SMART CITIES & ACADEMIA
Towards Action and Research

Peer Learning Workshop held on
4 March, 2022
1. Background to the workshop

The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and 15 premier Planning and Architecture Institutions, has launched the Smart Cities and Academia Towards Action and Research (SAAR) programme. The aim of this programme is to develop a compendium of 75 landmark urban projects implemented by the Smart Cities Mission. The purpose of this collaboration is to broaden the area of expertise for NIUA with academic fields, and create a niche for young students and researchers to foster innovative ideas for a new urban India. The expected outcomes from the compendium will provide trends, critical insights, and prospects for development in the areas of urbanisation, urban information systems, water and sanitation, and solid waste management, climate change and resilience, and inclusivity and sustainability among others. The compendium will act as a first point of reference for future research in the field of urban development, help disseminate learnings from projects under the Smart Cities Mission, act as a repository for innovative urban projects, and contribute to dissemination of best practices and peer-to-peer learning.

The Peer Learning Workshop is a part of the workflow of SAAR programme. The purpose of the workshop was to showcase a few Smart Cities Mission projects implemented by the Smart Cities for the benefit of participating students and faculties. There were six projects selected from the Smart Cities—Kochi, Srinagar, Bhopal, Surat, Indore, and Dharamshala—for the purpose of the workshop.

2. Discussion points from the workshop

The discussions from the workshop have been summarized below.

a. Welcome note and background to the workshop

The welcome note was addressed by the Director-NIUA, Hitesh Vaidya. He welcomed the officials from the Smart Cities, and the SAAR participants including the students and faculties. At the outset, Mr. Vaidya appreciated the Smart Cities Mission-Director, Kunal Kumar for conceptualising and initiating the SAAR programme. He highlighted that the purpose of preparing this compendium is to give students from Planning Institutes hands-on experience to learn about implementation of projects. He explained that this compendium also holds significance for the Smart Cities projects as the projects will be reviewed by the academic institutions. The feedback from review would be helpful in planning for better urban policies and projects for the cities.

A brief presentation on Overview of 108 Smart Cities Projects under SAAR was made by Dr. Purva Sharma from NIUA. She gave an overview on the progress of the SAAR activities. During the presentation, she requested the institutes to upload the SAAR project information for their respective projects on SAAR website (https://niua.in/saar/compendium/). It was highlighted that the 108 Smart
Cities projects selected under SAAR have been broadly categorized into three themes—climate change and resilient cities, information and technology in urban management, and physical and social infrastructure.

After the presentation, **Smart Cities Mission-Director, Mr. Kunal Kumar** addressed the students and faculties. He highlighted that the SAAR programme will make a huge impact on the interventions and future planning of the Smart Cities. There has been a lot of enthusiasm from the students to work on ground-level projects and gain an understanding about project planning and management.

After the remarks, Mr. Kunal Kumar had an open session with the students, and CEO Smart Cities. Some of the important points are summarized below:

1. **CEO-Kochi Smart City, Mr. Shanavas Shamsuddin** highlighted that people’s participation is important to implement the projects, and in assessing the impact of the projects. He gave examples of a few Smart Cities projects from Kochi where citizens gave their feedback on the projects.

2. **Dr. Priyanjali, Associate Professor-College of Engineering Trivandrum**, gave a brief about the site visits in Kochi. She applauded that the students receive a good support from the nodal officers from Kochi Smart City.

3. **Prof. Nand Kumar, MNIT-Jaipur** highlighted that the MNIT Planning students are working on the Smart Roads Project for Jaipur. He discussed that the initial analysis from the project showed that although the project is in the implementation but, there is a lack of awareness among the officials from the Jaipur Smart City on the full project cycle and implementation of this project.

4. **Mr. Soura Manna, student from SPA-Bhopal**, highlighted that the students faced the issues with the officials and citizens in Bhopal during the site visits and field surveys. While the official letters from the Ministry and NIUA have been issued regarding the SAAR programme but, there was resistance from the local officials and citizens with regards to the identity cards of the students from SPA-Bhopal.
5. Dr. Haimanti Banerjee, Associate Professor-IIT Kharagpur, gave briefing about the site visits and stakeholder consultations in Bhubaneswar. She remarked that the responses from the officials of different organisations in Bhubaneswar was phenomenal.

6. Dr. Rahul Tiwari, MANIT-Bhopal, gave briefing about land monetization project in Bhopal Smart City. He updated that the visit to Indore is pending.

7. Mr. Aniruddha Shahpure, Pune Smart City, briefed about the site visits by the students from College of Engineering Pune. He applauded that the students showed enthusiasm and were keen on learning more about the three Smart City Projects which have been implemented in Pune.

8. Dr. Prasanna Rao, Professor-RVCA Bangalore, discussed that the students have collated secondary information for the projects selected by RVCA in Bangalore, Belgavi, and Davengere. He also highlighted that the students are also doing two-months internship along with the SAAR initiative to gain a deeper understanding of the urban development field.
During the interactive session with the students, faculties, and Smart City officials, Mr. Kunal Kumar made the following remarks:

1. The compendium on SAAR will be shared as a best practice with other cities. Therefore, the documentation of case studies is important. A manuscript formatting instruction has been shared with all the institutions to follow a proper mythology for documentation.

2. It was requested that the Smart City officials and the Nodal officers for the selected projects should give recognition to the SAAR participants. There should be minimal gap in data sharing by the officials to the students and faculties. The Detailed Project Reports, Request for Proposals, presentations, and other secondary or primary sources are important for the students for documenting the case study and understanding the project implementation process.

3. Learnings from the documentation of SAAR case studies is important to plan for Smart Cities Mission in future as well.

4. The Ministry has received request from 10 Planning and Architecture institutions to become part of the SAAR programme. As a way forward, these institutions might be considered as well.

b. Presentations on the selected Smart City Projects

The session-II included the following presentations from the six Smart Cities.

**Theme: Urban infrastructure (10 minutes per city presentation)**

- Marine Drive Walkway, Kochi – Mr. Shanavas Shamsuddin, CEO, Kochi Smart City
- Heritage Restoration and Redevelopment of St. Lukes Church, Srinagar – Mr. Iftikhaar Kakroo, Chief Engineer, Srinagar Smart City

**Theme: Data and Technology (10 minutes per city presentation)**

- Integrated Command Control Centre in Bhopal – Ms. Divya Pillai, Consultant-PwC, Bhopal Smart City
- Integrated Command Control Centre in Surat – Mr. Jigar Patel, Surat Smart City

**Theme: Climate Change and Resilient Cities (10 minutes per city presentation)**

- Carbon-credit Aggregator model, Indore – Mr. Rishav Gupta, CEO, Indore Smart City
- Green-future solutions Roof-top in Dharamshala – Mr. Sanjeev Saini, General Manager, Dharamshala Smart City

Few snapshots of the presentations from the Smart Cities is as follows:
The last session of the workshop was an interactive session with the Chief Executive Officers and Officials from the Smart Cities and SAAR participants. The session was moderated by Prof. Saswat Bandopadhayay from CEPT University.

The discussion in this session was based on the following questions:

1. What are the three most unique features of your SMART City project? And why do you consider this project as "unique"?
2. What do you think are the key Impacts (such as Physical/Social/economic/ecological/cultural or any other) of your project?
3. If you are to do this project again, which are the 2-3 main areas you would like to improve or modify?
4. Your comments on SAAR- what are the key advantages of this initiative and your message for the SAAR participants?
The discussion from the participants has been summarized in the following points as given below:

1. **Mr. Rishav Gupta** discussed that the Smart Cities Mission is a boon for urban development in India. The three unique features of this project includes: the Area-Based Development (ABD) approach for the cities, the untied funding structure of the Mission, and less interference from the higher-level officials in the Mission projects. Indore has done commendable work under the Smart Cities Mission. There are other projects such as Rajwada Heritage Restoration and Redevelopment, Redevelopment of Chappan-Dukan, Smart Traffic, Solid Waste Management in Indore in which commendable work has been done.

2. **Dr. Rahul Tiwari** highlighted that the Integrated Command Control Centres (ICCC) are important projects especially in the case of Madhya Pradesh. Hence, the ICCCs in the state require awareness generation in relation to their unique features, applications, and revenue generation model. In continuation to the ICCCs, **Dr. Priyanjali** stressed upon developing a revenue generation model from the ICCCs.

3. One of the students from Jamia Milia Islamia University-Delhi, briefed upon their site visit to Chandigarh Smart City. The students shared their field experience of working on the bike-sharing project in Chandigarh. **Mr. Arun, Nodal Officer** for the project from Chandigarh Smart City highlighted upon the challenges related to the bike-sharing project. He discussed that this particular project is a PPP project. However, the project is facing the issues of financing especially due to COVID. At present, Chandigarh Smart City is looking into other channels of funding for the bike-sharing project.

4. **Dr. Nisar Khan, Associate Professor, Jamia Milia Islamia-New Delhi**, discussed about the site visit of the students from Jamia Milia Islamia to Srinagar. He highlighted upon the authenticity of the St. Lukes Church project in Srinagar Smart City. Mr. Iftikhaar Kakroo from Srinagar Smart City remarked that the project has been restored with a focus upon the native architectural design of the city.

5. **Dr. Yogesh Bhardwaj, Associate Professor, Jamia Milia Islamia-New Delhi**, discussed about the legacy of e-waste project in Chandigarh Smart City. He highlighted upon managing the water contamination around the city due to the project. It was discussed that a leachate treatment plant has been set-up in the city to treat the wastewater and ensure that the surrounding areas are not polluted.

6. **Dr. Hina Zia, Professor, Jamia Milia Islamia-New Delhi**, discussed about the capacity building initiatives undertaken for the stakeholders involved in ICCC projects. She highlighted that ICCCs are cloud-based system hence data security issues need to be handled, and there is a need to now develop a revenue generation model from the ICCC projects under Smart Cities.

After the discussion, **Prof. Saswat Bandopadhayay** briefly summarized the discussion points. He remarked that the presentations in the workshop presented a unique learnings for the students. He concluded that ICCCs are significant projects under the Smart Cities Mission. It is important to ensure
that data security issues in the projects, and generating awareness and building the capacities of the officials for ICCCs is important for the efficient working of the ICCCs. Heritage conservation is an integral part to restore the culture of the city; it is important to bring together the efforts from heritage conservation under the SAAR programme.

As the way forward, SAAR will continue to host similar Peer to Peer learning workshops and expert input lectures for the participants of the programme. The proposed SAAR lecture series would thrive to host some of the eminent urban practitioners from various fields to share their views and experiences. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Purva Sharma, NIUA.