**What is Smart City?**

The first question is what is meant by a ‘smart city’. The answer is, there is no universally accepted definition of a smart city. It means different things to different people. The conceptualisation of Smart City, therefore, varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform, resources and aspirations of the city residents. A smart city would have a different connotation in India than, say, Europe. Even in India, there is no one way of defining a smart city.

Some definitional boundaries are required to guide cities in the Mission. In the imagination of any city dweller in India, the picture of a smart city contains a wish list of infrastructure and services that describes his or her level of aspiration. To provide for the aspirations and needs of the citizens, urban planners ideally aim at developing the entire urban eco-system, which is represented by the four pillars of comprehensive development-institutional, physical, social and economic infrastructure. This can be a long term goal and cities can work towards developing such comprehensive infrastructure incrementally, adding on layers of ‘smartness’.

## Smart City Features:-

Some typical features of comprehensive development in Smart Cities are described below.

1. Promoting mixed land use in area based developments–planning for ‘unplanned areas’ containing a range of compatible activities and land uses close to one another in order to make land use more efficient. The States will enable some flexibility in land use and building bye-laws to adapt to change;
2. Housing and inclusiveness - expand housing opportunities for all;
3. Creating walkable localities –reduce congestion, air pollution and resource depletion, boost local economy, promote interactions and ensure security. The road network is created or refurbished not only for vehicles and public transport, but also for pedestrians and cyclists, and necessary administrative services are offered within walking or cycling distance;
4. Preserving and developing open spaces - parks, playgrounds, and recreational spaces in order to enhance the quality of life of citizens, reduce the urban heat effects in Areas and generally promote eco-balance;
5. Promoting a variety of transport options - Transit Oriented Development (TOD), public transport and last mile para-transport connectivity;
6. Making governance citizen-friendly and cost effective - increasingly rely on online services to bring about accountability and transparency, especially using mobiles to reduce cost of services and providing services without having to go to municipal offices. Forming e-groups to listen to people and obtain feedback and use online monitoring of programs and activities with the aid of cyber tour of worksites;
7. Giving an identity to the city - based on its main economic activity, such as local cuisine, health, education, arts and craft, culture, sports goods, furniture, hosiery, textile, dairy, etc;
8. Applying Smart Solutions to infrastructure and services in area-based development in order to make them better. For example, making Areas less vulnerable to disasters, using fewer resources, and providing cheaper services.

**Challenges**

**Planning:**

Many urban governments *lack a modern planning framework*

The *multiplicity of local bodies obstructs efficient planning and land use*

*Rigid master plans and restrictive zoning regulations limit the land available* for building, constricting cities’ abilities to *grow in accordance with changing needs*.

**Housing:**

*Building regulations that limit urban density - such as floor space indexes – reduce the number of houses available, thereby pushing up property prices*

*Outdated rent control regulations reduce the number of houses available on rent – a critical option for the poor*

*Poor access to micro finance and mortgage finance limit the ability of low income groups to buy or improve their homes*

*Policy, planning, and regulation deficiencies* lead to a proliferation of slums

*Weak finances of urban local bodies and service providers leave them unable to expand the trunk infrastructure that housing developers need to develop new sites.*

**Service delivery:**

Most services are delivered by city governments with *unclear lines of accountability*

There is *a strong bias towards adding physical infrastructure rather than providing financially and environmentally sustainable services*

*Service providers are unable to recover operations and maintenance costs and depend on the government for finance*

*Independent regulatory authorities that set tariffs, decide on subsidies, and enforce service quality are generally absent*.

**Infrastructure:**

Most urban bodies *do not generate the revenues needed to renew infrastructure, nor do they have the creditworthiness to access capital markets for funds*

*Urban transport planning needs to be more holistic – there is a focus on moving vehicles rather than meeting the needs of the large numbers of people who walk or ride bicycles in India’s towns and cities.*

**Environment:**

*The deteriorating urban environment is taking a toll on people’s health and productivity and diminishing their quality of life.*

## FAQs

**Q 1 –** It is difficult to implement water and sewerage projects specific to areas as the large infrastructure needed are generally created for the entire city. How to address this?

**Answer –** Typically, water and sewerage system are sub-divided into smaller geographical areas (e.g. zones). While selecting areas, it would be prudent to keep the smaller geographical units in view.

**Q 2 –** What will be the boundary of the Smart City?

**Answer –** For Retrofitting and Redevelopment options, statutory limits of ULB will be the boundary and for Greenfield development, it can be beyond the city limits, but within the notified planning area of the City.

**Q 3 –** The minimum area requirement for the Redevelopment model is 50 acres, which seems not feasible in case of cities in North Eastern and hilly states. Whether the requirement of minimum area is flexible and can be reduced for such areas?

**Answer –** In terms of Para 5.3 of the SCM guidelines, for North Eastern and Himalayan States, the area proposed to be developed will be one-half of what is prescribed for any of the alternative models.

**Q 4 –** For each city, GoI will provide Rs.500 crore and States will contribute its matching share of Rs.500 crore. This Rs.1000 crore will surely be not adequate for development of a city as smart city under SCM. How the convergence with other schemes be ensured for Smart Cities Mission?

**Answer –** While preparing SCP, cities must make convergence of SCM with other Government Schemes. For example, core infrastructure projects for entire city could be taken up under AMRUT, SBM and HRIDAY and then area selected for development as smart city could be taken up and smart solutions could be applied under SCM. Further, apart from the convergence with other schemes, there are a lot of other sources been identified for financing the SCM which can be seen in para 11.3 of the SCM guidelines.

**Q 5 –** When will the final Smart City Proposal format be sent to the States by MoUD? What is the last date for submitting the Smart City Proposals to MoUD?

**Answer –** Final SCP format is available in OM No.K-15016/61/2015-SC-I, dated 14-09- 2015. The timeline for submitting the SCP to MoUD is 15th December 2015. For timeline of other activities/sub-activities, please see OM No.K- 14012/101(28)/2015-SC-IIIA, dated 23-09-2015.

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