



Smart Cities Mission
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Advisory No. 17

Date: 18 June 2020

Smart Cities response to COVID-19

Governments, Civil society and Industry across all levels have taken several measures to prevent, control, and manage the outbreak of COVID – 19 in India. The situation necessitated urgent response from cities in order to fight the pandemic successfully. In this time of crisis, Smart City SPVs have performed an important role in managing the crisis especially in areas such as information processing, two-way communication amongst stakeholders, management of health infrastructure and essential services as well as preparing for the future. Although problems being faced by individual cities look similar at the macro level, there are bound to be differences in how the crisis presents itself in each context.

2. In this background, the need for smart cities to build greater resilience has been voiced by stakeholders with the goal to align their project implementation with the emergent situation during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ‘new normal’ expected in the future. Deliberations with states and cities during the crisis have brought to light exceptional innovations / interventions which not only cater to demands of the current crisis, but hold long-term promise in times to come. A tentative list of such innovations / interventions is enclosed in **Annexure 1**.

3. Guidelines and subsequent advisories issued as part of the Mission allow for flexibility in terms of prioritization of projects at the level of the SPV. It is important that such powers to decide locally are utilized by the SPVs in order to ensure that citizen concerns in these times of crisis and the expected ‘new normal’ post the crisis are taken care of. This would entail consultation with stakeholders and if so needed, quick and appropriate decisions as per local context.

4. Smart City SPVs are advised that the following activities may be undertaken:

- i. Deliberate on the emergent needs of the city and possible solutions thereof in the background of the Covid crisis and the ‘new normal’ expected in the coming future. Stakeholder consultations may be convened by the CEO to understand their concerns.
- ii. If need be, the SPV should use the flexibility provided under the Mission guidelines / advisories to relook at certain aspects of their SCP to incorporate some of the innovations / interventions as highlighted in Annexure 1 or any other such actions which they may feel appropriate in their local context.
- iii. The SPV may accordingly approve incorporation of such innovative practices into its plan after detailed consultation with stakeholders as mentioned above.
- iv. The SPV should take a judicious decision to balance long-term actions as documented in the city’s SCP while incorporating new ideas.

- v. It is hereby clarified, that projects so undertaken should be compliant with the guidelines and advisories issued by the Mission from time to time, and the overall SCP cost should not vary post such modifications.
- vi. Further, it is clarified that there is no additional funding for the revised projects, and their implementation should be undertaken within the grants eligible under the Mission. No additional grants, whatsoever, would be provided for the same.
- vii. The innovations so incorporated in the plan, if any, should be shared with MoHUA and updated in the online MIS within 3 days of approval of the Board.

5. Numerous advisories and SOPs have been issued by various Ministries of the Government of India and the State Governments in the past few months towards response to the COVID crisis. These advisories should be duly considered by SPVs while revising their projects and all actions identified and implemented should be in consonance with those directions.

Annexure 1

Illustrative list of innovative activities/projects

- ICT applications for activities related to management of COVID-19 / other pandemics / epidemics / similar exigencies in the future.
- Development & provision of IT-based psychological support systems to COVID-19 patients and others- e.g. institutional / self-quarantined people, students, senior citizens, people with mental illnesses etc.
- Development of smart surveillance systems for crisis management.
- Creation of tele-medicine facility for increasing access to health services for all.
- Provision of online education / education-to-home, access of education for all children, especially those, studying in municipal / government schools.
- Setting up of smart fixed / mobile health clinics which could either be run by Municipality / SPV or operated by private partners / NGOs.
- Provisioning appropriate public transport, non-motorized transport like walking, cycling through 'low-cost, quick action' placemaking projects.
- Digital ticketing systems, app-based systems for fully automated access to public transport / non-motorized transport infrastructure.
- Procurement /addition of smart solutions to enhance water and wastewater management / solid waste-management / sanitation facilities at public areas in the city.
- Creating of smart infrastructure for ensuring safe distancing at public areas or public transport systems.
- Creation of ICT based Smart Infrastructure for disaster management in the city.
- Development of data-management infrastructure, network connectivity infrastructure and IT systems for better generation, management, analysis of data including decision support systems for various use cases as per needs of the city.
- Deployment of ML / AI based predictive systems for handling exigencies like crimes, epidemics etc. or for better future planning of the city in various domains.
- Use of drone technology for crisis-management including information gathering, supply of essential items, surveillance of inappropriate activities etc.
- Use of social media analytics for better understanding citizen perception about various aspects of city governance.
- Use of existing / creation of digital aggregator platforms in the field of affordable / rental housing, essential supplies, e-commerce etc. for catalyzing government-assisted, market-driven solutions for vulnerable populations like migrant / seasonal labour etc.
- Smart technologies for improved access to health, sanitation and job opportunities to the low-income households, informal settlements, migrant labour colonies in the city.
