

# Project description

## Strengthening the impact of bare foot hydrologists

The Water and Sanitation programme of the community organization Gram Vikas has since 1994 contributed to the improved rural health situation in Orissa, India. In order to further enhance the impact of this programme, the project strengthens the local capacity of barefoot hydrologists. The project is executed as collaboration between Deltares Subsurface and Groundwater systems, ICCO, TNO and Gram Vikas. In addition to the partners' contributions, the two year project receives co-funding from the Dutch Schokland Fund, focussing on realising the Millenium Development Goals in 2015.

### Practical approach

The concept of Bare Foot Hydrologists includes training of local staff as practical hydrologists who can work in the field and in the office, build and maintain a basic computerized database, develop a toolkit and ensure improved interaction with local governments and research institutes. The uniqueness of this project is that it explicitly focuses on the typically difficult but important scientific background on hydrology and groundwater management.

### Training is essential

Too often the interference of human activities with (ground)water is ignored, while implementing water and sanitation projects. It is, however, exactly the lack of knowledge on such interactions that results in unsustainable water supply and sanitation. A better understanding of hydrology and groundwater flow is crucial for efficient siting of wells and sanitation service points. This understanding is particularly relevant when striving for more (up scaling) and better (sustainable) rural water supply and sanitation in Orissa, India.

### A safe drinking water objective

The primary objective is to ensure sustainable safe drinking water and sanitation by improving data collection and interpretation of geohydrological information. The project contributes directly to the Millennium Development Goals and towards the goal of the Indian Government by decreasing poverty through a better health, improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation, more time to do productive work and by decreasing the work load of women and girls.

### Future perspective

In addition, the joint expertise of the consortium partners will be able to directly realise mutual benefits by closely collaborating in this integrated project and, possibly in the near future, up scaling the concept of the Bare Foot Hydrologist to other rural areas outside Orissa and eventually around the world.

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