

# RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE

*A city led movement*



## CONCEPT NOTE

### THE RATIONALE

Rivers are among the most productive natural ecosystems providing a variety of environmental, economic, and social benefits. Cities that are located on the banks of rivers, or having rivers flowing through them, are distinctly placed to reap these benefits. However, most cities have just harnessed a fraction of this potential. Worse, in many cities development pressures have had a detrimental impact on the urban river stretches. The need for sustainable management of urban rivers, therefore, is paramount.

Traditionally, the management of rivers has been looked from a basin scale, which is captured in the philosophy of integrated river basin management. While this is certainly the ideal approach, the actual operationalization of the philosophy will need to happen in cities, especially in India. This is because urban areas are largely responsible for the deteriorated state of rivers in most parts of the country. Hence, since the cities have been part of the problem, they have a vital role to play in the solution as well.

Managing urban rivers is an emerging paradigm in India. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) along with other partners have pioneered the work in this regard and have created several enabling frameworks and guidance documents for proliferating river-sensitive development in our cities. Namami Gange through its integrated and comprehensive framework on river rejuvenation has been leading the cause in Ganga river basin and has been chosen as a successful model for replication in other River basins of India. The stage is now set for on-the-ground action.

As cities start to implement the river-sensitive development agenda, there is a unique opportunity for them to learn from each other, while at the same time inspire others to take up progressive action on this front. The River Cities Alliance (RCA) has been conceptualized to serve as an avenue for precisely this purpose.

## THE PURPOSE

*The core objective of RCA is to provide the member cities with a platform to discuss and exchange information on aspects that are vital for sustainable management of urban rivers.*

*The supplementary objective of RCA is for NMCG, NIUA and partners to provide dedicated technical and handholding support to the member cities as they implement interventions for river-sensitive development.*

## THE INSPIRATION

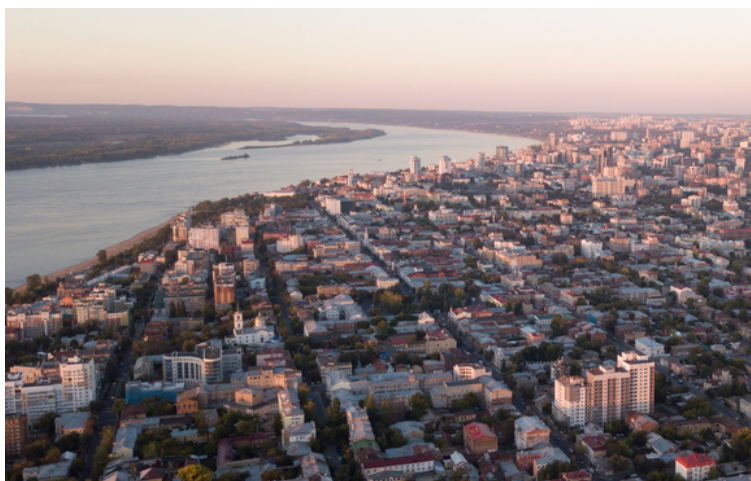
The ambitious call for river-sensitive development, was recognized by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. In the 1st meeting of the National Ganga Council in December 2019, the Hon'ble Prime Minister stated that, **“There is need for a new river centric thinking in planning for cities on the banks of rivers. Cities should be responsible for rejuvenating their rivers. It has to be done not just with the regulatory mindset but also with developmental and facilitatory outlook”.**

## THE OPERATING MODALITY

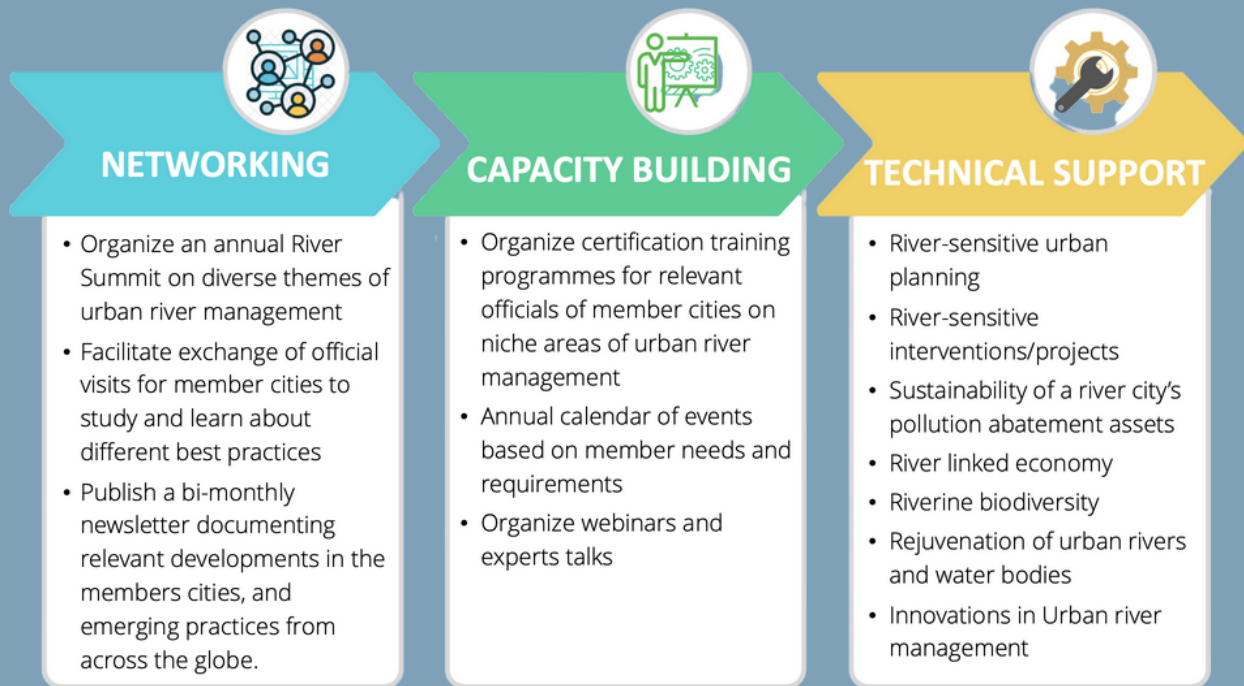
RCA has been envisaged as a city-led movement for promulgating river-sensitive planning and development. Hence, the agenda and operations for RCA will be determined by the member cities.

However, to allow member cities enough time to set up their own structure for managing the Alliance, a Secretariat will be established at NIUA in collaboration with NMCG to take on this responsibility for a period of 3 years.

Initially, the Alliance is being established with select River cities of Ganga basin and River cities from other river basins of India. The Alliance is however, open to all river cities of India.



The activities that RCA will organize fall under three broad themes:



## THE BENEFITS FOR MEMBER CITIES

RCA provides a number of tangible and intangible benefits for the member cities. These include:

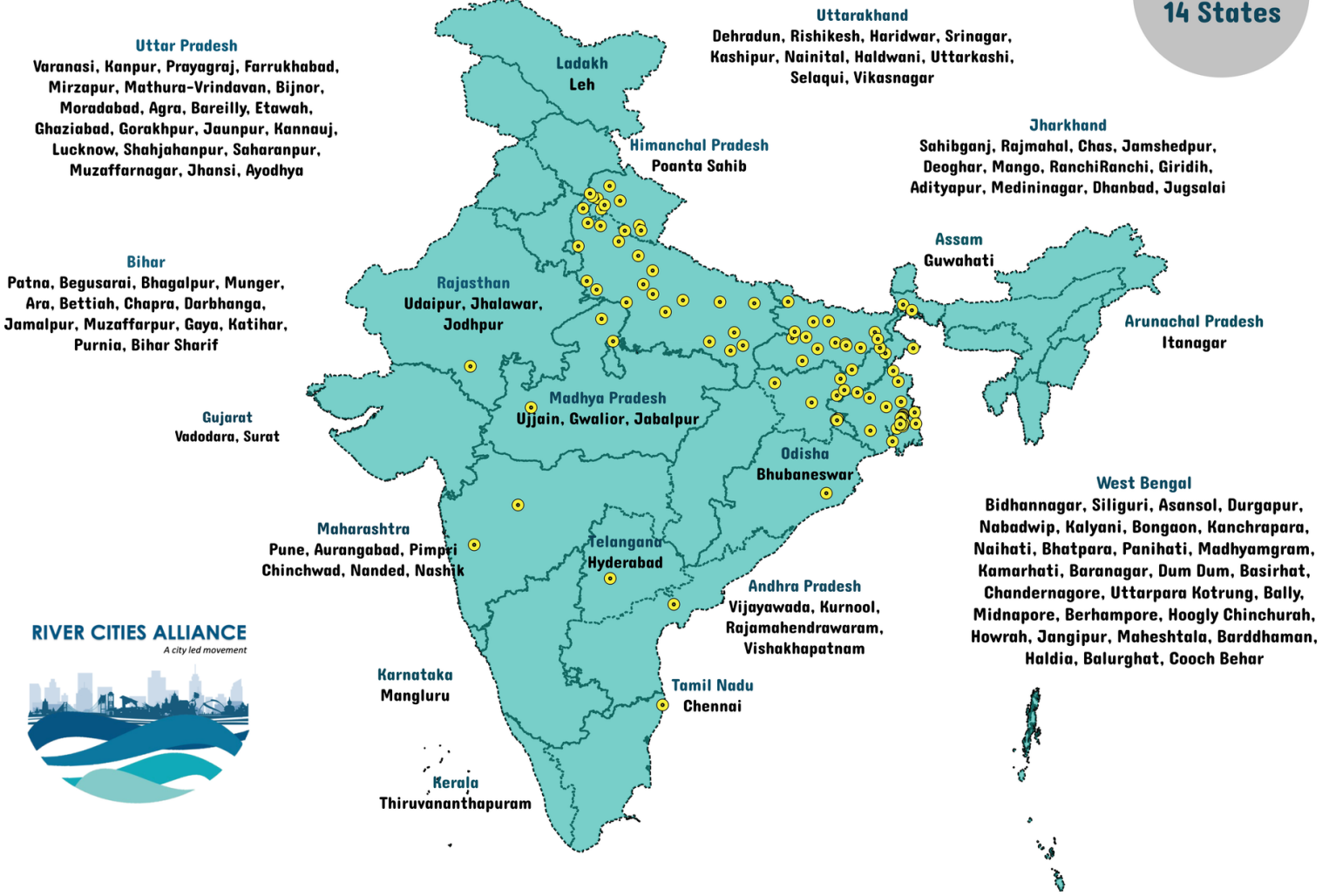
- Opportunity to be part of the first of its kind initiative in the world.
- Opportunity for city commissioners to have interactions with peers and exchange know-how on practical aspects of river management.
- Opportunity to strengthen governance aspects for river cities.
- Access to state-of-the-art knowledge, frameworks, and tools for urban river management.
- Opportunity to participate in niche and unique capacity building programmes.
- Access to technical support for planning and implementing interventions for urban river management.
- Opportunity to serve as the site for unique demonstration projects that will be implemented by NIUA and NMCG.
- Advise on funding options for different interventions.
- Access to international partners working with NIUA and NMCG.
- Improve the liveability of the city thereby attracting external economic investments



# CURRENT MEMBER CITIES

## Alliance Member Cities

114 Cities  
14 States



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