



IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN INDIA

Project Progress Report: 3/3

Workshop Report

December 2020



Introduction

This document serves as a progress report for the project 'Improving the Implementation of Affordable Housing in India'. This report titled 'Curriculum Outline' is led by WRI India and is supported by the Ford Foundation. The project is contextualized against the present state of implementation of affordable housing schemes by Central and State Governments in India, wherein significant implementation gaps exist. WRI India intends to train and build capacity of government officials towards better implementation of affordable urban housing programs in India, thereby improving the quality of life for the urban poor.

Acknowledgments

WRI India is grateful to the Ford Foundation for its generous grant and continued support to make this project a reality. The project commenced in December 2018, and was concluded in December 2020, after an approved extension of six months in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Project Team

This report has been prepared by the following team at the WRI India Ross Center for Sustainable Cities:

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I. Preparatory Activities

As detailed in Project Progress Report 1, the project was initiated with primary and secondary surveys aimed at identifying the capacity building gaps and requirements. A range of stakeholders were consulted for this purpose, and their observations were collated and analysed toward designing a suitable training methodology and pedagogy.

Project Progress Report 2 built on these findings to describe specific training modules that were created for the delivery of workshops with regional government agencies, and to articulate guidelines for the planning of such workshops.

The following modules were created:

1. Affordable Rental Housing
2. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Affordable Housing
3. Improving Thermal Comfort of Affordable Housing through Passive Design
4. Accessing Suitably Located and Serviced Land for Affordable Housing

II. Workshops Conducted and Feedback

As part of the project's deliverables, at least three regional workshops were envisioned. These have been briefly documented below.

WORKSHOP WITH SURAT MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Date conducted

The workshop was conducted on 25 November 2019, and was aligned with a larger external event centred on clean air action.

Duration

The workshop was conducted over half-a-day, as per the availability of the attendees.

Subjects offered

The attendees had requested the deployment of the module on improving thermal comfort of affordable housing through passive design.



Figure 1 A speaker at the Surat workshop | Source - WRI India

Number of attendees

90 individuals attended the workshop.

Agencies represented

The attendees represented Surat Municipal Corporation, Surat Urban Development Authority, and private sector practitioners such as civil engineers, architects, building management and efficiency professionals, developers, and builders.

Delivery format

The training was delivered in-person.



Figure 2 Attendees of the Surat Workshop | Source - WRI India

Key feedback and learnings

- The training was well received by the attendees, and the implementing officials expressed interest in exploring the application of the discussed principles in their ongoing and upcoming projects.
- The attendees were appreciative of the use of local case studies as it enhanced relatability and learning.

WORKSHOP WITH GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

Date conducted

The workshop was conducted during 19-20 December 2019.

Duration

The workshop was conducted over two days, as per the availability of the attendees.



Figure 3 Roundtable discussion conducted during the workshop with GNCTD | Source - WRI India

Subjects offered

The attendees had requested the deployment of the modules on improving thermal comfort of affordable housing through passive design, affordable rental housing, and public-private partnerships in affordable housing.

Upon the request of the partner agencies, the workshop was structured into two components:

- The first comprised of a conventional capacity building training wherein the above-mentioned modules were deployed over the course of one full day.
- The second comprised of a strategic roundtable discussion on envisioning a way forward for affordable housing in Delhi. This discussion was chaired by the Hon'ble Minister for Urban Development, GNCTD, and attended by a range of experts and officials from various sectors associated with affordable housing implementation. This discussion was conducted on the second day of the workshop.

Number of attendees

50 individuals attended the workshop over two days.



Figure 4 Attendees of the workshop | Source - WRI India

Agencies represented

The attendees represented GNCTD, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), and private practices such as architects, urban planners, civil society organizations, housing finance organizations, builders and developers, researchers, professors, and students.

Delivery format

The training was delivered in-person.

Key feedback and learnings

- The training was well received by the attendees, and the implementing officials expressed interest in exploring the application of the discussed principles in their ongoing and upcoming projects. In this regard, financial viability and limited jurisdictions were offered as key implementation challenges.

- The roundtable discussion held as part of the workshop discussed at length the need to devise strategies for provision of affordable rental housing, operationalization of vacant government housing stocks, and meeting allied needs such as housing for the elderly and improving public transit connectivity to far-flung but affordable lands. The roundtable helped provide inputs to GNCTD with regard to their housing strategy and vision.

WORKSHOP WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OF CHHATTISGARH

Date conducted

The workshop was conducted on 5 November 2020.

Duration

The workshop was conducted over half-a-day, as per the availability of the attendees.

Subjects offered

All four modules were offered during this workshop.

Number of attendees

50 individuals attended the workshop.

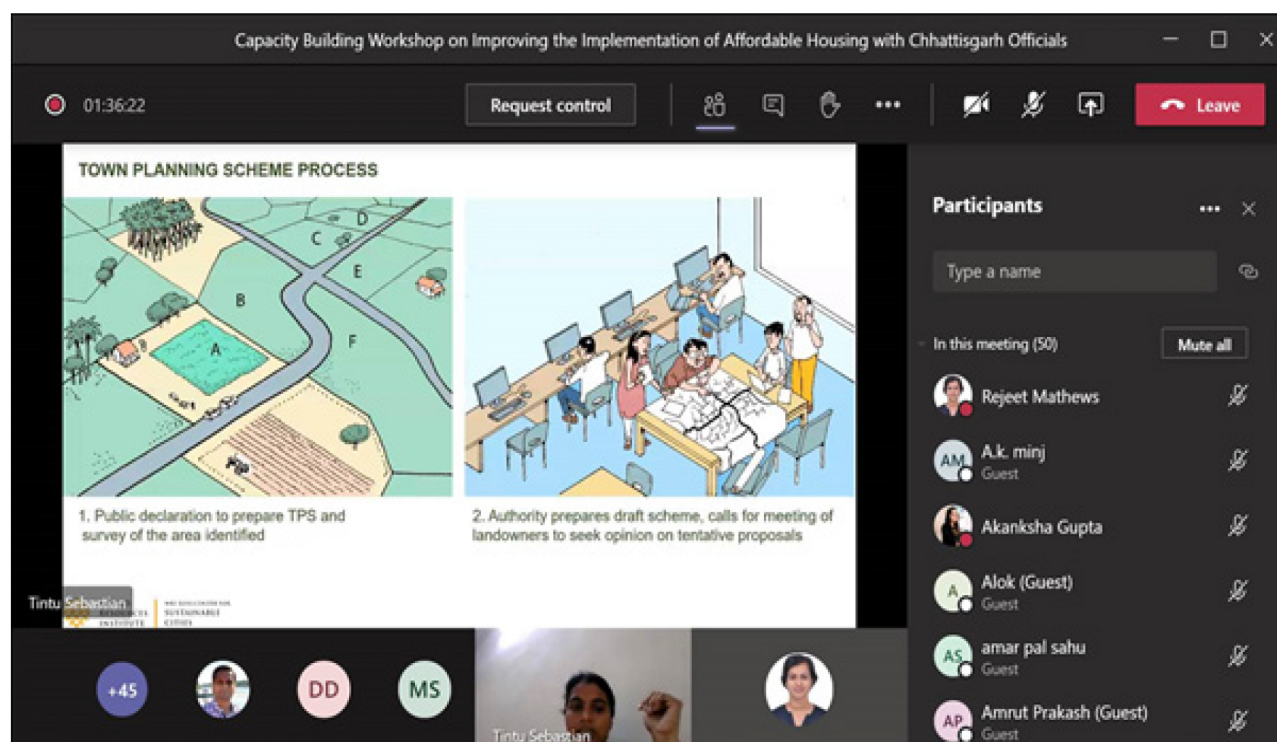


Figure 5 Screenshot of the virtual workshop with officials from Chhattisgarh | Source - WRI India

Agencies represented

The attendees represented Department of Town and Country Planning, Government of Chhattisgarh; Chhattisgarh Housing Board; the Chhattisgarh Regional Chapter of the Institute of Town Planners of India; and other private practitioners such as academicians, students, and architects.

Delivery format

The training was delivered virtually, through a web-conferencing facility.

Key feedback and learnings

- The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected the delivery of this third and final workshop as committed under the project. As a result, the project was granted an extension of six months, and the workshop itself was delivered through an online medium in view of travel restrictions.
- The attendees were appreciative of the modules presented, and expressed an interest in applying the principles learnt to their ongoing and upcoming projects. Follow-ups were requested specifically on the themes of affordable rental housing and passive design, as they were felt to be especially relevant for the local context of Chhattisgarh.
- While the delivery of the workshop through an online medium went smoothly, it was felt that the modules would need to be made more concise going forward.

III. Identification of Lighthouse Projects

Based on the feedback to the workshops delivered, the following case studies have been identified as lighthouse projects. These projects may be more exhaustively documented for future case papers and exposure visits. They have been described in greater detail in the modules annexed with Project Progress Report 2.

CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD'S RENT-TO-OWN SCHEME



Figure 6 A rent-to-own housing complex built by Chandigarh Housing Board | Source - Asian Development Bank

Background

Chandigarh Housing Board is one of the few agencies in the country to have implemented an affordable rental housing scheme. In its Rent-to-Own scheme, the agency has pursued resettlement of slum dwellers to newly constructed housing projects on a long-term rental basis, with the option of home purchase at the end of the tenancy term. The scheme has relied heavily on beneficiary engagement, and has thus seen good uptake.

Rationale

The scheme offers several positive learnings regarding site selection, beneficiary identification, and allotments. In particular, the use of IT services to enumerate beneficiaries and the focus on building community consensus has been instrumental in the scheme's success. The scheme also offers learnings on the themes of rent-fixing, project operationalization and maintenance, and engagement with third-party vendors for rent collection.

PPP-LED AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN BHUBANESHWAR



Figure 7 Affordable houses constructed by Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) | Source - BDA

Background

Bhubaneswar Development Authority is one of the first agencies in the country to successfully pursue public-private partnerships toward construction of affordable housing. The specific project is spread over a 20 acre site, and will house 2,600 units. The authorities have enabled a cross-subsidization methodology through which the private sector partner has been incentivized with access to freesale rights over 1/3rd of the site in exchange for developing affordable housing in the remainder, free-of-cost. The partnership also factors in project maintenance after handover, and has linked release of incentives to completion of construction milestones.

Rationale

This project is a rare example of a successful public-private partnership in the affordable housing space, and offers many learnings from an administrative and contracting perspective. It is also helpful toward understanding the various kinds of incentives that a government agency can consider toward attracting greater private sector participation in affordable housing provision, as well as safeguards that can ensure quality and timely delivery of affordable housing.

SMART GHAR III IN RAJKOT



Figure 8 Smart Ghar III | Source - BEEP

Background

A slum redevelopment project propagated under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), Smart Ghar III hosts 1176 dwelling units in total. It has employed simple design strategies for ventilation and lighting through which ambient temperatures in the complex have been brought down by 5 °C. This in turn has reduced living costs for the beneficiaries by reducing dependence on electricity and mechanical ventilation.

Rationale

Smart Ghar III is especially relevant for affordable housing implementers as it has been conceived and constructed within the framework of active housing policies such as PMAY(U). Other learnings herein include cost-effective design techniques that can be replicated in other affordable housing projects sited in arid / semi-arid climates, and the use of participatory design workshops to sensitize beneficiaries to the benefits of passive design.

SPATIALLY DISTRIBUTED AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGH TOWN PLANNING SCHEMES IN AHMEDABAD

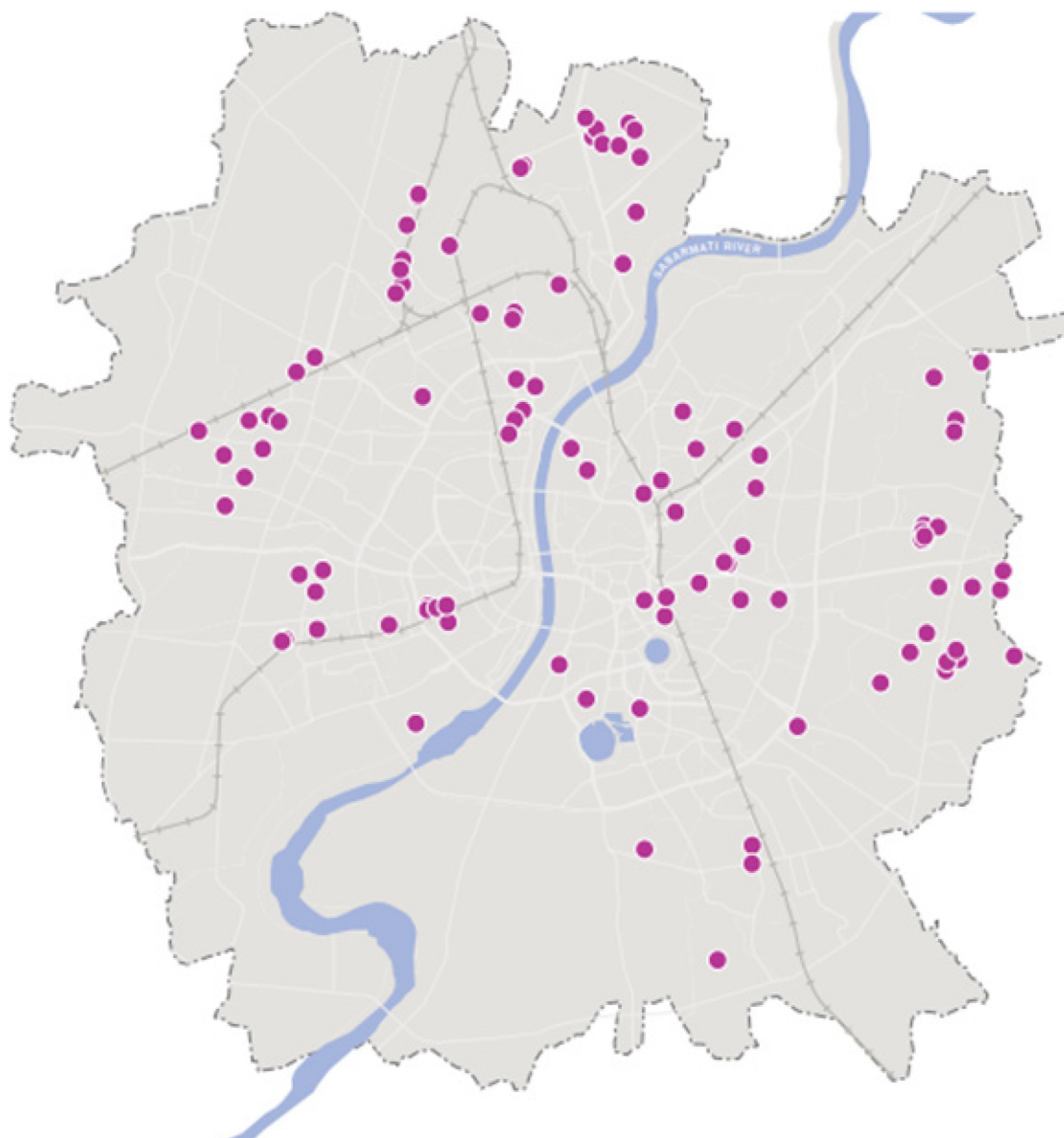


Figure 9 Location of affordable housing sites sourced through TPS in Ahmedabad | Source - WRI

Background

Town Planning Schemes are a mechanism through which land may be pooled together and redistributed such that its serviceability and accessibility may be upgraded. Their use is especially common in Ahmedabad, where such schemes have encouraged the planned development of vacant and under-utilized lands across the city. The process of land pooling has enabled efficient redistribution of these lands, and allowed the earmarking of lands specifically for affordable housing.

Rationale

Ahmedabad's approach has enabled the creation of 80,000 affordable houses in the city, all of which are sufficiently connected to civic services. Furthermore, the process of Town Planning Schemes has ensured that these houses are distributed across the city, including in central as well as upcoming peripheral areas. This learning is especially useful for other Indian cities, where affordable housing sites are typically situated in far-flung locations that are unattractive for beneficiaries, and thus not taken up by them.

IV. Learning Framework

To develop an initial conceptual framework for peer learning, the following were studied:

1. The existing PMAY(U) portals managed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India
2. The Peer Experience and Reflective Learning (PEARL) portal of the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), Government of India
3. The CityFix Learn (TCFL) designed by World Resources Institute (WRI)

These platforms have been selected on account of their focus on affordable housing as well as broader urban developmental themes. Insights from each have been collated below.

PMAY(U) PORTALS

While not specifically a learning platform, the portals for the PMAY(U) scheme and its subsidiaries contain a range of learning resources. These comprise of:

1. Photo, video, and infographic galleries documenting projects and beneficiary engagements
2. Guidebooks and user manuals on various policies and sub-schemes
3. Reports and presentations documenting scheme progresses
4. Web tutorials for use by beneficiaries and state-level mission managers
5. 'Gurukul', a resource library comprising of various policies, templates for key administrative documents such as Requests for Proposals, research reports, case studies, and training modules on specific subjects.
6. Prototypical layouts for houses for use by beneficiaries

In apprising the portal, the following observations may be offered:

1. The portal directly addresses the affordable housing space in India, and as such offers a spread of relevant resources. While it is linked to a larger government-run ecosystem of information portals, it restricts its specific focus on the subject of housing only.
2. The resources available on the platform are largely static documents and modules, designed to be used in a self-paced manner. There are no active learning resources, such as webinars or e-learning modules.
3. The resources available on the platform are useful mostly for implementing officials at the state and local levels, and beneficiaries. There are no specific resources for other stakeholders.
4. The portal needs greater navigational clarity, as it houses several other functions than the learning framework.
5. The portal offers several resources in regional languages other than English, which helps enhance knowledge access to a wider range of persons.

PEARL

Designed by the National Institute of Urban Affairs, PEARL is a knowledge platform addressing various urban developmental themes. Its key features include:

1. A compendium of case studies, research papers, and reports that document best practices and case examples on specific themes such as housing, waste management, and public transport.
2. Listings and proceedings of capacity building programs like workshops, trainings, exposure visits, webinars, e-learning courses etc.
3. A peer-connect feature that encourages inter-city partnerships toward sharing of urban knowledge and solutions.

In apprising PEARL, the following observations may be offered:

1. The platform directly addresses capacity building in the context of sustainable urban development in India. However, it documents several urban development themes, and its focus on affordable housing is limited.
2. The platform operates more as a directory of resources and facilitator of knowledge exchanges than a learning portal in itself.
3. The platform's intended users are city officials and administrators looking for relevant resources and learning opportunities.
4. The platform also documents city-to-city learning exchanges, a theme which many attendees in this project's workshops expressed interest in better understanding.
5. PEARL also uniquely offers a mobile app, which helps enhance accessibility to the portal, especially in smaller cities where internet connectivity and access to desktop computers may be limited.

THE CITYFIX LEARN

Designed by WRI, TCFL is a learning platform that collates urban-related knowledge from across WRI's global network, and articulates them with the intent of building the capacity of site visitors. Its key features include:

1. An ongoing series of webinars, along with a library of recordings of previously conducted webinars.
2. Toolkits, guidebooks, and manuals on specific subjects like Transit Oriented Development, that can be downloaded and referred to by implementers and other relevant practitioners.
3. Interactive online learning guides that sensitize participants to various themes in a self-paced, click-through fashion.
4. Information on training programs and packages that can be deployed on a needs-basis to agencies that request them.

In apprising TCFL, the following observations may be offered:

1. The platform showcases knowledge generated from the WRI network only, and its focus on affordable housing is currently limited. However, it does address allied sectors like social inclusion, transit, and energy efficiency.
2. The platform's learning guides feature is a unique bridge between self-paced learning and interactive teaching, and may be seen as more impactful than conventional downloadable resources.
3. The platform also articulates training packages that city agencies may request for in-person capacity building.
4. The platform addresses a wide range of stakeholders in the urban development space, with a slightly greater emphasis on city administrators and urban implementers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR A LEARNING PLATFORM

The comparative study of the aforementioned learning platforms provides several takeaways that can be leveraged toward articulating an initial conceptual framework for a learning platform on affordable housing subjects in the context of Indian cities. Key themes for consideration herein are:

1. Target audience – in line with the project, the platform may focus on reaching out to government officials involved in affordable housing implementation. However, visits by other stakeholders may also be anticipated, such as civil society groups and private sector developers working with government agencies on affordable housing projects.
2. Nature of engagement – the platform may consider provision of both active and passive engagement formats.

3. Overall objective – the platform may disseminate knowledge on affordable housing solutions, and encourage sharing of learnings between various stakeholders.
4. Subjects to be included – initially, the platform can build on the four subject modules already developed in the context of this project, and expand to other allied themes progressively. The resources included can relate to both, the Indian and international contexts.
5. Convergence – the platform may be linked to other relevant platforms as well, to encourage access to a larger network of resources.
6. Accessibility – developing the learning platform keeping slow internet speeds, limited desktop access, and linguistic constraints may be considered. A mobile-friendly design with content in regional languages will be especially useful.

The following components can be considered for inclusion in such a learning platform.

1. Static resources – these may comprise libraries or compendiums of useful documents, images, and videos that can be accessed by site visitors freely, and downloaded for future reference. Within this category, research papers, case studies, presentations, guidebooks, manuals, training modules, recordings of webinars, templates of important administrative documents, prototypical housing designs etc. may be considered.
2. Dynamic resources – these may comprise of interactive self-paced modules that better engage visitors. Within this category, click-through learning guides, quizzes, games, and e-courses can be considered.
3. Peer exchanges – this may comprise of a forum wherein members can share knowledge by way of postings on message boards. A dedicated section to document city-to-city knowledge transfers, like in the PEARL platform, may also be considered.
4. Events board – this may comprise a listing of relevant events that may be of use to site visitors, such as details of upcoming webinars, training programs, conferences etc.
5. Follow-up opportunities – this may comprise of briefs of various engagement types that interested cities can consult and request a follow-up to. Training programs, exposure visits, implementer interactions etc. are some of the kinds of engagements that can be described herein.

V. Way Forward

As of December 2020, the project has accomplished its committed deliverables.

Going forward, the modules created with the support of this project will be continually updated, and opportunities for their deployment with other government agencies actively sought.

Contingent to provision of support toward such exercises, a peer learning framework and lighthouse project exposure visit packages may also be created to accompany the modules already in place.

VI. About Wri India

The World Resources Institute is a global research organization that turns big ideas into action at the nexus of environment, economic opportunity and human well-being.

OUR CHALLENGE

Natural resources are at the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being. But today, we are depleting Earth's resources at rates that are not sustainable, endangering economies and people's lives. People depend on clean water, fertile land, healthy forests, and a stable climate. Liveable

cities and clean energy are essential for a sustainable planet. We must address these urgent, global challenges this decade.

OUR VISION

We envision an equitable and prosperous planet driven by the wise management of natural resources. We aspire to create a world where the actions of government, business, and communities combine to eliminate poverty and sustain the natural environment for all people.

OUR APPROACH

Count It

We start with data. We conduct independent research and draw on the latest technology to develop new insights and recommendations. Our rigorous analysis identifies risks, unveils opportunities, and informs smart strategies. We focus our efforts on influential and emerging economies where the future of sustainability will be determined.

Change It

We use our research to influence government policies, business strategies, and civil society action. We test projects with communities, companies, and government agencies to build a strong evidence base. Then, we work with partners to deliver change on the ground that alleviates poverty and strengthens society. We hold ourselves accountable to ensure our outcomes will be bold and enduring.

Scale It

We don't think small. Once tested, we work with partners to adopt and expand our efforts regionally and globally. We engage with decision-makers to carry out our ideas and elevate our impact. We measure success through government and business actions that improve people's lives and sustain a healthy environment.

ANNEXURES

A summary presentation documenting the entirety of the project has been annexed herewith.



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