

International cooperation in development of Smart Cities – USTDA

Summary:

United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA), the nodal agency of the U.S Government has been providing catalytic support for Infrastructure Development under the Indo-US bilateral cooperation through grants for feasibility, pilot projects and technical assistance programs. USTDA's South and Southeast Asia region has a robust India program, which has supported India's efforts to develop its infrastructure for over three decades. USTDA's portfolio in India includes transportation and energy infrastructure development projects that typically have an Information Communications Technology overlay. In January 2015, USTDA entered into Memoranda of Understanding with the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh that outline USTDA's partnership role in development of three smart cities namely – Visakhapatnam, Allahabad & Ajmer.



Objectives:

To leverage USTDA's expertise in building energy, transportation, telecommunications and water infrastructure in India, this initiative intended to deploy many tools to respond to the increasing demand for innovative solutions in Indian cities.

Implementation in practice

- In addition to its existing portfolios, the USTDA had added Smart Cities portfolio in India. The Smart Solutions for Smart Cities initiative utilizes U.S. industry expertise to deliver advisory and project preparation services to support comprehensive, sustainable urban infrastructure development throughout India.
- In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, USTDA had offered to provide on-the-ground consultancy services to support Allahabad and Ajmer's Smart City challenge preparation.
- While in Andhra Pradesh, USTDA had partnered with the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department on a planning framework, development strategy and a set of high-priority investment projects for smarter urban development in Vishakhapatnam.
 - The projects were envisaged to leverage innovative technologies, data analytics and delivery approaches to close gaps in public services, reduce congestion in logistical systems, and improve access to urban amenities.
 - The goal was to enhance economic competitiveness and improve quality of life in Visakhapatnam.
 - A phased assistance plan had been undertaken, wherein Phase-1 supported in reefing Visakhapatnam's smart city vision; evaluated the baseline of the urban infrastructure; assessed institutional and regulatory frameworks; identified sector-specific opportunities; and developed an action plans for two near-term smart city projects.
 - Phase-2 developed an Integrated Smart City Master Plan for Visakhapatnam. In addition to proposing urban planning frameworks for the entire pan-regional planning area, the Master Plan also provided detailed frameworks for four key urban centers, including integrated analysis and recommendations across eight identified smart city components.
 - Phase-3 envisaged to accelerate the implementation of five infrastructure projects identified in the City Infrastructure Project (CIP); connect U.S. companies to the present and future smart cities activities in Visakhapatnam; and bolster the technical capacity for the city of Visakhapatnam to sustainably implement smart city infrastructure projects.



- Apart from the above support, the USTDA had also organized a series of Reverse Trade Missions (RTMs) to host officials from the state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and the city governments of Visakhapatnam, Ajmer, and Allahabad in the United States to connect them with U.S. best practices and technologies that enable cities to be integrated, efficient and safe.
 - In February 2016, USTDA hosted a delegation from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh and the City of Visakhapatnam in Washington, D.C., New York, NY, and the San Francisco Bay Area, CA.
 - A similar RTM was held in January 2017 and brought officials from the State Government of Rajasthan and the cities of Ajmer, Jaipur, Kota and Udaipur to Washington, D.C., Austin, TX, and Denver, CO.
 - Finally, in March 2018, a USTDA RTM took officials from Allahabad and Uttar Pradesh to Boston, MA and Pittsburgh, PA.
- The RTMs included meetings and site visits that highlighted specific case study examples of how U.S. cities and metropolitan areas have integrated their operations to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services to their citizens.
- The Indian delegations met with U.S. federal, state, and city leaders, as well as representatives from U.S. companies to learn how their innovative and effective smart city solutions support integrated planning and implementation of critical city infrastructure.



- In 2020, the USTDA in collaboration with the World Bank and MoHUA had partnered to support in development of the National Urban Innovation Stack (NIUS) - a cutting-edge smart city tool to drive innovation, data-driven governance and capacity building across more than 100 Indian smart cities. The tool is envisaged to support India's goals of inclusive and sustainable urban development through a consortium of digital platforms, including e-governance applications, smart payments and training modules for its government workforce.
- The USTDA has offered \$1.5 Mn grant for undertaking a feasibility study for development of the National Urban Innovation Project – which consists of the National Urban Innovation Hub (“NUIH”) and National Urban Innovation Stack (“NUIS”). NUIH and NUIS will comprise two parallel and mutually compatible infrastructure and platform components under MoHUA.

Impact:

- All three cities – Visakhapatnam, Ajmer & Allahabad have not only successfully emerged as Smart Cities in the challenge process but also have developed robust city transformation plans in alignment with their local aspirations and global context.
- Cross-cultural exchange experiences and technical learning have enhanced individual capacities of officials while also supported in better understanding of city planning, design, management aspects impacting citizens Quality of Life.

Lessons learnt:

India's Urban Transformation vision to create globally competitive cities by providing better quality of life and sustainable communities would require multi-pronged partnership approach – City, State, National and International.

Replicability and Sustainability:

Such international cooperation programs can act as platforms for knowledge, resource and trade exchange while deepening strategic long-term relationships among partnering countries.

Fact Sheet:

Thematic area	International co-operation and bilateral partnerships
First-year of the program	2016 (wrt SCM)
Responsible institution	USTDA
Coverage	Visakhapatnam, Allahabad & Ajmer

Source: USTDA, EY analysis