

NAMASTE Scheme

1) What does ‘NAMASTE’ stand for?

NAMASTE is an abbreviation for “National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem”.

2) What is the objective of the NAMASTE scheme?

The objective of the NAMASTE scheme is to formalize and institutionalised the persons engaged in hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and promoting safe and mechanized cleaning through trained sanitation workers.

3) Which ministries have come together for implementation of ‘NAMASTE’ scheme?

The scheme is jointly being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

4) Which is the implementing agency for ‘NAMASTE’ scheme?

The National Safai Karmacharis Finance Development Corporation (NSKFDC) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) is the implementing agency of ‘NAMASTE’.

5) What is the implementation period for ‘NAMASTE’ scheme?

The ‘NAMASTE’ scheme would be implemented for three years from FY 2023-24 to FY 2025-26.

6) What are the intended outcomes of the NAMASTE scheme?

The intended outcomes of the NAMASTE scheme include zero fatalities in sanitation work, formalization and skilling of sanitation workers, elimination of direct contact with human faecal matter, establishment, strengthening and capacitating of Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs), and empowerment of sanitation workers through self-help groups and entrepreneurship, access to alternate livelihood options, and occupational safety training to all sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs).

7) Who does the NAMASTE scheme target?

The scheme primarily targets sewer and septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) in urban areas of India. This includes workers employed by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), parastatal agencies, and private sanitation service organizations and also independent workers. In addition, since 2024 wastepickers have been added as an additional target group.

8) Who is a Sewer and Septic tank sanitation worker (SSW)?

Sanitation workers are those who are engaged in cleaning and maintenance of sewers including those managing pumping stations, maintenance holes, and sewer lines; and those engaged in septic tank cleaning. Such workers may or may not be engaged by ULB/parastatal, empanelled/registered/licensed Private Sanitation Service Organisation (PSSO) and other private sanitation service providers.

9) Who is a PSSO?

PSSO is Private Sanitation Service Organisation who are involved in cleaning and maintenance of sewer and septic tanks and may or may not be empanelled/registered/contracted/licensed with ULB.

10) What is the role of State Government in implementation of NAMASTE scheme?

The role of State Government in implementation of NAMASTE is very important as State Government is to ensure the implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 which prohibits hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks. The State should have to immediately facilitate and issue notification for setting up of Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU) and designate Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA) in all Municipal Corporations and Districts with establishment of helpline number 14420. Further, necessary actions should be taken up by State Level Nodal Officer for NAMASTE to support convergence across the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), NAMASTE and Deendayal Antyoday Yojana – National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM). The State has to nominate a State NAMASTE Nodal Officer, from the Urban Development Department, for implementation of NAMASTE. State must declare each District MS free and pay compensation of Rs. 30 lakhs to the legal heir of deceased as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and also confirm whether any FIR under MS Act, 2013 against the persons responsible for engaging for hazardous cleaning of sewers has been lodged. The details of data relating to persons who have lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning must be loaded on the NAMASTE portal.

11) What is process of appointment of state PMUs?

As per TOR issued vide D.O letter U-19014/68/2022/-PLAN dated 15th July 2023 and 15th September 2023 by Under Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment; the recruitment process would be managed by the respective state nodal department.

12) What are the funding modalities for state PMU operationalizations?

The funds to the State PMU would be released by NSKFDC as per TOR issued vide D.O letter U-19014/68/2022/-PLAN dated 15th July 2023 and 15th September 2023 by Under Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.

13) How will a Union territory know their Nodal officers and PMUs?

As per the terms of reference issued vide D.O letter U-19014/68/2022/-PLAN dated 15th July 2023 and 15th September 2023 by Under Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment; the name of coordinating state for the respective Union territories is mentioned in the TOR.

14) What is the role of Urban Local Body (ULB) in implementation of NAMASTE scheme?

The role of ULB is nodal authority for implementation of NAMASTE scheme. ULBs will have to do empanelment of Private Sanitation Service Organisation (PSSO) and enumeration of SSWs engaged by ULB/parastatal agencies and all PSSOs through profiling camps. Further, ULB shall facilitate occupational safety training to SSWs for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety gear along with handling of mechanized cleaning operations provided through NSKFDC.

Additionally, ULB will have to support access to alternate livelihoods for SSWs through nominating SSW/dependents as beneficiary of Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY) for linkage with capital subsidy to procure sanitation-related machines, provide long-term and assured mechanized cleaning work contract and mobilize SSW into SHG through linkage with NULM for sanitation related enterprise. ULBs will provide the institutional frame work of the ESRU and maintaining it with trained manpower with availability of requisite safety equipments and a citizen help line number (14420)

15) What kind of support will be provided to sanitation workers under the NAMASTE scheme?

The scheme provides support in various forms, such as occupational safety training, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), health insurance coverage, livelihood counselling and support, and access to subsidized loans for the purchase of sanitation-related equipment.

16) How does the NAMASTE scheme converge with other ministries and programs?

The NAMASTE scheme aims to foster convergence with ministries such as the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. This collaboration leverages their respective strengths and resources to ensure the safety and well-being of sanitation workers.

17) Which department shall implement NAMASTE at State levels?

State Urban Development department shall be the nodal agency to implement NAMASTE in the respective state/UT, the department shall appoint a State NAMASTE Nodal Officer to ensure smooth implementation and monitoring of the scheme.

18) What if ULB is not the nodal authority for cleaning and maintenance of sewer lines and septic tanks?

In this case, the ULB should consult the concerned parastatal agency/authority and collect the information of PSSOs, and SSWs working with them and collate the information. These workers must be informed for profiling camp.

19) Under which condition manual entry is permitted for sewer or septic tank cleaning?

When the cleaning of sewer or septic tank is beyond capability of machines, only trained sanitation worker, properly equipped and authorised by RSA should be allowed to enter sewer or septic tank for cleaning.

20) Why is it important to focus on mechanization of sanitation work?

Sewer and septic tank Sanitation Workers (SSW) are directly exposed to hazardous waste and various occupational safety challenges while cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. Apart from increased risk of morbidity that these workers face due to their occupations, they face severe risks of losing their lives due to unsafe/unregulated entry into sewer lines or septic tanks. This necessitates mechanization of sanitation work as mechanization eliminates sanitation worker's direct contact with faecal matter. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Safety Devices

help in minimizing occupational hazards due to manual entry into sewers and septic tanks. 'NAMASTE' scheme aims to provide PPE, safety devices and equipment for cleaning of sewer and septic tanks through ERSU.

Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU)

21) What is the objective of the ERSU?

The primary objective of the Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERUU) is to offer a professional, well-trained, motivated, and adequately equipped workforce for the maintenance and management of sewers and septic tanks. The aim is to eliminate fatalities resulting from workers entering sewers and septic tanks by providing them with proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and training. It is the responsibility of ERSU to supply safety devices and equipment for confined space entry to Sewer Entry Professionals (SEPs). ERSU is to be headed by the Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA).

22) Who is an RSA?

The Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA) is designated as the District Magistrate or Municipal Commissioner of a major town or the regional head of a parastatal agency for their respective jurisdiction, including smaller clustered towns (ERSU Advisory, MoHUA, 2013). Their roles encompass ensuring timely service delivery, protecting sanitation workers, providing training, upgrades, equipment, and overseeing ERSU operations. In cases where human entry becomes necessary, the RSA assumes full authority and responsibility at the entry site until the task is deemed complete.

23) Where will ERSU be set up?

Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU) will be set up in all Municipal Corporations and/or Water & Sewer Board and in capital cities of each State/UT, and at district headquarters. The ERSU shall be responsible to meet sanitation emergency requests from all smaller towns within a cluster say 75 km radius (ERSU Advisory, MoHUA, 2019). 1100 ERSUs are envisaged to be set up across the country.

Occupational Safety and Training

24) How will the NAMASTE scheme address the occupational health risks faced by sanitation workers?

The scheme aims to enhance the occupational safety of sanitation workers by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, such as gloves, body suits, masks, and safety goggles. These measures help protect sanitation workers from any diseases/illnesses associated with their work.

25) Will the NAMASTE scheme provide training for sanitation workers?

Yes, the NAMASTE scheme includes provisions for training sanitation workers. It focuses on skill-building, capacity development, and occupational safety training. This helps enhance the professionalism and expertise of sanitation workers.

26) Who will provide occupational safety training to SSWs?

As per Scheme guidelines, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in coordination with NSKFDC will provide occupational safety training to SSWs.

27) How will the NAMASTE scheme empower sanitation workers to become entrepreneurs?

The NAMASTE scheme promotes the formation and strengthening of self-help groups (SHGs) among sanitation workers. These SHGs are empowered to run their own sanitation enterprises, allowing sanitation workers to have greater control over their livelihoods.

28) What kind of assistance is provided to SSWs for sanitation related projects under 'NAMASTE' scheme?

The capital subsidy is provided by way of upfront capital subsidy to SSWs. The details for this are given below:

Project cost up to Rs. 5.00 lakh	50% of the project cost
Project cost above Rs. 5.00 lakh and up to Rs. 15.00 lakh	Rs. 2.50 lakh + 25% of the remaining project cost above Rs. 5.00 lakh
For Group projects costing up to Rs. 50.00 lakh with each beneficiary project share maximum up to Rs. 10.00 lakh.	Same as above with maximum per member capital subsidy of Rs. 3.75 lakh and maximum group project subsidy of Rs. 18.75 lakh.

29) What shall be the funding modalities for IEC activities?

IEC activities are funded under NAMASTE scheme for State Government and ULBs which can run these citizen awareness programmes in RWAs, Municipalities, Malls and other public place after submission of their media plans.
