

# Govt plans to set up single agency for infrastructure

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**New Delhi:** As the government continues its thrust on infrastructure development and manifold hike in investment, the Centre has started working on setting up a single agency for infrastructure planning, monitoring and their evaluation.

The PMO is working on this plan with an aim to ensure that infrastructure projects have maximum impact on the economy, job creation, ease of living and quality of life, sources said. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has been asked to come up with an initial framework.

The development comes at a time when the Centre has increased the allocation of capital expenditure to Rs 10 lakh crore for the current financial year, as compared to Rs 2.6 lakh crore in 2017-18. Officials said the trend of high allocation for capital expenditure is likely to continue, and there has been a significant increase in the utilisation of the allocated fund as well. "Since resources are limited, it's important to have integrated planning and monitoring of all projects by one agency. But the evaluation of projects is more important to find what were the results and



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impact of the huge public expenditure. We need to evaluate them both in terms of short term and medium term impacts," said a source.

Recently, the finance ministry had suggested that the railways, road transport and shipping ministries conduct productivity tests of all their projects after completion. **TOI** has learnt that the issue had come up during the appraisal of a steep rise in budgetary allocation for railways — from Rs 45,232 crore in 2017-18 to Rs 2.4 lakh crore in 2023-24. Considering the skewed share of cargo transported by road, rail and waterways, the finance ministry has also asked Niti Aayog to carry out a study to assess the "optimal freight modal share" and prepare a plan for rationalising this.