Leakages from the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) that provides food, pre-school education, and primary healthcare to children less than 6 years of age and their mothers, cost the exchequer and have compromised the effectiveness of the government programme. The then-secretary of the ICDS, Mr. Rajit Punhani sought the IGC’s help in designing a monitoring system for the ICDS. A previous IGC funded project titled ‘Performance of ICDS Supplementary Nutrition Programme in Bihar’ had found a high level of leakages from the scheme. The government was interested in finding ways to curb these leakages; for this, they requested the IGC’s help in designing a monitoring system.

With Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS), the ICDS will use technology-based solutions to create top-down and bottom-up channels of information which are actionable, frequent, verifiable, and accurate. The IPMS document focuses on the design of three of the IPMS’ four components: (1) frontline worker (Sevika) self-reporting; (2) supervisor monitoring; and (3) community grievance redressal and feedback. The first two components provide the existing ICDS hierarchy with mobile phones to facilitate systematic and accurate reporting of on-the-ground performance. The IPMS technology platform aggregates this data and allows it to be presented in easily interpretable web-based reports to facilitate appropriate action by ICDS officials. The third component empowers community members both to report on service delivery and to receive information on the ICDS performance via a dedicated and free call centre service. Cutting across these components is a series of performance-based actions to effectively manage the ICDS employees. The Secretary’s goal is to use such a system to improve the ICDS service delivery, resulting in better beneficiary outcomes.