

CSE-NMCG Webinar on

Towards Water Sensitive Cities for Climate Resilience: Experience of Approach and Practices in India

Date: August 25, 2022 | Time 11:00 AM – 13:00 PM (IST) | Language: English | Platform: Zoom

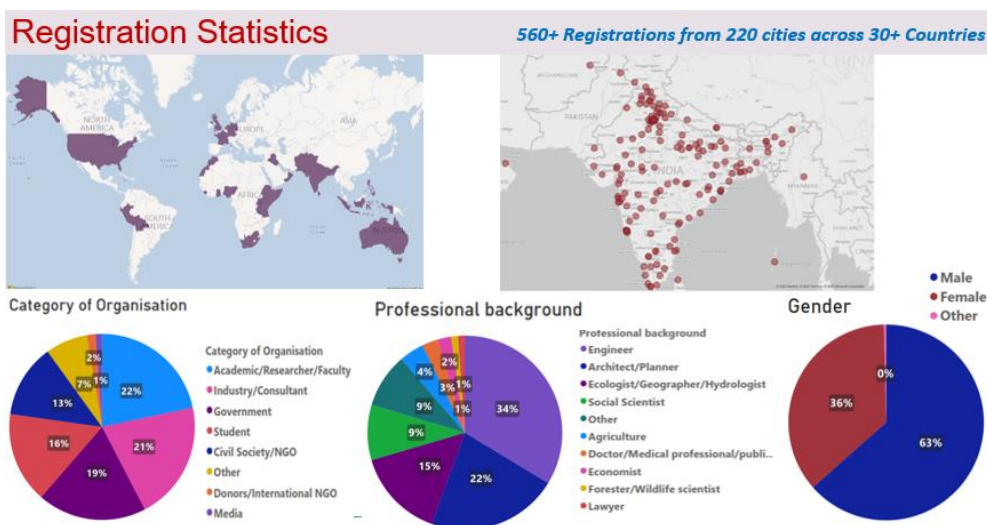
PROCEEDINGS

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in partnership with National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Govt. of India conducted a webinar on Towards Water Sensitive Cities for Climate Resilience: Experience of Approach and Practices in India on August 25, 2022. The webinar was conducted in year two, under the CSE-NMCG capacity building initiative on 'Making Ganga basin studies water-sensitive'.

This webinar delivered a range of informative and engaging sessions to enhance participants' knowledge on water sensitive design and planning approaches aimed at building city-wide resilience, and concepts related to water resilience to discussion on good practices and WSUDP implementation. The webinar aimed at sensitizing practitioners and advocating for the planning and designing of water-sensitive cities in India, and disseminating the experiences of water-sensitive cities and exemplar projects and programmes from India.

The speakers for the webinar included; G Math Vathnan, HUDD, Odisha, Veena Srinivasan, CSEI – ATREE, Manushi Ashok Jain, Sponge collaborative, Dr Suresh Kumar Rohilla, IWA and Dhruv Pasricha, CSE. The webinar was moderated jointly by Depinder Singh Kapur, Director, CSE and Shivani, Senior Research Associate - Water Programme, CSE.

The event received an overwhelming response with 560+ registrations from 22 cities across 33 countries worldwide. More than 47.5% of the registrants turned up as attendees, out of which 22% were Government officials. Apart from the attendees, the event was live streamed and approx. 2950+ viewers watched the event through the online social media platforms on Zoom, LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. The attendees belonged to diverse fields, including engineers, architects, planners, social scientists, etc. They represented private consultancies, govt. departments, academic institutions, NGOs, etc.



Ms Shivani, CSE, kick-started the webinar event by providing an overview of the CSE-NMCG programme, its vision, aim, objectives and upcoming events planned for the 2nd year. Mr Kapur inaugurated the webinar, introducing the speakers, and provided the context for the webinar. He set the context by talking about a Water Sensitive Framework for Global South Cities by contextualising the normative discourse emerging from the Planned and Infrastructure developed cities context of Australia and Europe to the Indian and global south context. Balancing the need for both grey and green infrastructure requirement with a justice and equity perspective that is missing in the discourse of the global north.

Ms Veena Srinivasan, CSEI – ATREE further deliberated on contextualising green infrastructure for India by taking the case of Bengaluru's cascading lake system. She quoted, "the Normative Approach" to WSUDP, needs to be replaced with a "Use Case Approach" for applying WSUDP to the specific context and challenges of a city. This will ensure that a generic approach for promoting WSUDP as a concept, is avoided. For example, Bengaluru has a lakes pollution problem and a city wide WSUDP approach addressing this will help the city. She specifically discussed on problems with urban lakes and presented a framework on how do we solve the problem.

Shri Mathi Vathanan shared the journey on how Odisha became the first state in India to mainstream Water Sensitive Urban Design & Planning. He talked about the initiatives recently taken up by the HUDD like state led and funded initiatives MUKTA, JAGA mission & Sujal, construction of Rain water Harvesting Structures on Campaign mode, individual Household level Toilet Construction in 2599 slums in 100 ULBs, community groups W-SHG's & SDAs lead on ground implementation. He showcased that based on the knowledge support provided by CSE on rainwater harvesting in parks and open spaces, HUDD has been able to implement more than 22,222 rainwater harvesting structures in 111 towns and cities of Odisha and role of 10106 community groups in sustaining these systems. He focused on how the programmes/ processes and designs were simplified, in order to scale-up the initiative from pilot implementation to city-wide and state-wide application within the last two years. He also discussed on access to safe sanitation and ODF and implementation of Citywide Inclusive sanitation (CWIS) programmes in the state.

Ms Manushi Ashok Jain, Sponge collaborative, presented on Mainstreaming Water Sensitive Urban Design & Planning Frameworks for Climate Resilience in Chennai and Kochi. She talked about systems approach that centers ecology and community in the design of integrated blue-green infrastructure, sustainable mobility, inclusive housing, vibrant public spaces, and resilient cities. In her presentation, she detailed out three projects at different scale; Adyar River Basin Vision: Chennai (Strategic Basin Planning), Mullassery Precinct Sponge Framework: Kochi (Sponge Planning Framework) and Kilambakkam Climate Park: Chennai (Sponge open spaces). Her key takeaways included Procurement Reform: Prohibitive qualifications for Municipal and Multilateral procurement for innovative firms in blue-green space competing against firms with decades of grey infrastructure experience. Green-Blue Financing: Unlocking new finance models including blended finance, public-private collaborations to finance the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of blue-green infrastructure.

Mr Dhruv Pasricha, CSE, showcased how the WSUDP, Green Infrastructure and Water Efficiency and Conservation can be integrated with the urban planning and development process. He shared various findings from CSE research on stormwater harvesting in parks and open spaces to address issues related to localized urban flooding and groundwater depletion in Odisha, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Focusing on the Ganga basin States, he mentioned the potential of WSUDP for select parks of Uttar Pradesh in Lucknow, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Moradabad and Varanasi and highlighted how run-off in excess of 2,400 Mil. L can be harvested in these cities from their existing park infrastructure.

Dr Suresh Kumar Rohilla shared India's journey towards mainstreaming water sensitive urban design and planning from Status Quo (Old Way) to Sustainable Results (New Way) through capacity building, research and technical support. He talked about water challenges, and how the changing climate will aggravate the water issues, especially in the global south and how a sustainable urban water management agenda is built in India through WSUDP approach of integrating water cycle management. He discussed on recent updates from India in terms of national flagship programmes on water supply, water conservation and rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge for sustainability and guiding notes on the next steps.

The event was concluded by Mr Kapur after the Q&A session followed with a vote of thanks to all the honourable speakers and the participants.