Proceedings of the Webinar

The Urban Water Unit of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) organised a virtual consultation workshop on WSUDP and Mainstreaming RWH in town and cities of Odisha. The objective of the workshop was to kick-start discussions on implementing short and long-term RWH strategies in cities of Odisha, with a partnership with Housing and Urban Development Dept. (HUDD), Govt. of Odisha.

The dignitaries included Sh. G. Mathi Vathanan, Principal Secretary, HUDD, Govt. of Odisha and Sunita Narain, Director General, CSE. Also present were Dr Suresh Kumar Rohilla, Sr Director, CSE; Sh. Sushanta Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary, HUDD, Govt. of Odisha. The workshop was attended by more than 150 state and city officials from HUDD, ULBs and Development Authorities from nine cities in Odisha.

During the welcome address, Ms Narain highlighted the key areas of focus, describing the linkages between water and public health, especially in times of Covid-19. She also talked about inclusive growth and the urban water cycle. She pointed out how a decentralised circular economy for water would help us move in the direction of sustainable urban development.

Sh. G. Mathi Vathanan highlighted the vision of the Govt. of Odisha, and their willingness to implement RWH and other WSUDP solutions to address the urban water issues faced in Odisha; and how the Govt. wishes to work towards a sustainable vision, even in the time of a disaster and public health crisis.

While signing the MoU, he talked about how strong value-based partnerships are important to bring about a positive paradigm shift in sustainable development, and how CSE has been instrumental in paving the path for sustainable development.
Virtual Signing of MoU between CSE and HUDD, Govt. of Odisha

This was followed by a brief presentation by CSE where speakers talked about the urban water challenges in India, and particularly in Odisha. Dr Rohilla showcased the linkages between urban development and water: with focus on groundwater, rainwater and urban water bodies. He highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in urban water management, and scaling up of successful projects. He shared some key research undertaken by CSE (with erstwhile MoUD, GoI) on WSUDP and Green Infrastructure.

Snapshots of presentation by Dr Suresh Kumar Rohilla, CSE

Dr Rohilla summarised by providing a roadmap for short and long-term activities over the next three years, with focus on high visibility-high impact model projects, capacity building and technical support.

Shivali Jainer, Programme Manager, CSE briefly showcased the WSUDP principles, and opportunity areas for implementation under various urban development mechanisms in Odisha, w.r.t planning guidelines, land use and rainfall patterns in cities of Odisha. Dr Rohilla summarised by providing a roadmap for short and long-term activities over the next three years, with focus on high visibility-high impact model projects, capacity building and technical support.
During the discussion session with various participants, Ms Narain and Sh. Mani Vathanan urged the officials to think beyond individual projects on RWH, and identify and include opportunity areas like pubic parks and open spaces, roads, flyovers. Sh. Mani Vathanan also highlighted the need for two modules for capacity building: one for general officials, and another for practitioners involved in implementation in ULBs and Development Authorities.

Dr Rohilla summarised the workshop, by highlighting key takeaways including preparing of action plan for implementation for short- and long-term projects. The event was closed with a vote of thanks for the dignitaries and participants.