIM at universities, institutions and corporates to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among young innovators of the country. The programme aims to create a strong foundation for innovation-driven enterprises by providing world-class incubation support, mentorship, and access to investors and markets. Grant up to Rs.10 crores is given to the Green Field Incubators as AICs and Brown Field Incubators over a 5-year period. AIM has successfully operationalised 76 AICs across India. These AICs enable startups by providing technical facilities, resource-based support, mentorship, funding support, partnerships and networking. Over 4500 startups are incubated at these AICs and have created more than 45,000 jobs in the ecosystem. Till date 82 AICs have been established, and 19 are upcoming completing mandate of 101 AICs.

### **Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACICs)**

4.6 Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) extend the reach of AIM to India's tier-2, tier-3 cities and aspirational districts. These centres promote inclusive innovation by enabling local entrepreneurs, youth, and community organisations to develop context-specific solutions address in regional challenges. Celebrating the idea of 'frugal' which is predominant in Indian communities, ACIC aims to create a formal approach to identify and scale up these innovations using solution driven design thinking and supported by the Public Private Partnerships (PPP) model. ACICs demonstrated notable progress in fostering grassroots and vernacular innovation through training, mentorship, and partnerships with local institutions. Till date 19 ACICs have been established and 31 are upcoming, this completes the mandate of 50 ACICs.

### **Atal New India Challenge (ANIC)**

4.7 Atal New India Challenge (ANIC) is a flagship programme of AIM, conceived to promote innovation in India by identifying, supporting, and scaling technology-based solutions that address critical national and societal challenges. The program aims to seek, select, support, and nurture technology-based innovations that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance. ANIC acts as a platform for demand-driven innovation, where specific problem statements are co-created with government ministries and public sector organizations. Through competitive challenge rounds, selected innovators receive financial support of up to INR 1 crore per project, mentorship, and access to a national network of incubators. ANIC 2.0 represents the program's expanded and evolved version. It introduces more structured challenge areas aligned with India's Vision 2047, addressing domains like e-mobility, transportation and highways, sanitation and waste management, medical devices, agriculture, space, and energy. Till date 141 startups/MSMEs have been cumulatively supported/selected.

### **AIM Ecosystem Development Programme (AEDP)**

4.8 AIM Ecosystem Development Programme (AEDP) is the horizontal cutting across all strategic AIM programmes strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem by building networks of relevant stakeholders to provide additional value to AIM beneficiaries beyond the framework of structured programmes. AEDP has forged over 60 domestic & 16 International partnerships across various corporations, and foundations engaging with

industry leaders and faculty that support AIM beneficiaries through infrastructure and technology, access, market and investor connections, creation of educational modules, and adoption of Atal Tinkering Labs.

4.9 The Output and Outcome targets of AIM including SETU for the year 2026-27 can be seen at **Annexure II**.

4.10 The allocation to AIM including SETU for the last three years are given below: The Scheme-wise details in respect of the FY 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 are as under:

(₹ in crore)

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU)									
Year	BE			RE			Actuals		
	Revenue	Capita l	Total	Revenue	Capita l	Total	Revenue	Capita l	Total
2024-25	144.30	10.70	155.00	94.82	14.53	109.35	27.01	0.07	27.08
2025-26	380.00	20.00	400.00	109.32	0.68	110.00	99.72*	0.06*	99.78*
2026-27	390.50	14.50	405.00						

\* Expenditure till 31.01.2026.

In respect of underutilisations during the FY 2024-25 and 2025-26 the response from Ministry of Planning informed that the underutilization in 2024-25 was on account of pending Cabinet approval of continuation of AIM (approved in Nov 2024) and for the transition of system of flow of funds from CNA to TSA Hybrid (from November 2024 to March 2025). And the underutilization in 2025-26 is on account of the necessity of fresh due-diligence of all selected beneficiaries and subsequently the RE being fixed at Rs 110 cr.

### Atal Innovation Mission

4.11 On being asked about the physical targets and achievements during the Financial Years 2023-24 to 2025-26 , following details were furnished by the Ministry of Planning:-

“Key physical targets and achievements are given in the following tables:-

Indicators	Annual Targets 2025-26	Annual Achievement 2025-26 (done till Jan 26 + expected by Mar'26)
1.1 Number of ATLS supported with subsequent tranche of Grant-in-Aid	2000	1000+

2.1 Number of new AICs established	20	10
2.2 Number of AICs supported with subsequent tranche of Grant-in-Aid	20	12
3.1 Number of Atal Community Innovation Centres supported	20	6
3.2 Number of AICs supported with subsequent tranche of Grant-in-Aid	7	4
4.1 Number of AICs supported with subsequent tranche of Grant-in-Aid	20	15
5.1 Number of LIPI Centres created	15	-
6.1 Number of ATLS established in frontier regions	500	-
7.1 Number of States / UTs with structured engagement with SIM	2	1
8.1 Number of International (Bilateral / Multilateral) Innovation Programs	2	2
9.1 Number of Industrial Accelerators established	5	-
10.1 Number of Sectoral innovations launchpads created	2	1

	Target 2023-24	Target 2024-25	Achievement 2023-24	Achievement 2024-25
Atal Tinkering Labs	- Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 2,000 ATLS	- Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 2,000 ATLS	- Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant done to 2100+ schools	- Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 1000+ schools
Atal Incubation Centres	- Selection and Due Diligence of 29 new AICs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 20 AICs	- Establishment of 29 new AICs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 20 AICs	- Selection of 29 new AICs completed  - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 18 AICs	- Due Diligence of 29 new AICs completed - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 10 AICs
Atal Community Innovation Centres	- Selection and Due Diligence of 36 new ACICs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 10 ACICs	- Establishment of 36 new ACICs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 10 ACICs	- Selection a 36 new ACICs completed  - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 4 ACICs	- Due Diligence of 36 new ACICs completed - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 6 ACICs
Atal New India Challenge	- Selection and Due Diligence of 88 new start-ups / MSMEs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 15 start-ups	- Disbursement of Grant in Aid to 88 new start-ups / MSMEs - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant to 15 start-ups	- Selection of 88 new start-ups / MSMEs done - Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant done to 14 start-ups / MSMEs	- Disbursement of subsequent tranche of Grant expected to 10 start-ups / MSMEs

4.12 As regards the Financial Target and Achievement in the last five years 2021-22 to 2025-26 is given as under:-

FY	BE Rs Cr.	RE Rs Cr.	ActualExp. Rs Cr.	% BE
2021-22	342.00	342.00	341.97	100%

2022-23	155.31	343.21	169.43	117%
2023-24	155.00	155.00	96.83	62%
2024-25	155.00	109.00	27.00	17%
2025-26	400.00	110.00	104.00	26%

The underachievement of target in 2023-24 and 2024-25 is on account of pending Cabinet Approval for Continuation of AIM. The Approval of the Cabinet received in November 2024.

4.13 As regards the shortfalls in the achievements in the targets and action taken to improve the performance in the lagging targets, the replies of the Ministry of Planning informed as stated below:-

“Constraints faced and Action taken

The key reason for shortfall was that the Cabinet approval for AIM was received only in November 2024 as a result of which launch of new programmes and disbursement of grant in aid under existing programs was delayed. Also, transition of system of flow of funds from CNA system to TSA hybrid system resulted in stoppage of disbursement and blocking of PFMS account of beneficiaries from November 2024 to February 2025.

To move over the constraints and streamline operations, AIM has obtained Cabinet Approval for its continuation with expanded scope of work. It has also completed migration of all its beneficiaries to the TSA Hybrid system and completed the fresh due-diligence of all new selected beneficiaries. In addition, AIM has increased the headcount based on the EFC approved manpower.”

4.14 AIM 1.0 involved implementing programmes that built new innovation infrastructure to strengthen India’s then nascent ecosystem, AIM 2 designed new initiatives to fill gaps in the ecosystem. The Committee wished to know about the status on the progress made on these new initiatives and Programmes, the Committee was apprised of the progress *via* written replies:-

“The programs under AIM 2.0 and their status are as under:-

Sl. No.	Program Conceptualized	Intervention Planned	Status
1	Language Inclusive Program for Innovation (LIPI)	- Establish 30 Vernacular Innovation Centres in existing incubators across ~ 20 states to provide access to design thinking, business model creation, investment,	- Consultations completed - Program Guidelines drafted and in process of approval - Formal Program launch in April 2026

		and government schemes in India's 22 scheduled languages	
2	Frontier Program	- Establish customized Atal Tinkering Labs (2,500), and Incubation and Start-up support templates to fit the frontier region ecosystems	- Consultations completed - Program Guidelines drafted and in process of approval - 500 schools in J&K for frontier ATL announced - ATL establishment in Q1 2026-27
3	Human Capital Development Program (HCD)	- Create a curriculum and delivery system for training 5500 ecosystem professionals to build, operate, and maintain India's growing innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem	- Consultations in progress - Competency Framework being developed
4	Deep-tech Reactor Program	- Create a research sandbox to experimentally test investment and policy theses for streamlining deep tech pathways	- Consultations in progress
5	State Innovation Mission (SIM)	- Advise states/UTs on building a five-year strategy for a uniform, strong ecosystem with education, skill, industry, and areas of strength	- Continuous engagement with States - 1 <sup>st</sup> SIM getting implemented in Haryana
6	International Innovation Collaboration (IIC)	- 5 deep bi-lateral engagements between India and advanced countries - Spread the India Innovation Model to the countries of global south (AIM-WIPO agreement) - Support Startup20 Engagement Group of G20	- India Australia RISE Accelerator conceptualized and in execution - International ATLs established in 12 CBSE-affiliated schools across the UAE - International Atal Incubation Centre coming up in IIT Delhi, Abu Dhabi - AIM ecosystem knowledge (through AICs) deployed and pilot conducted in Malawi and Ethiopia
7	Industrial Accelerators	- 10 Industry Accelerators in critical sectors with 10% government investment and 90% industry investment providing scale-up platforms in the industry premise for advanced start-ups	- Industry Consultations completed - Program Guidelines drafted and in process of approval - Formal Program launch in April 2026
8	- Atal Sectoral Innovation Launchpad (ASIL)	- 10 ecosystem platforms in 10 central ministries to enable them to foster a structured approach to integrate innovation into the industry sector within governmental frameworks	- Created ASIL for Ministry of Agriculture – iAEX - Work in Progress with Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Tourism

”

## CHAPTER V

### ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS PROGRAMME(ADPs)/ ASPIRATIONAL BLOCKS PROGRAMME(ABP)

#### Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)

5.1 The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) is an initiative aimed at transforming 112 relatively underdeveloped districts of India by focusing on 49 key performance indicators across five critical sectors: Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure. The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP), was launched in 2018 and marked its eight years of implementation in January 2026, as a testament to a pragmatic and data-driven approach to socio economic development in relatively underdeveloped regions of India.

The program's strength lies in bringing together Central and State Governments, District Administrations led by District Magistrate/ Collector (DM/DC), Prabhari Officers, development partners, civil society, and citizens. NITI Aayog facilitates this by bridging ministries and States, while regular meetings and workshops spark idea exchange, grassroots solutions, and best-practice sharing—creating a vibrant, boundary-spanning network.

5.2 It has been informed that it is proposing to take up ADP 2.0 beyond the approved period of March 2026, incorporating major refinements and structural improvements in the existing framework, with selective modifications in programme design and implementation process, when asked about the major structural improvements proposed to be integrated in the new programmes, the Ministry of Planning apprised as under:-

“Based on seven years of implementation of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and learnings from the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), NITI Aayog is proposing calibrated structural refinements in the next phase of ADP. The major structural improvements under consideration are as follows:

- (i) Revision of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Several existing indicators have reached near-saturation across most districts, leaving limited scope for incremental gains. Accordingly, survey-based and outcome indicators are being reassessed in consultation with concerned Ministries. It is proposed to revise and rationalize the KPI framework by July 2026 to sharpen focus on remaining gaps and drive last-mile saturation.
- (ii) Rationalization and graduation of districts: Based on analysis of Composite Scores and Indicator Saturation Count, top-performing districts among the 112 ADP districts are proposed to be graduated into an "Inspirational Districts" category. These

districts will act as torchbearers and mentors for other aspirational districts. They will be ranked separately and will not be eligible for award funds under the challenge method, though they may access support under the innovation category. These refinements are aimed at sustaining momentum, deepening outcomes in lagging pockets.”

5.3 Regarding the proposed revamping of ADP, the CEO, NITI Aayog during oral evidence apprised the Committee as stated below:-

*“.....aspirational district programme was launched in 2018. So, in a way, it is almost seven and a half years have passed. So, we have actually redesigned the programme. We have yet to get the EFC approval and other approvals but what we have come to the conclusion and later on, if you ask questions we will respond. We have felt that there were some criteria by which the aspirational districts were selected. They are the most backward under a large number of social and other indicators. We picked up the bottom districts. There were almost 80 indicators that were there. We have seen that in six years, a lot of indicators have been saturated. These districts are no longer at the bottom. They have gone up, not only vis-a-vis with the other hundred but vis-a-vis with normal districts also. So, about 30 districts were star performers. We will put them in a separate category. We will not be giving them any awards any more but people like that label aspirational, they want to aspire for the next level. So, we will allow them. We have three windows in this ADP programme. One is the normal prices. If you come first in the month or a quarter, we give them one crore, two crore or three crore for using on something.*

*The second is innovation. If I want to do something innovative, I give some money.*

*The third is some expenditure on training etc. So, we will continue to support them on innovation. But we will pull them out of the awards which is 80 per cent of the money goes for awards. So, that is the basic restructuring, 30 odd districts will move out and we have not yet looked at whether we should include new districts. It is quite possible. So, in the next 2-3 months, we will finalize them and the programme should be by April will be rolling out the new version of ADP. Some districts in the elite group or whatever which will be only eligible for innovative funds.....”*

### **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)**

5.4 Launched in January 2023, the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) builds on the success of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) by targeting 513 blocks across 27 States and 4 Union Territories. It seeks to improve governance and quality of life through a unified approach that merges existing schemes, sets clear outcomes, and tracks progress continuously.

In these blocks, ABP prioritises key socio-economic indicators in areas like health and nutrition, education, agriculture and allied sectors, basic infrastructure, and social development. By tailoring strategies to local contexts, it brings decision-making closer to communities, reduces inequalities, drives economic growth, and supports Sustainable

Development Goals, all while enhancing lastmile service delivery, awareness, and sharing of best practices. The overarching goal is to enhance ease of living for citizens by improving access to government schemes and fostering an inclusive, locally driven development paradigm. Progress is measured across 40 indicators using data from central ministry databases for accuracy and ease, with quarterly delta rankings released since the March 2023 baseline to highlight improvements. Additionally, the “Aakanksha” brand, introduced in March 2024, unites traditional products from these blocks under one identity to champion “Vocal for Local,” boost craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and local livelihoods.

### **Sampoornata Abhiyaan**

5.5 In the year 2024-25, NITI Aayog had launched Sampoornata Abhiyan to prioritise the saturation of few indicators in a time bound manner. Launched as a three-month initiative, it aimed to achieve saturation in six critical Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to health & nutrition, education, agriculture, social development, and basic infrastructure. The initiative focused on participatory planning, behavioural change, and data-driven strategies to address developmental challenges in these regions. By aligning efforts at both district and block levels, the campaign demonstrated the effectiveness of time-bound interventions in driving inclusive growth.



### **Champions of Change**

5.6 The Champions of Change (CoC) dashboard was launched in 2018, to enable real-time data collection and monitoring, publicly accessible to highlight the pivotal role of district collectors, magistrates, and their teams in driving district progress. The Aspirational Districts

Programme (ADP) fosters competition among 112 districts via dynamic quarterly delta rankings that reflect incremental improvements, encouraging districts to refine their data collection and maintenance for timely updates. The upgraded Champions of Change portal, CoC 2.0 equips district administrations with tools for data-driven governance and evidence-based policymaking, featuring innovations like Citizen Reports, Citizen Feedback, Advanced Analytics, Project Management, Geo-Spatial Maps, and AI/ ML solutions. Citizen Reports offer three key dashboards analysing CoC data: performance of aspirational districts since inception, quarterly delta rankings, and indicator-level progress across themes for all districts. CoC 2.0 includes automated mailers that alert districts to data discrepancies using pre-configured system logic, alongside quarterly delta ranking releases that boost overall data quality and performance analysis. System-generated quarterly reports are automatically sent to District Magistrates/Collectors, Central Prabhari Officers, State Prabhari Officers, and State Chief Secretaries, detailing performance across various indicators.

5.7 The Output and Outcome targets of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan International Cooperation Agency(JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) /Aspirational Districts Programme for the year 2026-27 can be seen at **Annexure II**.

5.8 Under Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Japan International Cooperation Agency(JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Aspirational Districts Government of India provides fund to Aspirational Districts on challenge method. The allocation under the scheme for the last three years are given below:-

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE			RE			Actuals		
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total
2024-25	433.00	--	433.00	208.55	--	208.55	8.07	--	8.07
2025-26	0.01	--	0.01	0.01	--	0.01	0.00	--	0.00
2026-27	0.01	--	0.01	--					

ADP Phase III: (2024-2026)- ADP Phase III is a new scheme approved by the EFC on 13.03.2025, with an initial allocation of ₹50 crore from the Contingency Fund released on 29.08.2025. Additional funds as per RE has been received in January 2026 and now sanction is being made for approved projects.

(₹ in crore)

Year	BE			RE		Actuals		
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Total
2024-25								
2025-26	-			220		105.27*		105.27
2026-27	270		270					

\* As on 02.02.2026

(₹ in crore)

Aspirational Blocks Programmes (ABP)									
Year	BE			RE			Actuals		
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total
2024-25	--	--		412.00	--	412.00	0.00	--	0.00
2025-26	353.00	--	353.00	210.00	--	210.00	160.67*	--	160.67*
2026-27	218.00	--	218.00	--					
* As on 02.02.2026									

5.9 When the Committee pointed out that under Official Development Assistance for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Aspirational District Programme (ADP) in the FY 2025-2026, it was reasoned that considering the pending approval for continuation of the scheme from competent authority at the time of raising the demands provision for only token demand of 0.01 crore was made, however, even for FY 2026-27 again a token budgetary allocation of 0.01 crore has been sought, the Ministry responded as under:-

“The token budgetary provision of 0.01 crore under the Official Development Assistance for Sustainable Development Goals (EAP-SDG) Phase II was made in FY 2025—26 and again sought for FY 2026—27 in view of the ongoing approval process for extension of the scheme period and the availability of substantial unspent balances under the CNA mechanism.

At present, approximately 08 crore remains available in the CNA bank account under EAPSDG Phase II. The Department of Expenditure had earlier permitted token releases with utilization of available CNA balances. Accordingly, the Programme Division has been meeting expenditure requirements through existing balances, and only a token provision was kept in the Budget to maintain the budget head and enable releases, if required.”

5.10 When asked about the yearly physical targets for preceding years and achievements against these targets, the Ministry of Planning in their reply submitted following clarification:-

“For the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) and the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), physical targets during the last three years are outcome-based rather than asset- or beneficiary-based. Annual targets are defined through measurable improvement across 49 KPIs under ADP and 40 KPIs under ABP, monitored through the Delta Ranking framework. Accordingly, the emphasis is on year-on-year improvement in indicator values and relative performance of districts and blocks, rather than fixed numerical physical outputs.

The main constraints faced in implementation include non-uniform fund flow due to performance-linked incentives, procedural timelines for submission and approval of projects by the Empowered Committee, capacity constraints at district and block levels in project formulation, and the two-year implementation window, which leads to staggered utilisation, particularly in the initial phases. To address these constraints, regular review meetings and field monitoring have been institutionalized, handholding by Central Prabhari Officers has been strengthened, appraisal processes streamlined, and States/Districts advised to propose short-duration projects (6–12 months) to accelerate execution. Enhanced data monitoring and convergence with Central and State schemes have further supported effective implementation under both ADP and ABP.”

5.11 The NITI Aayog was to evaluate the Aspirational Districts/Blocks Programmes to assess their impact on underdeveloped regions and analyze the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of these schemes in achieving Sustainable Development Goals by focusing on key indicators like health, education, and infrastructure, aiming to improve policy interventions and enhance program outreach, on being queried about the current status of the proposal, the Ministry of Planning submitted following reply:-

“The evaluation of the Aspirational Districts Programme and the Aspirational Blocks Programme is being undertaken by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, to assess their impact and effectiveness in achieving SDG-linked outcomes. The evaluation has reached the final stage, and the final report is expected to be received by end-February 2026.”

5.12 To accelerate the development of low performing blocks, the Aspirational Blocks Programme has adopted the approach of Convergence, Collaboration, and Competition. Kindly elaborate upon the methods and working methodology followed to ensure the same. On being asked as to how far has convergence of central and state schemes been achieved under these programmes and how collaboration and convergence has impacted the outcomes, the Ministry of Planning in their written submissions stated the following:-

“The Aspirational Blocks Programme adopts the framework of Convergence, Collaboration and Competition to accelerate development in low-performing blocks. Convergence is achieved by aligning block-level action plans with existing Central and State schemes across priority sectors, avoiding duplication and ensuring optimal use of resources. Collaboration is ensured through institutional mechanisms such as Central Prabhari Officers, multi-level review meetings and continuous handholding by NITI Aayog, while competition is fostered through the transparent Delta Ranking framework linked to performance and incentives. Convergence of Central and State schemes has been substantially achieved, with most interventions implemented through departmental programmes, and coordination among departments has improved through structured reviews and data-driven monitoring. This has led to better targeting, faster implementation and improved outcomes on key indicators.

Inter-departmental cooperation can be further strengthened through deeper data integration, capacity building at the block level and institutionalization of joint planning and review processes.”

5.13 In this connection the Committee sought to know about the partnership of NITI Aayog with NIIT Foundation to achieve 100% coverage in digital literacy, financial inclusion and employability across select Aspirational Blocks through targeted interventions and whether this tie up would be in consonance with the approach of Convergence, Collaboration, and Competition, the Ministry of Planning stated as given under:-

“NITI Aayog and NIIT Foundation have signed an SOI (Statement of Intent) on 23rd January 2026, and accordingly, the initiative commenced from that date and is expected to continue for a period of two years. As per the Action Plan provided by NIIT Foundation, the selection of blocks would be undertaken through a phased pilot approach. In the initial phase, a limited number of Aspirational Blocks would be identified for implementation in order to pilot the proposed interventions and assess their effectiveness. Learnings from this phased approach will help NIIT Foundation to put robust systems and processes in place and develop a scalable, replicable model for rollout across the remaining blocks. Yes, the partnership between NITI Aayog and NIIT Foundation aligns with the 3C approach of the ADP–ABP. The initiative aligns with National priorities and ABP indicators, showcasing convergence by bringing together NITI Aayog, NIIT Foundation and district/block administrations, thereby collaborating in promoting data-driven improvement and healthy competition among Aspirational Blocks in the areas of digital literacy, financial inclusion and Skill Development.”

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

5.14 The Sustainable Development Goals lay out a uniquely ambitious and comprehensive agenda for global development by 2030. In India, NITI Aayog is the nodal agency for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, leading with the spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism. It is responsible for coordinating and supervising SDG efforts at the national and sub-national levels.

5.15 To this end, NITI Aayog has developed monitoring tools such as the SDG India Index and Dashboard, NER District SDG Index and National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to evaluate the performance and rank States/ districts, thus promoting competitive federalism. While SDG India Index is designed to provide an aggregate assessment of the performance of all Indian States and UTs on various SDGs, NER District SDG Index provides insights into goal-wise performance at district levels in the North Eastern Region. The National MPI captures overlapping deprivations across the three dimensions of health,

education and standard of living across 12 indicators. These indices help leaders and change-makers evaluate their performance on social, economic and environmental parameters.

5.16 Localisation of the SDGs is the key to reach furthest behind first, and therefore a crucial mandate of the division. These efforts have strengthened the statistical systems and developed a monitoring framework covering all the 17 Goals and more than 100 indicators across the country. With this refined and comprehensive edition, NITI Aayog aims to cement India's place as a trailblazer in SDG achievement. During 2025–26, the SDG Division continued emphasis on aligning national priorities with the UN 2030 Agenda. The Division's strategy focused on three pillars: Refined Data Analytics, Aggressive Localisation, and Strengthened Intergovernmental Partnerships aimed at translating macro-level gains into local impact. The year culminated in the submission of India's Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025 to the UN, highlighting national progress and deepened engagement with States and Districts through targeted workshops and indices to accelerate advancement in areas such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and nutrition.

5.17 On being asked as to how NITI Aayog's policy frameworks and flagship initiatives contributing towards the achievement of the SDGs and the realization of India's Vision 2047 and what challenges NITI Aayog is facing in aligning short-term development priorities with long-term commitments under the SDGs and Vision 2047, the Ministry of Planning responded as mentioned below:-

“NITI Aayog is responsible for monitoring and implementation of SDGs in India. Recognising the interconnectedness of various issues such as poverty, inequality, health, innovation and climate change, there has been consistent efforts to put in place platforms, policies and programmes that can contribute towards the achievement of development priorities with a focus on last-mile delivery and synergy of schemes.

To facilitate the exchange of ideas, sharing of best practices and improved implementation, the Government has established various forums like Governing Council of NITI Aayog and National Conference of Chief Secretaries to enhance coordination and policy execution. These platforms encourage idea generation, foster cross-learning, provide opportunities for development of new initiatives and align short term development priorities with long term commitments.

NITI is implementing State Support Mission to enhance engagement with States and UTs in a structured and institutionalised manner. The SSM helps States/UTs develop a roadmap for achieving their socio-economic goals by aligning development strategies with national priorities and focusing on each State's core strengths. Interested states have established State Institutions for Transformation (SITs) which serve as multi-disciplinary resources to guide development strategies. As of 2026, 32 SITs have been established under the SSM. The mission emphasises cross-sectoral partnerships and

expertise, and States/UTs are encouraged to designate a Lead Knowledge Institution to support the SITs by partnering with universities or research organisations of excellence in their region.

Convergence of schemes at various levels and the saturation of essential government services are being advanced through initiatives such as the ADP and ABP. Both programmes emphasise data-driven governance, real-time monitoring and collaboration among Central, State and local bodies to meet district specific needs and advance SDG localisation. These programmes empower local communities and ensure targeted, measurable interventions to bridge development gaps.

To further advance SDG Localisation, NITI Aayog is supporting States to set up SDG Coordination and Acceleration Centres, and creating State Indicator Frameworks and District Indicator Frameworks that are aligned with National Indicator Framework.

India's commitment to the SDGs, extends beyond 2030, culminating in the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. This vision aligns with India's push to achieve the SDGs by supporting sustainable growth, empowering citizens, and implementing strategies to help them realise aspirations for an inclusive India and world. NITI Aayog has been actively supporting the States with the preparation of State-specific vision documents for 2047. Through consultations with States and domain experts, NITI Aayog is focusing on tackling issues such as strengthening of institutional capacity and coordination mechanisms, increasing financing for SDGs, data availability, unplanned urbanisation and reducing inequalities across various dimensions to bridge today's development needs with the sustainable, inclusive growth envisioned in SDGs and vision of Viksit Bharat@2047."

5.18 In this context, the Committee pointed out that as per the fourth edition of the SDG India Index (2023-24), the composite score for India improved from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24. However, SDG Goals 2 (Zero Hunger) and 5 (Gender Equality) with score points 52 and 49 have not witnessed the desired progress. The Gender equality is still in the aspirant category and enquired about the efforts being taken to bring in the requisite improvement, the Ministry submitted following explanation:-

"India is committed to further deepening its engagement with the 2030 Agenda, both as a national priority and as part of its broader contribution to global development discourse.

Though SDG 2 is called 'Zero Hunger', the indicators are all related to nutrition. As far as hunger is concerned, India has almost eliminated it. The Government has implemented several initiatives to ensure food and nutritional security, while promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving the livelihoods of farmers. Initiatives such as Poshan Abhiyaan are promoting dietary diversification through behaviour change communication, nutrition education, and organisation of community-based events like "Poshan Maah" and "Poshan Pakhwada".

As regards gender equality, over the last few years, India has witnessed a significant increase in the female workforce participation rate. PLFS data shows that the women's employment rate grew from 22% in 2017-18 to 40.3% in 2023-24, while the unemployment rate dropped from 5.6% in 2017-18 to 3.2% in 2023-24, reflecting positive growth in employment opportunities for women.

A range of targeted schemes have been implemented to protect, educate, and empower the girl child, many integrated under the umbrella Mission Shakti, which combines safety, security, and empowerment interventions. The share of Gender Budget allocation in the total Union Budget has increased to 8.86% in FY 2025-26 from 6.8% in FY 2024-25. An allocation of Rs. 4.49 lakh crore has been reported for welfare of women and girls in the gender budget statement of FY 2025-26. This is an increase of Rs. 37.25% over the GBS allocation of Rs. 3.27 lakh crore in FY 2024-25. The Government is continuing its focus on addressing gender discrimination by promoting education, health, housing, entrepreneurship and safety for women. Efforts are being undertaken to track the progress made by States and districts under SDG 5.

The next edition of SDG India Index will be published once the updated data for all the indicators is available. “

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **STATE SUPPORT MISSION (SSM)**

6.1 State Support Mission (SSM) is an umbrella initiative of NITI Aayog aimed at fostering structured and institutionalised engagement with States and UTs. SSM is a central sector scheme that is strategically designed to facilitate States/UTs to develop a roadmap to achieve their socio-economic goals and facilitate their development strategies in alignment with national priorities, with a special focus on the core strength areas of the respective State/UT. Under this mission, NITI Aayog is supporting interested States to establish State Institutions for Transformation (SIT) that can act as a multi-disciplinary resource centre to steer the development strategies in the States/UTs. The States/UTs can either establish SITs or reimagine the role of their existing institutions, such as Planning Departments/ Boards. SITs may comprise officials from State/UT governments and lateral entrants with sector specific expertise.

#### **State Institution for Transformation (SITs)**

6.2 With the support of NITI Aayog, States/UTs have been onboarded under the State Support Mission by notifying their existing planning body as a State Institute for Transformation (SIT), or by constituting a unit within the existing Planning Department/body, or by setting up a separate SIT to function as a State-level public policy think tank. Under SSM, States/UTs are provided support to set up a multi-disciplinary Programme Implementation Unit (PIU), an embedded team consisting of sectoral experts including a Team Leader as required by the States/UTs. The embedded team of experts will work under the supervision of the State/UT Government.

6.3 When enquired about the State Institutions for Transformation (SITs) established so far as against the projected physical targets and the measures taken for ensuring effective implementation, the Ministry of Planning in their written replies submitted the following response:-

“The State Support Mission (SSM) was launched in FY 2023–24 with the objective of strengthening institutional capacities in the States and UTs to steer their socio-economic transformation in alignment with national priorities. A key component of the mission is to support States and UTs in establishing State Institution for Transformations (SITs) or reorient the role of existing Planning Departments/Planning

Board/Planning Commission, as the case may be, to serve as a multi-disciplinary entity anchoring their development agenda. Being a demand-driven scheme, the participation of the States and UTs took place in phased manner during the implementation period of the scheme.

As on date, 32 States/UTs have been onboarded under the Mission while 4 States, namely, Odisha, Kerala, West Bengal & Jharkhand are yet to participate in the mission. NITI Aayog has been continuously engaging with these States to impress upon the benefits which they can avail under the State Support Mission which, *inter-alia*, include strengthening of their institutional capacities, building capabilities for monitoring and evaluation, leveraging domain expertise of Lead Knowledge Institutions for strategic planning, visioning and research, etc.

To ensure the effective implementation of the scheme, NITI Aayog conducts review meetings chaired by Mission Director to assess the progress of the various activities under the mission, fund utilization and address the challenges faced by the States and UTs. In addition, monitoring of the progress of mission is ensured through State visits by State Nodal officers/other officials of NITI Aayog.”

### **Lead Knowledge Institutions (LKI)**

6.4 To foster cross-sectoral partnerships such partnerships to bring expertise and sectoral domain knowledge to support the SIT, States/ UTs are encouraged to designate a Lead Knowledge Institution (LKI) by onboarding institutions such as IIMs/ IITs/ Central and State Universities/ any research-based organisation of excellence in the State/UT/region. The States/ UTs are in process of engaging LKI and to date, 16 LKIs have been officially onboarded .

6.5 State Support Mission was announced in the Union Budget of FY 2023-24. The allocation to SSM for the last three years are given below:-

(₹ in crore)

State Support Mission (SSM)									
Year	BE			RE			Actuals		
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total
2024-25	39.99	0.01	40.00	43.69	0.01	43.70	40.90	0.00	40.90
2025-26	44.99	0.01	45.00	38.99	0.01	39.00	33.21*	0.00	33.21*
2026-27	98.00	2.00	100.00						
* Expenditure till 31.01.2026									

6.6 The projected expenditure under State Support Mission Scheme for FY 2026-27 has seen an increase of 117.83% in Revenue Section. The Committee enquired that since, SSM is a demand driven Central Sector Scheme, the allocation of funds to the States/ UTS are made on demand basis, what are the projected demands over the allocated budget, the Ministry in their written reply submitted the following:-

“The State Support Mission is a Central Sector scheme which is proposed to be continued beyond FY 2025-26 in alignment with 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Cycle (FY 2026-27 till FY 2030-31) subject to the approval of the scheme based on the appraisal by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). As on date, 32 States/UTs have already been on-boarded under the mission, therefore, to continue support to the States/UTs with the existing components of the scheme with enhanced financial support, along with a few new components such as support to the States and UTS for data-driven governance, planning and visioning, undertaking innovative projects, etc. and also to establish a mechanism to strengthen NITI Aayog's engagement with States and UTs and to facilitate effective implementation and monitoring of flagship initiatives such as the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP), the State Support Mission, and the Atal Innovation Mission, the projected expenditure under the SSM for FY 2026-27 has seen an increase. Therefore, the expenditure in FY 2026-27 will be made to support the States/UTs for the aforementioned activities, subject to the approval of EFC.”

6.7 As regards the underutilization of allocated budget during 2025-26, the Ministry of Planning apprised that the SSM is a demand-driven scheme and its pace of expenditure occurred depending upon the on-boarding of the States & UTs under the scheme.

### **NITI for States Platform (NFS) & Viksit Bharat Strategy Room (VBSR)**

6.8 Launched in March 2024 by NITI Aayog, the NITI for States Knowledge Platform includes the NITI for States Portal and the Viksit Bharat Strategy Room (VBSR) experience space to promote cross-learning, evidence-based decisions, and sharing of best practices, policies, and datasets.

This platform aids government officials at State, district, and block levels in crafting data-driven policies and administration, offering knowledge products across sectors like agriculture, education, energy, health, livelihoods and skilling, manufacturing, MSME, tourism, urban development, water resources, and WASH, plus cross-cutting themes of gender and climate. It provides a vast collection of governance best practices, policy resources, and data insights from all States and Union Territories.

The repository has over 7500+ Best Practices, 5000+ Policies, 980+ Datasets, 1500+ Data Profiles, 56 starter kits, across 10 sectors, 2 cross cutting themes, 36 States & UTs, 765

Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks. The best practices are in the form of detailed type, video stories and audio bytes for enhanced user engagement. The portal has had over 2 lakh visitors with the majority of users spending an average of 10 minutes exploring the portal.

## BEST PRACTICES



### EXPLORE BEST PRACTICES ACROSS SECTORS



## CHAPTER VII

### RESEARCH AND NETWORKING

7.1 In pursuance of NITI Aayog's mandate to provide specialised inputs to the national development agenda and to evolve as a knowledge and innovation hub, concerted efforts have been undertaken to promote, coordinate, and institutionalise research activities across the organisation. With this objective, a dedicated Research and Networking (R&N) Division was established in September 2024 to streamline research-related initiatives, enhance inter-divisional coordination, and strengthen institutional linkages in the domain of policy research and analysis. The R&N Division is responsible for administering the Research Scheme of NITI Aayog, commissioning and monitoring research studies, publishing reports and working papers, facilitating collaborations with academic and research institutions, and undertaking other related activities.

7.2 A streamlined proposal evaluation framework for research proposals originating within NITI Aayog was developed for studies proposed under RSNA, providing critical evaluation and recommendations to ensure methodological rigour, strategic relevance, and policy alignment. The comprehensive evaluation process through a structured Appraisal Note culminated in meticulously curated recommendations that enhanced the research proposal's analytical rigour, policy pertinence, and alignment with NITI Aayog's institutional mandate.

7.3 The expenditure under Research Scheme of NITI Aayog is primarily utilized to meet the expenditure involved in funding research conducted by NITI Aayog in collaboration with external agencies/experts. In addition, seminar/conference/workshops, etc. organized by reputed organisations are supported under the Scheme. The allocations under this Scheme during fiscal year 2024-25 to 2026-27 are as under:-

(₹ in crore)

Research and Study									
Year	BE			RE			Actuals		
	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	Total
2024-25	4.00	--	4.00	4.00	--	4.00	4.00	--	4.00
2025-26	4.00	--	4.00	6.00	--	6.00	3.99#	--	3.99#
2026-27	4.00	--	4.00						
#As on 10.02.2026									

7.4 Asked about the achievements under the scheme *vis-à-vis* targets during last three , the Ministry of planning furnished following details:-

“

FY 2023-24		FY 2024-25		FY 2025-26	
Physical Target	Achievement	Physical Target	Achievement	Physical Target	Achievement (as on 10-02-2026)
20 Research Study Proposals	13 New Studies Approved	20 Research Study Proposals	16 New Studies Approved	20 Research Study Proposals	25 New Studies have already been approved.
Concerted efforts are being made to improve the performance of this scheme in promoting research activities including by setting up a new Division viz. Research and Networking to promote research. During 2025-26, 25 new studies have been approved as against the target of 20.					

”

7.5 As regards the steps taken for better implementation of scheme, the Ministry of Planning submitted following reply:-

“Recent steps undertaken for better implementation of the Scheme

- (i) To give further push to research activities, a new Division, viz. Research & Networking Division was set up in NITI Aayog in September, 2024. R&N Division is tasked to promote research activities and enable NITI Aayog to build a network of relevant stakeholders in this space.
- (ii) The RSNA Guidelines, 2021 were revised and new Guidelines were notified in 2024 to streamline the process for commissioning research studies.
- (iii) A comprehensive dashboard is being actively maintained to facilitate systematic monitoring of RSNA-supported research studies and NITI Aayog logo support to workshops and seminars. The dashboard is being updated weekly to ensure accuracy and timeliness of information, thereby enhancing operational transparency, enabling real-time oversight of progress and approvals, and aiding informed decision-making across levels.
- (iv) These steps have resulted in achievement of financial target in FY2024-25 and it is anticipated that budget utilization would be Rs 6.00 Cr as against BE of Rs 4.00 Cr in FY2025-26, resulting in overachievement of the targets.”

## PART - II

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. ANALYSIS OF BUDGET

The budget analysis of the Ministry of Planning reveals that Rs. 1203.38 crore has been sought as Budget Estimates 2026-27 as compared to BE of Rs. 1006.06 crore for the fiscal year 2025-26, which is an increase of around 22%. However, the Actuals for the FY 2023-24 were at Rs 290.81 crore against a BE of Rs. 824.39 crore, which is around 35% of the BE. Likewise, the Actuals for the FY 2024-25 were only Rs. 282.61 crore only, against a BE of Rs. 837.26 crore i.e. just about 34% in percentage term. The scrutiny further reveals that the Actuals for the following fiscal i.e., 2025-26 are to the tune of Rs. 666.32 crore, i.e. 66.23% of the BE.

After overall scrutiny of estimates, allocations and utilization of the budget grants during financial years under reference, the Committee are of the view that there has been continuous underutilization of the earmarked funds by the Ministry of Planning. Though it has improved its utilization percentage in the FY 2025-26, but nonetheless it is three percentage points more than half of the allocated funds. With only a narrow window of two months remaining in the FY under reference, the Committee are not very optimistic. Strikingly enough, despite there being continuous underutilization during multiple fiscal cycles the BEs still saw a hike of 20% and 22% respectively in the preceding years. The Committee in their previous reports have time and again emphasized the need for more realistic planning and financial management for optimal use of available financial resources. The Committee therefore strongly recommend Ministry of Planning to ensure that 2026-27 budget is utilized effectively and to avoid any idling and blocking of funds in the non-responsive Heads. The

Committee hope that the Ministry of Planning would be more fiscally prudent in assessment of their projected expenditure and targets in the future.

2. QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE PLAN (QEP)

The analysis of NITI Aayog's Quarterly Expenditure Plan (QEP) reveals a persistent and significant underutilisation. In FY 2023-24 and 2024-25, actual spending was strikingly low i.e. at approximately 35% and 33% of the total BE, respectively. This indicates flaws in planning as there is dismal implementation of the plans on the ground. The Committee further note that throughout the four quarters, notably during FY 2023-24 and 2024-25 utilization percentage has dropped to as low as 20.34% of the planned target. While FY 2025-26 shows a positive trend with improved utilization (56.46%), the surge in Q4 expenditure remains a concern. A projected spending of ₹139.17 crore in Q4 2025-26 appears to be a disproportionate rush to exhaust funds, risking a violation of the 15% of monthly spending cap. The Committee also note that this spending pattern is suggestive of administrative bottlenecks hindering a steady fiscal flow. The Committee are of the firm view that there is need to adhere to strict Quarterly Expenditure Percentage norms and NITI Aayog should conduct internal reviews to synchronize administrative sanctions with the QEP. It should also be ensured that the first two quarters are earmarked not less than 50% of the fiscal targets.

3. VIKSIT RAJYA @ 2047

The Committee note that the Viksit Rajya @ 2047 initiative has been started by NITI Aayog for aligning state-specific goals with the national vision of a developed India by 2047 and mandate of cooperative federalism of NITI Aayog is being effectively institutionalised. NITI Aayog has so far launched the vision documents in nine states

including states like Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha demonstrating a proactive commitment to socio-economic transformation of states and a nation as a whole. The socio-economic and demographic diversity of these states is suggestive of the flexibility of the initiative enough to accommodate varied regional priorities. The Committee further note the varying stages of preparation in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra highlighting the dynamic implementation pace. The core strength of this initiative lies in NITI Aayog's role as a knowledge partner, providing technical expertise to bridge the gap between ambitious long-term aspirations and actionable, time-bound implementation roadmaps. However, the Committee would like NITI Aayog to ensure that these vision documents do not merely remain static policy papers and that the growth envisioned for 2047 is both inclusive and sustainable. Therefore, NITI Aayog should establish an interoperable Real-time Monitoring Dashboard to track the progress of short-term and medium-term goals and milestones, where "Best Practices" across states similar to Viksit Bharat Strategy Room model may be showcased and documented for other states to follow to ensure inclusivity. The Committee also want that 'visioning' exercise should be completed for remaining states/UTs at the earliest.

#### 4. ATAL INNOVATION MISSION

The Committee note that financial performance of the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) across FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 highlights how administrative and systemic transitions can severely derail high-priority schemes like AIM. In FY 2024-25, the utilization was abysmal, with only ₹27.08 crore spent against a BE of ₹155 crore which is approximately 17% of the BE. The Ministry's attribution of this to a late Cabinet approval and the shift to the fund flow system reveals a lack of transition planning. These procedural lapses effectively froze the progress for considerable part of the

year. Thereafter, situation in FY 2025-26 was a repeat of preceding fiscal cycle. Notwithstanding, an ambitious BE of ₹400 crore, the RE was slashed to ₹110 crore, citing the need for "fresh due-diligence" of beneficiaries. A massive mid-year cost cutting suggests that the initial budget targets were disconnected from the mission's operational readiness. Furthermore, the Capital expenditure remained nearly negligible to Rs. 0.06 crore only, indicating NIL tangible gains or infrastructure creation.

The Committee nevertheless, acknowledge that Cabinet approval for continuation of AIM was given in Nov 2024 only, which left a window of approximately four months for execution of plan, making it harder to reach the set targets. The Committee however, in regard to the underutilisation which occurred due to changes in fund flow mechanism recommend that future migrations to new fund flow system or procedures or changes affecting fund flow towards the schemes must be adequately taken in account at the Planning stages itself. The Ministry must ensure all administrative prerequisites including renewals and beneficiaries due diligence are finalized in advance itself to prevent the massive RE cuts seen in previous years.

The Committee further note that there is stark divergence between ambitious physical targets and actual ground-level delivery under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), primarily driven by a three-year fiscal slump. Since FY 2023-24, actual expenditure has plummeted from 62% to a low of 17% in 2024-25, before slight recovery in 2025-26. This financial paralysis is directly reflected in the performance of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) and Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) that saw a 50% drop in grant disbursements compared to targets in FY 2024-25, while critical new initiatives like LIPI Centres, Frontier Region ATLs, and Industrial Accelerators recorded zero progress against their 2025-26 targets. The recurring justification of "pending Cabinet Approval" highlights a significant failure in pre-emptive policy planning. The delay

until November 2024 for a scheme continuation effectively created a zero growth year in 2024-25, stalling the establishment of Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) and Community Innovation Centres (ACICs). While 2025-26 showed a slight improvement in spending, the massive revision of BE of Rs.400 crore to RE Rs.110 crore indicates that the mission is operating at only one-fourth of its intended capacity. Further, the gap in disbursements of "subsequent tranche" is indicative of liquidity crunches, potentially stifling the innovation ecosystem AIM seeks to establish and nurture. The Committee are of the opinion that NITI Aayog must move for "In-principle" approvals sufficiently ahead and if feasible in the previous fiscal cycle to ensure that Cabinet approvals do not stall the progress and cessation of fund flow.

#### 5. ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS PROGRAMME

The scrutiny of the allocated grants under the scheme Official Development Assistance (ODA) From Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for SDGs/ Aspirational District Programme(ADP) revealed that during FY 2024-25 the BE of Rs 433 crore remained unutilized due to high Central Nodal Agency Balance and only a negligible sum of Rs. 8.07 crore has been the overall utilization against an RE of Rs. 208.55 crore. Thereafter, the "token demand" of Rs.0.01 crore for both FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27 indicates that administrative delays in scheme approval/extensions completely halted the scheme progress. Simultaneously, the ADP Phase III, approved in March 2025, although showed a better trajectory with an expenditure of ₹105.27 crore by February 2026, the allocations from the Contingency Fund for initial sustenance highlights a lack of synchronized budget planning, as it was not a new scheme, rather an extension of the ongoing scheme. The Committee therefore recommend that in future Ministry of Planning must strive not to resort to allocations out of Contingency Fund and ensure that Full Budget

Estimates for ADP Phase III are locked in at BE stage itself to avoid late-stage sanctions of Supplementary grants.

The Committee further note that under Aspirational Blocks Programme there is system of giving monetary rewards to the top performer Districts. Now, It has been informed that now among these, 30 star performer Districts, who have outperformed even the other normal Districts as well, will be put in separate category and instead of simply giving away reward money, the districts would be rewarded money on doing something innovative i.e. these outperforming Districts would be getting 'Innovative fund'. The Committee desire Ministry of Planning to expedite working out the modalities in this regard to incentivise innovations and further desire that these rewarded Modals, innovations and best practices must be given sufficient publicity to inspire other States/ UTs to emulate and create new milestones.

#### **6. ASPIRATIONAL BLOCKS PROGRAMME**

The Committee note that in case of ABP the Budgetary Planning does not appear so strong a forte of the Ministry of Planning. There is continuous underutilization of the allocated grants during the FY 2024-25 & 2025-26. At the initial stages of scheme, there is NIL utilisation and thereafter in the FY 2025-26, there is curtailment at RE stage and underutilization of the already curtailed BE, which stood at 45.51%.

The Committee further note that Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), currently examining and evaluating the ADP/ABP to assess their impact on underdeveloped regions and analyse the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of these schemes in achieving various enshrined objectives and SDG-linked outcomes. The final report was expected to be out by end of February. The Committee would like

the Ministry of Planning to share the evaluation report of Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) with the Committee.

Further, observing the budgetary allocation and utilisation thereof towards ABP, the Committee are of the firm view that there is a need to address the issue of underutilization of allocated grants, which require better planning, improved coordination and stronger monitoring mechanisms. There also appears a need of review of the administrative procedural complexities and simplification of the same. The Committee recommend Ministry to proactively work towards addressing these issues for improved implementation and utilization of the allocated resources.

#### 7. SAMPOORNTA ABHIYAAN

The Committee note that during FY 2024-25, NITI Aayog had launched Sampoornta Abhiyaan to prioritise the saturation of few selected indications in the limited time period of three months. The Abhiyaan aimed to achieve saturation in six Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) related to health & nutrition, education, agriculture, social development and basic infrastructure.

The Committee note that these time bound interventions proved to be quite successful, where 91 Aspirational blocks and 23 Aspirational Districts saturated all 6 indicators. The Committee in their 4<sup>th</sup> Report (18<sup>th</sup> LS) had also recommended the Ministry to organise more such campaigns, to achieve saturation in more Key Performance Indicator (KPIs). The Committee are pleased to note that based on the success of Sampoornta Abhiyaan 1.0, the next phase 2.0 has already launched in Jan 2026.

The Committee in this regard like to further recommend that beside organizing fresh rounds of Sampoornta Abhiyaan, the Ministry of Planning must also do Post-Campaign monitoring so that the achievements under the three-month drive continues

as part of regular governance systems. The Committee also wish to be intimated regarding the outcomes of the Sampoornta Abhiyaan 2.0.

#### **8. DIGITAL & FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

The Committee note that NITI Aayog and NIIT Foundation, has signed a Statement of Intent in January 2026, for achieving 100% digital and financial inclusion in India's most underserved regions ie Aspirational Blocks. By targeting beneficiaries in these regions, the initiative would directly address the "last-mile" connectivity gap in the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP). The Committee also note that the phased pilot approach would result in an evidence-based scale up and implementation, ensuring that the model will be refined and customised for diverse needs across Districts/Blocks before a nationwide rollout. Further it has been informed that the initiative is also in alignment with National priorities and ABP indicators, showcasing convergence by bringing together NITI Aayog, NIIT Foundation and district/block administrations, for collaborating in promotion of data-driven improvement and healthy competition among Aspirational Blocks in the areas of digital literacy, financial inclusion and Skill Development. Considering that pilot project has to be implemented in a fixed timeline of approximately two years, the Committee recommend the Ministry of Planning to work expeditiously towards finalizing/selection of the Aspirational Districts/ Blocks.

#### **9. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The Committee appreciate that India's composite SDG score has improved significantly from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023-24, reflecting the success of NITI Aayog's monitoring tools like the SDG India Index and the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The establishment of 32 State Institutions for Transformation (SITs) as of

2026 further demonstrates a robust commitment to institutionalizing sustainable development at the state level. However, the Committee expresses serious concern regarding the stagnancy in SDG 2 pertaining to Zero Hunger/Nutrition and SDG 5 i.e. Gender Equality, with the latter remaining in the "aspirant" category with a score of 49. While the Committee acknowledges the 37.25% increase in the Gender Budgeting and the rise in female workforce participation to 40.3%, it is also of the opinion that enhanced budget allocations have not translated more effectively into improved social outcomes. The Committee are concerned to note that in spite of there being number of welfare measures formulated at Centre and State level for women as well as deprived sections of the society, these SDG goals still lag behind considerably. The Committee recommend that for improving SDGs 2 and 5, along with other measures, the Ministry of Planning must also conduct impact assessment surveys of Government's various welfare and upliftment programmes to actually have ground level inputs about the efficacy and impediments in the way of effective implementation of various Programmes.

#### 10. STATE SUPPORT MISSION

The Committee note that the State Support Mission (SSM) is transitioning from a nascent pilot phase into a robust institutional framework by institutionalised engagements with States and UTs. They have informed that as on date, 32 States/UTs have been onboarded under the Mission while 4 States, namely, Odisha, Kerala, West Bengal & Jharkhand are yet to establish State Institution for Transformations (SITs) and the Ministry is in continuous engagement with these States to bring them under the umbrella Mission. To bring expertise and sectoral domain knowledge to support the SITs, 16 Lead Knowledge Institution (LKI) such as IIMs/ IITs/ Central and State

Universities/ any research-based organisation of excellence in the State/UT/region have also been officially onboarded.

The Committee also note the momentum shift in the scheme evidenced by the 117.83% increase in the Revenue Budget for FY 2026-27. While previous years saw modest allocations and high utilization of Rs. 40.90 crore against Rs. 43.70 crore RE in 2024-25, the succeeding year witnessed an underutilisation of even the curtailed RE of Rs.39 crore. The steep hike in BE 2026-27 has been attributed to the "demand-driven," nature of the mission indicating towards the dependence on the readiness of the states to engage and execute projects. The projected demand of the budget for 2026-27 would be utilised for integrating new components like data-driven governance, state-level visioning for 2047, and the monitoring of flagship schemes (ADP, ABP, and AIM) etc. The Committee further note that alignment of the next phase of SSM with the 16th Finance Commission cycle (2026–2031) signals a long-term commitment of NITI Aayog's engagement with state governments beyond the approved time span of the Mission.

The Committee recommend that the Ministry of planning must put all efforts to bring in loop the remaining four states viz Odisha, Kerala, West Bengal & Jharkhand as well for establishing SITs and encourage all States/UTs to assign LKIs in the remaining States/UTs. The Committee are hopeful that the dynamic situation based response strategy can motivate the States. The Committee are of the opinion that the Ministry should move towards incentivisation and reward system, beside spreading awareness about the benefits of establishing SITs/LKIs. The Committee also wish the Ministry of Planning to ensure the optimum utilisation of 2026-27 budget, specifically so in view of the multifold increase in the budget estimates 2026-27.

## **11. RESEARCH & NETWORKING**

The Committee note that NITI Aayog has taken measures like established a dedicated Research and Networking (R&N) Division in 2024, and notification of the revised RSNA Guidelines in 2024, establishment of a comprehensive dashboard to facilitate systematic monitoring of RSNA-supported research studies and NITI Aayog logo support to workshops and seminars etc. to streamline NITI Aayog's research framework. The success of the measures taken is mirrored in the transition from an achievement of 13 research studies to 16 and then to an achievement of 25 approved studies during the FY 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 indicating enhanced institutional capacity and research activities.

It has been further observed that there is a clear upward trajectory in the approved research studies during FY 2024-25 to 2025-26, and the Aayog surpassed even its target of 20 proposals by approving 25 new studies in the last fiscal cycle. However, given the consistent over-achievement of physical targets and the projected hike in budget utilization in FY 2025-26, the Committee recommend that NITI Aayog should consider proposing higher Budget Estimates (BE) alongside higher physical targets for including more research studies for the upcoming fiscal years to sustain this momentum. The Committee further recommend that while the number of approved studies has increased, the R&N Division should also ensure that these research studies/projects are not merely academic but remain strictly aligned with the National Development Goals. Further, as we know that in today's world Data has gained center Stage of governance and government is keen on evidence based policy making on the basis of several Primary and Secondary Data sets, therefore, the Ministry must also approve more research studies pertaining to Data sciences

covering key areas like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, data mining, data privacy and security, and AI ethics etc.

**New Delhi;**  
**13 March, 2026**  
**22 Phalguna, 1947 (Saka)**

**Bhartruhari Mahtab**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Standing Committee on Finance**

**Annexure I**

<b>Demand No.77 - Ministry of Planning</b>												
<b>ANALYSIS OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS i.e. PERCENTAGE INCREASE/DECREASE IN VARIOUS HEADS DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS</b>												
Sl. No.	Major Head	Name of the Schemes	<b>(₹ in thousands)</b>									
			BE 2023-24	Actuals 2023-24	BE 2024-25	Actuals 2024-25	%Increase/Decrease of BE 2024-25 over BE 2023-24	BE 2025-26	Actuals 2025-26 (upto 16.01.25)	%Increase/Decrease of BE 2025-26 over BE 2024-25	BE 2026-27	% Increase/Decrease of BE 2026-27 over BE 2025-26
		<b>I. Establishment Expenditure</b>										
1	3451	Department of Planning (Revenue)	15900	15799	20376	17639	28.15%	21863	15758	7.30%	21863	0.00%
	5475	Department of Planning (Capital)	100	--	100	--	0.00%	100	--	0.00%	100	0.00%
2	3451	NITI Aayog (Headquarters)[Revenue]	1515000	1317868	1592204	1486672	5%	1492702	1579584	0.00	1703512	14.12%
	5475	NITI Aayog (Headquarters)[Capital]	73400	53341	78700	68087	7.22%	132800	142464	68.74%	119600	-9.94%
3	3451	Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister(Revenue)	30000	34070	43595	27382	45%	40775	32062	-6%	49950	22.50%
4	3451	Departmental Canteen	6500	5632	6950	7013	6.92%	9050	4105	30.22%	8550	-5.52%
5	3451	Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office(Revenue)	166900	153640	193975	241131	16.22%	226110	321018	16.57%	331825	46.75%
6	5475	Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office(Capital)	3100	5223	3700	2722	19.35%	4100	1261	10.81%	3100	-24.39%
		<b>Total- Establishment Expenditure</b>	1810900	1585573	1939600	1850646	7.11%	1927500	2096252	-0.62%	2238600	16.14%
		<b>II. Other Central Expenditure</b>										
1	3475	Grants-in-aid to National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (Revenue)	113000	113000	113000	174971	0%	113000	97000	0%	113000	0.00%
		<b>Total- Other Central Expenditure</b>	113000	113000	113000	174971	0%	113000	97000	0%	113000	0.00%
		<b>III. Central Sector Schemes</b>										
1	3475	Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) (Revenue)	1443000	967065	1443000	270083	0%	3800000	973835	163%	3905000	2.76%

	5475	<b>Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) (Capital)</b>	107000	1291	107000	745	0%	200000	641	87%	145000	-27.50%
2	3475	<b>State Support Mission (SSM) (%) [Revenue]</b>	397000	215762	399900	408971	0.73%	449900	331156	12.50%	980000	117.83%
3	5475	<b>State Support Mission (SSM) (%) [Capital]</b>	3000	--	100	--	-96.67%	100	--	0.00%	20000	19900.00%
4	3475	<b>Research and Study</b>	40000	25461	40000	39988	0%	40000	29197	0%	40000	0.00%
5	3475	<b>Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	4330000	--	4330000	80666	0%	100	0	-100%	100	0.00%
6	3475	<b>Aspirational Blocks Programmes (ABP)</b>	--	--	--	--	--	3530000	1249058	0.00	2180000	-38.24%
7	3475	<b>Aspirational Districts Programme- Phase III</b>						--	499824	0%	2700000	
		<b>Total: Central Sector Schemes</b>	<b>6320000</b>	<b>1209579</b>	<b>6320000</b>	<b>800453</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>8020100</b>	<b>3054311</b>	<b>26.90%</b>	<b>9970100</b>	<b>24.31%</b>
		<b>Grand Total-</b>	<b>8243900</b>	<b>2908152</b>	<b>8372600</b>	<b>2826070</b>	<b>1.56%</b>	<b>10060600</b>	<b>5247563</b>	<b>20.16%</b>	<b>12321600</b>	<b>22.47%</b>

(₹ in thousands)												
Sl. No.	Major Head	Name of the Schemes	BE 2023-24	Actuals 2023-24	BE 2024-25	Actuals 2024-25	%Increase/ Decrease of BE 2024-25 over BE 2023-24	BE 2025-26	Actuals 2025-26 (upto 16.01.25)	%Increase/ Decrease of BE 2025-26 over BE 2024-25	BE 2026-27	% Increase/ Decrease of BE 2026-27 over BE 2025-26
	3451	Deduct Recoveries		(-) 3445		(-) 2837						
	3475	Deduct Recoveries		(-) 25789		(-) 19042						
		<b>Total recoveries:</b>		<b>(-) 29234</b>		<b>(-) 21879</b>						

**Ministry of Planning**

**Demand No. 77**

**I. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self Employment and Talent Utilization(SETU)(CS)–Indicators for OOMF F.Y. 2026-27**

FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)	OUTPUTS 2026-27			OUTCOME 2026-27			
	2026-27	Output	Indicators	Targets 2026-27	Outcome	Indicators	Targets 2026-27
405	<b>a. Language Inclusive Program of Innovation (LIPI)</b>						
	1. To build innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in India’s regional languages	1.1 No. of LIPI centres created		15	1. Systematically reduce entry barrier for innovators, entrepreneurs and investors who don’t speak English	1.1 No. of vernacular innovators and investors supported by the LIPI Innovation Centres	30
		1.2 No. of beneficiaries of knowledge sharing sessions conducted by LIPI Task Force		10			
	<b>b. Frontier Program</b>						
	1. To create tailored interventions for developing innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in frontier regions of India (Hilly and NE-Indian Regions)	1.1 No. of ATLS established in frontier regions		500	1. Catalyze the growth of a vibrant innovation ecosystem in frontier regions	1.1 No. of students engaged in ATL innovation projects	2,500
		1.2 No. of research and landscape studies initiated		2		1.2 No. of teachers trained as ATL in-charge	250
						1.3 No. of novel templates of tinkering labs and incubation centres developed for frontier regions	2

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
	<b>c. Human Capital Development Program (HCD)</b>					
	1. To create a system for producing professionals specializing in building, operating and maintaining India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem	1.1 No of innovation and entrepreneurship courses developed	2	1. Establish a robust ecosystem for training and certifying professionals in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship	1.1 No. of incubation management personnels trained in innovation and entrepreneurship courses	100
		1.2 No of competency framework developed for innovation enabling centres	1		1.2 No of innovation enabling centres which adopted competency framework	10
	<b>d. State Innovation Mission (SIM)</b>					
	1. To build innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem across various States/UTs	1.1 No. of States / UTs with structured engagement with	4	1. Engage with the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem across various states to	1.1 No. of workshops / sessions conducted in physical/virtual/hybrid mode	4
					1.2 No. of participants from ecosystem stakeholders (States /UTs and Central Govt., Incubators, Startups, Innovators, VC and funding ecosystem players) in the workshops / sessions	300

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
		SIM (under State Support Mission)		foster knowledge sharing, best practice exchange, and network building.	1.3 Total no. of structured Programs launched through the SIM across the State/UTs where SIM is launched	8
<b>e. International Innovation Collaboration (IIC)</b>						
	1. To build innovation and entrepreneurship exchange platforms across national boundaries	1.1 No. of International (bilateral / multilateral) innovation programs launched / executed	2	1. Engage with the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem across various nations / multilateral agencies to foster knowledge sharing, best practice exchange, and network building.	1.1 No. of startups supported through bilateral / multilateral innovation programs	30
					1.2 No. of pilots conducted through bilateral / multilateral innovation programs	9
<b>f. Atal Acceleration Centres for Scale-up of Startups (AACCESS - Industry Accelerator)</b>						
	1. To build a platform for supporting revenue-stage startups through establishing	1.1 No. of industrial accelerators established	10	1. Create startup-industry linkages that accelerates the growth of technology-	1.1 No. of revenue stage startups accelerated	120
		1.2 No. of acceleration	14		1.2 Growth % recorded in revenue of the supported	1.5x

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
	acceleration centres in corporate, PSUs and industries	programs launched		driven startups in key industrial sectors	startups( <i>x is the startup revenue at initial stage of the acceleration</i> )	
		1.3 No. of partnerships facilitated for the startups with vendors, companies in relevant sectors, educational institutes, research labs, venture capital firms etc.	50		1.3 No. of products/services commercialized by the supported startups	60
<b>g. Atal Sectoral Innovation Launchpad (ASIL)</b>						
	1. To create institutions in central government ministries to independently run sectoral innovation programs and integrate innovation into the sector	1.1 No. of sectoral innovation launchpads created in central government	4	1. Establish institutional mechanism within central government ministries, accelerating the adoption of innovative solutions and	1.1 No. of innovation programs run through sectoral innovation launchpads	9
					1.2 No. of startups supported through sectoral innovation launchpads	60
					1.3 No. of startups pilots conducted through sectoral innovation launchpads	30

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
		ministries and departments		driving sector-specific growth and development.		
<b>h. Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL)</b>						
	1. To build a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship in schools	1.1 No. of school staff/teachers engaged in ATLs (in total schools)	5,000	1. Promote a culture of and ecosystem for entrepreneurship & innovation at school level	1.1 No. of students engaged in ATL innovation projects	50,000
		1.2 No. of ATL innovation challenges / events initiated	5		1.2 No. of ATL student prototypes / innovations created	5,000
					1.3 No. of students recognized through SIP/SEP/partnership recognition programs	1,000
<b>i. Atal Incubation Centre (AIC)</b>						
	1. To build platforms for innovation and entrepreneurship in academic institutions / R&D and other institutions	1.1 No. of AICs established	15	1. Create institutional mechanism for supporting startups in sectors of	1.1 No. of start-ups incubated (physical and virtual)	1000
		1.2 No. of incubator / startup excellence sessions facilitated by AICs	500		1.2 No. of jobs (direct/indirect) created by startups incubated in AICs	5,000

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
		1.3 No. of value adding partnerships established by AICs	100	national importance	1.3 Leveraged external funding for startups through AICs (in %)	800
		1.4 No. of mentors in AICs	120		1.4 No. of Intellectual Properties (IP) filed by startups incubated in AICs	60
<b>j. Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACIC)</b>						
	1. To encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship in the underserved/unserved regions of India	1.1 No. of Atal Community Innovation Centers supported	25	1. Create institutional mechanism for supporting grassroots innovations through ACICs	1.1 No. of ACIC start-ups / social entrepreneurs supported (physical and virtual)	300
		1.2 No. of innovation knowledge sharing sessions conducted by ACIC	100		1.2 No. of local community jobs created by ACICs	500
		1.3 No. of community outreach events conducted	100		1.3 No. of Community Innovators Fellows (CIFs) supported	50
<b>k. Atal New India Challenges (ANIC)</b>						
			50	1. Commercialize new products based on		20

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
	1. To seek, select, support and nurture technology-based innovations that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance	1.1 No. of ANIC startups supported		cutting edge technology relevant to the Indian context	1.1 No. of new ANIC startups commercialized	
					1.2 No of ANIC winners connected to government and private sector investors	10
<b>I. AIM Ecosystem Development Program (AEDP)</b>						
	1. To develop and implement strategic initiatives and partnerships to identify and address gaps in India's innovation and	1.1 No. of strategic programs ongoing / introduced across AIM ecosystem	2	1. Facilitate networking and collaboration among key stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem, including startups, investors, corporates, academia, and other enablers.	1.1 No. of innovators / startups supported (participation) under identified strategic programs	30
				2. Create platforms to showcase innovative		

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
	entrepreneurship ecosystem.			solutions developed by students, startups, and entrepreneurs to a diverse audience of investors, corporates, MSMEs, and non-profit organizations.	2.1 No. of innovation solutions showcased at national / international forums across innovation ecosystem	10
<b>m. Deep Tech Reactor (DTR)</b>						
	1. To build institutional platforms for streamlining the entire ecosystem of deep science and technology-based startups that require longer gestation periods and higher investments	1. 1 No. of deep tech reactors established	1	1. Promote and facilitate R&D, investments, and technology policies for deep-tech startups.	1.1. No. of deep-tech solutions/startups with proven prototypes supported	5
				2. Identify and bridge institutional gaps hindering the deployment of	2.1. No. of beneficiaries/participants in the entire deep-tech ecosystem (researchers, academicians, VCs, startups, and/or corporates)	50

<b>FINANCIAL OUTLAY (Rs in Cr)</b>	<b>OUTPUTS 2026-27</b>			<b>OUTCOME 2026-27</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets 2026-27</b>
				deep tech solutions in India		

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**2. Aspirational Districts Programme Phase III (ADP Phase III) & Aspirational Blocks Programme-**

<b>Financial Outlay (In Crores)</b>	<b>Outputs (2026-27)</b>			<b>Outcomes (2026-27)</b>		
<b>2026-27</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator (s)</b>	<b>Target 2026-27</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Indicator (s)</b>	<b>Target 2026-27</b>
<b>Aspirational Districts Programme Phase III (ADP Phase III)</b>						
<b>270</b>	1. Engagement with relatively	1.1 No. of projects	1.1 To finalize	1. To sanction projects to	1.1 No. of projects sanctioned for districts	1.1 To approve the projects (min 85) submitted by districts, by the empowered committee of secretaries

Financial Outlay (In Crores)	Outputs (2026-27)			Outcomes (2026-27)		
	Output	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27	Outcome	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27
2026-27	underdeveloped Districts for their socioeconomic development	submitted by districts	85 project proposals under ADP from the districts.	districts/blocks addressing critical development gaps and thus accelerating the socio-economic progress of districts and blocks.	1.2 Percentage of fund disbursed for the sanctioned projects	1.2 40% of funds disbursed to the sanctioned project
<b>Aspirational Blocks Programme</b>						
218	1. Engagement with relatively underdeveloped Blocks for their socio-economic development. Measuring performance of 513 blocks on the basis of improvement made in key performance	1.1 Number of blocks awarded under delta ranking based on the improvement made on 40 KPIs	1.1 Award 14 blocks every quarter based on progress made on KPIs.	1. Measuring improvement made in KPIs by the 513 blocks across 5 socio-economic themes.	1.1 Average percentage change in KPIs. 1.2 Average percentage change in composite score by the blocks	1.1 7% average of KPIs change. 1.2 5% percentage average change in composite score by the blocks

Financial Outlay (In Crores)	Outputs (2026-27)			Outcomes (2026-27)			
	2026-27	Output	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27	Outcome	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27
		indicators (KPIs) across 5 socio-economic themes, such as- Health & Nutrition Education Basic Infrastructure Social Development Agriculture & Allied Services	2.1 No. of projects submitted by blocks.	2.1Preparation of 85 project proposals by blocks under ABP.	2. Sanction projects to districts addressing critical development gaps and thus accelerating the socio-economic progress of blocks.	2.1 No. of projects sanctioned for blocks. 2.2 Percentage of fund disbursed for the sanctioned projects	2.1 Approval of projects (min 85) by the Empowered Committee of Secretaries. 2.2 40% of funds disbursed to the sanctioned project

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### 3. State Support Mission:

Financial Outlay (In Crores)	Outputs (2026-27)			Outcomes (2026-27)			
	2026-27	Output	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27	Outcome	Indicator (s)	Target 2026-27
			1.1 Total amount of funds estimated to be released to states for SSM activities, M&E systems,	Target amenable*	1. Number of states supported under SSM to develop their	1.1 Number of State Institution for Transformation (SIT) formed in	36

100	1. Engagement with states	studies, workshops and other admin exp		strategies and State Vision@2047 in alignment with India Vision@2047 and other national development priorities	various States/UTs	
		1.2 Number of workshops/trainings/conferences conducted	50		1.2 Number of SITs operationalized.	Target amenable*
		1.3 Number of LKIs on boarded	15			

*\*Since they are state specific and Demand Driven*

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**Minutes of the Nineteenth Sitting of the  
Standing Committee on Finance (2025-26)**

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 from 1615 hrs. to 1800 hrs in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe (PHA), New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab - Chairperson**

**LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Arun Bharti
3. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
4. Shri Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu
5. Shri Kishori Lal
6. Smt. Sandhya Ray
7. Prof. Sougata Ray
8. Shri Manish Tewari
9. Shri Balashowry Vallabhaneni

**RAJYA SABHA**

10. Shri Narain Dass Gupta
11. Shri Yerram Venkata Subba Reddy
12. Shri S. Selvaganabathy
13. Shri Sanjay Seth
14. Dr. M. Thambidurai

**SECRETARIAT**

1. Smt. Bharti Sanjeev Tuteja - Director
2. Shri Kuldeep Singh Rana - Deputy Secretary
3. Shri T. Mathivanan - Deputy Secretary

## WITNESSES

### Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog)

1. Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, Chief Executive Officer
2. Shri Deepak Narain, AS & FA
3. Shri Rohit Kumar, Mission Director (MD) (ADP/ ABP)
4. Ms. Gitanjali Gupta, PD (VB-PP&V)
5. Dr. Deepak bagla, MD (AIM)
6. Dr. Yogesh Suri, PD (GCS/ Parliament)
7. Dr. Pravakar Sahoo, PD (E&F-1)
8. Shri Rajib Kumar Sen, PD (SDG/ State Finance)
9. Shri Rajeev Singh Thakur, DG (NILERD)
10. Shri Dhrijesh Tiwari, JS (DMEO)
11. Shri Shoyabahmed Kalal, Director (SSM)

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson, welcomed the Witnesses to the sitting of the Committee. After the customary introduction of the Witnesses, the CEO, NITI Aayog made a Power Point Presentation (PPT) before the Committee on the examination of Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog) and broad issues connected therewith.

3. The Committee then deliberated upon the Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog) and the overall mandate and mission of NITI Aayog. The major issues discussed during the sitting were related to the Budget allocations to NITI Aayog; allocation and utilization of budget grants under Central Sector Schemes viz. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) Programme, State Support Mission, Research and Study and Aspirational Districts/Blocks Programme (ADP/ABP); rationale for the token budgetary allocation for Official Development Assistance for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/Aspirational District Programme (ADP); various achievements of NITI Aayog; understanding the functions of National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development, the autonomous body under the aegis of NITI Aayog; the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) that assist the Government in evidence-based policy-making; progress of the third phase of the ADP; progress on the new programmes under Atal Innovation Mission 2.0 – implemented to make AIM more efficient; gathering the progress made by the Ministry of Planning in furtherance of Sustainable Development Goals and its alignment with Viksit Bharat@2047 Mission.

4. In addition to above, the Committee also discussed the thrust being laid for every State to come out with their vision documents for achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat; developing more cities to create more engines of growth; need for new research project for assessing the economic impact of State freebie schemes/Fiscal Health Index enabling visualization of fiscal condition of States; mandate and functional modalities of Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office and National Institute of Labour, Economic Research and Development; reasons for underperformance in creation of Language Inclusive Program of Innovation (LIPI) centres and financial grants to Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) under AIM Programme; improvements that are contemplated and proposed in ADP 2.0 and Phase 2 of ABP; initiatives under DFGs (2026-27) that aim to reduce regional disparities in development outcomes; reasons for deviation in the Budget Estimate of Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog) from the norms of quarterly/monthly expenditure limits prescribed by Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs); concrete metrics to measure transitioning of demographic dividend into productive employment; NITI Aayog's role and efforts in meaningful implementation of technologies and commercial applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to ensure it penetrates amongst people living below the poverty line to transform their lives; reasons for consistent and widening gap between the Budget Estimate and actual utilisation; systemic reforms and policy initiatives needed to achieve USD 30 trillion economy, Viksit Bharat vision 2047 and Net Zero emissions by 2070; status of number of States covered under Accelerating Sustainable State Energy Transition Programme.

5. The witnesses responded to the queries raised by the Members. The Chairperson then directed the representatives of the Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog) to furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members which could not be readily responded to by them during the discussion, by 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 to the Secretariat.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

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**Minutes of the Twenty-Second Sitting of the  
Standing Committee on Finance (2025-26)**

The Committee sat on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2026 from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs in Committee Room Samanvya -5, Parliament House, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab – Chairperson**

**LOK SABHA**

2. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
3. Shri Rajesh Naranbhai Chudasama
4. Shri Kishori Lal
5. Shri N. K. Premachandran
6. Prof. Sougata Ray
7. Dr. Jayanta Kumar Roy
8. Dr. K. Sudhakar
9. Shri Manish Tewari

**RAJYA SABHA**

10. Shri Narain Dass Gupta
11. Shri Sanjay Seth
12. Smt. Darshana Singh

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                            |   |                  |
|----|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri Gaurav Goyal          | - | Joint Secretary  |
| 2. | Smt. Bharti Sanjeev Tuteja | - | Director         |
| 3. | Shri Kuldeep Singh Rana    | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Shri T. Mathivanan         | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee took up the following draft Reports for consideration and adoption:

- i) Thirty-Third Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Finance (Departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Public Enterprises and Investment & Public Asset Management).
- ii) Thirty-Fourth Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Planning (NITI Aayog).

iii) Thirty-Fifth Report on Demands for Grants (2026-27) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

3. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the above draft Reports with minor modifications and authorised the Chairperson to finalise them and present the Reports to the Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

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